The Report Committee for Travis Michael Gray
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Savage City: Odessa and the 1905 Pogrom

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor:

Charters Wynn

Mary Neuburger

Savage City: Odessa and the 1905 Pogrom

by

Travis Michael Gray, B.A.

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Dedication

Dedicated to my mother, father, and brother for their unending love and support.

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Abstract

Savage City: Odessa and the 1905 Pogrom

Travis Michael Gray, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Charters Wynn

The study of globalization has become an increasingly popular topic among Western scholars. Empires, in particular, provide scholars with opportunities to understand the complex mechanisms that shaped the movement of capital, people, and culture, on a massive scale. The picture that often arises is of a single system of connection—through capital and information networks—that produced greater levels of social and economic integration. This study attempts to understand the limits of global networks by analyzing extreme instances of anti-Semitic violence in the port city of Odessa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Overall, I argue that the economic, social, and cultural forces that initiated Odessa's rise as a cosmopolitan hub provided the perfect environment for ethnic and religious conflict.

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Introduction

The study of globalization has become an increasingly popular topic among Western scholarly communities. Fueled by the technological and social media revolutions of the last few decades, historians have sought to contextualize this new era of "hyper connectivity" by analyzing the global systems of the past. Empires, in particular, provide scholars with opportunities to understand the complex mechanisms that shaped the movement of capital, people, and culture, on a massive scale. The picture that often arises is of a single system of connection—through capital and information networks—that produced greater levels of social and economic integration. This conventional understanding, however, ignores the broader social, cultural, and economic tensions that industrialization created within urban environments. This study attempts to understand the limits of global networks by analyzing extreme instances of anti-Semitic violence in the port city of Odessa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Overall, the globalization process in Imperial Russia was characterized by specific cycles of "integration" (i.e. whereby socioeconomic interactions between groups were fluid and dynamic) and "atomization" (i.e. whereby socioeconomic interactions between groups were restricted).

This study identifies Odessa's unique position as both an economic and cosmopolitan hub of the Russian Empire. Originally a small fishing community bordering the Black Sea, Odessa soon became a thriving port city by providing the major wheat growing regions of southern Russia with access to Western and Mediterranean markets. As a result, the traditional thatch roof houses and dirt roads of the Russian countryside were

replaced by a modern urban landscape. The city's commercial growth also led to a massive inflow of human capital that radically altered its social, ethnic, linguistic, and religious composition. By the mid-nineteenth century, over thirty different ethnic groups lived within the city walls including Poles, Jews, Greeks, Bulgarians and Western traders. These minority groups were heavily involved in commercial and industrial activities and pursued new social, intellectual, and economic opportunities that were nonexistent in other areas of the Russian Empire.

Russian Jews flocked to Odessa in order to escape the social and economic confines of the Pale of Settlement. Established in the late eighteenth century by Catherine the Great, the Pale of Settlement was meant to control and isolate Russia's Jewish population by limiting its settlements to the western border regions (i.e. present day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, and parts of Western Russia). As such, Jewish communities were heavily discouraged from interacting with non-Jews—a sentiment that was further enforced by a well-entrenched Jewish rabbinic authority that encouraged communal solidarity through strict adherence to Jewish law. Odessa, in contrast, was not as heavily influenced by these judicial and cultural restrictions and provided Jews with a means for integrating into the global-industrial economy.

These radical social and economic transformations are prominent examples of how industrialization allowed for an initial period of transnational growth in the Russian Empire. Odessa's economic growth through commerce and industrial production created new opportunities and positions for ethnic groups that in turn brought them into closer contact with broader global flows. From this perspective, Odessa's early and mid-

nineteenth century history would support the conventional view that global industrialization was a positive path that promoted higher and higher levels of interconnection. However, as we will see, this process was in many ways a double-edged sword that promoted periods of social mobility and integration as well as periods of extreme conflict and violence.

Indeed, the dramatic social, economic, and demographic changes that early globalization created in Odessa eventually planted the seeds of its own destruction. These changes, for example, caused division and resentment among various national groups. The city's Jewish population, in particular, was a point of conflict that fueled discontent among Odessa's non-Jewish residents. Many Russians blamed Jews for the broader political, social, and economic problems associated with rapid industrialization. The horrible living conditions and poor economic opportunities that lower class Russians experienced on a daily basis were often juxtaposed with cultural perceptions of Jews as being privileged and wealthy elites. Predictably, these imagined inequalities produced extreme forms of ethnic and racial violence that swept through Russia's southern frontier in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The foundation for Orthodox-Jewish tensions in Odessa was the persistence of anti-Semitic attitudes among Russian peasants and a complete absence of social interaction between these two groups. Although there was extensive interaction between Russians and Jews in the market place, there were few public spaces where Jews and Christians could actually interact with one another on a daily basis. This self-imposed segregation—like the Pale of Settlement—only served to alienate Odessa's Jewish

community despite their prominent presence throughout the city. As a result, the vast majority of Russian peasant-workers-- many of whom simply transplanted the anti-Semitic attitudes of the village—viewed their Jewish neighbors with hostility and suspicion.

In addition to local cultural circumstances, the anti-Semitic riots that plagued Odessa were also influenced by dynamic changes in global capital markets—particularly the international wheat market and the rise of the United States as an economic power in the late nineteenth century. Odessa's economic growth was directly linked to the expansive growth of the international grain market during the early and mid-nineteenth century. However, Odessa's share of this market began to decline in the 1870s and 1880s due to the abundant produce of the United States. Without its monopoly on grain exports to Western Europe, Odessa's economy suffered significant losses that only added to its growing social problems.

As a result, the industrialization process that transformed Odessa into a modern European city through expanded capital and information networks also created a perfect environment for ethnic and religious conflict. The 1905 pogrom serves as a grim reminder that capital and population flows create new social and economic difficulties that have the potential to produce violent reactions among certain groups. The revolutionary technological advancements and demographic shifts of the industrial age were unable to penetrate the widespread anti-Semitism of the Russian and Ukrainian peasantry. On the contrary, these changes only served to increase tensions between both

groups and ultimately lead to repeated waves of popular violence throughout the Black Sea region.

Odessa's 1905 pogrom reveals that globalization is a complex historical process characterized by alternating cycles that shift between periods of integration (i.e. whereby socioeconomic interactions between groups were fluid and dynamic) and atomization (i.e. whereby socioeconomic interactions between groups were restricted). By considering this process in greater detail, it is my hope to portray the global networks that imperial systems established as inherently unstable— constantly changing in response to local and transnational pressures. These instabilities were not unique to Russia, but affected every major international empire throughout the industrial era. Whether it was the British in India or the French in North Africa, both the colonizers and the colonized encountered certain areas where integration and stability proved impossible.

In addition, this study not only furthers our understanding of the past but also alters our perception of the contemporary world. Like past global networks, our current era of hyper-connectivity is inherently unstable and vulnerable to the social and economic tensions that develop through the movement of capital, culture, and information across racial and national boundaries. Communal violence is an expression of these tensions and is still used by identity groups today to reassert their power in network societies. As a result, the contemporary world is still shaped by the same paradox that destroyed Odessa's cosmopolitan veneer—whereby, the trends that characterize globalization create the very pressures that ultimately destroy it.

Odessa: The Jewel of the Sea

At the turn of the century, Western visitors to Odessa were often struck by the stark contrasts that shaped the city's landscape. Perched on a high bluff overlooking the azure waters of the Black Sea and the barren lands of the southern steppe, the modern cityscape seemed almost alien amidst its natural surroundings. "Here is the steppe, and a yard further the city "noted a German traveler more than a century ago, "and one might almost fancy it exercised no influence whatever on the surrounding country."[1] Stranger still, the city resembled a modern European metropolis with baroque and neoclassical facades lining broad, well-managed boulevards, a crowded port bustling with ships and products of all kinds, and an ethnically diverse population—including Russians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, and Western traders. Indeed, the port city of Odessa was quickly becoming a cosmopolitan center within the Russian Empire as industry and trade promoted new relationships between different groups.

Despite these outward appearances, however, Odessa also witnessed intense waves of anti-Semitism throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jews were murdered on the streets by Christians in repeated outpourings of hatred and fear. The most intense pogrom swept through Russia's southern frontier after the issuance of the October Manifesto in 1905. In the city of Odessa alone, "the police reported that at least 400 Jews and 100 non-Jews were killed and approximately 300 people, mostly Jews, were injured, with some 1,632 Jewish houses, apartments, and stores incurring

[1] Kohl, J.G. *Russia*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1844. p. 417.

damage."[2] What caused this volatile confrontation between these two groups who had coexisted peacefully during most of the city's history? This is one of the crucial questions that will be explored in this study, but first we must begin by looking at how Odessa became so wealthy and diverse.

According to legend, the empress founder, Catherine II, ordered the city to be named after the Greek epic hero Odysseus, but to render the word in the feminine gender.[3] There are also tales that the region had once been the site of an ancient Greek colony named Odessa, so that this was to be the second Odessa. Whether or not these legends are true, they reflect the Russian monarchy's long held fascination with Western Europe. Whereas St. Petersburg was founded as a window to the West, so too would Odessa symbolize the rebirth of Western civilization on the southern steppes. In particular, the city's neo-classical facades and broad streets represented Imperial Russia's triumphant victory over its Ottoman foes.

Indeed, Catherine II was the first Russian ruler to breach the shores of the Black Sea after waging several successful wars against the Ottoman Empire. In the course of the Russo-Turkish War of 1787-1792, Russian forces eventually captured the fortress of Yeni-Dunai at Khadzhibei and through the Treaty of Jassy, extended Imperial Russia's sovereignty over the Crimea and the section of coast between the South Boh and the Dniester.[4] Upon conquering the territory, Catherine and her advisers began looking for a

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[2] Weinberg, Robert. "Workers, Pogroms, and the 1905 Revolution in Odessa", *Russian Review* 46, no. 1 (1987). p. 53.
[3] Makolkin, Anna. *The Nineteenth Century in Odessa: One Hundred Years of Italian Culture on the Shores of the Black Sea (1794-1894)*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007. p. 7.
[4] Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. p. 7.

suitable port that would cement Russia's growing influence in the region. Joseph de Ribas, a soldier of fortune from Naples in the Russian army, suggested that Khadzhibei provided the perfect location for a warm water port.[5] This proposal was supported by the governor general of Novorossiia, Prince Platon Zubov, who obtained the necessary financial credit from the imperial court to build the port and establish the new city of Odessa.[6]

As opposed to the other cities that Catherine established throughout her reign, Odessa proved to be surprisingly successful, growing rapidly as an important trading center within a few years of its founding. Foreign traders saw Odessa as a crucial link between Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean because it was one of the few warm water ports in Russia's possession. As a result, the city soon took on the trappings of its Greek and Italian inhabitants who strove to introduce Mediterranean culture to the sun drenched steppes of Russia's southern frontier. Italian—rather than Russian or French—became the lingua franca of the city and a unique blend of Greek and Italian architecture dominated the landscape—as opposed to the traditional architectural styles of the Russian Empire.[7] Indeed the overwhelming Mediterranean feel of the city fascinated travelers including one writer who remarked that "it was easy to believe that the Black Sea had given birth to Aphrodite."[8]

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[5] Iljine, Nicolas. *Odessa: Memories*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. p. 4.
[6] Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. p. 7.
[7] Makolkin, Anna. *The Nineteenth Century in Odessa: One Hundred Years of Italian Culture on the Shores of the Black Sea (1794-1894)*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007. p. 38.
[8] Paustovsky, Konstantin. *Story of a Life*, vol. 2, *Slow Approach of Thunder*, trans. Manya Harari and Michael Duncan. London: Harvil Press, 1965. p. 217.

Overall, most of the foreigners who came to Odessa to make their fortunes in the Russian grain market were Greek émigrés. Within four years of the establishment of the city, "at least forty-six Greek families resided in Odessa,….By 1832 most of the forty export firms in Odessa were in Greek hands, some worth as much as a million rubles, but most valued between 50,000 and 100,000 rubles."[9] In addition, many of these wealthy Greek families were able to use their massive fortunes to create civic and cultural institutions that were invaluable to Odessa's future growth and prosperity. Joint-stock companies in construction, for example, provided the necessary capital to finance important building projects throughout the nineteenth century including a university, public libraries, and a public park.

In addition, foreign rule also promised Odessa a prolonged period of administrative stability. Armand Emmanuel Duc de Richelieu—a French aristocrat who distinguished himself as a capable officer in the Russian army—served as the city's governor-general from 1803 until his return to Paris as French foreign minister in 1814.[10] He played a crucial role in guiding his citizens through outbreaks of bubonic plague and stabilizing ethnic tensions between local Ukrainian, Tatar, and Jewish communities. Like his predecessors, he encouraged the wheat trade and ensured that public funds were spent on internal improvements. One of his most successful projects, for example, was a beautification project whereby the local government encouraged settlers to plant a wide variety of trees on their land in an effort to transform the barren landscape of Russia's

[9] Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. p. 7.
[10] Iljine, Nicolas. *Odessa: Memories*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. p. 7-8.

southern steppe.[11] As a result, chestnut and acacia trees lined the city streets and lands that had once been barren were now shaded by small forests. As Henry A.S. Dearborn wrote in his memoirs:

> On the arrival of the Duc de Richelieu, an unprecedented activity was displayed, in the construction of piers, fortifications, magazines, lazarettoes and buildings of all kinds. Emigrants were invited from Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Sclavonia, Germany and other neighboring countries. Houses were built for the accommodation of the mechanics within the city; cattle and agriculture implements furnished to such adventures as came to establish themselves in the environs, who were divided into villages, and every facility afforded, which might tend to stimulate them to exertion.[12]

Thus it was Odessa's foreign population that provided the city with a firm foundation for commercial and demographic growth. It was this eclectic and stable environment that first attracted a wide assortment of ethnic and national groups to the region. By the mid-nineteenth century, Odessa had gained a reputation as a relatively liberal and tolerant urban center within the Russian Empire—similar in many ways to Paris or New York. Minority groups, in particular, flocked to Odessa viewing it as a refuge from the extreme forms of discrimination they encountered in regions that were

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Dearborn, Henry A.S. *A Memoir of the Commerce and Navigation of the Black Sea, and the Trade and Maritime Geography of Turkey and Egypt*. Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1819. p. 236.

ethnically Russian. As would be expected, Russification of these groups—including Greeks, Italians, Jews, Ukrainians, Poles, Tatars, Armenians, Belorussians, Mordovians, and Georgians—was never fully achieved. As one traveler observed, Odessa possessed "Italian horses, Russian officials, French shops, and German artisans." Even the Duc de Richelieu, noting that so little Russian was spoken in the city, ordered the high school be founded to teach the Russian language.[13]

As the nineteenth century progressed, Odessa's continued economic growth produced further integration into international trade networks. In 1798, Odessa's exports "were valued at 90,977 silver rubles, and its imports at 117,888 rubles. By 1805, exports had grown in value to 3,399,291 rubles and imports to 2,156, 844. In eight years, the worth of imports increased 18 times while that of exports was growing 44 times."[14] In 1847 (although it should be noted that this was an exceptional year) Odessa's exports surpassed in value 44 million rubles, which amounted to about a third of the worth of all exports from Russia.[15] Between the two periods 1824-1833 and 1844-1853, the average annual export of wheat from Russia tripled, and in both periods, more than half of the wheat was sent through Odessa.[16] This rate of economic growth astonished Western observers, an English woman who visited Odessa in 1816-1820 noted: "The town of Odessa is a very flourishing seaport, and a most astonishing place if it be remembered

[13] Iljine, Nicolas. *Odessa: Memories*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003. p.10.
[14] Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. p.40-41.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

that about twenty years ago a few fishing huts comprised the whole of its inhabitants, and that in 1812 a third of its population was destroyed by the plague."[17]

When compared to other Russian cities, the Imperial government also showed particular interest in promoting Odessa's economic growth. During the early nineteenth century, the state offered lucrative financial incentives for both serfs and merchants to settle on the empire's southern frontier. Russian nobles and foreign merchants were given generous land grants whereas serfs were promised personal freedom as well as land leases for farming.[18] Odessa's municipal governors also facilitated trade within the city by "regularizing the collection of customs receipts, permitting free storage of imported goods for a period of up to one and a half years, and earmarking funds for the construction of roads, schools, hospitals, and other public work projects."[19] As opposed to restricting minority and foreign populations from settling in the region, the Imperial government realized that Odessa's lucrative trade networks were largely dependent on these communities—especially its Greek and Jewish émigrés.

Odessa's successful integration into the global economy was also based on a number of important economic shifts. Most importantly, the early nineteenth century was a period of unprecedented economic and population growth in Western Europe. The Industrial Revolution—particularly in France and Great Britain—caused urban populations to grow exponentially, thus increasing demand for cheap cereals. As one of

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[17] Holderness, Mary. *Journey from Riga to the Crimea, with Some Account of the Manners and Customs of Colonists of New Russia*. Second Edition. London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1827. p. 77.
[18] Weinberg, Robert. *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993. p. 3
[19] Ibid.

Russia's only access points to the Mediterranean, Odessa virtually monopolized the international grain market in Eastern Europe. As a result, exports grew dramatically and a relatively small portion of the population was able to amass huge fortunes that were later invested in local industries. As would be expected, however, these economic gains were always tenuous and depended on Western Europe's continued demand for Russian wheat. Any variations in these market factors had the potential to permanently destabilize Odessa's local economy.

Because much of the city's early growth was based around commerce, industry expanded slowly in the region. In the mid-nineteenth century, most of Odessa's manufacturers were "induced" industries; that is, they involved the processing of raw materials, which were for the most part locally produced. Thus, the major factories produced "tallow, flour, macaroni, starch, sugar, salt, alcohol…chemicals, vegetable oils, and dyes."[20] In the late nineteenth century, however, industrial production in Odessa began to grow at an accelerated rate. It is estimated, for example, that the number of industrial workers in the city grew from 9,000 in 1890 to 20,859 in 1899. Factories sprang up overnight as Western firms (British, French, and Belgian) pumped capital into the city. By 1900, substitution industries—particularly metallurgy—began to overtake induced industries in production and value (24 percent of Odessa's workforce was employed in metallurgical plants and metal products constituted 12 percent of the value of manufactured goods).[21] This industrial growth was mirrored in neighboring regions as

[20] Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. p. 194.
[21] Ibid.

well—especially in the Donets Basin where heavy industries like coal and iron production rose and flourished.[22]

Predictably, Odessa's economic growth led to a massive inflow of human capital as peasants streamed into the city looking for work:

> "Between 1794 and 1825 the city's population increased from 2,345 to 32,000. Over the next four decades this number quadrupled to 118,970. In 1904 Odessa's population stood at 511,000. Only St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw had more people, but none of them could match Odessa's nineteenth-century growth rate. In this sense, Odessa resembled an American boomtown more than a Russian city."[23]

As Odessa's population swelled, its demographic and ethnic composition shifted dramatically. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the city had originally been populated by Russian and Ukrainian peasants involved in fishing and agriculture. By the mid-nineteenth century, over thirty different ethnic groups lived within the city walls. Indeed, when census takers surveyed the population in 1897, they found that Odessa was far more ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse than any other major urban center in the Russian Empire. 166,345 individuals, for example, (41.2

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[22] Wynn, Charters. *Workers, Strikers, and Pogroms: The Donbass-Dneper Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870-1905.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1992. p. 17.

[23] Tanny, Jarrod. *City of Rogues and Schnorrers: Russia's Jews and the Myth of Old Russia.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2011. p. 25.

percent of the population) spoke another language other than Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian, only 56 percent of its population adhered to Russian Orthodoxy, and its population was little more than half Slavic in its ethnic composition.[24]

Overall, the picture that emerges is of an increasingly diverse population whose social and economic positions were becoming more eclectic as the city's economy gradually shifted from commerce to industry. Odessa's Slavic population, in particular, became more pronounced as the city's factories attracted new people from surrounding rural areas. These peasant-workers maintained strong social and cultural values that differed substantially from their Greek and Jewish counterparts. In this sense, industrialization not only brought about substantial economic growth, but also initiated a gradual process through which ethnic and national differences within the city were elevated and fortified. Before we begin to dissect this process, however, I feel that it is necessary to briefly consider these different ethnic groups and how they interacted with one another in their daily lives. Because this study is mostly concerned with Odessa's Jewish and Russian populations, I will focus most of my attention on these two groups in the following sections.

[24] "The First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897" Institute of Demography at the National Research University "Higher School of Economics." Web. 20 Mar. 2014. <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97_uezd_eng.php?reg=1665>

The Jewish Presence

By the turn of the century, Jews were the second largest ethnic group in Odessa and comprised 12.81 percent of the city's total population.[25] Jewish communities throughout Eastern Europe and Russia flocked to Odessa in the mid-nineteenth century for two reasons: (1) the social environment was relatively liberal when compared with other areas in the Russian empire and (2) the economic prospects appeared to be promising as the city's commercial and industrial sectors expanded. By the early 1900s, "around two-thirds of the handicraft shops and industrial enterprises, nearly 70 percent of the trading companies, and nearly 90 percent of the grain-trading firms had Jewish proprietors."[26] As a result, Jewish intellectual and cultural life flourished—attracting Jewish academics and religious leaders to the shores of the Black Sea.

This intense wave of Jewish migration can also be attributed to a general cultural and social transformation of European Jewry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Whereas earlier Jews were a social unit possessing distinct religious beliefs and cultural practices from their Christian counterparts, modern Jews ceased to define themselves in these terms. Instead, Jews began to move "in significant numbers from the economic periphery into (or at least near) the center of commercial and financial activity."[27] As a result, many Jewish communities—particularly in Germany and Austria-Hungary—began to conform their religious practices to mainstream European society.

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[25] Ibid.
[26] King, Charles. *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2011. p. 98.
[27] Zipperstein, Steven. *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. p. 9.

Although Russian Jews were on the periphery of the Jewish Reform movement, many viewed Odessa as an opportunity to integrate into modern society through finance and commercial trade. Many Orthodox Jews, for example, had their children learn secular subjects in school as well as foreign languages—including Italian, French, or German—as necessary prerequisites for a successful commercial career. As would be expected, the close and continuous commercial relations that Odessa enjoyed with Western and Central Europe, Asia, and the United States did "facilitate contact with the larger world to a much greater extent than was typical of Russian Jews."[28]

Although Odessa's Jewish communities were more integrated into the global economy, this does not mean they were not religious. On the contrary, Judaism was a vibrant part of city life and synagogues were among Odessa's most prominent buildings. As Rabbi Shimon Gliksberg wrote:

> In Odessa's spiritual life synagogues played a major role, perhaps larger than in other cities in which I had lived before coming to Odessa. The outward appearance and the order of the synagogue did not take away from the religious customs, which were very seriously observed….Synagogues in Odessa were unique in their size, beauty of the buildings, matching furnishings, the Holy Arks that were carved in unique shapes and decorated with incredibly rich golden ornaments….it was a house filled with air and light. It did not have the same pleasant dimness of the old synagogues in the Diaspora,… where the dimness was

[28] Ibid. p. 21.

> used to provide a unique and mysterious inspiration…but it provided a feeling of *Mima'amakim* (from the depths) and respect for the sacred, as well as the fresh influence on life that cheers up the soul.[29]

Indeed, unlike in Western and other parts of Eastern Europe, Jewish sacred spaces in Odessa were not restricted in size or confined to a specific area or ghetto. As a result, Jewish religion and culture was a ubiquitous element in the daily lives of every city resident regardless of ethnicity or nationality.

Before the 1850s, however, most Jews viewed Odessa as a remote periphery in Jewish intellectual and religious life. It possessed few prominent Jewish leaders and its inhabitants spoke mostly Yiddish instead of Hebrew. As a result, most Jews looked toward Vilna and Berdichev as the true centers of Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement.[30] However, this began to change in the early and mid-1860s, during the period of concerted "russification" that followed the first reforms of Alexander II. It was at this time that Jewish periodicals and language schools were established—serving as important vehicles for influencing the social and cultural life of Russian Judaism as a whole. Young Jews in particular were attracted to the city to participate in the intellectual, religious, and cultural debates being printed in publications such as *Razvet* and *Ha-Melits*, *Sion'*, and *Kol Mevasser*.[31]

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[29] Gliksberg, Shimon. Jewish Odessa: Chapters from my Memoirs. JewishGen Inc. Web. 23 Mar. 2014. <http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/odessa/lif_gen_gliksberg.asp>
[30] Zipperstein, Steven. *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. p. 70.
[31] Ibid.

As the nineteenth century progressed, it soon became apparent to Russian Jews that Odessa had become the center of Eastern European Judaism—a position that it would retain until the beginning of the First World War. During this time, many of the most prominent Jewish intellectuals in Eastern Europe moved to Odessa (along with tens of thousands of other settlers) for long, often highly creative stays. However, this does not mean that Odessa was not criticized by Russia's Jewish leaders. On the contrary, the extreme socio-economic gaps separating the city's wealthy Jewish middle class and their counterparts in the streets was a major cause of contention among a number of Jewish intellectuals.

It should be noted that most Jews who settled in Odessa were not financially successful. Most were hardly discernible from their Russian and Ukrainian counterparts and struggled to survive as shopkeepers, second-hand dealers, day laborers, and workshop employees. Poverty was a daily struggle within the Jewish community and it is estimated that "nearly 50,000 Jews were destitute and another 30,000 poverty-stricken. In 1905, nearly 80,000 Jews requested financial assistance from Jewish welfare organizations in order to buy Passover matzo."[32] As Odessa's population continued to expand and its labor market became more competitive and crowded, many Jews were even poorer than most Russian peasants. As the title character exclaims in Sholem Abramovitsh's 1869 novel *Fishke the Lame*,

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32 Weinberg, Robert. *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993. p. 19.

> I found all the beggars I wanted! Armies of them, and of all different kinds—beggars with sacks and beggars without sacks—types you could find only in Odessa and nowhere else. There were Jerusalem Jews and Frankish, Turkish, and Persian Jews who babbled away in the Holy Tongue; there were old paupers with their wives, and also without their wives, who claimed they were on their way to Jerusalem to die, but, in the meanwhile, stayed on in Odessa, had more children, and thought the world owed them a living.[33]

Like their Russian counterparts Jews were also heavily involved in criminal activities and violence. During the Russian Revolution, for example, Konstantine Paustovskii witnessed a typical example of what must have been a daily occurrence in Odessa. Observing a street-corner queue, he saw what he described as

> a short, old, Jewish gentleman in a dusty bowler and a worn black coat reaching to his ankles. Smiling and nodding benevolently…he took out of his pocket a small black book with the Star of David embroidered in gold on the cover, read a page or two and returned the book to his pocket.

[33] *Selected Works of Mendele Moykher Sforim.* Edited by Marvin Zukerman, Gerald Stillman, and Marlon Herbst. Malibu: Pangloss, 1991. p. 292.

Paustovskii then observed a young rather insolent-looking man, wearing a black skullcap and canary-colored yellow shoes, approaching the queue. "The young man," Paustovskii continues,

> was wondering how to jump the queue without causing a fuss and a row. He saw the old gentleman with the book, and naturally took him for the very embodiment of mildness and non-resistance to evil. Making up his mind, he skillfully inserted his shoulder between him and his neighbor in the queue and, pushing the old man, muttered casually:
>
> "Excuse me."
>
> Still with the same smile, the old man bent his sharp little elbow, drew it back, took aim and, dealing the young man a swift and forceful blow in the chest, right under the heart, said politely:
>
> "Not at all. Excuse *me*."
>
> The young man grunted and flew back, hitting an acacia tree. His cap fell off his head. He picked it up and walked away without looking back. Only at the corner did he turn and shake and shake his fist at the old man, whimpering,
>
> "Jailbird! Bandit!"[34]

Reading this account, it seems obvious that Jews in Odessa were not afraid to use violence to pursue their own interests. This is hardly surprising given the fact that Jews

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[34] Tanny, Jarrod. *City of Rogues and Schnorrers: Russia's Jews and the Myth of Old Russia.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2011. p. 1.

had no government or judicial institutions to protect their interests and valued physical toughness as a means of protecting themselves.

Poor living conditions and economic opportunities also made Jewish communities a breeding ground for criminal organizations as the city grew. These young street toughs would usually engage in non-violent forms of crime including theft, prostitution, illegal gambling, and loan sharking. However, this does not mean that violence wasn't an important aspect of Jewish hooliganism. In certain areas of Odessa, for example, Jewish street thugs roamed the alleyways at night with bats, knives, and guns praying on local peasants. Murders, beatings, and robberies simply became a part of daily life for many of the urban Jewish poor.

Overall, unlike other regions with well-established Jewish communities, Odessa offered a rare opportunity for Jews to fully integrate themselves into the global economy. As Robert Weinberg asserts:

> Odessa offered an environment in which the traditional values and norms of Jewish society and culture enjoyed less influence. The newness of the Jewish community in Odessa meant that the restraints and sanctions imposed by older communities were either lacking or severely attenuated. The well-entrenched Jewish communal authority, which based its power and authority on a rabbinic heritage and was generally unwilling to accommodate the demands and pressures

generated by more intimate contact with the gentile world, was weak if not entirely absent in Odessa.[35]

Thus, the city's Jewish community was able to pursue economic and social opportunities that had previously been denied to them. These economic activities created networks and connections with the Slavic, Greek, and Western European communities. Indeed, Jews emerged as the critical middlemen in Odessa's commerce "linking up with peasants, immigrant farmers, and herders in the interior and forming an essential bridge to the large export concerns in the port city."[36]

However, not all Jews had access to these social networks or were heavily involved in international trade. These Jews lived in a lower working class environment that was often as harsh and degrading as their Russian counterparts. As a result, Odessa's Jewish community can be viewed as an extremely diverse group whose socio-economic position varied widely from individual to individual. Religious and cultural perceptions also varied to extremes in that many Odessan Jews wanted to assimilate into modern society whereas others felt compelled to defend their identities through violence and crime.

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[35] Weinberg, Robert. *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993. p. 10.

[36] King, Charles. *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011. p. 99.

The Russian Presence

According to the All-Russian Imperial Census of 1897, the population of Odessa can be roughly divided into four major ethnic groups: Greeks, Jews (Hasidic and Karaite), Slavs (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Belorussian), and Western Europeans (French, Italian, and British).[37] Russians were the dominate Slavic group in Odessa comprising almost one-half of the population (50.78 percent).[38] According to Patricia Herlihy, however, this figure "may be inflated by a tendency on the part of many non-Russians to report Russian as their native language, and thus claim for themselves membership in the politically dominant group."[39] Although the exact size of the Russian population is not exact, there is no doubt that Russians were still the dominant national group within Odessa.

Most Russians who migrated to the region in the late nineteenth century were traveling from their surrounding villages. Indeed, as Russia's rural population continued to grow during the 1880s and 1890s, more and more Russian peasants were forced to leave their villages in pursuit of better economic opportunities in the city. The vast majority believed that their stay in Odessa would be temporary. By supplementing their agricultural incomes with low-skilled labor on a dock or in a factory, they hoped to make

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[37] Of course there are a number of ethnic groups that are not included in these four categories—most notably Cossacks and Tatars—but delineating between these many different ethnic groups goes beyond the scope of this study.

[38] "The First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897" Institute of Demography at the National Research University "Higher School of Economics." Web. 20 Mar. 2014. <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97_uezd_eng.php?reg=1665>

[39] Herlihy, Patricia. "The Ethnic Composition of the City of Odessa in the Nineteenth Century", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1977). p. 61.

enough money to support their households during periods of drought or famine. As a result, Odessa's lower working classes were mostly comprised of Russian peasant-workers transitioning from rural to industrial forms of production.

Most peasants who traveled to Odessa had little experience with the world outside their native villages. Consequently, many of these individuals simply brought the traditions and perceptions of village life with them to their new urban environment. Typically, Russian peasants were extremely loyal to their village and maintained strong kinship ties with their fellow villagers as they moved to urban areas. Several men from the same village, for example, would often travel together when searching for work in a particular city. They would even go so far as to look for jobs in specific industries where other peasants from nearby regions had been hired. Migrating in groups provided an important social and psychological mechanism for easing the radical transition that each worker-peasant experienced as they began their new lives in a strange and unfamiliar environment. The preservation of these strong kinship ties, however, also encouraged their collective isolation—both culturally and socially—from other ethnic and national groups. Indeed, the overwhelming desire of Russian peasants to live and work with their fellow villagers created a general hostility toward outsiders—particularly Jews and foreigners.[40]

This general hostility was reinforced by peasant religious traditions that promoted extreme forms of Judeophobia in Russia's rural areas. For most of the nineteenth century,

[40] Johnson, Robert. *Peasant and Proletarian: The Working Class of Moscow in the Late Nineteenth Century*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979.

the religiosity of the illiterate masses in Russia, so far as it was not purely local, "was a patriotic Christianity that focused on the Tsar and was encouraged by the highly Christian "Official Nationalism" he supported."[41] As such, many peasants viewed their religious identities as intimately connected to their national identities. Religious traditions and feast days, for example, were frequently used by peasants to express their Russian identities as both Orthodox Christians and loyal subjects of the Romanov dynasty. Jews were a frequent target of these nationalist sentiments because they were seen as a foreign population that threatened the stability of village life. As recent arrivals from the village, the majority of Odessa's peasant-workers would have been heavily influenced by this pervasive culture of rural anti-Semitism.

This transition from agriculture to industry was also accompanied by the familiar socioeconomic problems of modernization. Beyond the fashionable central streets near Nickolaevsky Boulevard, Odessa harbored sprawling shantytowns where the lower laboring classes were crammed into overcrowded courtyards or ramshackle huts. Lacking even the most elementary sanitary facilities, disease proliferated throughout these areas. Typhus, smallpox, and cholera epidemics, for example, repeatedly swept through Odessa's working-class populations killing thousands. Criminal classes plied their trades in broad daylight, while roving gangs of teenage boys ruled the alleyways at night. Odessa's governing authorities, for their part, lacked the funds and resources to counter these growing social problems because the imperial government had restricted their

[41] Langmuir, Gavin. *History, Religion, and Anti-Semitism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. p. 217.

power to tax property. Consequently, most of the worker peasants who settled in Odessa were left to fend for themselves in a world where alcohol, gambling, and fighting were important parts of daily life.

The difficult economic conditions that Russian peasant-workers experienced in Odessa throughout the late-nineteenth century were often viewed in relation to the social and cultural values they inherited from the village. Like their rural counterparts, these urban workers usually blamed Jews for their problems and viewed them as parasites who exploited innocent Russians through their inordinate wealth and power. In 1871 a Russian cabdriver, referring to the Jews' practice of lending money to Jewish immigrants to enable them to rent or buy a horse and cab, complained: "Several years ago there was one Jewish cabdriver for every 100 Russian cabdrivers, but since then rich Jews have given money to the poor Jews, so there is now a countless multitude of Jewish cabdrivers."[42] Predictably, animosities like these would build gradually over time and occasionally erupt in limited instances of mass violence—these confrontations usually coincided with religious holidays and were often indistinguishable from the occasional brawls between rival street gangs.

One should be careful not to categorize all Russians as poor and economically disadvantaged. Although most Russians had occupations that conferred relatively low status in the social hierarchy (day laborers, construction workers, soldiers), there was also a select elite who filled the ranks of the local aristocracy. These wealthy individuals

[42]Weinberg, Robert. *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993. p. 17.

mostly supported themselves through stocks and savings or by renting land to local businesses and farmers. Unlike their peasant counterparts, these elites were descended from noble families and grew rich from Odessa's booming grain trade in the mid-nineteenth century. They enjoyed the comforts of modern life in the center of the city, often participating in the various banquets, performances, and balls that defined aristocratic culture in Odessa. Russians also dominated "the administrative and judicial posts in the city government and along with foreigners, owned a majority of the factories by the 1890s."[43]

Russians also engaged in a range of commercial activities, especially the marketing of agricultural products, and comprised "approximately a third of the total number of individuals listed as earning livings from trade."[44] Russians also controlled a large percentage of the local stores and trading firms and were frequently involved with foreign and Jewish enterprises in lucrative business partnerships. However, many of these merchants—like their lower-class counterparts—were not immune from anti-Semitic attitudes. In fact, they regarded Jews as such formidable competitors that they encouraged any government action that would limit their activities.

In sum, Russians filled the lowest and highest ranks of Odessa's society, but were singularly absent on the middle levels of the social pyramid, where most shopkeepers and small manufacturers were found—these positions were filled primarily by Jews and foreigners. This indicates that ethnicity was not always a defining aspect of social class in

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

Odessa. The socioeconomic pressures of industrialization cut across ethnic lines and affected different groups in similar ways by either elevating or reducing their standard of living. Many historians have argued that these pressures attenuated ethnic loyalties by creating a new form of "class consciousness" among these poorer transethnic communities. However, as we have seen, popular prejudices and ethnic tensions did not disappear amidst the globalizing forces that transformed Odessa. Although certain networks and flows promoted transethnic cooperation and social mobility, globalization had a limited effect on individual cultural perceptions.

Despite its cosmopolitan veneer, Odessa was still a highly segregated society at the turn of the century. Jewish and Slavic communities, for example, were largely separate from one another and although there was extensive interaction in the market place there was little social interaction between the two groups. As Caroline Humphrey and Vera Skvirskaja contend, "Close friendships and even common social occasions between Jews and non-Jews remained unusual at all levels of society, and while business partnerships were frequent, they were increasingly strained due to the difficult economic conditions."[45] Moreover, many of the worker peasants who migrated to the city simply created a new culture of Judeophobia in the city. This factors laid the foundation for Russian-Jewish tensions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[45] Humphrey, Caroline and Vera Skvirskaja. *Post-Cosmopolitan Cities: Explorations of Urban Coexistence*. New York: Berghahn Books. 2012. p. 26.

Economic Decline and Revolution

Two years prior to the Odessa pogroms, a fifteen-year-old boy named Mikhail Rybachenko was brutally murdered in the village of Dubossary. His body was found in a pool of dried blood next to a small garden near the Dniester River with two stab wounds in his back. The next day, the village doctor conducted an autopsy and concluded that the boy had died from the profuse hemorrhaging caused by his wounds. Despite these findings, however, the boy's grandfather insisted that he had been killed by Jews and that his blood was being used to prepare matzo for the coming Passover holidays.[46] Although these accusations proved to be groundless—the boy was actually killed by his cousin—they initiated a series of extremely violent confrontations between Jews and Orthodox Christians throughout Russia's southern frontier.

These pogroms began less than a month later in in Kherson province on March 11, 1903 (old style) as one telegram from reported,

> On March 5 there was a bazaar in Pavlovka, and quite a few Jewish traders usually come here with temporary stands and cartloads of cheap manufactured goods, haberdashery, and foodstuffs. Already in the morning…, rumors began to circulate in the market square that the peasants intended to attack the Jews because last February, the Jews [purportedly] murdered a Christian boy in

[46] "Secret Memorandum of the Police Supervisor and Permanent Member of the Kherson Provincial Office to the Governor of Kherson." *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: Select Documents, 1772-1914.* Eds. ChaeRan Freeze and Jay Harris. Waltham: Brandeis University Press. 2001. p. 536.

> Dubossary….separate groups of peasant youths then began to deal blows to the Jews and plunder their goods. Stealing only goods that were on display and in the carts, they left the Jewish houses…in the town untouched.[47]

Although this instance was limited in scope and quickly contained by local police, the minor thefts committed by the participants indicates that this violent outburst was, to a certain extent, economically and socially motivated. The fact that the victims were not only Jews, but also merchants and traders, suggests that the rioters were beating these people because their Jewishness was perceived as an indication of their wealth and power.

One month later, another series of pogroms broke out in Kishinev and escalated into a two day riot that left 200 people dead and over 700 homes and businesses destroyed.[48] As with the previous pogrom, the participants used mob violence to purse their personal economic interests by stealing goods and materials that were largely unavailable to them. One Jewish observer wrote,

> Almost all the stores in town were destroyed and their goods plundered, so that absolutely nothing valuable remained, not even the furniture….The general loss reached tens of millions of rubles….Materially, they deprived many individuals of their cash by breaking into metal registers: from one they took 25,000 rubles and

[47] Ibid.
[48] "Macedonians in Kishinev (13 April 1903)" *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: Select Documents, 1772-1914*. Eds. ChaeRan Freeze and Jay Harris. Waltham: Brandeis University Press. 2001. p. 554.

> many valuables, from another 18,000 rubles,…The men and women in the mob who were not arrested dress up fashionably in the looted clothes and female adornments. One town policeman took a silver cigar case, silver watches and bracelets.[49]

Both of these instances reveal a common factor that influenced every episode of anti-Semitic violence in the Russian Empire. Namely, that those who perpetrated the violence were usually motivated by their economic needs. They also usually belonged to the lower urban classes (i.e. young peasant-workers who were usually hardest hit by regional economic downturns). It is necessary, therefore, to understand Odessa's unique economic problems and how they galvanized instances of ethnic violence within the city.

Odessa, for its part, was no stranger to extreme forms of ethnic and racial violence. Serious riots in which Jews were killed and Jewish property suffered substantial damage occurred in 1821, 1859, and 1871.[50] Apart from these major incidents, Jews and Orthodox Christians would often engage in violent street fights during religious holidays and festivals.[51] During the early twentieth century, however, these confrontations—like in other areas of southern Russia—began to occur more frequently and would also assume violent proportions at levels that often surpassed earlier pogroms. As will be seen, this increasing violence can be attributed to two factors (1) Russia's grain trade was

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[49] Ibid. p. 556-557.
[50] Humphrey, Caroline and Vera Skvirskaja. *Post-Cosmopolitan Cities: Explorations of Urban Coexistence*. New York: Berghahn Books. 2012. p. 30.
[51] Easter and Passover were particularly tense—rumors of impending pogroms would often circulate throughout the Jewish community.

contracting; thus destabilizing the local economy and (2) war with Japan placed an undue burden on local resources leading to a further decline in living standards.

As mentioned above, Odessa's prosperity was largely dependent on its monopoly on grain exports to Western Europe. However, the Russian share of this market had begun to decline in the 1870s and 1880s due to the abundant produce of the New World. American wheat was both incredibly cheap and of higher quality; thus providing a welcomed alternative to Russian barley and rye for Western Europe's growing population. This new preference for American wheat is demonstrated by the following figures:

> At the end of the 1860s and the start of the 1870s, Russia still supplied England with 35 percent of her imported grain. In the years before World War I, Great Britain imported from the Russian Empire only 14 to 16 percent of its cereal needs. By 1913, the figure had slumped to 9 percent. The United States, on the other hand, supplied England with only 6.2 percent of its needs in the early part of the century; in 1876-1880, American wheat accounted for 54 percent of England's imports.[52]

This decline in demand also coincided with the modernization of competing ports in the Azov and Black Seas, specifically Nikolaev, Kherson, and Rostov-on-Don. Utilizing the latest western technologies, it soon became more efficient and profitable for foreign

[52] Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1986. p. 206.

merchants to buy wheat from these ports—thus further reducing Odessa's share of Russian grain exports. Predictably, Odessa's local economy suffered from heavy declines in both production and consumption. Declining wages and high unemployment served to incite widespread unrest among the city's workers who were already struggling to eke out meager lives in the slums. In 1901, for example, Odessa's unemployed dock workers resorted to violence. Looting stores and smashing windows, they initially focused on Jewish businesses, but soon the riot expanded to other parts of the city. Order was eventually restored when the municipal authorities dispatched soldiers to suppress the crowd.[53]

Odessa was further isolated from the global market when Russia declared war on Japan in 1904. The city had been the major grain supplier for the Russian Far East and maintained significant trading ties with China and Japan—exporting manufactured goods in return for tea and silk. Already vulnerable from the declining grain trade, the loss of these oversea markets inflicted huge economic losses on trading firms and manufacturing businesses.[54] Many were forced to close their doors, further expanding the ranks of the city's unemployed and contributing to a growing socioeconomic crisis that municipal authorities were unable to solve for lack of funding and resources.

In addition, the war also severely affected domestic trade between urban areas throughout the Russian Empire. The Russian army commandeered every major rail line in order to quickly transport its troops to Manchuria to counter the Japanese attack on

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[53] Ibid.
[54] King, Charles. *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2011. p. 160.

Port Arthur. The process was extremely slow and greatly reduced the amount of freight cargo moving in and out of Odessa. As long as the war continued, economic activity in Russia's southern frontier would remain at a complete standstill. Fortunately for the city residents, Russia's war in the Far East would end abruptly—resulting in a humiliating defeat at the hands of a lesser power.

Overall, these contractions of the local and national economy helped fuel ethnic tensions between Odessa's Russian and Jewish populations. As the unemployment rates rose and wages fell, Jews were now viewed as competitors within a rapidly shrinking market:

> "The growing visibility of Jews enhanced the predisposition of Russians to blame Jews for their difficulties. Like elsewhere in Russia and Western Europe, many non-Jews in Odessa perceived Jews as possessing an inordinate amount of wealth, power, and influence. The steady growth of the city's Jewish population during the nineteenth century indicated to some gentiles the seriousness of the Jewish "threat."[55]

Indeed, when Russian day laborers and servants compared their own impoverished lives to their preconceived notions of Jewish privilege they reacted in predictably violent ways.

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[55] King, Charles. *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2011. p. 17.

Although globalizing forces had brought these two groups closer together, they still viewed themselves as ethnically, nationally, and religiously separate.

The war against Japan also provides us with the political setting for the 1905 pogrom. Russia's defeat and the revolution that followed forced the Tsarist government to make political concessions. The October Manifesto guaranteed civil liberties and transformed the Duma from an advising body into a legislative assembly composed of elected representatives. Although the reforms saved the empire from revolution, it further polarized Russian society between leftist liberal elements and right-wing extremist groups. In Odessa, these political differences reinforced the underlying social, cultural, and economic tensions between Russian and Jewish communities. The heightened political environment made these socioeconomic problems more urgent and dynamic; political groups were urged to take action to either preserve or overthrow the Tsarist system.

The extreme forms of anti-Semitism that Jewish communities experienced in Odessa compelled many young Jews to join radical movements in order to both defend their communities against communal violence and topple the Tsarist government.[56] Jewish self-defense leagues, in particular, provided weapons and ammunition to their members and developed defensive strategies to counter any future instances of communal violence. Odessa's Jewish community was no longer a passive witness to mob violence, but was now preparing to meet these masses head on through violent confrontation in the

[56] Many Jews believed—not without cause—that the Tsarist state was responsible for supporting and institutionalizing anti-Semitism. Their need for self-defense was carefully balanced with a desire to overthrow the monarchy through violent and revolutionary activity.

streets. As a result, the strengthening of self-defense forces changed the character of the pogrom in significant ways. Previously, Jews had not offered much resistance to the roaming gangs that attacked them, thus limiting the scope and scale of the violence. After the October manifesto, however, the pogroms began to resemble bloody street wars as well-armed Jewish men confronted huge crowds brandishing knives, axes, and clubs.

Moreover, Odessa's Jewish population was becoming increasingly political as it gravitated toward liberal opposition movements among students and professionals. Labor strikes and student gatherings provided Jews with an opportunity to pursue their personal interests within the context of a broader political movement. The General Jewish Labor Bund, for example, made significant inroads among Jewish workers during the early twentieth century, "particularly those who had recently settled in Odessa from the northwest and were accustomed to agitation in Yiddish. The Bund was also active in rallies and demonstrations (especially in synagogues), May Day celebrations, and the strike movement (including the 1903 general strike)."[57] The General Jewish Labor Bund, the Bolsheviks, and the Mensheviks also joined the National Committee of Jewish Self-Defense in "reorganizing self-defense brigades they had formed the year before and taking up collections for the stockpiling weapons and ammunition."[58] This growing Jewish presence within the revolutionary movement, however, seemed to support a general view among Odessa's Russian population that Jews were largely responsible for

[57] Weinberg, Robert. *The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1993. p. 75.
[58] Ibid. p. 139.

the political upheavals affecting the empire—despite the fact that the number of Jews actually involved in revolutionary activity was relatively small.

The growth of Jewish radicalism coincided with the founding of several Rightist groups in 1905 (the Russian Monarchist Party, the Russian Assembly, and the Union of the Russian people). Central to the organizational spirit of the right was a deep and hostile anti-Semitism. This anti-Semitism was vulgar and violent. A speech delivered by M. Dubrovin to 300 members of the URP in Odessa stated: "The Holy Russian cause is the extermination of the rebels. You know who they are and where to find them…Death to the rebels and the Jews." His speech was greeted by wild enthusiasm with the crowd yelling "Death to the rebels. Death to the Jews."[59] As would be expected, these groups viewed the October Manifesto as a threat to traditional Russian society and called for "the restoration of a strong autocracy, martial law, dictatorship, and the suppression of the Jews, who it was claimed, were mainly the 'instigators' of all the disorders."[60] Fascist in character and outlook, many of these groups were directly funded and supported by the Russian state which helped popularize their central message of Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationality among Odessa's lower working classes.

[59] *The Times*, 10 October 1906, 3:3.
[60] Figes, Orlando. *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924.* New York: Penguin Books. 1996. p. 196.

The 1905 Odessa Pogrom

Thus, by the fall of 1905, a black wave of anti-Semitism was ready to engulf Russia's southern frontier. This pogrom, which would leave 400 Jews and 100 non-Jews dead, 300 people injured, and some 1,632 Jewish houses, apartments, and stores damaged, did not appear in a vacuum.[61] The modernizing and globalizing forces that led to Odessa's economic growth, ethnic diversity, and social stability, also led inadvertently to rapid population growth, lower standards of living, and economic decline. Indeed, these are the two phases of the globalizing process (i.e. expansion and contraction) which transformed Odessa from a cosmopolitan metropole in the early nineteenth century into a city widely associated with anti-Semitism, hooliganism, and communal violence by the early twentieth century.

Like other pogroms in the Russian Empire, the 1905 Odessa pogrom began suddenly and spread quickly throughout the region. News of the October Manifesto reached Odessa on October 18th, and by the next morning thousands of people flooded the streets to celebrate the new constitutional government. Initially the crowds were peaceful, but soon they became increasingly violent. Waving red flags and holding desecrated portraits of the Tsar, they viciously attacked and disarmed policemen—killing two and wounding ten.[62] By this point, tensions between liberal and conservative factions within the city finally broke as rival mobs confronted each other in running street battles. Fired upon by members of the Jewish self-defense league or radicalized students, these

[61] Weinberg, Robert. "Workers, Pogroms, and the 1905 Revolution in Odessa", *Russian Review* 46, no. 1 (1987). p. 53.
[62] Ibid.

nationalist groups would respond by brutally and indiscriminately beating and murdering innocent Jewish civilians. Apart from the human toll, synagogues were destroyed, apartment buildings were set ablaze, and the stores of wealthy Jewish merchants were desecrated. This massive wave of violence would continue for four days.

The chaotic violence and looting shocked Western reporters. The mobs appeared uncontrollable and seemed to be destroying everything in their path as they vented their rage against Odessa's Jewish community. As an article from the *New York Times* stated:

> There was a veritable reign of terror on Oct. 31….Late in the afternoon there was firing in the outskirts of the town, and the massacre of the Jews commenced. All Jews found in the streets were severely beaten, and many were killed in their shops which were ruthlessly pillaged….Crowds of workmen, rowdies, women, and children laden with all kinds of loot walked openly in the streets, quarrelling over the spoils.[63]

The physical damage to the city, however, paled in comparison to the horrendous crimes perpetrated by these individuals on their unfortunate victims. Torture and mutilation became widespread throughout the city as many Jews, particularly women and children, had no means of defense against the crowds. Those who survived usually did so by abandoning their homes and finding shelter in non-Jewish households or by hiding in

[63] "Odessa Looted; Jews Massacred." *New York Times (1857-1922)*: 1. Nov 02 1905. *ProQuest.* Web. 23 Apr. 2014.

nearby basements or attics. For many people, however, these measures provided little protection from the mobs. As one survivor later wrote,

> The gates of the apartment building were opened and a crowd of people poured into the courtyard and spread out to the apartments. We were sitting in the attic, shaking as we heard banging and shouting….They dragged out one young man…and broke off a thick leg from an oak table and killed him by smashing in his chest and skull. His murder went on for a long time, and his screams could be heard all over the courtyard.[64]

During these four days, little was done to by local police or military forces to protect Odessa's Jewish residents or their property. On the contrary, eye witness reports seem to indicate that many of the participants were policemen and actively encouraged the crowds to attack Jewish stores and apartments. As an article from the *New York Times* suggested, "It is openly stated that the police are indignant at the changed order of things resulting from the Emperor's manifesto and are abetting the disorderly elements in order to give excuse for violence."[65] Indeed, Odessa's governing officials probably supported the pogroms—believing that the Jews were a subversive element that threatened the social hierarchy of the Tsarist state. Prime Minister Sergei Witte, for example, wrote in his memoirs that a major cause of the violence was "the brutality of the Municipal

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[64] *Odesskii pogrom i samooborona.* Paris, 1906. p. 36-38.
[65] "Panic and Riot in Odessa." *New York Times (1857-1922)*: 2. Nov 01 1905. *ProQuest.* Web. 21 Apr. 2014.

Governor [Dimitri] Neidhardt, who was bitterly hated by most of the inhabitants."[66] His decision to remove the police from their posts on October 18, in particular, was viewed as a crucial catalyst for the violence and his subsequent comments, which blamed Odessa's Jews for the pogroms, indicated a general reluctance among local officials to control and punish those responsible. It should be noted, however, that many Russians condemned the pogroms as obscene and barbaric. High-skilled metal workers, for example, blamed the riots on the lower classes—the uneducated peasant workers who were largely unskilled and unemployed.

The rioting finally ended on October 23rd after Russian soldiers were directed to shoot at pogromists as well as self-defense groups. Unorganized and poorly armed, these coordinated attacks forced the pogromists to abandon the stores and apartments they occupied. Although Russian forces quickly contained the violence, they were far too late to save the city's Jewish community which never fully recovered from the pogrom. Everything that had made Odessa the center of Eastern European Judaism in the nineteenth century—synagogues, printing presses, language and educational institutions—had been completely destroyed by the early twentieth century. Seeing little reason to stay in the city, most of the surviving Jewish families simply immigrated to Poland, Western Europe, and the United States.[67]

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[66] Witte, Sergei. *The Memoirs of Count Witte*. Trans. Abraham Yarmolinsky. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1921. p. 263.

[67] "15,000 Jews Leave Odessa." *New York Times (1857-1922)*: 4. Mar 02 1907. *ProQuest.* Web. 23 Apr. 2014.

Conclusion

The extreme forms of anti-Semitism that I have analyzed in this work paint a very dark picture of the globalization process. Indeed, many view globalization as a linear force whereby technological advancements and information flows make transnational movements of capital, people, and culture more efficient and rational. Scholars, in particular, focus on how new products alter the cultural perceptions and consuming habits of specific groups, thus creating fusions between traditional and modern practices. Although this is an important aspect of how network societies create change, it ignores the inherent cultural and social barriers that transnational flows encounter. This is especially appearant when one analyzes movements and interactions between different ethno-national groups. Whereas technologies and consumer products are easily adopted by different societies because of convenience and utility, the infusion of new ethnic groups into preexisting social structures has proven to be a much more difficult historical process.

The difficulty arises from the fact that new flows of capital and people create new sources of completion and resentment. Russian peasant workers saw Odessa's Jews as unwelcome competitors for lucrative economic positions. These resentments became even more conspicuous once Odessa's grain market monopoly ruptured and the local economy began to decline. Predictably, the Russian majority reacted violently to these sudden changes and began targeting Jews as easy scapegoats for their misfortunes. Although these pogroms were not planned, they embodied a widespread popular sentiment among Russians that Jews were not welcome in Odessa. Accordingly, these

events reveal that globalization—like any political or economic system—does not promote integration or equality, but rather a different set of "winners" and "losers" who are affected differently by new networks.

Obviously, Odessa's new position as a global commercial hub provided some of its residents with new sources of wealth. Jews and foreigners, for example, found a relatively liberal environment where they could live and work outside the strict controls of state institutions. In addition, Russian and Ukrainian peasants usually found work in Odessa's burgeoning factories and used the income to supplement their farms and households. As a result, certain segments of the population witnessed noticeable material improvements in their daily lives both within the city and in the surrounding rural areas. However, the vast majority of the city's wealth was still confined to a small minority of commercial and landed elites who were largely unaware of the broader social and ethnic tensions that rapid industrialization had produced throughout the Russian Empire.

The vast majority of those who migrated to Russia's southern steppe received few benefits from the global system they participated in. On the contrary, Odessa's growth as a modern city was matched only by the burgeoning numbers of urban poor that flooded its streets. Crowded into shantytowns and forced to live on meager wages, many simply became accustomed to violence and criminal activity as natural parts of their daily lives. Young men and orphaned children, for example, made their living by robbing and murdering people in broad daylight. The average miner and factory worker would spend most of his free time in taverns where drinking and fighting were easy escapes from the hardships they encountered.

This precarious existence was shared by every major ethnic and demographic group in Odessa with few exceptions. Although one would be inclined to believe that these shared experiences would create a sense of class consciousness among workers, differences in ethnic and regional origin prevented this process from taking place. The regional identities and ethnic animosities that had developed in the village were simply reanimated within a new urban landscape. The social and economic inequalities that these groups experienced, therefore, were often characterized in terms of ethnic identity and not class struggle. As such, popular demonstrations among Russian workers were often characterized by calls for ethnic solidarity and included targeted attacks against Jews and foreigners. The 1905 pogrom was particularly nationalistic because it took place during a period of radical liberalization galvanized by Russia's humiliating defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. Conservative groups (e.g. the Holy Brigade, the Russian Assembly, and the Black Hundreds) were especially ardent in provoking anti-Semitic violence throughout the Ukraine as a means of defending the Russian monarchy from foreign influences.

Odessa's 1905 pogrom was, therefore, a triumph of Russian nationalism during a period of unprecedented economic growth and ethnic diversity. Despite global trends that indicated that the Russian Empire was becoming a more integrated society through urbanization, these horrendous acts of violence showed that cultural perceptions and communal values played a crucial role in defining where transnational flows could and could not go within Russian society. Industrialization and integration were not predetermined conclusions in Russia, but temporary situations that were disrupted by

local and international circumstances. Ethno-nationalism was initially weakened and then reinforced as Odessans confronted a difficult socio-economic situation by relying on the conventional values of the village and the city. These values reinforced the importance of ethnic and religious identity in the lives of Russian peasant-workers and many acted upon them by persecuting local Jewish communities.

Overall, this study shows how transnational flows are shaped and resisted by those who experience them. It emphasizes the resilience of culture and identity when confronted with global economic, social, and political pressures. By considering the 1905 pogrom, ethno-nationalism can be seen as a natural part of the integration and atomization cycle that global currents produce in certain societies. It supports a nuanced understanding of globalization that emphasizes the long-term permanence of culture over short-term movements of capital and people. Although these transfers have the potential to radically transform the societies they influence, global currents must always run against the cultural foundations of these societies. These values are not always malleable—as some scholars believe—but are usually rigid when threatened by dynamic change. With this in mind, I feel it is necessary to take the lessons we've learned from out study and apply them in meaningful ways to our own society.

In the end, industrialization and integration within the global economy did not make Russia a more stable society. It only gave rise to inequality, social polarization, poverty, and extreme violence which ultimately culminated in the destruction of the imperial system itself. In the current historical context, there are many other regions of the world who are experiencing these same instabilities as they confront the rise of

informational global capitalism. This new form of globalization is closely associated with the new technological and organizational conditions of the Information Age. As such, wealth and economic development have become closely associated with individual access to information flows through computers and other electronic mediums. Predictably, the increased availability of these resources has created new opportunities for consumption and production for millions of people around the globe. However, as we have seen through our case study, new flows are often selective and foster new social conflicts between different groups.

One of the defining aspects of our age is that sources of productivity and economic growth are now dependent on science, technology, and information. Applied knowledge, therefore, has replaced capital and labor as the most valuable aspect of the production process. As such, advanced economies have witnessed a revolutionary shift from material production to information-processing activities. Material production, in turn, has shifted toward other areas of the globe where manual labor is both cheap and plentiful (e.g. China, India, Mexico, Indonesia, and Brazil).

Obviously, the Third World's new position as a center of industrial production provides certain groups with new social and economic opportunities. Those who have basic educations or know multiple languages, for example, will have important advantages over those who don't—leading to higher wages and improved living standards. However, the vast majority, like their Russian counterparts, will be at the mercy of complex local and international networks that will push and pull in different directions—possibly toward greater levels of poverty and social polarization. Misery, in

turn, produces resistance through familiar mechanisms including organized violence, ethno-nationalism, and racism. In this sense, Odessa's 1905 pogrom provides an important case study for analyzing the instabilities that confront our own global networks. It reveals that as transnational economic systems become more complex and interconnected they also become more unstable by exposing more people to the negative effects of market capitalism.

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