

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE TOWARDS THE JEWS IN RUSSIA

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Executive Summary

Data from our 2005 national survey (2,972 interviews) show a widespread and strong religious intolerance towards the Jews in Russia. Most Orthodox Christians and Muslims are unwilling to grant the Jews basic religious liberties despite Judaism's legal status of a "traditional" religion. Jews are Russia's least tolerated "traditional" minority, and only "non-traditional" western churches are tolerated less. Among the Orthodox, stronger religiosity is linked to slightly more, and among Muslims, to slightly less tolerance. The intolerance is more consistently linked with illiberal and ethnocentric beliefs about religions than with religious beliefs proper. It is worsened by reactionary ideological orientations and racist attitudes. The intolerance is so widespread that anti-Semitism adds little to it. The intolerance towards the Jews is part of a broader culture of disdain for religious freedom. It would be impossible to advance religious freedom for Russia's Jews without policy efforts targeting this broader culture.

PROBLEM

In January 2005, twenty Russian parliament members were among 500 signatories of a letter demanding to prosecute Jewish religious and other organizations for spreading ethnic hatred, in particular through religious publications. By July 2005, there were already 15,000 signatures under a similar follow-up letter. On January 11, 2006, eight people were stabbed in a Moscow synagogue by a young self-avowed fighter against “Jewish domination.” These and many other incidents of hate speech and violence in Russia have been broadly reported by international observers.

Are these merely isolated incidents, or do they express a much broader popular sentiment? Do these ideological and violent attacks on Jewish religious groups reflect religious intolerance or ordinary racism? And if this is religious intolerance indeed, how is it related to the resurgence of Orthodox Christian and Muslim religiosity in Russia?

Our paper addresses these urgent yet understudied questions using the data from our 2005 representative national survey in Russia. It begins with a discussion of the importance and policy relevance of this understudied problem in the Russian as well as global contexts. Then we briefly outline our main argument, and proceed to explain how intolerance was measured and how the evidence was collected. This is followed by the presentation of findings and conclusions.

RELEVANCE TO POLICY ISSUES

The first aspect of this study’s policy relevance deals with its innovative contribution to the field. Unlike much research on anti-Semitism as prejudice, we focus directly on religious

intolerance towards the Jews as people's unwillingness to grant them basic religious liberties. As a result, we offer a specific, multifaceted and broadly applicable method of assessing the intolerance levels among various nations and faith groups. While our study deals primarily with intolerance towards the Jews among Russia's Christians and Muslims, its method can be used in monitoring obstacles to international religious freedom in many nations.

Next, as social scientists have long understood, sentiment towards the Jews predicts people's attitudes towards democracy, freedom, and human rights. It is understandable, thus, that attitudes towards the Jews are often monitored by researchers and policy makers as important indicators of the degree to which a democratic civic culture takes root, and totalitarian tendencies are overcome. Hence, the second aspect of the study's policy relevance: religious intolerance towards the Jews is a salient indicator of the current prospects for freedom and democracy in post-Soviet Russia.

MAIN ARGUMENT

The main argument of this paper is based on the following five propositions. *First*, religious intolerance towards the Jews (the unwillingness to grant them religious liberties) is widespread and strong in Russia. Most Russians would not allow Jews to build synagogues or engage in other basic religious activities. Jews are the least tolerated group among the religions Russia's law deems "traditional," and the second least tolerated religious minority overall (only the so-called "non-traditional" U.S.-based and other western religious groups are tolerated less). *Second*, we show that this intolerance is strong not only among the majority of Russians who identify themselves as Orthodox Christians, but also among the country's Muslim minority,

whose members are slightly less willing to grant the Jews religious liberties. *Third*, Orthodox and Muslim religiosity plays a relatively small and inconsistent role in shaping the intolerance towards the Jews. While both groups are strikingly intolerant, greater devotion among the Orthodox is linked to slightly more tolerance, and among Muslims, to slightly less. *Fourth*, religious intolerance towards the Jews is more closely linked to illiberal and ethnocentric ideological beliefs about religions than to religious beliefs as such. The intolerance also reflects such purely secular influences as reactionary political ideologies, racism, and hostility to dissent. Thus, the intolerance of Judaism in today's Russia is to an extent a non-religious phenomenon in its origins. *Fifth*, we find that while anti-Semitism, especially in its secular manifestations, is alarmingly widespread in Russia, it explains only a relatively small part of the strong religious intolerance towards the Jews. This intolerance reflects a broader climate of hostility to religious freedom in post-Soviet Russia. We conclude that major obstacles to the religious freedom of Russia's Jews come "from below," i.e., from ordinary Russians' attitudes that persist despite the official recognition of Judaism and condemnation of anti-Semitism "from above." In order to advance religious freedom in Russia in general, and acceptance of Jews and Judaism in particular, major policy efforts should focus on overcoming exactly this popular culture of hostility to religious liberty.

HOW WAS RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE DEFINED IN OUR STUDY?

Historically, much sociological research has focused on anti-Semitism as prejudice, either secular or religious. Yet, even if based upon religion, prejudice does not necessarily translate

into religious intolerance. Put simply, those who are prejudiced against the Jews and Judaism would not always deny them the rights to build synagogues, open religious schools, or publish a newspaper. Thus, we distinguish anti-Semitism (secular or religious) as prejudice from religious intolerance towards the Jews as opposition to their religious freedom.

Accordingly, we define religious intolerance towards the Jews as *the unwillingness to grant them basic religious freedom*. What this freedom entails is well defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which envisions the liberty to worship and practice religious faiths individually or in community with others, privately or publicly. Thus, we look at whether or not, and how strongly, Christians and Muslims oppose granting the Jews specific religious liberties, such as the right to build places of worship, teach Judaism, establish religious schools, publish and distribute religious texts, and others.

**HOW WAS RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE TOWARDS THE JEWS
MEASURED IN
OUR SURVEY?**

We asked Russians if in their hometowns the Jews should be given specific religious liberties. Orthodox Christians and Muslims were asked the following identical questions:

Questions
<p>“In Russia, there are followers of various religions, including Judaism (the traditional religion of the Jews):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppose Jews wanted to build a new synagogue in our town. Do you think they should be allowed or prohibited to do so? • And now suppose Jews started to publicly preach their religion in our town. Should they be allowed or prohibited to do so? • What if Jews wanted to publish and distribute their religious newspapers and magazines in our town? • And if Jews wanted to open a Jewish religious school in our town?

- Now suppose Jews wanted to teach the foundations of Judaism in public schools of our town. Should this be allowed or prohibited to them?
- And if Jews wanted to preach their religious views on television?
- If Jews wanted to engage in charitable work in our town?
- And if Jews in our town started collecting money and donations for their religious needs, should they be allowed or prohibited to do so?"

The advantage of these questions is that they provide a very specific, multifaceted measure of religious intolerance in a comprehensible, down-to-earth language. Answers to these questions were used to construct a general measure of religious intolerance towards the Jews. Subsequently we were able to compare the levels of intolerance toward the Jews with those towards other religious groups and among Muslims and Christians.

HOW WAS THE EVIDENCE COLLECTED?

This paper is based primarily on evidence from our international collaborative study, “Religious Intolerance among Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Russia: How Strong is it and why?,” funded by The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER) in 2004-2006. The study involved a representative national survey conducted in Russia in June 2005 using a national probability area sample of Russia’s adult household population. In order to better represent Russia’s Muslims, the survey included four oversamples from the predominantly Muslim regions of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Dagestan. Overall, 2,972 in-person interviews were conducted. Utilizing a questionnaire we designed for this project, each interview took on average slightly more than one hour. They were conducted by trained interviewers from our sub-contractor, the Moscow-based Institute for Comparative Social Research. The Institute was selected for its strong record of high-quality research in Russia and other post-Soviet states, including many projects commissioned by American and western agencies.

Of the 2,972 interviews, 1,651 were part of a national sample, and 1,321 were part of oversamples in Muslim regions. The response rate (measured as the ratio of completed interviews to the total number of contacts) was 64%.

Additionally, our interpretations are informed by studies we previously conducted in Russia, including an exploratory 2002 study of religious intolerance (with over 2,800 interviews) and field research funded by Western Michigan University in 1998, 1999, and 2004. We also use census data from Russia.

FINDINGS

1. Jews on Russia's religious scene: general characteristics.

After the collapse of communism, Russia experienced a resurgence of religion and a period of remarkable religious freedom supported by the 1990 law on religion. Jewish religious life benefited in this atmosphere. In 1990, by some accounts, there were 31 Jewish organizations in Russia, and there has been dramatic growth since. The 1997 Law on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations discriminated against the so-called “non-traditional” religious groups but did not directly disadvantage Judaism, one of Russia's four proclaimed traditional faiths. By 2005, the Federation of Jewish Organizations of Russia (*FEOR*) included 184 communities (mostly Orthodox and Hassidic) in 176 cities. In addition, the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia (*KEROOR*) includes 100 organizations (mostly Orthodox and Reformed) in 68 cities. The growth of Jewish groups has been confined by continuing emigration to Israel, Germany, and other countries. Although according to the U.S. Department of State there may remain up to one million Jews in Russia, the 2006 Report of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute estimates their number as 228,000 compared to 808,000 in 1970. It is projected that by 2020

this population will shrink to 130,000. Religious attendance among Russian Jews is estimated at less than 15%. Russia's Jewish population is too small to be adequately included in a representative national sample survey. Therefore, our survey provides no data on Jewish religiosity.

Since this paper focuses on Orthodox Christians and Muslims' intolerance of the Jews, some facts pertinent to religious life of these two confessions need to be discussed. According to our surveys, presently over 80% of all Russians and over 85% of ethnic Russians identify themselves as Orthodox Christians. In our survey, 3.1% of Russian citizens identified themselves as Muslims, and this is consistent with reliable surveys conducted in Russia in the last fifteen years. Some surveys estimate the Muslim population at five percent. Thus, among the 9.4% of all Russians whose ethnic identification, according to the 2002 Russian census data, is with traditionally Islamic groups, one third to a half consider themselves Muslims, which is unsurprising given cultural assimilation and Islam's status of a minority religion.

While most Russians affiliate themselves with Orthodoxy or Islam, traditional religious beliefs and practices are not so common. Overall, attendance of religious services in post-atheist Russia has been among the lowest in Europe. Even using rather soft criteria of religiosity (including relatively consistent core beliefs and relatively active practice), in our study we estimated that only 10% of self-identified Orthodox and 20% of Muslims could be considered religious in a traditional sense. When stricter criteria are applied, proportions of traditional believers drop to single digits. Yet, we show below that this relatively weak religious commitment does not preclude widespread religious intolerance towards the Jews and other minority groups. Finally, it should be noted that prior to our study, research on

religious intolerance of the Jews in Russia has been fragmentary, and this paper is the first systematic survey-based assessment of this issue.

2. Religious intolerance towards the Jews is widespread and strong.

Our data show that Russia's Jews are facing overwhelmingly widespread and strong religious intolerance. Most Russians, regardless of their religion, are not willing to grant the Jews basic religious freedom. For instance, less than half of all Russians (47%) would allow the Jews to build synagogues in their hometowns; even fewer would permit Jewish religious publishing (37%), the establishing of Jewish religious schools (38%), or the public preaching of Judaism (27%). While there is considerable support in Russia for teaching elective courses on Orthodoxy in state-run schools, only 13% would allow teaching Judaism in such schools. This is despite the fact that Judaism is by law considered one of Russia's "traditional" religions and is, therefore, entitled to the same treatment as Orthodoxy or Islam. There is only one liberty that a majority of Russians (56%) would grant the Jews, namely to do charitable work in their towns. Still it is striking that so many would not allow the Jews even this (see Table 1 in Appendix).

A salient indicator of the strength of religious intolerance is how many Russians would completely deny the Jews all religious freedom compared to those who would give them full religious rights. We found that nearly one in four (24%) Russians would deny the Jews at least seven or all eight liberties. This contrasts with just 11% of those who would grant them at least seven or eight liberties from our list.

3. Jews are the least tolerated "traditional" religious group in Russia.

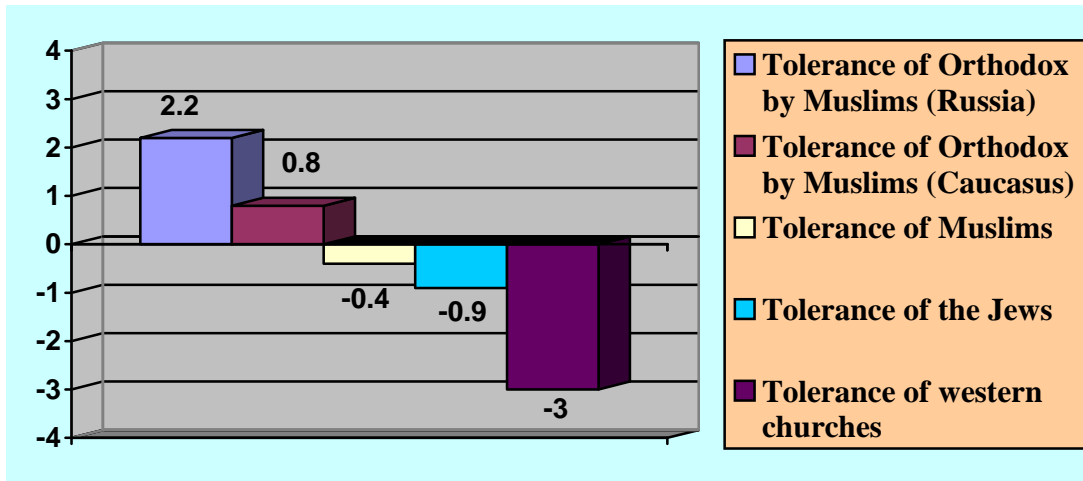
The intolerance towards the Jews is stronger than towards the Orthodox and Muslims, two other groups officially considered “traditional” in Russia. Below we compare the levels of intolerance towards the three groups.

To show the differences more saliently, we computed average levels (also known as mean values) of tolerance by group. For each group, these averages reflect tolerance of all eight religious activities we asked about, from synagogue/mosque/church building to fundraising. The higher the numbers, the more tolerance they show (an eight-point level would indicate a full tolerance of all religious activities, which is hard to find in Russia). The lower the averages, the less tolerance they reflect. When numbers drop to near and especially below zero, they mean strong intolerance.

Chart 1 shows that among the three “traditional” religions included in our study, Judaism is the least tolerated. The Orthodox Christian majority in Russia in general is the most tolerated group. Tolerance towards the Orthodox markedly drops, however, when they find themselves in a minority in the overwhelmingly Muslim North Caucasus. Muslim minorities, in their turn, are even less tolerated by the Orthodox. Yet, Russians are more willing to put up with Muslims than with the Jews.

Thus, our data suggest that Judaism is indeed Russia’s least tolerated “traditional” religion. While our study did not directly focus on the intolerance towards Buddhists, there are reasons to believe that they are more tolerated than the Jews. According to our data, Russian attitudes to Buddhists are more positive on average than to the Jews.

Chart 1. Levels of tolerance towards religious minorities in comparison with tolerance towards Orthodox majority



4. Only the “non-traditional” western churches are less tolerated than the Jews.

Only the newly established western religious groups evoke greater animosity in Russia than the Jews. Such groups are legally deemed “non-traditional” although they include churches well established in the West (e.g., U.S –based evangelicals). These groups face legal hurdles, enmity of secular and “traditional” religious authorities, unfavorable press coverage, and, as a result, widespread public hostility.

Compared to such groups, Jews seem to benefit, at least somewhat, from their status of a “traditional” faith. Even so, as Chart 1 shows, intolerance of the Jews is the closest in magnitude to that of the “non-traditional” outcasts on Russia’s religious scene.

5. Both Orthodox Christians and Muslims are strongly intolerant of the Jews.

Most of Russia’s self-identified Orthodox and Muslims are remarkably unanimous in their unwillingness to grant religious liberties to the Jews. Only a minority in each group would allow them any religious activity but charitable work.

Chart 2. Tolerance towards the Jews among the Orthodox and Muslims by religious

activity

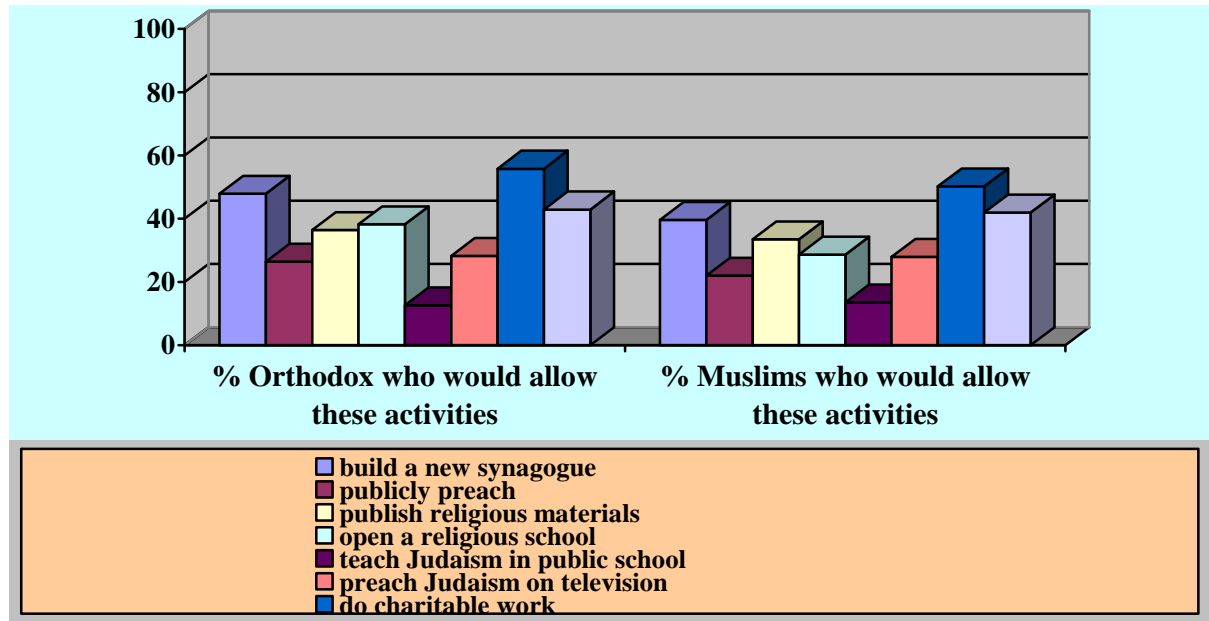


Chart 2 shows that the profiles of intolerance by religious activity are similar among the Orthodox and Muslims. Charity is the most tolerated and teaching Judaism in public schools is the least tolerated activity in both groups.

Since, paradoxically, many Russians who are non-believers and even atheists still identify themselves as Orthodox or Muslims, it is important to separate them from those in both groups who call themselves believers. Among the Orthodox, self-identified believers show significantly more tolerance than non-believers and atheists on four issues (religious schools, publishing, charity, and fundraising). However, among Muslims, on two issues (synagogue building and public preaching) believers show less tolerance than those whose affiliation does not mean faith. On other indicators, believers and non-believers in both groups are statistically indistinguishable (see Table 1). The detected differences suggest that religiosity may relate to intolerance differently among Muslims and the Orthodox. We address this question in section 7.1. below.

6. Overall, Muslims are slightly less tolerant towards the Jews.

As shown in Table 1, although the profiles of intolerance are similar among Orthodox and Muslims, fewer Muslims allow the Jews any religious activities with the exception of teaching Judaism in public schools. These (statistically significant) differences are especially noticeable concerning religious schools, synagogues, and charity. They are smaller on publishing and preaching on television.

7. Religious, near-religious, and secular factors behind the intolerance of the Jews

We have seen that religious intolerance towards the Jews is remarkably widespread among Russia's Christians and Muslims. A fundamentally important question then is to what extent this widespread intolerance is an outcome of the resurgence of Orthodox and Muslim religiosity in post-atheist Russia. Does religious intolerance towards the Jews have mostly religious or secular roots? Do religious commitment and devotion to Orthodoxy and Islam make their adherents more intolerant of the Jews? If so, the ongoing growth of popular religiosity in Russia may be expected to make its people even less tolerant of Judaism. This would mean a grim outlook for the future of Jewish religious life, and more broadly, religious freedom and support for democratic values in Russia. If, on the other hand, the main causes of intolerance are not religious in nature, if they rather reflect the ideological, political, and other circumstances in which religions are currently practiced, then there may be policies to remedy such circumstances. Thus, the question of religious and secular roots of the intolerance towards the Jews is of great importance not only academically but also practically and politically.

In order to address this question, we looked at how intolerance towards the Jews is related to the following religious, near religious and secular (non-religious factors): (1) *religiosity* as such, including beliefs in the fundamental tenets of one's faith and religious practices; (2) *near-religious ideology*, i.e., people's beliefs about their own and other religions; and (3) *non-religious ideology*, i.e., people's secular beliefs and sentiments. In our study, these include pro-democracy and pro-western orientations, the willingness to put up with dissidents, and ethnic prejudice. The influence of these factors on intolerance is summarized below. Pertinent statistical details are in Table 2. Additionally, an entire section of our paper (8) focuses on the link between anti-Semitism and religious intolerance.

7.1. Religiosity. We found that among Russia's Orthodox Christians and Muslims religiosity is dissimilarly linked to their religious intolerance of the Jews. In order to show how differently the two religiosities influence intolerance, we consider below the degrees to which Orthodox and Muslims share basic monotheistic beliefs common to both faiths (e.g., in God, the devil, life after death, heaven and hell). For the Orthodox, we additionally consider uniquely Christian beliefs (e.g., in Jesus Christ and his resurrection) and their link to tolerance. We also take into account how frequently Russia's Orthodox and Muslims attend churches or mosques, pray, and read the Bible or the Koran.

7.1.1. Among the Orthodox, aspects of religiosity are linked to more tolerance. There is no evidence in our study that more devout Orthodox Christians are less tolerant towards the Jews. On the contrary, we found that those Orthodox who more fully share monotheistic and Christian beliefs tend to be slightly more tolerant of the Jews than those who do not. As to the Orthodox religious practices, none of the ones we considered was

linked to the intolerance towards the Jews. Those who go to church, pray, and read the Bible more often are neither more nor less intolerant of the Jews.

7.1.2. Among Muslims, aspects of religiosity are linked to less tolerance. As to Russia's Muslims, more consistent monotheistic beliefs do not appear to predispose them to either greater tolerance or intolerance towards the Jews. By contrast, greater devotion to religious practices is linked to a stronger intolerance. In particular, regular mosque attendance is noticeably linked to intolerance. Links with frequent prayer and reading of the Koran are weak yet significant statistically.

7.1.3. Intolerance and religiosity: Comparing the Orthodox and Muslims. Seeking a more holistic and salient demonstration of religiosity's link to intolerance, we looked at three groups of the Orthodox and Muslims. One group includes those who rarely or never attend churches or mosques, pray and read the Bible or the Koran, and, in addition, only partly share monotheistic beliefs. In sum, this is a "*low-religiosity*" group (40% of Orthodox and 29% of Muslims fit this description). Next, relatively consistent monotheist believers who also regularly attend churches or mosques, pray and read the scripture, were included in a "*high-religiosity*" group (10% of Orthodox and 23% of Muslims). Finally, the remaining large groups of the Orthodox (50%) and Muslims (48%) fell in the "*medium*" category. Using several criteria at once makes sense considering how closely aspects of religiosity are intertwined in real life.

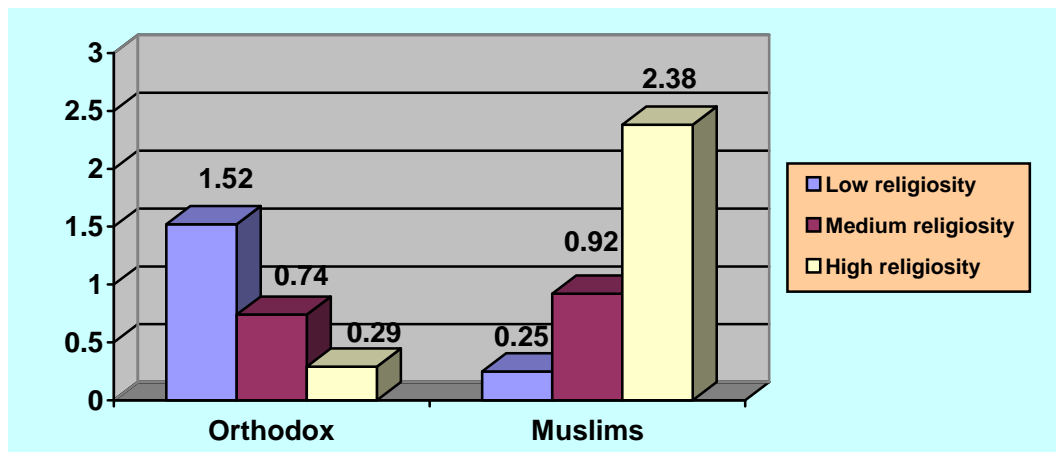
Chart 3 shows contrasting ways in which religiosity and intolerance towards the Jews appear linked among Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Among the Orthodox, highest tolerance (in strictly relative terms) goes along with high religiosity, and the least religious

are also the least tolerant ones. Among Muslims, the pattern is exactly the opposite: the higher the religiosity level, the less tolerance we see.

Granted, given how strongly intolerant both groups really are, these comparisons give no grounds for any far-reaching conclusions about the nature of Orthodox or Muslim religiosity. Even the relatively highest level of tolerance among devout Orthodox believers in absolute terms means a strikingly strong intolerance.

Yet, these comparisons suggest that while much research understandably focuses on hostility towards the Jews among Russia's Christian majority, religious Judophobia among its growing Muslim minority deserves a closer look. Note, that the group with the highest religiosity and strongest intolerance includes nearly one fourth of Muslims in our study.

Chart 3. Religious intolerance towards the Jews among Orthodox Christians and Muslims by level of their religiosity (higher values reflect stronger intolerance)



7.2. Near-religious ideology. While, as shown above, core religious beliefs do not make Orthodox and Muslims more intolerant towards the Jews, both groups' *beliefs about their and other religions* do. In particular, in both groups the intolerance is noticeably reduced by the belief that all religions should be given equal rights in Russia. The

intolerance towards the Jews is made worse by *religious ethnocentrism*. This ideology rigidly links people's ethnic identity to their dominant religion and views other faiths as alien. For instance, 85% of ethnic Russians believe that they are Orthodox in their heart even if they were not baptized and do not go to church. Nearly half believe that only ethnic Russians can be true Orthodox, and for more than one third, converts to non-Orthodox faiths are no longer truly Russian. Religious ethnocentrism is also common among Muslims (e.g., 85% of Tatars and other historically Islamic peoples say they are Muslims in heart regardless of actual religiosity). While the ethnocentric views make Muslims more religiously intolerant, they more noticeably increase the intolerance towards the Jews among the Orthodox.

7.3. Secular ideology and attitudes. Intolerance towards the Jews is linked to some beliefs and attitudes that have nothing to do with religion. Pro-democratic and pro-western views make both Muslims and Orthodox more tolerant of the Jews. The intolerance towards the Jews is also linked to support for civil liberties for political and social out-groups (e.g., fascists, atheists, and homosexuals). Those more willing to put up with such groups are also more tolerant of the Jews, and this is especially the case with Muslims' attitudes. Additionally, a generalized negative attitude towards ethnic non-Russians from Asia and the Caucasus is a sound predictor of religious intolerance towards the Jews. In fact, this generalized negativity is simply racism, and our data unsurprisingly link it to prejudice against the Jews.

Overall, unlike religiosity proper, near-religious and non-religious ideologies are consistently and similarly linked to the intolerance of the Jews among the Orthodox and Muslims. In both groups, tolerance of the Jews is strengthened by pro-democratic and pro-western orientations, a non-ethnocentric approach to religions and support for their equality

under the law, and by the willingness to put up with dissent. Opposition to such orientations increases the intolerance of the Jews. Furthermore, near-religious and non-religious factors are linked to intolerance more closely (in statistical terms) than core religious beliefs and practices. Thus, paradoxically, religious intolerance of the Jews in Russia is only in part a religious phenomenon in its origins.

8. Anti-Semitism and religious intolerance

Anti-Semitism, including its Russian variety, has been well researched, but its relation to the unwillingness to grant the Jews religious freedom has not. Our study is the first one to address this important issue. We show that in today's Russia secular anti-Semitism is widespread, while religious anti-Semitism is less common. Next, we find that while anti-Semitism is understandably related to the intolerance of the Jews, it predicts the intolerance only to a degree.

8.1. Anti-Semitism is widespread, and secular more than religious.

The anti-Semitic episodes mentioned in this paper's opening section do not appear accidental against the backdrop of Russians' popular attitudes. On the surface, almost four out of five Russians say their feelings towards the Jews are generally positive. Yet, more specific questions reveal widespread underlying anti-Semitic attitudes. As is often done in research, we distinguish below between *secular* and *religious anti-Semitism*. The latter explicitly justifies prejudice by religious considerations, while the former does not.

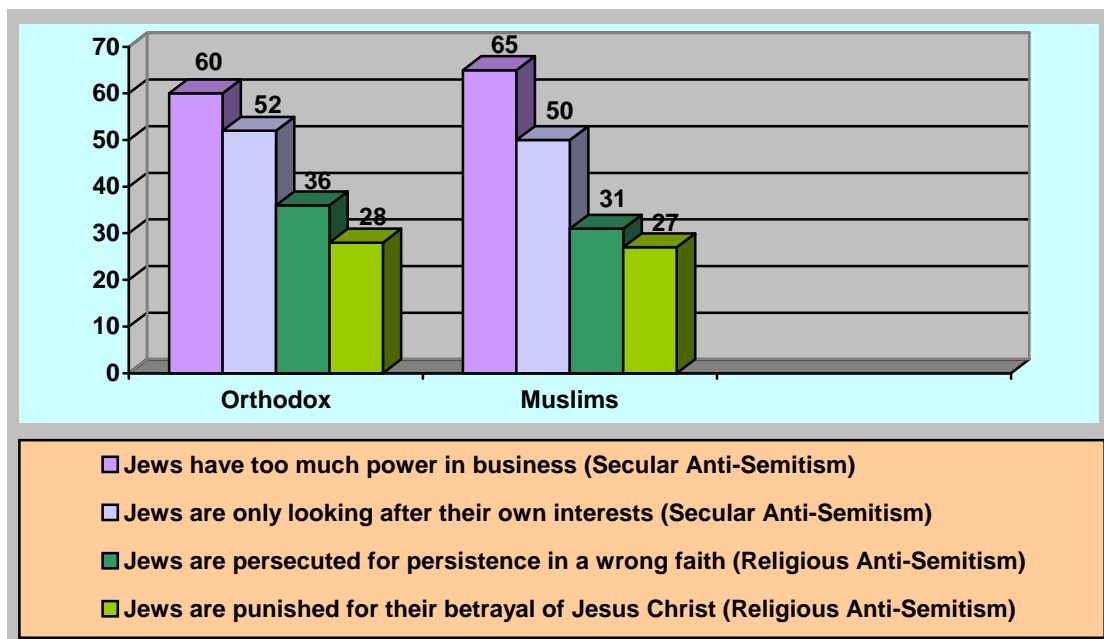
The *Secular anti-Semitism* that flourished in the officially atheist Soviet society is especially prevalent in Russia. Thus, 60% of Russia's Orthodox and 65% of Muslims believe

that Jews have too much power in business. Roughly 50% of both the Orthodox and Muslims share the opinion that Jews only look after their own interests at other people's expense.

Religious anti-Semitism is less common, yet its spread is striking for a country with barely fifteen years of post-atheist experience. For instance, 36% of the Orthodox and 31% of Muslims share the view that Jews are persecuted because they persist in their false religious belief and refuse to accept the true faith. A sizable proportion of Russians believe that Jews are punished for their betrayal of Jesus Christ (27-28% among both the Orthodox and Muslims). However, as shown below, the spread of religious intolerance towards the Jews surpasses the expanse of anti-Semitic attitudes, religious or secular.

The relative strength of secular and religious anti-Semitism among Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Russia is shown in Chart 4. Secular anti-Semitism is stronger among both groups, and somewhat more prevalent among Muslims. Religious anti-Semitism is slightly higher among the Orthodox.

Chart 4. Secular and religious anti-Semitism among Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Russia (% agreeing with anti-Semitic statements)



8.2. Anti-Semitism explains intolerance only to an extent. Contrary to what might have been expected, anti-Semitism's links to religious intolerance of the Jews are relatively weak. Paradoxically, religious anti-Semitism is among the weakest predictors of religious intolerance towards the Jews among both Muslims and the Orthodox. For the latter, secular anti-Semitism plays a slightly more important role. The relatively weak influence of anti-Semitism on intolerance does not mean that anti-Semites are somehow tolerant of the Jews. On the contrary, it means that those who are not anti-Semites are nearly as intolerant as those who are.

8. 3. Intolerance towards the Jews is part of a broader hostility to religious freedom. While amazingly common in Russia, religious intolerance towards the Jews is not an isolated phenomenon. Our findings show that those who are intolerant of the Jews are also most likely to be intolerant of Muslims (or of the Orthodox when Muslims are interviewed) and of the “non-traditional” western churches. Thus, while Russians are less tolerant of the Jews than they are of Muslims or regional Orthodox minorities, the intolerance towards the Jews appears to reflect a broader atmosphere of religious intolerance in today's Russia.

CONCLUSION

Most Russians, while declaring themselves Orthodox Christians or Muslims, do not actively practice their faiths. Yet, they are also strikingly unwilling to let Russia's Jews openly practice theirs. A majority of Russians would not allow Jews to build synagogues, open religious schools, publish faith-related materials or publicly express their faith otherwise. Jews are far less tolerated than other religions Russia's law deems “traditional,” and the

intolerance towards them is surpassed only by the unwillingness to put up with the so-called “non-traditional” U.S.-based and other western religious groups.

So far, this widespread and strong religious intolerance has relatively rarely expressed itself in acts that threaten the religious freedom of Russian Jewry or actually violate it. Ranging from infamous demands to ban Jewish organizations to attacks on synagogues, such acts are committed by a tiny minority of demagogues, extremists, and indeed criminals. However, the minority’s acts of hate resonate astoundingly with the majority’s strong hostility to the open practice of the Jewish faith.

At the same time, official policies are in obvious dissonance with ordinary Russians’ intolerance towards the Jews. Where the law defines Judaism as a “traditional” faith and formally grants its adherents all internationally acknowledged religious liberties, only 11%, meaning less than one out of nine Russians, would give the Jews most of these liberties. Similarly, while president Putin is unusually popular among Russians, his public demonstrations of aversion to anti-Semitism and respect for Judaism are in sharp contrast with widespread religious Judophobia.

Russia’s Orthodox Christians and Muslims appear united by their shared unwillingness to grant religious freedom to the Jews, and Muslims’ attitudes are slightly more restrictive in this regard. However, the intolerance towards the Jews is inconsistently and relatively weakly linked to religiosity in both groups. Among the Orthodox, a high level of religiosity is associated with slightly more, and among Muslims, with slightly less tolerance towards the Jews. Yet, in practical terms these differences do not mean much. Even the devout Orthodox believers’ relatively higher tolerance level means a very strong intolerance in absolute terms. At the same time, these comparisons suggest that while much

research understandably focuses on hostility towards the Jews among Russia's Christian majority, religious Judophobia among its growing Muslim minority, especially its actively practicing part, deserves a closer look.

Overall, the unwillingness to grant the Jews religious freedom is linked more strongly and consistently to factors that have little or nothing to do with core religious beliefs and practices. Thus, while monotheistic or Christian religious beliefs do not seem to make Russians more intolerant, their *beliefs about religion* do. In particular, ideological opposition to giving all religions equal rights predicts intolerance towards the Jews among Orthodox Christians as well as Muslims. Similarly, tolerance is undermined by ethnocentric views of Orthodoxy and Islam that merge ethno-religious identities with animosity towards other faiths. Furthermore, religious intolerance towards the Jews noticeably reflects secular ideological influences and popular sentiments. The intolerance is strengthened by undemocratic and anti-western orientations, racism, and illiberal attitudes toward dissenters and non-conformists. Thus, religious intolerance towards the Jews in today's Russia is a mostly non-religious phenomenon in its nature.

While anti-Semitism, especially in its secular manifestations, is strikingly common in Russia, our study shows that it explains the intolerance only to some extent. Let us not be misled by this finding. It does not mean that anti-Semites are tolerant. It means that those who are not anti-Semites are almost as intolerant as those who are. Furthermore, the unwillingness to put up with the Jews as a commonly disliked group, reflects the influence of a broader hostility towards religious freedom and minority rights. Russians intolerant of the Jews are also likely to be intolerant of Muslims and western churches.

There appear to be important policy implications from these findings. First, religious intolerance towards the Jews in Russia requires attention and monitoring no less than the much studied anti-Semitic prejudice. The monitoring would provide policy-makers with an assessment of challenges to religious freedom that come “from below,” often despite the official orientations of Russia’s secular and religious elites. We see our study as a much-needed first step in such a monitoring.

Next, given the importance of non-religious factors of intolerance towards the Jews, consistent monitoring, educational and other policy efforts need to target the ideological environment that surrounds the resurgence of Orthodoxy and Islam in Russia. If and when Russia’s political and religious leaders make sincere efforts to rid this environment of racist, ethnocentric, and anti-minority tendencies, such efforts deserve full support and encouragement. Sustainable religious freedom for Russia’s Jews can only be achieved in a political and ideological climate rid of hostility to all religious minorities, traditional or not. At the same time, the extent of ordinary Russians’ willingness to grant full religious freedom to the country’s Jews can serve as a valid indicator of progress towards such a climate. So far, what this indicator shows is not promising.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Religious tolerance towards the Jews among all Russians (N=1,651), the Orthodox (N=1,331), Muslims (N=833), and believers and non-believers among the Orthodox and Muslims in Russia (% allowing the Jews religious activities)

Religious activities	All Russians	Orthodox	Orthodox believers	Orthodox non-believers and atheists	Muslims	Muslims believers	Muslim non-believers and atheists
build a new synagogue/church	46.9	47.9	47.5	40.0	39.6	36.5	44.7
publicly preach their religion	26.9	26.4	26.6	22.1	22.0	20.8	30.3
publish religious materials	37.3	36.4	37.4	25.0	33.5	30.2	38.2
open a religious school	38.1	38.2	40.1	28.6	28.6	25.8	34.2
teach Judaism in public schools	12.7	12.6	12.4	14.3	13.5	12.9	17.1
preach Judaism on television	29.2	28.2	28.7	22.1	27.9	27.1	26.3
do charitable work	55.8	55.8	55.8	42.9	50.2	46.8	56.6
raise funds for religious needs	41.6	42.9	43.6	29.3	41.9	39.4	44.7

Table 2. Religious, near-religious, and secular factors of tolerance towards the Jews among Orthodox Christians and Muslims (partial correlations, controlling for the influence of age, education, and city size)

	Tolerance among the Orthodox towards the Jews	Tolerance among Muslims towards the Jews
Religiosity (beliefs and practices):		
Monotheistic beliefs	.13***	–
Christian beliefs	.07**	N/A
Church/mosque attendance	–	-.19***
Prayer frequency	–	-.09*
Frequency of reading Bible/Koran	–	-.07*
Near-religious ideology (beliefs about and attitudes to one's own and other religions):		
Belief that all religions should have equal rights	.29***	.15***
Positive views of Islam/Orthodoxy	.23***	.20***
Religious anti-Semitism	-.09**	-.14***
Religious ethnocentrism	-.25***	-.11*
Non-religious ideology (secular beliefs and attitudes):		
Pro-democratic and pro-western views	.19***	.22***
Political tolerance	.17***	.33***
Prejudice against ethnic non-Russians/Russians	-.25***	-.17***
Secular anti-Semitism	-.20***	-.11**

- no significant association
- * significant at $p < .05$
- ** significant at $p < .001$
- *** significant at $p < .0001$, tow-tailed test