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A New Word on **The Brothers Karamazov**

Edited by Robert Louis Jackson
With an introductory essay by Robin Feuer Miller
and a concluding one by William Mills Todd III



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Truth dawns in adversity.
—Fyodor M. Dostoevsky

Contents

Preface	ix	The God of Onions: <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> and the Mythic Prosaic <i>Gary Saul Morson</i>
List of Abbreviations	xi	Did Dostoevsky or Tolstoy Believe in Miracles? <i>Donna Orwin</i>
<i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> Today <i>Robin Feuer Miller</i>	3	The Sexuality of the Male Virgin: Arkady in <i>A Raw Youth</i> and Alyosha Karamazov <i>Susanne Fusso</i>
Refiguring the Russian Type: Dostoevsky and the Limits of Realism <i>Robert Bird</i>	17	Zosima's "Mysterious Visitor": Again Bakhtin on Dostoevsky, and Dostoevsky on Heaven and Hell <i>Caryl Emerson</i>
Mothers and Sons in <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> : Our Ladies of Skotoprigonevsk <i>Liza Knapp</i>	31	Dostoevsky—Genius of Evocation: The Scene of Fyodor Karamazov's Murder and Its Symbolic Topography <i>Horst-Jürgen Gerigk</i>
Shame's Rhetoric, or Ivan's Devil, Karamazov Soul <i>Deborah A. Martinsen</i>	53	The Legend of the <i>Ladonka</i> and the Trial of the Novel <i>Kate Holland</i>
Two Fates: Zosima's Bow and What Rakitin Said <i>Tatyana Buzina</i>	68	Sensual Mind: The Pain and Pleasure of Thinking <i>Marina Kostalevsky</i>
Struggle for Theosis: Smerdyakov as Would-Be Saint <i>Lee D. Johnson</i>	74	The Jewish Question and <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> <i>Maxim D. Shrayer</i>
Accidental Families and Surrogate Fathers: Richard, Grigory, and Smerdyakov <i>Vladimir Golstein</i>	90	Alyosha's Speech at the Stone: "The Whole Picture" <i>Robert Louis Jackson</i>
		<i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> Tomorrow <i>William Mills Todd III</i>
		Contributors

Maxim D. Shrayer

The Jewish Question and *The Brothers Karamazov*

Both yes and no. Yes!—if one assumes that the human spirit, like a geometrical figure with all its sides and angles, lies in an open hand, fits entirely on a flat surface; no!—because we realize that a human heart possesses a fathomless depth, is a mysterious and self-contained world full of unelucidated hints and insurmountable contradictions.

—Aron Shteinberg, "Dostoevskii i evreistvo"
("Dostoevskii and Jewry"), 1928

[T]hat this man should not have come up with even a single word in the defense or justification of a people persecuted over several thousands of years—could he have been so blind?—or was he perhaps blinded by hatred?—and he did not even refer to the Jews as a people, but as a tribe as though they were a group of natives from the Polynesian islands or somewhere—and to this tribe I belonged and the many friends and acquaintances of mine with whom I had discussed the subtlest problems of Russian literature, and to this tribe also belonged Leonid Grossman and Dolinin, Zil'bershtein and Rozenblyum, Kirpotin and Kogan, Fridlender and Bregova, Borshchevsky and Gosenpud, Mil'kina and Hus, Zundelovich and Shklovsky, Belkin, Bergman and Dvosya Lvovna Sorkina and the many other Jewish literary critics who have gained what amounts to a monopoly in the study of Dostoevsky.

—Leonid Tsyplkin, *Summer in Baden-Baden*, 1982

WHAT PLACE would be assigned to the Jews in Dostoevsky's theocracy? Would they be allowed to exist as a Judaic community

within a larger Christian one? That would certainly depend on who the theocrat is: Father Zosima or the Grand Inquisitor. If the church state is structured in keeping with Father Zosima's teachings, the Jews would probably be expected to merge with the Christians when the conditions for this merger have been created. If the theocrat is the Grand Inquisitor, some of the Jews would be forcefully converted, some probably becoming Marranos, while the rest would be expelled, if not exterminated. Somewhere between these two poles lie Dostoevsky's own attitudes toward the Jews and Judaism, ranging from moments of idealistic universalism and open-mindedness to long streaks of enmity and intolerance.¹

Let me state from the outset that I think the Jewish question in Dostoevsky is primarily a religious one rather than a social or ethnic one. Religious considerations permeate and supersede the other aspects of Dostoevsky's writings on the Jewish question, and in fact "the Judaic question" might be a more adequate representation of what Dostoevsky grappled with when writing of the Jews. Of course there are Dostoevsky's socioeconomic and political anxieties and phobias, but his dominant concern is this: What is one to do with the Jews in view of the obvious fact that they have refused to recognize Christ and will not convert even as they face persecution? This is the crux of Dostoevsky's disagreements with, fears of, claims against, animosity toward, and even inspired flights of admiration and compassion for the People of the Book.

Of course, there are Dostoevsky's more or less crude versions of economic Judeophobia—look at his penchant for such terms as Jewish "usury" and Jewish "gold trade"; look at his quasi-Marxist (and quasi-Marxian) and populist explanations of and arguments about Jewish involvement in trade and banking. And there is Dostoevsky's anti-Jewish social rhetoric of the "Yid is coming" variety: the menacing Jewish upward mobility (and hence the numerus clausus should be kept in place); the mysterious kahal; the *status in statu*; the individualism and exclusiveness of the Jews. Once removed from their respective discursive, epistolary, or fictional contexts and summarized, Dostoevsky's socioeconomic and political statements on the Jewish question argue for the existence of an alleged international Jewish conspiracy and already anticipate the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that were a concoction of the czarist secret police.² Dostoevsky's arguments strike historians of Jewry as both familiar and predictable. There is no need to debunk them here: they are the stale bread of the chroniclers of the Jewish question, and only the students of Dostoevsky's art stare forlornly at those pages where the word "Yid" gapes like a black hole amid other black letters. Still, one should not forget that at the Beilis trial in 1913, Chief Prosecutor O. Iu. Vipper invoked Dostoevsky's moral authority when speaking, in the name of the people, about "the Yids" who would "destroy Russia."³ One might also find it noteworthy that in 1995, sections 1 to 3 of

chapter 2 of Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer* for March 1877 were reprinted by an ultrapatriotic Russian publisher in the same series as *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Henry Ford's nefarious treatise, *International Jewry*.⁴ This brochure, *The Jewish Question*, which features Dostoevsky's name on the cover and takes its title from the first section of his essay about the Jews, also contains Adolf Hitler's "My Political Testament." Ronald Hingley's incensed comment comes to mind in this connection: "The idealization of war, the mumbo-jumbo about a great people's destiny, the assertion of grandiose territorial designs combined with peace-loving professions, and above all the exalted, hysterical and sometimes unharmonious prose style—all these are features uniting *The Diary of a Writer* with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*."⁵ I will not grace with comments the cohort of Russian ultranationalist litterateurs who have claimed Dostoevsky as their spiritual ancestor. No matter whom else they put on their shield and banner—Sergei Aksakov, Mikhail Bakhtin, or Fedor Tiutchev—the Kozhinovs and Kuniaevs of today's cultural right will always remain petty salesmen of "Anti-Semite and Co."⁶

By the middle 1870s, toward the end of his career, Dostoevsky commanded a larger-than-life authority over the Russian reading public. The trouble with his discursive writings about the Jews, culminating in the March chapters of *The Diary of a Writer* for 1877, lies not in their novelty or profundity but rather in the fact that through these writings, Judeophobic thinking was given national legitimacy. Indeed, Arkadii Gornfel'd is quite right that Dostoevsky's indictments of the Jews contain no "serious evidence, nor particularly striking ideas."⁷ In fact, on a number of occasions, Dostoevsky plainly lies, as in his irresponsible remarks about the suffering of the Jews in the imperial army: "Ask if the Jew is abused in the barracks as a Jew, as a *Yid*, for his faith, for his tradition?" (*Ps*, 25:80). If only once Dostoevsky had spoken of the plight of the *kantonisty*, the young Jewish recruits who often starved themselves to the point of inanition, refusing to violate the dietary laws of *koshrut* and continuing to serve Russia and her czars! Or consider Dostoevsky's ill-advised remark about the Jews in the postbellum United States: "But let them, let them be morally purer than all the nations in the world, and certainly of the Russian nation, and in the meantime I have just read in the March issue of *Vestnik Evropy* [*European Messenger*] a report that in America, in the southern states, the Jews have already attacked with all their power the multimillion masses of the freed Negroes and have already taken them under their control, through their known and centuries-old 'gold trade' [*zolotym promyslom*], and are taking advantage of the inexperience and human flaws of this exploited tribe" (*Ps*, 25:78).

Let me also draw attention to the linguistic side of Dostoevsky's writings about the Jews. In his essay "The Jewish Question," Dostoevsky offers a justification for using the term *zhid* ("Yid" or "kike"): "Could it be that

they accuse me of 'hatred' because I sometimes call the Jew 'Yid'? But, first, I did not think that it was so offensive, and, second, the word *Yid*, as far as I can recall, I have always used to connote a certain idea: 'Yid, Yiddism, Yids' kingdom' [*zhid, zhidovshchina, zhidovskoe tsarstvo*], etc. Here a certain notion, a direction, a characteristic of the century was being fleshed out" (*Ps*, 25:75).⁸ Suggestions have been made that Dostoevsky draws a distinction between *evrei* (the biblical Hebrews) and *zhidy* (his contemporary Jews, the "Yids" or "kikes"). Such explanations of these opprobrious word choices are problematic, for the linguistic aspect of Dostoevsky's attitudes toward the Jews entails too many variables to be packaged into a neat (and apologetic) formula: epoch and milieu, background, authorial intent, verisimilitude, speaker, usage, and speech context.⁹ Whatever his intent may have been, when readers hear the words "Yid" or "kike" from Dostoevsky, the sheer linguistic power of these derogatory terms is tremendous—and obviously much greater than when such terms come from the mouths of street thugs.

And yet, to brand Dostoevsky's rhetoric about the Jews "banal," as Gornfel'd did, or to ignore the presence of the Jewish question in Dostoevsky's life and works (as most Soviet scholars were forced to do), is to commit an injustice both to Dostoevsky and to the history of Jews and Judaism. Scholars and critics have approached this problem in a number of ways, and I would like to assess the variety of judgments that have been made to date.¹⁰

First, there are the apologists, of whom the finest and most sensitive is Joseph Frank, who famously called Dostoevsky "a guilty anti-Semite."¹¹ Then there are the proponents of psychoanalytic criticism, headed by the Freudian Felix Dreizin, who referred to Dostoevsky as a "compulsive anti-Semite";¹² the psychoanalysts have sought explanations for Dostoevsky's hateful remarks in his childhood and his relationships with his parents, as well as through his mental health. Other scholars have focused on various aspects of the poetics of the Jewish question in Dostoevsky, generating compelling readings of his fictional works: Felix Philipp Ingold, Gary Rosenshield, and Michael Katz.¹³ Another approach to Dostoevsky's morbid fascination with Jews and Judaism has been to apply the idea of a Dostoevskian double to his writings on the Jewish question. Most recently this idea was formulated by Peeter Torop, who spoke of the Jew as Dostoevsky's double in whom Dostoevsky is reflected: "he neither loves nor hates himself, but loves or hates himself in this other."¹⁴ Dmitrii Merezhkovskii, David Zaslavskii, Felix Dreizin, and others have argued for the idea of "two Dostoevskys." Refuting this position, Katz remarked that "of course there is only one Dostoevsky, a very complex one."¹⁵

Three scholars stand out as the authors of the most provocative works about Dostoevsky and the Jews: Leonid Grossman, David I. Goldstein, and

Gary Saul Morson. Grossman zoomed in on a single case study, Dostoevsky's correspondence with Avraam-Uria Kovner, the "Jewish Pisarev." Published in 1924, Grossman's captivating microhistory, *Confession of a Jew*, was much ahead of its time in its methods and in the conclusions it offered.¹⁶ Its protagonist, Kovner, was, one might say, himself a Dostoevskian character, a Jew and an atheist who converted to Christianity fourteen days prior to his marriage to a non-Jewish woman, a political radical and utilitarian critic, an idealistic embezzler who stole exactly 3 percent of the annual profit of Russia's richest bank. Kovner made a powerful impression upon Dostoevsky, compelling him to speak of the Jewish question in a polemical essay. In modern Dostoevsky scholarship, Grossman was the first to place religious, and specifically messianic, questions at the center of Dostoevsky's thinking about the Jews. Grossman brilliantly argued that a Jewish person, Jesus Christ, and a Jewish book, the Old Testament, preoccupied Dostoevsky's artistic imagination.¹⁷

David I. Goldstein's *Dostoyevski and the Jews* still puzzles many of the writer's students. Although Goldstein's book is very useful and reliable, its denunciatory thrust is misplaced. Assessing the book, Gary Saul Morson pointed to Goldstein's refusal to allow the possibility that passages and even whole works by geniuses may "convey inhumane, fanatic, and morally unacceptable views."¹⁸ Morson further suggested that the success and outcome of one's reading of Dostoevsky's writings about the Jews depended on one's individual background, position, moral beliefs, and aesthetic predilections: "One reason many critics find Dostoevsky's anti-Semitic passages disturbing is that the critics are, unlike Dostoevsky, themselves hostile to anti-Semitism. . . . It is hazardous to deduce facts about an author's process of creation directly from a value judgment, or from any report of a reader's response, because the circumstances, constraints, and concerns that shaped the making of a work need not coincide with those that shaped its reception."¹⁹ It may thus follow that one's thinking and writing about Dostoevsky's thinking and writing about the Jews becomes thinking and writing about one's *individual* act of reading Dostoevsky on the subject. This is a sobering and cautionary idea. What choices does one have in reading and interpreting Dostoevsky on the Jewish question? Is one's refusal to read Dostoevsky the only truly moral response to his objectionable, Judeophobic attitudes? And, finally, must one make a distinction between the statements that Dostoevsky made about the Jews in his fiction and in his discursive writings?²⁰

Of all Dostoevsky's readers past and present, Vladimir Solov'ev has come the closest to understanding Dostoevsky's divided and yet hauntingly integral views. Solov'ev argued that Dostoevsky realized his own formula of the Russian ideal—a formula Dostoevsky articulated in his Pushkin speech of 1880—"more as a sage and artist than as a thinker."²⁰

As I prepared to write this essay, I reread both Solov'ev's essay "The Russian National Ideal" (1891) and Dostoevsky's Pushkin speech (1880). In the *New York Times Magazine*, I came across an interview with an elderly lady, Maude McLeod, whose ancestors were black Jews. The interview struck me as Dostoevskian in spirit and relevant to the subject of this essay. I quote from McLeod's account of her "return" to Judaism:

I grew up on the island of Montserrat, and my parents were supposed to be Christian. But in the years that I was home I always wondered why my people were so particular about what they did. We did not eat pork. My uncles were all circumcised. We ate challah bread on Friday night. . . . All of that we did, and we did not know why we were doing it—because they told us that we were Christians. But I knew something was wrong, see? My grandfather told my mother we came from West Africa. And many years later I heard that the people on Montserrat were Hebrews that were taken as slaves from Ghana and carried to the island. . . . I came to New York in 1923 when I was 19 years old. . . . It was 1927 when I first met Rabbi Matthew on Lenox Avenue. He was standing on a ladder with a yarmulke on, and . . . he was preaching that we were not Christians as they had told us, but that we were the lost house of Israel. I heard the call. . . . I did not join the Hebrew faith—I returned. I simply was on the wrong road and found my way back. . . . When I go to synagogue, and the shemah sounds, I sing, "Shemah yisroel adonai elohanu adonai echad," and my voice is *solid*.²¹

What would Dostoevsky say about this "individual case" of a Christian reclaiming her Judaic roots? The prospect of a Judeoized Orthodox Christianity seems anything but unlikely to Dostoevsky. In *The Diary of a Writer*, he asks a sinister question and gives an even more sinister answer: "And in the meanwhile a fantasy has sometimes entered my head: well, what if there were 3 million Russians, and not Jews, in Russia; and there were 80 million Jews—well, what would become of the Russians under them and how would they abuse them? Would they give them a chance to have the same rights? Would they allow them to pray among them freely? Would they not turn [the Russians] straight into slaves? Worse yet, would they not rip our skins off [*ne sodrali by kozhu sosem*]?" (*Ps*, 25:80). I wonder how Dostoevsky would react to an account of Russian villages where the bearded and straw-haired Russian peasants—the followers of the Judeoizers—followed Mosaic law, kept kosher, and fasted on Yom Kippur.²²

Vladimir Solov'ev was absolutely right to emphasize that religious aspects are central to Dostoevsky's rhetoric on the Jewish question. Scholars have suggested that Solov'ev started his own campaign for the reconciliation and unification of Orthodoxy with both western Christianity and Judaism in his third Dostoevsky speech of 1883.²³ Almost a decade later, in his essay "The Russian National Ideal," Solov'ev recognized that Dostoevsky's intolerance went against the very grain of the writer's proclaimed Christian

universalism: "If we agree with Dostoevsky, that the true essence of the Russian national spirit, its great merit and advantage, is in its being able to grasp all strange elements, to love them, to be transformed into them, and if, along with Dostoevsky, we accept that the Russian people is capable and destined to realize in a brotherly union with other nations the ideal of all-humanity [*vsechelovechestvo*]²⁴—then we could never be sympathetic to Dostoevsky's own wild attacks [*vykhodkam*] against the 'Yids,' the Poles, the French, the Germans, against all Europe, against all foreign faiths."²⁴

In *Jewry and the Christian Question*, written in 1884, three years after Dostoevsky's death, Solov'ev posited three main questions about Russian Orthodoxy and Judaism: "1. Why was Christ a Jew, why is the stepping-stone of the universal church taken from the House of Israel? 2. Why did the majority of Israel not recognize its Messiah, why did the Old Testament church not dissolve into the New Testament church, and why do the majority of the Jews prefer to be completely without a temple, rather than join the Christian temple? 3. Why, finally, and for what purpose was the most solid (in the religious aspect) part of Jewry moved to Russia and Poland, placed at the boundary of the Graeco-Slavic and Latin-Slavic worlds?"²⁵ I would suggest that these same questions haunted Dostoevsky, shaping his struggling vision of the Jews and unifying his divided sympathies. I would further point out that Solov'ev downplayed Dostoevsky's fear and jealousy of the Jews and his paranoid view of a rivalry between the old Israel (the Jews) and the Russians (the New Israel) in Dostoevsky's thinking. Writing in 1928 in a Russian émigré journal and stressing—after Grossman—the centrality of the Jewish Bible in Dostoevsky's literary imagination, Aron Shteinberg observed astutely that for Shatov-Dostoevsky "the God-chosen Russian people are in essence a present reincarnation of Israel" (Shatov is one of the principal characters of Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed*).²⁶ In *The Possessed*, Shatov explains to Stavrogin his idea of a national religious consciousness: "A people is the body of God. Every people only remains a people so long as it possesses its own God and excludes all other gods without any reconciliation: so long as it believes that, with its God, it will vanquish and expel all the other gods from the world. . . . The Jews lived only in order to await a true God, and they have left the world a true God" (*Ps*, 10:199). Keys to Dostoevsky's most problematic statements about the Jews lie in his desire and inability to reconcile a universalist, all-embracing vision with his parochial, xenophobic urges.²⁷ Dmitrii Merezhkovskii may have said it best in "The Prophet of the Russian Revolution," a tribute written for the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dostoevsky's death: "When the Christians call Jews 'Yids,' they blaspheme Christ through the womb of his Mother, in the mystery of his birth, in holy Israel. The real 'Yids' are not the Jews but those Christians who return from the New Testament to the Old, from the universal Christ to one people's Messiah."²⁸ In the same pages, Merezhkov-

skii also spoke of the "nationally exclusive, preordained, 'circumcised,' Yideoizing Orthodoxy [*zhidovstvuiushchee pravoslavie*] of Dostoevsky himself." I wonder, however, whether Merezhkovskii was not giving expression to what the first part of his argument seemed to rally against.

In his Pushkin speech, Dostoevsky set for himself an almost unattainable ideal: "Show me at least one of these great geniuses who would possess the same capacity for universal responsiveness as did our Pushkin. . . . And what is the strength of the spirit of the Russian people if not its striving in its end goals toward universalism and all-encompassing humanity?" (*Ps*, 26:147). Did Dostoevsky possess the kind of universal gift that he himself glorified in the Pushkin speech?

My goal is not to accuse or denounce. I do not wish to reopen the case against Dostoevsky on the grounds of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. In fact, I confess that as a Diasporic Jew, a post-Shoah Jew, and an ex-Soviet one at that, I have been conditioned to expect Judeophobic behavior. I sometimes get tired of defining my identity by negation, through blaming and self-defending and fighting every Jewish battle that comes my way. I want to be able to face my students without feeling utterly bewildered by the discussion of the blood libel in *The Brothers Karamazov*, bewildered by Dostoevsky and by my own inability to interpret this scene in the text's own terms. I would like to unearth in Dostoevsky's treatment of the Jews—in *The Brothers Karamazov* and other works of fiction—that which Grossman once described so lovingly: "But in the depths and at the heights of his creative work, there, where all the minutiae disappeared and the absolute was exposed, he parted with his magazine manifestos and publicistic tendencies. Dostoevsky as the artist and thinker, in the flashing scraps of his pages, would suddenly reveal a profound attraction to the complex essence of the biblical spirit."²⁹

Let me turn to the text of Dostoevsky's last novel. First of all, small-scale references to the Jews are more numerous here than in Dostoevsky's earlier works (I have counted ten separate instances in the text of *The Brothers Karamazov*). Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, referring to his early years in Odessa, speaks of having met "a lot of Yids, Yidkins, Yidels, and Yidelkins" (*Zhidami, zhidkami, zhidishkami i zhideniatami*) and later being received not only by Yids but "also by Jews" (*i u evreev byl priniat*). Grushenka is at one point likened to a Jewish woman because of her financial savvy (*prozvali ee suchshei zhidoikovoi*). To raise money to get to Chermashnia, Dmitri sells his watch to a Jewish watchmaker; a Jewish band plays in Mokroe; Dmitri links his enemies to the Jews by suggesting that Grushenka's Polish suitor would use lawyers, "Pollacks and Yidkins" (*poliachkov da zhidkov*; *Ps*, 14:21, 311, 453).

The discussion of the blood libel occurs in part 4, book 11, chapter 3, and was written right after Dostoevsky's trip to Moscow in May 1880. How

paradoxical that upon his return from Moscow, where he articulated in the Pushkin speech his innermost aesthetic, ethical, and metaphysical ideals, Dostoevsky writes the blood libel scene. Petr Berlin called this juxtaposition "a pendulum's swinging from proclaiming great Christian ideas to practical considerations that have nothing to do with such ideas."³⁰ The day described in book 11 is a big day for Alyosha Karamazov; he zigzags through the town of Skotoprigonevsk making visits: from Captain Snegiryov and Ilyusha to Grushenka to the Khokhlakovs. The chapter where he talks with Liza is called "Besenok" ("A Little Demon"); let us also recall that in chapter 4 of book 5 Ivan calls Alyosha a "little demon" after Alyosha has recommended that a sadistic general be executed for sending a pack of hounds after a little boy. The conversation about the blood libel is set in motion when Liza asks Alyosha the controversial question:

"Alyosha, is it true that at Easter [in Russian the same word, *paskha*, is used for both Easter and Passover], Yids [*zhidy*] steal children and kill them?"

"I don't know."

"There's a book here in which I read about some trial, and a Yid who took a four-year-old child and cut off the fingers from both his little hands, and then crucified him on the wall, hammered nails into him, and crucified him, and afterwards at the trial he said that the child died quickly, within four hours. That was 'quickly'! He said the child moaned, kept on moaning and he stood admiring it. That's nice!"

"Nice?"

"Nice. I sometimes imagine that it was I who crucified him. He would hang there moaning and I would sit opposite him eating pineapple compote. I am awfully fond of pineapple compote. Do you like it?"

Alyosha looked at her in silence. Her pale, sallow face was suddenly contorted, her eyes burned.

"You know, when I read about that child, all night I was shaking with tears. I kept thinking of how the little thing cried and moaned (a child of four understands, you know) and all the while the thought of pineapple compote haunted me. In the morning I wrote a letter to a certain person, *begging* him to come and see me. He came and I told him all about the child and the pineapple compote, *all* about it, *all*, and said, 'it was nice.' Then he got up and went away. He was only here five minutes. Did he despise me? Did he despise me? Tell me, tell me, Alyosha, did he despise me or not?" She sat up on the sofa, her eyes sparkling. (BK, 552–53; Ps. 15:24; emphasis in the original)

The "certain" person to whom Liza refers is of course Ivan Karamazov, the same Ivan who would refuse the Kingdom of God if it had to come at the price of one child's suffering. Alyosha leaves soon thereafter, carrying Liza's letter to his brother Ivan. After he is gone, Liza "unbolted the door, opened it a little, put her finger in the crack and slammed the door with all her might, pinching her finger. Ten seconds later, releasing her finger, she walked softly, slowly to her chair. She sat up straight in it and looked intently at her black-

ened little finger and at the blood that oozed from under the nail" (BK, 554). After this episode, Alyosha visits Dmitri in jail and then runs into Ivan; Alyosha's encounter with Ivan results in an unfortunate conversation and an argument between them (book 11, chapters 4 and 5).

First of all, Liza speaks of two alleged crimes. In addition to ritual murder (the charge that Jews allegedly use the blood of Christian babies to make matzos), she also refers to profanation of the host (here crucifixion of a Christian child). From the twelfth century onward (the William of Norwich affair), the Jews of Europe had been accused of these crimes by their persecutors in order to justify anti-Jewish violence and restrictive measures.³¹ Both accusations had had a history in Russia—consider the Velizh affair of 1823.³² Dostoevsky knew enough about the subject to be able to make an educated and unbiased judgment.³³ He was acquainted with such important scholarly defenses of the Jews as D. A. Khvol'son's monograph *About Some Medieval Accusations against the Jews* (1861), a condensed version of which was put out in 1879 at the height of the Kutaisi affair.³⁴ At the same time, Dostoevsky also had access to several notoriously anti-Semitic books, such as Iakov Brafman's *The Book of Kahal* (1869), as well as the report of 1844, "An Inquiry into the Killing of the Christian Infants by the Jews," commonly attributed to Vladimir Dal' and *The Question of the Use, by Jewish Sect Members, of Christian Blood* (1876), by Ippolit Liutostanski.³⁵ Furthermore, Dostoevsky followed closely the Kutaisi affair of 1879 (a trial of a group of Georgian Jews falsely accused of a ritual murder of a Georgian Christian peasant girl in the village of Sachkheri) and made horrifying remarks on the subject. "How disgusting that the Yids of Kutaisi [*kutaisskikh zhidov*] were acquitted," he wrote to O. A. Novikova in 1879. "Here they are undoubtedly guilty."³⁶ The Kutaisi affair, as Grossman was first to demonstrate, enters into the fictional space of *The Brothers Karamazov* in the blood libel episode.³⁷ Let me also suggest that typologically speaking, both ritual murder and profanation of the host are attractive notions for Dostoevsky's poetics; their perpetrators are accused of violating God's image, committing acts of *bezobrazie* (both dehumanization and deaesthetization), reenacting crucifixion to mock it.³⁸ Typologically speaking, there is a congruency between Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov's spitting on an icon, or having sexual intercourse with a holy fool, and an act of crucifying a child and watching him die, as presented in Liza's description.

Commenting on the discussion of the blood libel in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Maxim Gorky wrote in 1913:

When a [fourteen-year-old] girl tells about a "Yid who took a four-year-old child and cut off the fingers from both his little hands, and then crucified him . . .," the reader knows that the girl has been slandered: she did not say, she could not say such a repugnant vile thing. And likewise, when responding to this slandered girl's question: "Is it true that at Easter Yids steal children and kill

them?" the righteous Alyosha says, "I don't know," the reader understands that Alyosha could not respond this way; Alyosha could not "not know"; he does not believe "the notorious legend," organically he cannot believe it, although he is a Karamazov.³⁹

Students of Dostoevsky disagree about the believability of Alyosha's ambivalent reply to Liza's horrific anti-Semitic anecdote. Ingold has shown that the inherent ambivalence of Alyosha's reply yields several interpretations: "I do not have any knowledge of the subject"; "I am not sure whether it is true or not"; "I do not rule out that it is true."⁴⁰ One should also consider the place of the blood libel (*krovavyi navet*) in the popular imagination of the Russian population in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Morson "[does] not detect any failure of artistry in [A] Little Demon." Rosenshield also believes that the "I don't know" response is "more credible and artistically motivated" than any other variant: "if Russians themselves are guilty of inflicting similar cruelties on their own children [compare Ivan's account of violence toward children, of which Liza's letter to Ivan reminds one] can Alyosha . . . disbelieve that Jews are at least potentially capable of similar abominations?"⁴¹ I think this is quite true, but I add one caveat: Alyosha can well imagine sadists and villains à la Marquis de Sade among both Jews and Gentiles, but it seems unlikely that Father Zosima's disciple would give credence to charges of ritual murder and profanation of the host as religious accusations against the entire Jewish people. ("Alyosha, is it true," asks Liza, "that at Easter [Passover] Yids steal children and kill them?")

In terms of the novel as a whole, what might have been Dostoevsky's artistic motivation for including this scene? Can one identify other episodes that elucidate the meaning of Liza's invocation of anti-Semitic charges and of Alyosha's vague reply?

An episode that comes to mind in this connection occurs in part 2 of the novel, when Alyosha first meets the *mal'chiki* (boys), including Kolya Krasotkin and Ilyusha Snegiryov. In book 4, chapter 3 ("A Meeting with the Schoolboys"), Alyosha leaves his drunk father and goes over to the Khokhlovks. On the way to their house, Alyosha encounters a colorful group of boys throwing stones at each other—actually six attacking one, Ilyusha Snegiryov. Alyosha intercedes: "What are you doing! Aren't you ashamed! Six against one! Why, you'll kill him." One of the boys, dressed in a red shirt, explains that Ilyusha "began first." "He is a beast, he stabbed Krasotkin in class the other day with a penknife, and there was blood." Alyosha learns that the boys tease Ilyusha Snegiryov, using the nickname *mochalka* (wisp of tow). Alyosha asks the boys why they "hate him [Ilyusha] so." They warn him to "watch out," as Ilyusha "will stab you in a minute as he did Krasotkin." Alyosha then attempts to reason with Ilyusha, who throws a stone at him. Here is Dostoevsky's account of what follows:

The boy waited in silent defiance, certain that now Alyosha would attack him. But seeing that even now he would not, his rage was like a wild little animal's. He flew at Alyosha and before Alyosha had time to move, he seized his left hand and bit his middle finger. He fixed his teeth on it. Alyosha cried out with pain and pulled his finger away with all his might. The child let go and retreated. Alyosha's finger had been badly bitten to the bone, close to the nail. It began to bleed. Alyosha took out his handkerchief and bound it tightly around his injured finger. (BK, 177–79)

Despite his pain and bleeding, Alyosha continues to communicate with the "wild little animal" (*zverенок*), asking him, "So what have I done? How have I wronged you?" (BK, 179).

In the next chapter Alyosha calls on the Khokhlovks at their house—for the first time in the novel. He arrives with a bleeding finger, and Liza reacts hysterically to the sight of his injury. The word "blood" is invoked several times. Madame Khokhlova: "Good heavens, what a wound, how awful!" Liza: "He might have bled to death, mother! How did you do it? Water, water! You must wash it first of all, simply hold it in cold water to stop the pain, and keep it there, keep it there" (BK, 181). Later, Katerina Ivanovna arranges with Alyosha to deliver a sum of money to the Snegiryovs. Here the reader finds out from her the story of Dmitri's drunken attack on Ilyusha's father, retired Captain Snegiryov. Katerina Ivanovna feels terribly ashamed of Dmitri's abusive behavior: "Dmitri did a very ugly thing. There is a certain tavern here in town and in it he met the discharged officer, that captain, whom your father used to employ. Dmitri somehow lost his temper with this man, grabbed him by the beard and dragged him out into the street in that insulting fashion. And I am told that the captain's son, a little boy who is at the school here, ran beside them crying and begging for his father, appealing to everyone to defend him. But everyone laughed" (BK, 190–91).

And then comes a curious development. Alyosha visits the Snegiryovs, and in his presence Ilyusha admits to having bitten Alyosha's finger. Captain Snegiryov, speaking hysterically, weaves the motif of the bloody finger into his words: "What! Did he bite your finger? . . . Was it your finger he bit? . . . And did you think I'd punish him before you for your satisfaction? Would you like it done at once, sir? . . . I am sorry about your finger, sir. But instead of beating Ilyusha, would you like me to chop off my fingers with this knife here before your eyes to satisfy your anger? I should think four fingers would be enough to satisfy your thirst for vengeance. You won't ask for the fifth one too?" (BK, 196–97).

It finally dawns on Alyosha that the boy attacked him to avenge the violent humiliation his brother Dmitri had inflicted on the boy's father. During a walk that Alyosha and Captain Snegiryov take together, the cap-

tain illustrates his son's profound empathy for him: "He suddenly fell on me, threw both his little arms around my neck and held me tight. . . . 'Father, he kept crying, 'dear father, how he insulted you!' And I cried too. We sat shaking in each other's arms. 'Ilyusha,' I said to him, 'Ilyusha darling.' No one saw us then. God alone saw us. . . . No, sir, I won't beat my boy for your satisfaction" (BK, 203-4). The sequence of episodes from Alyosha's meeting of the boys to his visit with the Snegiryovs is punctuated by references to blood, stabbing, wounds, and violence to children. One of the boys wears a red shirt, and the color red is even hinted at in Ilyusha's last name, Snegiryov, from *snegir'* (bullfinch), a bird with a red puffy chest. But most significantly, the motif of a finger—bitten, bleeding, cut off—receives much billing in the scenes that I discussed earlier.⁴² I would suggest that a strong linkage exists between the early sequence of episodes where Alyosha serves as a structural conduit between Ilyusha Snegiryov and Liza Khokhlakova, and the later, problematic scene where Liza tells Alyosha of an old Jewish man who allegedly cut off a little boy's fingers and crucified him.⁴³ In the memory and imagination of Dostoevsky's readers, Liza's discussion of the alleged ritual crimes falls on fertile soil. What remains is to explain the meaning of the suggestive linkage between the story of father and son Snegiryov and Liza's account of popular anti-Semitic accusations.

The story of Dmitri Karamazov's violence against Captain Snegiryov, paralleled as it is by the boys' baiting and taunting Ilyusha at school, represents a classic model of scapegoating and persecution. Victimization is based on the victims' difference and defenselessness. As René Girard has persuasively argued in *The Scapegoat*, persecution is grounded in the oppressor's own crisis.⁴⁴ Dmitri attacks the miserable Captain Snegiryov because old Karamazov employs him as a solicitor, and Dmitri takes out on the captain his own parricidal urges. The boys bait and taunt Ilyusha at school because he is his father's son, the son of the "wisp of tow," puny but proud. And what is typical of the dynamics of persecution, Ilyusha's tormentors (the boys) blame their victim for his own victimization, blaming the victim instead of blaming the victimizer.⁴⁵ While the early episodes involving father and son Snegiryov suggest a paradigm of persecution, Liza's invocation of the alleged ritual crimes—a gratuitous reference only at first glance—introduces the theme of anti-Semitism and popular anti-Judaic prejudices. But this would not be Dostoevsky's novel, especially one where the "Russian boys" were meant to be the main heroes, if the ending did not offer a unifying perspective on both persecuting behavior and the Jewish question.

In part 4 of the novel, book 10 is entitled "The Boys," and it chronologically precedes the chapter where Liza invokes the blood libel. In book 10, the reader learns that Ilyusha Snegiryov has become a center of gravity of a group of schoolboys, while Alyosha Karamazov serves as the boys' mentor and spiritual leader. Book 10 ends with a doctor's pronouncing Ilyusha's

medical verdict, upon which his father "mutters in a wild whisper," with trembling lips and his arms thrown up: "'I don't want a good boy! I don't want another boy!' . . . 'If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my tongue . . .'" Apparently intrigued by Captain Snegiryov's remark, Kolya Krasotkin asks Alyosha, "What was that he said about Jerusalem? . . . What did he mean by that?" "It's from the Bible," Alyosha explains. "'If I forget you Jerusalem,' that is, if I forget all that is most precious to me, if I let anything take its place, then may . . ." "I understand!" says Kolya, whereupon book 10 ends (BK, 532).

Captain Snegiryov quotes from Psalm 137, "By the rivers of Babylon . . ." This is the psalm's second half:

How can we sing a song of the Lord
on alien soil?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither;
let my tongue stick to my plate
if I cease to think of you,
if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory
even at my happiest hour.
Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem's fall:
how they cried, "Strip her, stir her
to her foundations!"
Fair Babylon, you predator,
a blessing on him who repays you in kind
what you have inflicted on us;
a blessing on him who seizes your babies
and dashed them against the rocks!⁴⁶

In his classic essay on Anton Chekhov's "Rothschild's Fiddle," Robert Louis Jackson argued that Chekhov employed biblical poetry—the poetry that appealed both to the story's Russian coffinmaker and to the Jewish musician—and thereby suggested a path of Russian-Jewish (and Christian-Judaic) reconciliation. In his reply to Kolya Krasotkin's question, Alyosha Karamazov chooses a moderate explanation of the psalm: "'If I forget you, Jerusalem,' that is, if I forget all that is most precious to me, if I let anything take its place, then may . . ." Alyosha's explanation draws on the letter and spirit of the first part of Psalm 137. At the same time, Ilyusha's father might have had something more extreme in mind when he quoted from this psalm. The ancient Jewish psalmist ends on a stark note of revenge, the victim's revenge for the suffering and persecution that the Jews have endured by their captors. In offending and humiliating Captain Snegiryov, Dmitri emblematically pulls out his beard, a particularly harmful act against a religious person, for whom the beard represents the beards of the patriarchs. If one thinks

of Ilyusha's actions—stabbing a classmate, attacking and biting Alyosha—they strike one as acts of revenge in keeping with the psalm's last lines. In light of the psalm's conclusion, Ilyusha's actions may allegorize an impending revenge of those trampled upon and falsely accused against their oppressors and murderers. One would profit from recalling that Dostoevsky's novel came out right on the eve of the wave of massive anti-Jewish violence of 1881 to 1882 that changed the course of Jewish-Russian history.

Entering the narrative space of *The Brothers Karamazov* in two prominent sequences, the Jewish-Judaic theme hovers over the conclusion of the novel and augments the novel's message. Dmitri, of course, has already been sentenced, and the narrative of parricide comes to an end. Ilyusha's funeral crowns the ending of the novel. Alyosha Karamazov, whose first name in its diminutive form suggestively rhymes with that of Ilyusha, makes a remarkable speech:

Let us make a compact, here, at Ilyusha's stone, that we will never forget Ilyusha and one another. And whatever happens to us later in life, even if we don't meet for twenty years, let us always remember how we buried the poor boy at whom we once threw stones. Do you remember, by the bridge? Afterwards we all grew so fond of him. He was a fine boy, a kindhearted, brave boy. He felt for his father and resented the cruel insult done to him and stood up for him. . . . Perhaps we may grow wicked later on, may be unable to refrain from evil, may laugh at men's tears, at those people who say as Kolya did just now: "I want to suffer for all men." We may even jeer spitefully at such people. But however bad we may become—which God forbid—yet, when we recall how we buried Ilyusha, how we loved him in his last days [we] will not dare to laugh inwardly at having been kind and good at this moment! (BK, 727–28)

Alyosha talks specifically about the dynamics of persecution and Ilyusha's courage in view of his baiting and taunting by the boys: "Let us remember his face and his clothes and his poor little boot, his coffin and his unhappy father. Let us remember how boldly he stood up for him against the whole school." And then Kolya Krasotkin elevates the discourse to an even loftier note: "'Karamazov,' cried Kolya. 'Can it be true as they teach us in church, that we shall all rise again from the dead and shall live and see each other again, all, Ilyusha, too?'" This is an opportune moment for Alyosha, and he seizes upon it: "'Certain we shall all rise again . . .,' Alyosha answered, half laughing, half ecstatic" (BK, 729).

In *Jewry and the Christian Question*, Solov'ev pointed out that "the final goal for Christians and Jews is the same: universal theocracy, realization of the divine law in the world of humans, the embodiment of the celestial in the earthly."⁴⁷ Reading the conclusion of *The Brothers Karamazov* in light of Dostoevsky's prior writings, but also in light of Solov'ev's views of the Russian-Jewish and Christian-Judaic relations, one is reminded of an-

other funeral scene by Dostoevsky.⁴⁸ Consider "The Funeral of 'The Universal Man'" and "An Isolated Case," two sections from chapter 3 of *The Diary of a Writer* for March 1877. Published in the same installment, they follow immediately after Dostoevsky's three sections of *The Writer's Diary* devoted to the Jewish question and Dostoevsky's polemics with A.-U. Kovner and with T. V. Braude, a St. Petersburg physician.⁴⁹ Dostoevsky writes of the funeral of Dr. Hindenburg. He had learned about Dr. Hindenburg from Sof'ia E. Lur'e, a Jewish woman from Minsk whom he met in St. Petersburg in April 1876 and with whom he corresponded in 1876 and 1877.⁵⁰ In fact, Dostoevsky included Lur'e's letter of February 13, 1877, in the text of "The Funeral of 'The Universal Man'" (Ps, 25:89–90). Dr. Hindenburg was an obstetrician, a German, and a Protestant, whose lifelong goal was helping the poor regardless of their ethnic or religious background. He died in poverty.⁵¹ In Dr. Hindenburg's mission, Dostoevsky sees an answer to his own "pros and contras": "The poor newborn little Jew squirms before him on the bed; a Christian takes the little Jew [evreichick] into his arms and wraps him in a shirt off his own shoulders. Gentlemen, this is the solution of the Jewish question!" And here is Dostoevsky's description of Dr. Hindenburg's funeral:

Although this man who served everyone is an isolated case, he united the entire town over his coffin. These Russian peasant women and poor Jewish women [russkije baby i bednye evreiki] kissed his feet in the coffin together, together they bunched up near him, together they wept. . . . The whole town sees him off, the bells of all churches toll, prayers are being sung in all tongues. The pastor speaks with tears in his eyes over the open grave. The rabbi stands nearby, waiting for the pastor to finish, then takes over and gives his speech and sheds the same tears. And in this moment this very same "Jewish question" is nearly resolved! Indeed, the pastor and the rabbi have joined together in common love, they have nearly embraced each other over the grave in full view of Christians and Jews. (Ps, 25:91, 92; emphasis in the original)

Striking an intonation similar to the one resounding through the conclusion of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky here elevated "common love" to a spiritual note the Jews and the Christians share, or could share, as communities that thirstily await the Messiah—in his first or second coming. In the Pushkin speech, created some three years later while Dostoevsky was already working on *The Brothers Karamazov*, he called on his compatriots "to strive to introduce a final reconciliation into European contradictions . . . for the Russian soul to embrace . . . all of our brothers" (Ps, 26:148).

Why did Dostoevsky not make Captain Snegiryov a Jew? Why did he choose instead to sketch a model of persecution and scapegoating (the Snegiryov episodes) and to link it to the history of anti-Semitism and popular anti-Judaic beliefs (Liza's discussion of the blood libel)? One cannot, of

course, answer this question without a measure of speculation. The fact remains, inspiring and appealing Jewish characters are glaringly absent from Dostoevsky's fiction.⁵² Creating profound Jewish characters became the task of the Russian writers who came after Dostoevsky, first Anton Chekhov and Vladimir Korolenko, then the neorealists—Leonid Andreyev, Ivan Bunin, Maxim Gorky, Aleksandr Kuprin, and others. Some of these Russian writers were less philo-Semitic than others in their private lives, but in their works they consistently tried to ease the great burden of Russian guilt by drawing moving portraits of the Jews and decrying their compatriots' anti-Semitism. Among the generations of Russian writers that succeeded Dostoevsky in the 1880s and the 1900s, many believed that Russian-Jewish (and Christian-Judaic) reconciliation required an admission of Russian and Christian guilt. Following in Dostoevsky's footsteps, today's Russian writers continue to struggle with themselves as they create Jewish characters.⁵³ It would serve these Russian writers well to reread not only *The Brothers Karamazov* but also the works of Vladimir Solov'ev, who obtained his universalist inspiration from Dostoevsky's art. "The Jews have always treated us in accordance to the Jewish faith," Solov'ev wrote in 1884, "on the contrary, we, the Christians, have yet to learn to treat the Jews in the Christian fashion."⁵⁴

Notes

An early version of this essay was presented at the symposium "Focus on *The Brothers Karamazov*" at Yale University on October 3, 1999. I am most grateful to the organizer, Robert Louis Jackson, for encouraging me to undertake this study, giving me an opportunity to participate in the symposium, and commenting on several drafts of this essay. A later version was delivered as "The Judaic Question in Dostoevskii's *The Brothers Karamazov*," at "Dostojevskij und Deutschland," the eleventh symposium of the International Dostoevsky Society at Baden-Baden, on October 5, 2001. I thank the organizers, Horst-Jürgen Gerigk and Rolf-Dieter Kluge, for including me in the program.

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The epigraphs are taken from A. Z. Shteinberg, "Dostoevskii i evreistvo," *Versty* 3 (1928): 99 [translation mine]; and Leonid Tsyplkin, *Summer in Baden Baden*, trans. Roger and Angela Keys (London, 1987), 116.

1. All citations from Dostoevsky's Russian texts are from F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, 30 vols. (Leningrad, 1972–90), hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *Ps* with volume and page number. *Brat'ia Karamazovy* appears in volumes 14 and 15. I use a modified version of Constance Garnett's English translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York, 1957), hereafter cited as *BK* with page number. All other translations from the Russian are my own; they do not attempt to capture the artistry of the original but rather seek to be literal insofar as possible.

A number of scholars have written about Jewish topics in Dostoevsky's life and art. The following are works that will not be acknowledged elsewhere in this essay: D. V. Grishin, "Byl li Dostoevskii antisemitom?" *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia* 114 (1974): 73–88; Robert Louis Jackson, "A Footnote to *Selo Stepancikov*," *Ricerche Slavistiche* 17–19 (1970–72): 247–57; Robert Louis Jackson, "The Bathhouse Scene in *Notes from the House of the Dead*," *Literature, Culture, and Society in the Modern Age: In Honor of Joseph Frank*, special issue of *Stanford Slavic Studies* 4, no. 1 (1991): 260–68; Walter Kaufman, "Tolstoy versus Dostoevsky," *Existentialism, Religion, and Death: Thirteen Essays* (New York, 1976), 15–27; Joshua Kunitz, *Russian Literature and the Jew* (New York, 1929), 51–54; E. Levin, "Vladimir Solov'ev protiv antisemitizma," *Evrei v SSSR* 19 (January 1979): 418–38; M. Schwartz, "Dostoevsky and Judaism," *Jewish Review* 4 (April–June 1933): 57–63.

2. *Protokoly sionskikh mudretsov* was a forgery created in Paris by an anonymous author probably employed by the Okhrana, the Russian secret police. The first Russian public edition was put out by S. A. Nilus in 1905 and was followed by a second edition in 1911. The *Protocols* gained their worldwide notoriety in the late 1910s and early 1920s.

3. David I. Goldstein, *Dostoyevski and the Jews* (Austin, 1981), 131 (originally published as *Dostoevskii et les juifs* [Paris, 1976]); see also Leonid Grossman, *Isposved' odnogo evreia* (Moscow, 1924), 65–66.

4. See F. M. Dostoevskii, *Evreiskii vopros* (Moscow, 1995), 3–13; see also *Ps*, 25:75–93. Of the six sections in *Diary of a Writer* for March 1877 where Dostoevsky discusses the Jewish question, the publishers of this compilation have included only disgracefully edited versions of sections 1 ("Evreiskii vopros"), 2 ("Pro i contra"), and 3 ("Status in statu: Sorok vekov bytiia").

5. Ronald Hingley, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Works* (New York, 1978), 174–75.

6. I am paraphrasing Vladimir Nabokov's formulation about Chichikov in *Dead Souls*: "Chichikov himself is merely the ill-paid representative of the Devil, a traveling salesman from Hades, 'our Mr. Chichikov' as the Satan & Co. firm may be imagined calling their easy-going, healthy looking but inwardly shivering and rotting agent." Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol* (New York, 1961), 73.

7. A[rkadii] Gornfel'd, "Dostoevskii, Fedor Mikhailovich," in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 7 (St. Petersburg, n.d. [1906]), 311.

8. On the word *zhid* in Russian language and culture, see Henrik Birnbaum, "Some Problems with the Etymology and the Semantics of Slavic Zid 'Jew,'" *Slavica Hierosolymitana: Slavic Studies of the Hebrew University*, vol. 8 (1985): 1–11; and John D. Klier, "Zhid: Biography of a Russian Epithet," *Slavonic and East European Review* 60, no. 1 (1982): 1–15.

9. It is, for instance, difficult to "make sense" of Dostoevsky's flippant use of the noun *zhid* in his essay "Po povodu vystavki" ("On the Occasion of an Exhibition"), from *The Diary of a Writer for 1873*; see *Ps*, 21:71.

10. Gornfel'd, "Dostoevskii, Fedor Mikhailovich," 311; after a version of this essay had been delivered at the 2001 Dostoevsky symposium in Baden-Baden, Horst-Jürgen Gerigk kindly sent me the manuscript of a Russian translation of a long and fascinating paper by the Japanese Slavist Kennosuke Nakamura, "Dostoevskii i evreiskii vopros: Zametki" ("Dostoevskii and the Jewish question: Observations"), translated from the Japanese into Russian by Aleksei Potapov. The original version appeared in the Japanese-language collection *Nationalism in Contemporary Russian Culture*, ed. Haruko Yasuoka (Tokyo, 1998). Nakamura's paper makes an important contribution to the study of Dostoevsky's attitudes toward the Jews, and I can only regret that I did not learn about it earlier and that it is not available in English.

11. Joseph Frank, foreword to Goldstein, *Dostoyevski and the Jews*, xiv. In the final installment of his monumental Dostoevsky biography, which has come out since the original publication of this essay, Joseph Frank has devoted a chapter to Dostoevsky's writings on the Jewish question: see Frank, "The Jewish Question," *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 301–19. Committing several pages to Dostoevsky's riveting exchange with Avraam-Uria Kovner, Frank takes a less apologetic stance toward Dostoevsky's discursive anti-Semitism. Suggesting a model of "oscillation between advocacy and attack" (316), Frank asks himself and his readers if one might "view Dostoevsky as inwardly caught between the Christian-philanthropic ideals . . . and a need to find a scapegoat for the disappointments, frustrations, and social-economic upheavals that had plunged Russian life into turmoil since

the liberation of the serfs" (319). I wonder, however, if Frank does not underplay (willy-nilly?) the religious nature of Dostoevsky's Judeophobia. Consider this comment by Frank: "Nonetheless, [Dostoevsky] did not consider himself to be anti-Semitic out of religious animosity or unreasoning prejudice" (303).

12. Felix Dreizin, "Dostoevsky's 'Kike,'" in *The Russian Soul and the Jew: Essays in Literary Ethnocentrism*, ed. David Guaspari (Lanham, Md., 1990), 113.

13. Felix Philipp Ingold's work (*Dostojevskij und das Judentum* [Frankfurt am Main, 1981]) strikes me as the most balanced in its reasoning and the least befuddled by overarching theories. See also Gary Rosenshield, "Isai Fomich Bumshtein: The Representation of the Jew in Dostoevsky's Major Fiction," *Russian Review* 43, no. 3 (July 1984): 261–76; Rosenshield, "Dostoevskii's 'The Funeral of the Universal Man' and 'An Isolated Case' and Chekhov's 'Rothschild's Fiddle': The Jewish Question," *Russian Review* 56, no. 4 (October 1997): 487–504; and Michael Katz, "Once More on the Subject of Dostoevsky and the Jews," in *People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity*, ed. Jeffery Rubin-Dorsky and Shelley Fisher Fishkin (Madison, 1996), 231–44.

14. P. Torop, "Dostoevskii: Logika evreiskogo voprosa," *Sbornik statei k 70-letiiu prof. Iu. M. Lotmana* (Tartu, 1992), 310.

15. Katz, "Once More," 242. On the idea of "two Dostoevskis," see D. S. Merezhkovskii, "Prorok russkoi revoliutsii: K iublieiu Dostoevskogo," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii D. S. Merezhkovskogo*, vol. 11 (St. Petersburg–Moscow, 1911); D. S. Merezhkovskii, *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii: Zhizn', tvorchestvo i religiiia*, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii D. S. Merezhkovskogo*, vol. 7 (St. Petersburg–Moscow, 1912); and D[avid] Zaslavskii, "Dostoevskii o evreiaikh (K stoletiiu so dnia rozhdeniia)," *Evreiskii vestnik* 1 (1 April 1922): 6–10.

16. Leonid Grossman, *Isповед' odnogo evreia* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1924). Grossman's book is available in English translation; see *Confession of a Jew* (a more accurate translation of Grossman's Russian title would be *Confession of One Jew*), trans. Ranne Moab (New York, 1975); the Russian text was recently reprinted: *Isповед' odnogo evreia* (Moscow, 1999). Aleksandr Melikhov's novel *Isповед' evreia* (*Confession of a Jew*) adapts its title from Grossman's book; Melikhov's novel was published in *Novyi mir* in 1993 and then in book form in 1994; see Aleksandr Melikhov, *Isповед' evreia* (St. Petersburg, 1994). Leonid Tsyplkin's novel *Leto v Badene* (1982) also takes its inspiration from Grossman's *Confessions of a Jew*: it was recently brought into public view by Susan Sontag's "Loving Dostoevsky," *New Yorker*, 1 October 2001, 98–105. Tsyplkin's novel is available in English translation: *Summer in Baden-Baden*, trans. Roger and Angela Keys (London, 1987; New York, 2001); it was reprinted in Moscow in 1999 and 2003. Peter Scotto's essay explores Jewish questions in Grossman's influential study

"Lermontov and the Cultures of the East"; see "Censorship, Reading, and Interpretation: A Case Study from the Soviet Union," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 109, no. 1 (1994): 61–70.

17. See, in particular, Leonid Grossman, "Dostoevskii i iudaizm," *Is-poved' odnogo evreia* (Moscow, 1924), 165–81.

18. Gary Saul Morson, "Dostoevsky's Anti-Semitism and the Critics: A Review Article," *Slavic and East European Journal* 27, no. 3 (1983): 312. Morson reworked this article for publication in a collection of essays by Jewish scholars; see Gary Saul Morson, "Apologetics and Negative Apologetics: Or, Dialogues of a Jewish Slavist," in *People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity*, ed. Jeffery Rubin-Dorsky and Shelley Fisher Fishkin (Madison, 1996), 78–97.

19. Morson, "Dostoevsky's Anti-Semitism," 310.

20. V. S. Solov'ev, "Russkii natsional'nyi ideal," *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 5, 1883–1897 (St. Petersburg, n.d.), 383.

21. Maude McLeod and David Isay, "I Did Not Join the Hebrew Faith—I Returned," *New York Times Magazine*, 29 September 1999, 116; emphasis in the original. I thank my wife, Karen E. Lasser, for drawing my attention to this interview.

22. For a useful account of the history of Judeoizers in Russia, see "Zhidovstvuiushchie" in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 7, ed. L. Katsnel'son and D. G. Gintsburg (St. Petersburg, n.d. [1906]), 582–88. Small Judaic communities of Russian peasants had survived into the post-World War II Soviet period and were persecuted by the Soviet authorities. For instance, see an account by the then members of the Helsinki Group, including Vlasimir Slepak and Anatoly Sharansky, of a visit to the *selo* (village) of Il'inka, in the Talovaia district of the Voronezh province, in June 1975: "Soobshchenie o Sele Il'inka," *Gruppa Sodeistviia vypolnenniu Khel'sinskikh soglashenii v SSSR. Dokumenty. Vol'noe slovo*, vol. 25–26 (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), 108–10.

23. See V. S. Solov'ev, "Tri rechi v pamiat' Dostoevskogo," in *Filosofia iskusstva i literaturnaia kritika*, ed. R. Gal'tseva and I. Rodnianskaia (Moscow, 1991), 250–51. See Marina Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev: The Art of Integral Vision* (New Haven, 1997), 28–34.

24. Solov'ev, "Russkii natsional'nyi ideal," 382–83.

25. V. S. Solov'ev, *Evreistvo i khristianskii vopros* (Moscow, 1884), 9; see also 6. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt discusses Solov'ev's writings on Jews and Judaism in "Vladimir Solov'ev on Spiritual Nationhood, Russia and the Jews," *Russian Review* 56, no. 2 (April 1997): 157–77.

26. Shteinberg, "Dostoevskii i evreistvo," 103.

27. See Nathan Rosen's passionate review of David I. Goldstein's *Dostoyevski and the Jews*, *Dostoevsky Studies* 3 (1982): 200–3.

28. Merezhkovskii, "Prorok russkoi revoliutsii," 195–96.

29. Grossman, *Is-poved' odnogo evreia*, 167.

30. P. A. Berlin, "Dostoevskii i evrei," *Novyi zhurnal* 83 (1966): 266.

31. See Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (Philadelphia, 1943), 109–55; see also "Krov'," in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 9, ed. A. Garkavi and L. Katsnel'son (St. Petersburg, n.d. [1906]), 866–69; and John Doyle Klier, "The Occult Element in Russian Judeophobia," *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), 417–49.

32. See "Velizhskoe delo," in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 5, ed. A. Garkavi and L. Katsnel'son (St. Petersburg, n.d. [1906]), 398–406.

33. On the subject of ritual murder in Dostoevsky, see Goldstein, *Dostoyevski and the Jews*, 95–98, 122–26, 155–59.

34. D. A. Khvol'son, *O nekotorykh obvineniakh protiv evreev: Istoricheskoe issledovanie po istochnikam* (St. Petersburg, 1861); D. A. Khvol'son, *Upotrebliaut li evrei khristianskuiu krov'?* (St. Petersburg, 1879).

35. Iakov Brafman, *Kniga Kagala: Materialy dlia izucheniia evreiskogo byta* (Vil'na, 1869); Iu. Gessen et al., eds., *Zapiska o ritual'nykh ubiistvakh (pripisyvaemaia V. I. Dal'iu) i ee istochniki* (St. Petersburg, 1914). The report, attributed to V. I. Dal', was originally published as *Rozyskanie o ubienii evreiami khristianskikh mladentsev i upotreblenii krovi ikh* (St. Petersburg, 1844). See John Doyle Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855–1881* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), 419; on the other two figures associated with the authorship of the 1844 Dal' report, see 495 n. 6. A leading Dostoevsky scholar, Boris Tikhomirov, has kindly shared with me his recent discovery, shedding new light on the possible source of Liza's information. Made in connection with the forthcoming description of Dostoevsky's personal library (reconstruction), Tikhomirov's finding will appear in *Nauchnoe opisanie biblioteki F. M. Dostoevskogo (rekonstruktsiia)* ed. N. F. Budanova (St. Petersburg, forthcoming 2003). Tikhomirov suggests that the book that Liza refers to is Ippolita Liutostanskii's *Vopros ob upotreblenii evreiami-sektatorami khristianskoi krovi dlia religioznykh tselei, v sviazi s voprosom ob otoshenii evreistva k khristianstvu vooobshche* (*The Question of the Use, by Jewish Sect Members, of Christian Blood for Religious Purposes, in Connection to the Question of the Jews' Attitudes to Christianity as a Whole*), 1st ed. (Moscow, 1876). I. Liutostanskii, a former Polish Catholic priest defrocked in 1867 and subsequently ordained as a Russian Orthodox priest, based his book on the dissertation he had written and defended while studying at an Orthodox seminary (about Liutostanskii and his career, see his own *Pokatannoe pis'mo Ippolita Liutostanskogo* [Kiev, 1911]). Tikhomirov traces Liza's reference to Dostoevsky's notebook for 1876–77, where the following entry is found: "'Moskovskie Vedomosti.' No. 296. Kniga ob upotreblenii evreiami khristianskoi krovi. Tsena 2 rub. Po Sadovoi u Korableva" (Dostoevsky, *Ps*, 24:296). Dostoevsky refers to an advertise-

ment printed in No. 296 of the newspaper *Moskovskie vedomosti*, announcing the publication and sale of Liutostanski's book, but not the name of its author. The nature of Dostoevsky's notebook entry points to his intention to purchase the book, although we do not know for a fact whether he did indeed purchase it. Since Liza specifically refers to "odna kniga" (one/a book), Tikhomirov's hypothesis seems more substantiated than the well-known contention that Liza refers to materials in the review *Grazhdanin* in 1878 (see Dostoevsky, *Ps*, 15:588). I take this opportunity to thank Boris Tikhomirov for his contribution.

36. "Kutaisskoe delo," in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia, Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 9, ed. A. Garkavi and L. Katsnel'son (St. Petersburg, n.d. [1906]), 863–65. For Dostoevsky's remarks, see *Ps*, 30:1:59.

37. Grossman's research is discussed in Goldstein, *Dostoyevski and the Jews*, 157–58, 217 n. 33.

38. Robert Louis Jackson elucidated the centrality of the *obraz-bezobrazie* opposition in Dostoevsky's poetics and aesthetics; see, in particular, his *The Art of Dostoevsky: Deliriums and Nocturnes* (Princeton, 1981), 304–18. I investigated the problem of linguistic dehumanization in "Metamorphoses of *bezobrazie* in Dostoevskij's *The Brothers Karamazov*: Maksimov-Von Sohn-Karamazov," *Russian Literature* 37 (1995): 93–108.

39. M. Gor'kii, "Eshche o 'karamazovshchine,'" in *F. M. Dostoevskii u russkoi kritike*, ed. A. Dmitrieva (Moscow, 1956), 396.

40. See Ingold, *Dostojewskij und das Judentum*, 88–95.

41. Morson, "Dostoevsky's Anti-Semitism," 310; Rosenshield, "Isai Fomich Bumshtein," 275. In a brief passage occurring in the context of an extensive analysis of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Frank points out that Alyosha's reply is "verisimilar, given the intellectual limitations of his background; and the fact that [Alyosha] does not simply affirm the truth [sic] of this charge may be considered a small concession to decency" (*Dostoevsky*, 669–70). Frank does state, without equivocation, that Dostoevsky's introduction of the topic of blood libel "leaves a permanent stain on his reputation" (669–70).

42. Another refraction of the finger motif is the account of the birth of the servant Grigory's son who is born with six fingers; I am grateful to Horst-Jürgen Gerigk for pointing this out.

43. One could also argue that toward the end of the novel, the motif of blood has gained further prominence: the bloody murder of old Karamazov, the servant Grigory's bloody wound, the blood on Dmitri's hands and clothes, and so on.

44. See René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, 1986), esp. chap. 2, "Stereotypes of Persecution." Originally published as *Le bouc émissaire* (Paris, 1982).

45. Berlin spoke about this process in "Dostoevskii i evrei."

46. *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia, 1988/5748 [the Jewish year]), 1272.

47. Solov'ev, *Evreistvo i khristianskii vopros*, 28.

48. Gary Rosenshield points to a connection between "The Funeral of 'The Universal Man'" and *The Brothers Karamazov* in his article, "Dostoevskii's 'The Funeral of the Universal Man,'" esp. 488, 492–94, 501.

49. In "Leskov and Dostoevsky, Parable and Icon," a section of her recent book, *Rewriting the Jew*, Gabriella Safran offered interesting comments on Dostoevsky's "Funeral of 'The Universal Man'" and "The Jewish Question"; see Safran, *Rewriting the Jew: Assimilation Narratives in the Russian Empire* (Stanford, 2000), 135–46.

50. See S. A. Ipatova, ed., "Neizdannnye pis'ma k Dostoevskomu [Letter of S. E. Lur'e]," *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, vol. 12 (St. Petersburg, 1996), 205–26. Of S. E. Lur'e's letters to Dostoevsky, nine letters and an envelope of the tenth have survived (they are at Institut russkoi literatury [Institute of Russian Literature], Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka, St. Petersburg); Dostoevsky is known to have written ten letters to Lur'e, of which three have survived and been published (see *Ps*, 29:81, 146, 150). See also Frank, *Dostoevsky*, 223–24, 316–17. The subject of Sof'ia Lur'e's relationship with Dostoevsky awaits its investigators.

51. My main source of information about Hindenburg is Sof'ia Lur'e's letter to Dostoevsky of February 13, 1877. A recent publication of Lur'e's letters to Dostoevsky mentions an obituary, published in the German-language *Sankt-Petersbourger Herold*, February 1877; see S. A. Ipatova, ed., "Neizdannnye pis'ma k Dostoevskomu."

52. A catalog of principal Jewish characters in Dostoevsky's fiction includes Isai Fomich Bumshtein in *Notes from the House of the Dead*, Achilles (Achilles) in *Crime and Punishment*, and Liamshin in *The Possessed*. In the early 1840s, Dostoevsky worked on a play to be titled *Zhid Iankel' (Iankel' the Yid)*, inspired by Nikolay Gogol's *Taras Bul'ba*.

53. I discuss the careers of three major representatives of Russian village prose, Viktor Astaf'ev, Valentin Rasputin, and Vasilii Belov, in connection with their writings about the Jews, in "Anti-Semitism and the Decline of Russian Village Prose," *Partisan Review* 3 (2000): 474–85.

54. Solov'ev, *Evreistvo i khristianskii vopros*, 3.