

police will be recruited from all strata of the population, and it will be an absolute obligation for every citizen to report any criticism of the régime. Seditious agitation will be treated as a shameful crime, comparable with theft or murder. Liberalism will be utterly extirpated and unquestioning obedience demanded from all. Liberty will, admittedly, be promised for some future time but it will never be granted.

On the other hand everything will be done to ensure the efficient functioning of society. Unemployment will be abolished and taxation will be proportionate to wealth. The interests of the small man will be furthered by the stimulation of small-scale industry. Education will be designed to train the young for the particular station in life for which each is destined. Drunkenness will be severely discouraged; and so will independence of thought.

All this will tend to keep the masses quiet and contented, and the example set by their rulers will help in this. The laws will be clear and unalterable; judges will be incorruptible and infallible. All the Jewish leaders will show themselves able, efficient, and benevolent. Above all, the sovereign will be a man of exemplary character; unsuitable heirs will be ruthlessly set aside. This Jewish ruler of the world will be seen to go freely among the people, accepting their petitions; nobody will realize that those who surround him are security police. His private life will be above reproach, he will bestow no favours on his relatives, he will possess no property. He will work constantly at the task of government. The result will be a world without violence or injustice, in which true well-being will be enjoyed by all. The peoples of the earth will rejoice in being so well governed; and so the kingdom of Zion will endure.

Such, then, is the plot attributed to those mysterious gentlemen, the Elders of Zion. It was first revealed to the public when a number of editions were published in Russia, between 1903 and 1907. The earliest is a version, slightly shortened at the end, which appeared in the St Petersburg newspaper *Znamya* (*The Banner*) from 26 August to 7 September 1903. *Znamya* was edited by P. A. Krushevan, the noted and militant antisemite. A few months before publishing the *Protocols*

he had instigated the pogrom at Kishinev in Bessarabia, in which forty-five Jews were killed and more than 400 injured and 1,300 Jewish houses and shops destroyed.

Krushevan does not reveal who sent or gave him the manuscript – only that it was a translation of a document originally written down in France and that the translator had entitled it *Minutes of the Meeting of the World Union of Freemasons and Elders of Zion*; for his part he called it *Programme for World Conquest by the Jews*. Some two years later the same version, but no longer truncated, appeared in the form of a booklet with the title *The Root of our Troubles* and the sub-title: 'Where the root is of the present disorder of society in Europe and especially in Russia. Extracts from the ancient and modern Protocols of the World Union of Freemasons'. This work was handed to the St Petersburg Censorship Committee on 9 December 1905; permission to print was given at once and the book was published the same month, in St Petersburg, under the imprint of the Imperial Guard. No editor's name was given but it is very likely that the editor was in fact a retired officer called G. V. Butmi, who was a close associate of Krushevan and like him a Bessarabian.

At that time – from October 1905 onwards – Butmi and Krushevan were busily helping to build up an extreme right-wing organization, the Union of the Russian People, commonly known as the Black Hundreds, with armed squads of toughs to assassinate radicals and liberals and to massacre Jews. In January 1906 this organization published a new edition of the pamphlet *The Root of our Troubles*, but this time bearing the name of Butmi and the title *The Enemies of the Human Race*, with the sub-title: 'Protocols extracted from the secret archives of the Central Chancellery of Zion (where the root is of the present disorder of society in Europe in general and of Russia in particular).' This edition appeared under the imprint no longer of the Imperial Guard but of a society of the deaf and dumb. Three further editions of this version appeared in 1906 and another in 1907, all in St Petersburg; another appeared at Kazan in 1906, with the title *Extracts from the Protocol of the Freemasons*.

*The Root of our Troubles* and *The Enemies of the Human Race* are cheap pamphlets meant for mass distribution. Quite

different is the edition of the *Protocols* that appeared as part of a book called *The Great in the Small. Antichrist considered as an imminent political possibility*, by a mystical writer, Sergey Nilus. The first two editions of this work, published in 1901 and 1903, did not contain the *Protocols*, but they were inserted in the third edition, published in December 1905 under the imprint of the local Red Cross at the imperial residence outside St Petersburg, Tsarskoe Selo. As we shall see, this edition was produced to influence Tsar Nicholas II, and it bears all the signs of its origin. It is elegantly printed, it forms part of a mystical work such as the Tsar loved to read; above all it abounds in reference to French events and personalities, whereas the Krushevan-Butmi version refers more to purely Russian affairs.

Nilus's book was passed by the Moscow Censorship Committee on 28 September 1905, but it was still in manuscript; even so it appeared in print about the same time as *The Root of our Troubles*. And it had made its mark before that. At that time Sergey Nilus was much in favour at the imperial court; as a result, the Metropolitan of Moscow ordered a sermon quoting his version of the *Protocols* to be read in all the 368 churches of Moscow. This was duly done on 16 October 1905, and the sermon was promptly reprinted in the right-wing newspaper *Moscovskia Vedomosti* – yet another edition of the *Protocols*, of a sort.

It was Nilus's version, not Butmi's, that was to become a force in world history. That did not even begin to happen in 1905, nor when further editions of *The Great in the Small* were published in 1911 and 1912. It happened only when the book reappeared, somewhat revised and enlarged, under the title *He is Near, At the Door . . . Here comes Antichrist and the reign of the Devil on earth*. And then it happened because of the moment: 1917.

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When one is confronted with a highly secret document ostensibly recording a series of lectures one naturally wonders who delivered the lectures to whom and on what occasion, and also how the document came to be seen by eyes for which it was