

Title: The Concept of the Jewish Antichrist and the rise of Anti-Semitism in Russia at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

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My study examines the identification of the Jews with the Antichrist in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russia, which contributed to growing anti-Semitic attitudes in Russian society and led to the belief that the Jews were responsible for the cataclysmic social, economic, and political unrest plaguing Russia in the years leading up to the Bolshevik Revolution.

The paper begins with a discussion of the reactionary writings of Konstantin Leontiev, who builds upon Dostoevsky's vision of an imminent socialist/revolutionary Antichrist, specifically connecting him with the Jews. Insisting that since "the Antichrist has to be a Jew, and that nowhere else are there as many Jews as are in Russia," Leontiev denounces attempts to grant Jews equal rights, claiming that doing so would only "open the way for the Antichrist." Sergei Nilus' publication of the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in 1903 further developed Leontiev's anti-Semitic assertions. In the work, Nilus makes it clear that he believes the Antichrist is imminent and that he will be the long-awaited Jewish messiah.

Lev Tikhomirov's fantastical apocalypse, *Last Days*, borrowed freely from his friend Nilus' writings. Predictably, Tikhomirov's Antichrist is Jewish, arising from a secretive Jewish-Masonic organization. However, Tikhomirov also envisions for a significant part of converted Jews an important eschatological role in the Antichrist's defeat.

While Tikhomirov and Nilus openly injected their racial biases into the Endtime scenario, Vladimir Soloviev, who in 1900 wrote the most elaborate and influential Russian account of the coming Antichrist, toned down the Antichrist's Jewishness by showing him to be a deceiver of the Jews as well. Moreover, Soloviev foresaw for the Jews the key role in overthrowing the Antichrist militarily. Thus, Soloviev's tale is unique in its author's ecumenical outlook, notably departing from the prevalent apocalyptic attitudes of the time, certainly with respect to the Jews.