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Vyacheslav Ivanov on the Jewry:
Philo-Semitic Narrative in Anti-Semitic Discourse

1. Those interested in an adequate understanding of Vyacheslav Ivanov's statements concerning the Jewish theme should first of all consider a peculiar nature of his discourse. Vyacheslav Ivanov's discourse was built in a supra-personal way — as a speech devoted to the eternal, divine and transpersonal Truth. However, the Truth for Ivanov was not a rational concept but rather a *myth* contained in ancient religious traditions. Therefore, his statements about the Truth were built as an articulation of messages, which seem to be authored not by Ivanov himself but by universal impersonal mythological tradition. As Lev Shestov profoundly and fairly noted, Ivanov aspired to express not his personal thoughts and feelings, but whatever the Truth had ordered him to think and feel¹.

Ivanov intentionally used to highlight the statements that were especially important for him, thus emphasizing their particular, supra-personally true nature. "I proclaim the dogma of the orthodoxy of art," he once (in his article "On Sect and Dogma") said (2, 613)². In fact, he could have said something like this about almost every text he had written, for he put the very presentation of the text — at least ideally — on the same footing as "proclaiming the dogma in the name of some or other authoritative collective tradition — be it the Church, Christianity, Art, Symbolism, or the Russian Soul, etc. It should be also noted that Ivanov usually interpreted the term "dogma" not as a specific, rationally formulated proposition (as does the Church's tradition), but as a mythological narrative.

Ivanov's text-generation process was aimed not only at creation of new texts within the established discourse space of the Russian literature,

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¹ Л. Шестов, Вячеслав Великолепный (К характеристике русского упадочничества), *Potestas Clavium (Власть ключей)*, М., 2007, с. 279.

² In this way I refer to the numbers of the volume and the page of the Ivanov's Collected writings in Russian: В. Иванов, *Собрание сочинений*, В 4 т. Bruxelles, 1971—1987: <http://www.v-ivanov.it/brussels/toc.htm>

but also at inducement of new, external discourses as well. The significance of Ivanov's Hymns to Dionysus, or his stylization of a Greek tragedy ("Tantalus"), or his mystical meditations (namely and specifically in his poem "Man"), or his translations of Novalis' works is not restricted to the introduction of some new thematic and stylistic elements into the Russian culture. They have also enriched the Russian culture with comprehensive discourse complexes, which made multilingual voices of Hellenism, Dionysism, Renaissance Hermeticism, German Romanticism, and etc. sound in Russian. Ivanov wanted to be the Russian Voice of Universal Culture.

The impersonalistic tendency to "displace a system-defined and psychological person" and thus promote an impersonalistic "objective artistic structure"³, to replace the author as an individual creator of an individual textual structure with the herald of supra-personal discourse is known to be one of the leading tendencies of the Modernism-epoch literature. Vyacheslav Ivanov imagined himself to be, and really was such a Modernist author — a herald of discourse. So he envisaged himself and was in his whole creative work, just as he envisaged himself and was in his declarations devoted to the Jewish theme.

2. Ivanov's article "On the ideology of the Jewish question" (1915) was his main and the only full-scale public declaration devoted to the Jewish theme. This article was thoroughly commented by S. Markish in the context of the general theme: Ivanov and Jewry⁴. Nevertheless, I consider his commentary to be far from exhaustive; besides, Ivanov's article itself, though small, is so extremely intense and complex in its content, full of ambiguities and mythological allusions, that it is immensely significant. Therefore, I believe it would be useful to analyze it in details.

The key point of the article "On the ideology of the Jewish question" is the restoration of the "forgotten" "holy and true Tradition" of Christianity that the Church is a direct heiress of Judaism: "the more vivid and profound the mind of a Christian is, the more vivid and profound is his realization that he is the son of the Church — I would not merely say: a Philo-Semite, but a real Semite in Spirit." (3, 308—309).

As Ivanov notes, not only are the sons of the Church "Semites in their spirit", i. e., Jews in their souls, but the Church itself as a mystical body, "the body of Abraham's semen" (3, 309), is, so to say, a collective

³ J. Mukaržovsky, *Kapitoly z česke poetiky*, Vol. 2. Praha, 1928, s. 294. On this theme see also: В. Паперный, Поэтика русского символизма: персоналогический аспект, В кн.: Андрей Белый: Публикации. Исследования, М., 2002, с. 153—168.

⁴ S. Markish, Vyacheslav Ivanov et les Juifs, *Cahiers du monde russe*, vol. 25, No 1 (Paris, 1984), p. 35—47.

mystical Jew. These Ivanov's declarations directly ascend to the Apostle Paul's words: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (*Galatians* 3: 29). However, this idea actually ascends only and solely to the *words* of the Apostle, whose "testimony" Ivanov specifically mentions (3, 309), but not to his *teaching*.

Paul claimed that the promise given to Abraham by the God "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (*Genesis* 12: 3) contains the foresight that "God would justify the heathen through faith" (*Galatians* 3: 8). Besides, when Paul — quite forcibly — interpreted another God's promise to Abraham "and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (*Genesis* 22: 18), he claimed that this promise does not refer to Jews but exclusively to Christ, as "He saith not, 'And to seeds', as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy seed', which is Christ." (*Galatians* 3: 16). This exegesis allows Paul to prove that, on the one hand, in case of newly converted pagans, the fulfillment of the "Law" (Torah's requirements) adopted by the initial Church — is unnecessary and even inappropriate, while, on the other hand, the Advent of Christ had cancelled the *Law* itself and replaced it with the *Faith*: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (*Galatians* 3: 13); "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (*Galatians* 3: 24–25). Being an exceptional "Abraham' seed", Christ turns the pagans — his new believers — into Abraham's heirs — apparently, not biologically, but in a religious and legal sense.

Yet, all these details of Paul's teaching are absolutely irrelevant for Ivanov. Ivanov is seeking — and finds — authoritative "evidence" presented by Paul (3, 309), which might, as he believes, allow him to avow *his own* mythological narrative, which describes the centuries-old history of Christian-Jewish relationship to be "an ancient truth of the Church" — to be a Dogma. The content of this Ivanov's narrative is as follows. Christianity and Judaism are two parts of the mystical body of the Church, which is at the same time "the true, though invisible, body of Christ, and, through Christ, the body of Abraham's semen". This body *was* holistic in its initial state and *will be* holistic at the End of Time. However, at a certain moment in sacred history, this mystical Judeo-Christian body split "like the veil of the Jerusalem Temple at the moment of the Death on the Cross", it "was torn in two; and the Jewish part is painfully seeking the whole, languishes and suffers from jealousy, and is bitterly angry with the other part, which, in turn, longs for reunification and entirety of the mystical Israel" (3, 309).

Ivanov builds his mythological narrative on the Judeo-Christian entirety and strife, as a sort of mystical love story, whose essence consists in peripetia of obvious enmity and hidden passion of the parties.

The role of the male protagonist of this story is assigned to the Church⁵. And the love of the Church to Jewry is described by Ivanov as the realization of all possible forms of the *male Eros*. This love is simultaneously a *sexual* love of a Groom for his betrothed Bride, and a *filial* love of a Son for his Mother (“the one in Church loves Mary, the one who loves Mary loves Israel as his Mother”), and a *brotherly* love for a descendant of the common Father (a son of the Church as “Abraham’s child” “through baptism” is presented as “in a mystical sense, a brother of Abraham’s offspring”).

The female character of Ivanov’s mythopoetic story on Jewish-Christian relationships is the Jewry, which is presented by him as the betrothed Bride of the Church. Explaining this pretty daring mythopoetic innovation, Ivanov depicts the Jewish attitude to the Church as a certain kind of the female Eros that expresses love via hatred. As Ivanov states it, “despite her secret and subconscious love” for Christ, her betrothed Groom, the Bride-Jewry “hates him” — but hates “with such a peculiar hatred that springs from love offence and jealousy, which the Hellenes defined as the negative face of Eros — “Anteros” (3, 309).

Being utmost brief, the text of the article “On the ideology of the Jewish question” does not allow for full comprehension of the sense of the mythopoetic construction presented above. Nonetheless, this sense can be reconstructed from the whole context of Ivanov’s writings of the period when the article was written.

In his poem “Man”, both in its text and the author’s commentaries to it, in his article “Thou art” (and its version “Anima”), as well as in many of his other texts, Ivanov develops a pretty peculiar mythology of the universal *androgyny*, interpreted by him both as nuptiality and ambisexuality. The God — in whom “the Heavenly Aphrodite couples with Logos in a nuptial bond and is winnowed by the breath of the Holy Spirit”⁶ — is androgynous. The Man (Anthropos), whose initial ambisexual entirety has been lost due to the Fall and who is eager to restore this entirety — through love, through Eros — is androgynous. The whole World Order is androgynous: the female Universe that broke away from God is afire

⁵ It is well-known that, in the Church tradition, the Church is personified by a female figure — the Wife or the Bride of God. Ivanov, however, speaks of the Church as the mystical body of Christ; therefore, the Church in the above description is a male figure.

⁶ В. Иванов, [Фрагмент комментария к поэме «Человек»], В кн.: Вячеслав Иванов: Человек: Приложение: Статьи и материалы, М., 2006, с. 9.

with passion and eager to merge with the male God again. In the poem "Man", Ivanov impressively depicts an androgynous globe with everything — inanimate objects, animals and humans — overwhelmed with a powerful sexual drive. Female vaginal sexuality and male phallic sexuality jointly represent the manifestation of the female Universe fervently striving for coitus with the male God. This God is described as Eros and as Hyperion-Sun that inseminates the world with the arrows of his rays⁷.

Through myth of Androgyny Ivanov also interprets the essence of religion. He describes it as a passionate erotic search of the humane *female* "ego" for the God's *male* "thou". "Psyche" — "Soul" — "Anima" — "Eve who rose from Adam's body while he was asleep" gets into a state of "orgiastic frenzy", "seeks after its Eros", "seeks after the rays of soul" emitted by "thou" — "the Groom" — "the Divine Center" — "the Absolute" — "Atman" — "Self" — "Son" — "Adam" — "Heaven" — "Heavenly Father" (3, 263, 265, 271—274).

As Ivanov states, the internal world of human personality is also androgynous. It is divided to the male orderly and conscious principle — *Mind* — and the female chaotic and unconscious principle — *Soul*. Mind represents the Logos, and Soul is both Fallen Sophia of the Gnostic myth (who departed from the God, fell into the chaotic material world and was distorted) and chthonic Aphrodite. Just like Akkadian Ishtar, who used to kill her lovers and with whom chthonic Aphrodite was identified in ancient Greek mythology Soul is filled with a "husband-killing resistance to Logos" and fights against the Mind. However, the Soul's hatred for the Mind is merely a perversive form of her love for him, and at the End of Time they will enter to a holy marriage, that will also an embodiment of godly union of Heavenly Aphrodite and Logos⁸.

Apparently, Ivanov builds his narrative about Judeo-Christian relationships as a repetition, up to details, of his narrative about a complex bond between the Soul and the Mind. This case allows us to reconstruct the mythological prototype onto which Ivanov projects Jewry: he sees Jewry as an embodiment of the Fallen Sophia/chthonic Aphrodite. Therefore, Jewry behaves exactly like this dual character of Ivanov's mythological system.

⁷ В. Иванов, *Человек*, М., 2006, с. 27—39. Detailed analyses of Ivanov's mythology of universal Androgyny see in my article: V. Paperni, Мотивы христианского и еврейского гнозиса в тексте и контексте поэмы Вяч. Иванова «Человек», *Jews and Slaves*, vol. 21 (Jerusalem — Gdańsk, 2008), p. 237—239.

⁸ My detailed description of this mythopoetical complex see: V. Paperni, *op.cit.*, p. 235—238.

The mythology of the universal androgyny as a part of the mythopoetic system created by Ivanov summarized his *mystical gnosis* — his interpretation of the “secret” of Universe, Man, and God. And formulating the narrative on the Judeo-Christian relationships in terms of this mythology meant that a *particular* “secret” of the Judeo-Christian fate is nothing less than an aspect of the *general* “secret” of the absolute Fate: Man and Universe separated from God at the Beginning of the Time, and they must make their long and painful way back to Him. In this context, Christianity symbolically represents Man and Universe as those who have already come back to God and merged with him. Jewry and Judaism symbolically represent Man and Universe as those who have departed from God — as the *infidels*. These infidels have a secret desire to return to God but are *still* infidels in their current state.

As we see, Ivanov's *narrative* on the Judeo-Christian relationships is expressly *Philo-Semitic*: in its subjective intention, it is the narrative of why Christians are supposed to, and, with rare exceptions, do love Jews. However, the *discourse* this narrative is submerged into reveals fundamental elements of the *Anti-Semitic* discourse of the Christian Church. The ecclesiastical Anti-Semitism is based on the doctrine, according to which Jews *must* admit that Christ is the Messiah and the God. Nevertheless, they not only avoid fulfilling this obligation, they even dare hate Christ and the Church. At the End of History they will join the Church, but now Jews are infidels. This basic presupposition of ecclesiastical Anti-Semitism is fully accepted by Ivanov.

The Anti-Semitism of the Church, unlike other forms of Christian Anti-Semitism, is well known to have a strong propensity to representing itself as a kind of a religious loving concern about the fate of Jews, whose rejection of Christ ruins their souls. This concern is especially typical for the Catholic Church (sf. the fact that up until 1955 the Catholic mass contained a special appeal for converting “infidel Jews”). Ivanov's conception of the Church was universal and ecumenical, i.e., in fact, the Catholic one. In this aspect, he followed Vladimir Solovyev, who had joined the Roman Church — and so did Ivanov in 1926 in Rome. In his article “On the ideology of the Jewish question”, Ivanov especially emphasized Vladimir Solovyev's “affectionate love for Jewry” as an ideal model of the Christian attitude to Jews (3, 309). Ivanov's reference to Solovyev is highly significant. Just like Solovyev, Ivanov believed in a religious-political utopia of assembling all the Churches under the auspices of Rome and, just like Solovyev, he believed that Jewry will eventually join this Church alliance⁹.

⁹ See my interpretation of V. Solovyev's and his followers' attitude to the “religious fate” of Jewry: V. Паперні, Библия, иудео-христианская конфронтация и «новое религиозное

As I have already mentioned above, in Ivanov's opinion, the attitude of Jews to Christianity combines love and hatred, i.e., is ambivalent. In fact, however, it is *Ivanov's viewpoint* on the "Jewish question" that is ambivalent.

In his article, Ivanov emphasized the statement on the hostility of Jews towards Christianity as well as to the "Russian soul"¹⁰ though with certain reservations. Jews "curse us", they "do not want to love" "the Russian soul", to love "its sacred shrines", Ivanov writes (3, 309–310). "Personally I do not think that Jews really hate Christ nowadays" (3, 309), immediately adds Ivanov in a slyly ambiguous way, clearly implying that in the past the Jewish attitude to Christ was absolutely different. This implication justifies for him the fact that "the psychology of powerful representatives of the earthly church organization could have been poisoned with hostility towards Jews". However, Ivanov introduces another reservation right away. Church's representatives sometimes hated Jews, but "not the authentic ones, rather the current ones whom they suspected of being a bunch of Christ's enemies". And they hated Jews not because of their being Jews, but because Jews "seemed to them lacking the Jewish spirit, as if they ceased to be Abraham's semen" (3, 309). Ivanov was ready to admit, though quite indistinctly, the very fact of the existence of Anti-Semitism in the minds of Church hierarchs, and he was ready to condemn this Anti-Semitism, though not calling it by the name — to condemn it as an erroneous opinion, though. Together with that, according to Ivanov, the Church's intentions towards Jewry had always been correct. Moreover, Ivanov believes that the Church and its representatives have an absolutely legitimate right to judge which Jews are authentic and veritable, and thus, deserve Christian love, and which of them are not authentic, not veritable, and thus do not deserve this great love.

Distinguishing between authentic and non-authentic Jewry, in terms of distinguishing between Jews before and after Christ, as a rule, is one of the permanent elements of the traditional ecclesiastic Anti-Semitic discourse. And Ivanov actively uses this element. In the analyzed article, he compares "atheists among Jews" to "salt that has lost its strength" (3, 308). Several years later, in Baku, Ivanov said to his friend, a young Jew Moses Altman, who accentuated his "Anti-Zionism": "it was necessary for Jews to get disseminated throughout the world, but it is also necessary for you to settle again in Palestine at the end of time. But Zionism

сознание» в русской культуре конца XIX — начала XX в., *Jews and Slavs*, vol. 4 (Jerusalem — St Petersburg, 1995), p. 166–178.

¹⁰ See also the notes of young Ivanov on the problem of the relationships between Jews and Russians: К. Лаппо-Данилевский, Набросок Вяч. Иванова «Евреи и Русские», *Новое литературное обозрение*, № 21 (М., 1996), с. 182–190.

should turn into a religious movement. And your language should be Hebrew.”¹¹. Ivanov does not reveal why it was so “necessary” but this can be inferred from his general eschatological paradigm. Ivanov accepted this paradigm that emerged from the New Testament in its specific form, which Vladimir Solovyev gave to it in his “Story about Anti-Christ” (1900).

3. Ivanov’s attitude towards Jewry was characterized by demonstrative, stressed Philo-Semitism. Ivanov was one of the first representatives of the Russian intellectual milieu, who used to support Zionism as a movement devoted to the national revival of the Jewish people on the Land of Israel. Ivanov emphatically supported the revival of the Hebrew culture. He translated poems by a leading Hebrew poet of his time Haim Nachman Bialik’s into Russian, and this fact reflects his real, vital interest in the New Hebrew culture¹². Ivanov with enthusiasm supported revival of the Hebrew language that was for him, as the language of the Scripture, the holy language. It is, thus, significant that Ivanov’s poem “Man” contains a description of a mystical vision of Jesus Christ as a gigantic Cosmic Man (“*Cosmic Anthropos*”), whose forehead bears Hebrew letters:

I saw *Aleph*, I saw *Beth* —
Dreadful light! —
And above the giant’s brow,
I dare not read up to *Tav*
The scroll of glory
Of the Son of Man¹³.

Explaining this passage in his Commentaries to the poem, Ivanov wrote that he meant the Cabbala doctrine that “the holy alphabet is written on the human’s body: the list of letters represents the list of secrets of the human being”¹⁴.

Ivanov valued highly not only the Jewish mystics of the language, but also the Jewish mystical tradition as whole, though he knew it quite su-

¹¹ М. Альтман, *Разговоры с Вячеславом Ивановым*, СПб, 1995, с. 52.

<http://www.v-ivanov.it/altman/toc.htm>

¹² See on this theme: Р. Тименчик, З. Копельман, Вячеслав Иванов и поэзия Х. Н. Бялика, *Новое литературное обозрение*, № 14 (М., 1996), с. 102—115; В. Horovits, “Russian-Zionist cultural cooperation, 1916—1918: Leib Jaffe and Russian intelligentsia”, *Jewis social studies: History, Culture, Society*, vol. 13, #1 (Fall 2010), pp. 87—107.

¹³ В. Иванов, *Человек*, с. 48.

¹⁴ В. Иванов, *Человек*, с. 107. On the sources of the cited passage from the poem “Man” and of this commentary in the Bible and in the Jewish mystics see: V. Paperni, Мотивы христианского и еврейского гнозиса в тексте и контексте поэмы Вяч. Иванова «Человек», с. 240—242.

perfidiously and incompletely and most of his knowledge about it was, so to say, “second-hand”. He included into his mythopoetic constructions a significant number of motives derived from the Jewish mystics. As he believed, the “secrets” revealed by Jewish mystics are an important component of the global secret knowledge (gnosis) of God, Universe and Man¹⁵.

For Ivanov, the brotherhood of *blood* was the most important mystical secret of the Judeo-Christian entirety, and he was ready to interpret this brotherhood quite literally. It is characteristic in this occasion that in May 1905 Ivanov was one of organizers of a very special ceremony of communion with Jewish blood in a very special place for such event — in the private apartment of a Symbolist poet Nikolai Minsky in Saint Petersburg. Drops of blood from a hand of a young Jew was poured into a glass of wine, and then the drink was drunk little by little by Ivanov and his friends¹⁶. This shocking and strange rite should have complemented a traditional Eucharist of the Church. Its symbolism was based on the concept of the Jewish-Christian unity as a Brotherhood in Blood, which is equally the Blood of Christ and the Jewish Blood. At the same time, it was intended to be an alternative (but very provocative and ambivalent alternative) to the blood libel — the myth that Jews use Christian blood (the blood libel, as it is well-known, was widespread in Russia before the World War I).

Ivanov’s general attitude to Jewry was symptomatically expressed in his polemics with S. Dimanstein, the leader of “Yevseksia” (the Jewish national organization within the Communist Party of Russia) in early Soviet years. Ivanov appeared in official debates to defend the Hebrew language, the Hebrew culture and the Hebrew theater “Habima” arguing against the demands of “Yevseksia” to close the “Habima”, to ban the Hebrew language and culture as bourgeois ones and to preserve the Jewish culture only in Yiddish¹⁷. No doubt, in this argument with the “Yevseksia” leader, as well as in his debate with the “anti-Zionist” Altman, Ivanov was deeply pleased represent himself as a true advocate of “authentic” Jewry against “current” Jewry. Unlike those Jews, who had lost their way, he — a Russian Christian — definitely knew what authentic Jew should be like.

¹⁵ See on this theme: *ibidem*, с. 232–234, 236–237, 240–243.

¹⁶ As L. Katsis has reminded (see: Л. Кацис, *Кровавый навет и русская мысль*, М., Иерусалим, 2006, с. 292) V. Rozanov told about this event in his book: «Обонятельное и осязательное отношение евреев к крови», and the part of the book with this story was firstly published by Rozanov in 1913 in the journal «Новое время»

¹⁷ A description of this argument see: П. Тименчик, З. Копельман, *op.cit.*, с. 105–107.

Nevertheless, Ivanov's Philo-Semitism had its distinct and clear-cut limits. These limits exhibited themselves whenever Ivanov's own reasoning or certain social circumstances forced him to confront Anti-Semitism. As we have already seen, Ivanov refused to recognize the ecclesiastical Anti-Semitism as such, partly interpreting it as a peculiar form of Philo-Semitism, and partly considering it to be a series of excesses or errors. The only case of Ivanov's direct, openly and unambiguous condemnation of Anti-Semitism is presented in his article "On the ideology of the Jewish question". In the beginning of the article, he stresses his opposition to the "ideology of spiritual Anti-Semitism", which "ascribed many excellent and brilliant qualities to Aryans [...] and saw nothing but negative energy in the Semitic influence on Aryans and impurity of the Aryan nature". Ivanov criticizes this ideology as "God-fighting and implicitly anti-Christ". Besides, he calls it a "wooden Trojan horse made in Germany", meaning that it is the ideology infused into Russian minds by Germans, who implemented it in order to weaken Russia, which fights against them (3, 308).

M. Bezrodnij, who had analyzed this problem in details, noted that Ivanov's attacks against the racist Anti-Semitism of the Aryan doctrine were aimed at a specific Russian supporter of this doctrine — Emilii Metner, Ivanov's colleague and ideological contender in the "Musaget" publishing house¹⁸. The poisoned arrows of Ivanov's criticism were shot at Metner as a betrayer of Christianity, as a Germanophile and as German by birth.

It is quite typical for Ivanov to attribute — not without pleasure, I guess — "atheists among Jews, the ones ashamed of their kinship, who are like salt that has lost its strength" to the ranks of those who "rejoiced" "newly fashionable" racist Anti-Semitism (3, 308). He does not mention any specific names of these Jewish Anti-Semites, but the general context of his statements devoted to the "Jewish question" reveals what he implies. Ivanov condemns unauthentic, "current" Jewry. This Jewry rejects the mission it is destined for (destined by Christianity, of course); it does not limit its interests with its own, purely Jewish matters, but tries to get involved in the life of the Christian society and Christian culture. Such cosmopolitan Jewry deserves disapproval and disdain, Ivanov believes.

It is worth mentioning Ivanov's assessment of Andrei Bely's (in his Anti-Semitic article "The Stamped culture") and later Metner's attacks on "the Jewish predominance" in Russian culture. As they proclaimed, Jews spoil the Russian culture and the Russian language by introducing the

¹⁸ М. Безродный, Вячеслав Иванов и «Мусагет»: заметки к теме, Вячеслав Иванов и его время: Материалы VII международного симпозиума, Вена, 1998. Wien, 2002, с. 419.

spirit of platitude and bourgeoisie, the spirit of “stock exchange”, the spirit of all-embracing thirst for profit. In his article “Vyacheslav Ivanov and ‘Musaget’” M. Bezrodnj referred to several archival materials which testify to Ivanov’s consent with Bely’s and Metner’s attacks; he also published several Anti-Semitic remarks found in Ivanov’s letters to A. R. Mintslova — namely, his lamentations about “Jewish obstinateness and pushiness” and “Jewish slyness and intrusiveness” of one Jewish lady — their mutual acquaintance attacks¹⁹. As we see here, in his private epistolary dialogue with Mintslova, who was an Anti-Semite and his partner in his occupation in theosophy, Ivanov did not consider it necessary to stand upon ceremony and revealed the habitual and private aspect of his attitude to Jews, which he tried not to express in public. Such small displays of habitual Anti-Semitism might seem negligibly insignificant and by no means spoiling the showy portrait of Ivanov as the friend to Jewry, Zionism and the Hebrew language. Nevertheless, they are notable as they crack open the door to the usually closed sphere of Ivanov’s purely private assessments.

Philo-Semitism was a part of the *public* image that Ivanov presented to the society. On the other hand, his individual, private personality hidden behind this image possessed certain Anti-Semitic reflexes. And Ivanov revealed these Anti-Semitic reflexes not only in separate “uncontrolled” Anti-Semitic utterances, but also in the fact that certain elements of Anti-Semitic discourse are the basic ones for Ivanov Philo-Semitic narrative.

A speaking subject is more or less able to freely choose themes for his narratives. He is also able to control their content more or less efficiently, able not to say what he does not want to tell. However, the choice of discourse cannot be really free. A discourse of a speaking subject directly and non-reflexively expresses the system of values that is integrally inherent to him. The fact that Ivanov’s Philo-Semitic narrative basically grows from an Anti-Semitic discourse indicates sharp internal contradictions, which characterize Ivanov’s attitude to Jewry. Ivanov both loves and hates Jewry. And when Ivanov speaks about a combination of love and hatred in the Jewish attitude to Christianity, he, in fact, speaks about himself, transferring, according to the well-known psychological law, his attitude to the object onto the object itself.

4. In a broad context of the European history of the 20th century, Ivanov’s protest against the German racist Anti-Semitism, based on an Aryan myth, seems to be almost prophetic and may be assessed as his

¹⁹ *ibidem*, c. 417—418.

greatest merit. Yet, this protest looks absolutely different in a narrower historical context, in which it was presented.

Ivanov wrote his article "On the ideology of the Jewish question" in 1915 for the collection "Shield" conceived by its initiators as a joint protest of the outstanding representatives of Russian intelligentsia against brutal campaign which fell upon Russian Jewry after Russia had entered the World War. In the course of this campaign that was initiated by civil and military authorities and received broad public support, Jews were accused of sympathizing with the German enemy and even of mass espionage in favor of it. As a result, mass exile of Jewish families from the front-line area, accompanied by brutal violence, took place. Jewish periodicals, both in Hebrew and in Yiddish were closed (in June 1915). The very fact of Ivanov's participation in the "Shield" collection may be naturally interpreted as a demonstration of his protest, though in some way a *silent* one. Ivanov did not say a word about the Anti-Semitic *practice* of violence and prosecutions that was loudly shouting about itself from the pages of Russian newspapers. Moreover, his reaction was indistinct and ambiguous: some Anti-Semites are spiritual agents of Germany but, on the other hand, "Jewry with rare exception" "does not want to love the Russian soul" (3, 309) — so, everything is possible...

Ivanov's explicit refusal to confront a brutal reality of sufferings, which fell upon Jewry due to Anti-Semitism, requires explanation. As far as I can judge, the roots to this refusal not so much lie in a peculiar nature of his attitude to Jewry as in the escapism that characterized his thinking and his literary discourse. Ivanov did not want to wonder in the darkness of reality. He abandoned brutal reality for the subtle world of ideas, the world of enlightened mythological images, the world of shades of ancient cultures where the myth reigned, where the mystics searched for occult secrets, where Aphrodite coupled with Logos in a divine syzygy and where Jewish and Christian souls engaged in their complicated love play. Ivanov spoke a lot and with gusto of tragedy in the myth and literature, of Oedipus tragedy and the tragedy of Dostoevsky's characters, but he had simply nothing to say about real-life terror and the horrors of victims of violence. He could have debated "the Jewish question" with Metner, Altman and even with a *comrade* from "Yevseksia", because he could argue with them and against them about pure ideas. Yet, he did not argue with extremist Anti-Semitic attacks against Jews that were committed by his close friend and disciple P. A. Florensky and his fellow V. V. Rosanov (Anti-Semitism of both of these Russian philosophers reached the level of direct instigation to violence against Jews). Why didn't he protest? He tried to avoid a real struggle that could have engaged him in real-life con-

flicts; he did not want to lose his friends and to shake off his contemplative calmness. In 1915, when racist Anti-Semitism was still a pure idea, Ivanov argued against it. Conversely, he kept silent in 1930s, when this Anti-Semitism became a frightening practice of mass violence. In 1934 Ivanov's young Jewish friend E. Shor invited him to join a collective protest against nazi prosecutions of Jews. Ivanov rejected this proposition. As D.Segal (who published the Shor's and Ivanov's letters related to this fact) explained, in this case Ivanov submitted to the Church discipline in the time, when the Catholic Church preferred to avoid direct confrontation with the Nazis²⁰. I don't believe that such explanation is correct. The Church did not prohibit to his private members to protest. This case is very simple: Ivanov did not want ...

Ivanov lived in Rome during World War II. He witnessed the deportation of Roman Jews who were taken deathwards in October 1943. Later, just before Rome was liberated by Allies (in June 4th 1944), Ivanov wrote a poem connected to this event "To whom the Hellene's speech is dark..." (3, 173–174). The poem was included to his poetic cycle "Roman Diary, 1944" and dated by May 17th. This poem is thematically divided into two distinctly antithetic parts. In the first part of the poem (the first three quatrains), the author pathetically declares that, despite the schemes of the Hell, the results of God's constructive activities appear in the Universe, and the Jacob's ladder along which the Angels descend and ascend Earth connects Earth to Heaven.

Hope! An apparent non-construction
Is evidence of Someone's building,
Though the inferno's play
Of hellish forces conceals from eye
The face of angels, who aforeside
Descended to the one, who slept in Bethel,
Downstairs from the sky, and, all creation
Connecting to the sky, ascended.

In the second part of the poem (the last quatrain), the author turns to low and base human deeds, and his tone becomes sentimentally doleful:

And we know nothing of Bethel;
We see that Herod is still reigning,
Rachel her children is lamenting,
A ditch is dug at each one's feet.

²⁰ D. Segal, Вячеслав Иванов и семья Шор, *Cahiers du Mond russe*, vol. 35 (Paris, 1994), No 1–2, p. 349–351.

The motive of the “ditch” introduces the theme of massacres committed by Germans. These murders are presented both as the Jewish Holocaust (the murdered are “Rachel’s children”) and as a worldwide catastrophe that endangers “everyone”. It is also important that Ivanov depicts modern massacres as a repetition of the Slaughter of the Innocents conducted upon Herod’s decree — a terrible but inevitable event predestined by God himself and prophesied by Jeremy: Herod “sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof... Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, “In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.” (*Mathew* 2: 16–18). The aim of Herod’s Slaughter of the Innocents was, as the Evangelist claims, an attempt to kill the infant Jesus.

This circumstance is extremely important for understanding this Ivanov’s text: having repeated the thesis of his article “On the ideology of the Jewish question” on the Anti-Christian nature of German Anti-Semitism, Ivanov in his poem “To whom the Hellene’s speech is dark...” accuses Germans, who slaughtered Jews, of an attempt to slaughter Christ. Thus, a horrible reality of life is being cleared of the concreteness of life and turns into a pure idea, a sterile mythopoetic image of innocent sufferings that are human destiny. People have forgotten God, they hate God and “do not know about Bethel” — do not know about the angels scurrying about between the Heaven and the Earth in order to connect “all creation” with the Creator.

There is nothing new in all that. Hence, there is nothing to protest against. And therefore, there is only one thing for the poet to do: to escape, to overcome a painful impression of horrible misfortunes of individuals in order to give himself up to sublime sorrow over their common pitiful destiny.