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## Abrogation of the Russian-American Trade Treaty of 1832 and the U.S. Press

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### Abstract

*In December 1911 the American Special Ambassador to Russia Curtis Guild informed the Imperial Russia about the decision made by his Government to abrogate the Russian-American Trade Treaty of 1832. That was the result of a large-scale campaign organized in the United States by prominent Jews which lasted for several months in that country. The main reason for denunciation of the Treaty was the accusation of the Russian Empire that she discriminated the American fellow-citizens of Jewish nation who wanted to arrive in that country but were not treated on an equal basis with other foreigners who came to Russia. That was understood by the leaders of the campaign as violation of Article I of the Trade Treaty. However, the position of the Russian officials in that question was very clear and firm when they appealed to Article II of the same Treaty that proclaimed that foreigners who arrived in Russia had to obey the laws of the Russian Empire and the same was true for Russians who came to the United States. For the Russian officials it meant the implementation of the Russian passport rules which restricted entry to some groups of people. So the ambiguous interpretation of the Treaty became that stumbling block that was followed by termination of the trade agreement between the two countries. The article aims to analyze the materials published in the New York Times - one of the most influential American newspapers - that described the campaign which was initiated by a pressure group of American prominent Jews. We would like to assess what kind of information and possible interpretation of the matter the newspaper offered for its readers and how unbiased it was in describing all reasons and details of it.*

Keywords: Russia, the United States of America, Russian-American trade, abrogation of the trade treaty, Russian-American relations

### 1. Introduction

The development of Russian-American trade relations in the XIXth century was very slow. It took several decades for the American Government to obtain conclusion of a U.S.-Russian Treaty of Navigation and Commerce with the Russian Empire in 1832. That treaty signed by Count C. De Nesselrode, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and U.S. Ambassador J. Buchanan provided general bilateral trading rights as well as most-favored-nation treatment, and regulated trade

relations between the two countries for eighty years. In 1911 the U.S. Congress dissolved it being under durable heavy pressure of lobbying campaign instigated by a group of bankers who were against of the Russian policy to Jews (former Russian nationals whose rights were limited in that country).

Whereas in the XIXth century Russia had trade agreements and conventions with numerous countries including (besides the main European powers) Venezuela, Persia, Hawaiian Isles, Greece, Egypt, Kongo, Luxemburg, Mexico, Mongolia, Peru, etc., she had only one treaty of such kind with the United States of America. The full text of it was reissued in the official publication of the Russian trade treaties for the period of the XIXth century published by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1912. However, the United States were not even mentioned in the Ministry's publication of 1915.

This should not be interpreted in such a way that Russia was not interested in fostering trade relations with the United States, but was due to the fact that her main commercial partners at that period were the leading countries of Western Europe.

At the beginning of the XXth century the United States of America were increasing their exports to Russia and always had positive trade balance with that country. By 1910 the United States was the third main exporter (after Germany and Great Britain) to Russia and considered Russian market as one of the most promising at that time.

From this point of view, and taking into account American trade and commercial perspectives in Russia, the denunciation of the Russian-American trade treaty was illogical and could not be of any commercial benefit for the latter. Moreover, it could worsen economic and political relations between the two countries and change dramatically the trade terms between them instigating the so called "tariff war". This was obvious for the Russian and American officials, but all the attempts of the American President to withstand the campaign and to avoid the abrogation of the treaty were in vain.

The whole political situation in the United States that preceded the denunciation of the U.S.-Russian Treaty of Navigation and Commerce of 1832, the debates in the House of Representatives, as well as the respond to the abrogation in America, Russia and European countries were described in numerous newspaper articles of all mentioned countries. All of them tried to offer an independent view on the problem and predict what might happen next. They were also the main sources of information for public and sometimes deliberately or not could impose preconceived notion and shape the wrong opinion about the matter.

This article is based exclusively on the materials published by one of the most influential and reputable American newspapers - The New York Times. The main goal is therefore to analyze the objectiveness of the materials that described the whole campaign for abrogation - from the beginning of its open for public stage up to the U.S.-Russian attempts to negotiate the terms of a new trade treaty.

## **2. The origins of the conflict.**

One of the first articles from which one could learn about the existence of American-Russian contradictions in passport questions appeared in The New York Times only in the end of October

1911. It marked the beginning of the second phase of the campaign initiated in January 1911. The history of its escalation with all the attempts of the Jewish leaders to negotiate the problem with the members of the State Department and the U.S. President and to find the solution of it that could satisfy the former would never appear on the pages of The New York Times.

It was absolutely clear for the majority of its supporters that public campaign was very dangerous for them as it "would mean open conflict with the administration ..., it would require a thorough education of the public..." with "no guaranty that the public would side with them". What was more "they feared raising any question which might appear as Jewish agitation..." and in case they "lost the fight, their prestige with both the Jewish and general public would shrink considerably."<sup>1</sup> But the leaders of the campaign had no other choice as to take those risks and not to stop half-way from their goals. In fact it could be considered as a "step of despair" when all their previous attempts to attract attention of the officials and make them do anything about the passport issue in Russia were fruitless.

From one of the first short articles that appeared in the New York Times in October 1911, nine months since the public campaign had started, one was not able to make a clear idea about the background of the problem. The article started with the statement that "Plans for a nation-wide agitation for the abrogation of the treaty with Russia ... were formulated yesterday afternoon at a meeting of the Executive Committee, of which William G. McAdoo is Chairman. An appeal was drawn up and will be sent to leading citizens of the country of all political parties and religious denominations, calling upon them to demand of their representatives in Congress summary abrogation of the treaty."<sup>2</sup> So one could suggest that his country was in the epicenter of a serious conflict that almost nobody had heard about. Anyway the article mentioned only the measures that were planned to undertake soon but not about the core of the subject. "At the meeting of the Executive Committee at the Railroad Club in the Hudson Terminal Building yesterday", - it was said, - "Mr. Nolan, as secretary, presented a draft of a circular, booklet which is to be sent through the country with the proposed appeal, containing even now more than 150 letters of acceptance and endorsement from prominent citizens who have been invited to support the movement to compel recognition by Russia of the American passport."<sup>3</sup>

The next publication helped to clarify the situation only partly as it was devoted to the position of the most active members of the movement for abrogation of the treaty. One of its leaders, Mr. William Sulzer, referred to the first article of the treaty of 1832, which guaranteed the inhabitants of both countries equal rights, "the same security and protection as natives of the country wherein they reside, on condition of their submitting to the laws and ordinance there prevailing, and particularly to the regulations in force concerning commerce."<sup>4</sup> The appeal to Article I of the treaty was repeated in all the publications that were focused on the official position of the Jewish leaders who took part in the campaign and in all the meetings organized by them in order to make public be involved into it.

The materials of the article and the facts mentioned by W. Sulzer explained the existence of the controversy between the two countries and were informative enough for people. From them and

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<sup>1</sup> *Cohen Naomi W.* "The Abrogation of the Russo-American Treaty of 1832." // *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol.25, No.1 (Jan., 1963). P.13.

<sup>2</sup> "Organize to Break Treaty With Russia." *The New York Times*, October 24, 1911.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Russo-American Trade Agreement of 1832 From The Post-Containment Handbook: Key Issues in U.S. - Soviet Economic Relations* / ed. by Robert Cullen. Westview Press Boulder, San Francisco, & Oxford. 1990. P.4.

according to W. Sulzer one could learn that misinterpretation of the treaty had lasted for thirty years and, as the Jewish leader argued, "Russia pays as much attention to American diplomatic notes on the question as a cat does to the moon."<sup>5</sup> "In Congress", - he said, - " we organized a committee and went to the President and told him that in our opinion the only thing that could be done was to abrogate that treaty."<sup>6</sup> Thus the public could make a very certain opinion how complicated and deeply rooted the problem was as it needed to be discussed with the President of the country. The article ended with a very firm and emotional claim expressed by Mr. Sulzer who said: "I want to make Russia live up that treaty, and unless she does I do not want to have anything to do with Russia."<sup>7</sup>

In November 1911 The New York Times published a series of articles where the position of the Jewish leaders to the passport questions was outlined as well as measures that had to be taken soon. During that period there were several important meetings of different organizations where the American Jewish Committee was among the most active ones. In fact it organized the fifth annual meeting of the Committee which was devoted to the discussion of the problem. At the adjournment of the session the Secretary of the Committee, Herbert Friedenwald, gave out the statement where it was determined "to aid energetically all efforts" to the abrogation of the treaty and what was also important - "to use its influence for the maintenance of the present immigration laws and to oppose the adoption of any further restrictive features in those laws."<sup>8</sup> In a week The New York Times published a short article about mass meeting which was held in the synagogue of the Congregation B'Nai Jeshurum in Newark. The author offered the opinions of the core speakers, including Rabbi Julius Silberfeld, Rabbi Solomon Foster, Rev. Lyman Whitney Allen, rector of the Park Presbyterian Church and others who put the main stress on that very idea that it was not just the Jewish question but the one that violated the rights of American citizens. According to Rev. Dr. E.A. Wasson "the protest being made against Russia was one of American patriotism and humanitarianism. ... He declared that a halt should be called upon the discrimination practiced by Russia against American citizens."<sup>9</sup>

In October-November 1911 all the articles that appeared in the New York Times represented the activities of the Jewish leaders to inspire the public campaign for abrogation of the treaty with the Russian Empire. The information that was offered in them contained those measures that the American Jewish Committee and other organizations undertook during that period. There were no any comments or judgments of the events - the newspaper published only the facts about the events that took place in New York or elsewhere. On the other hand, at that period there was only a little information if any about the positions of the U.S. President and the Russian officials. So the articles based exclusively on the opinion of the leaders of the Jewish pressure group that could leave no doubts and be understood by the public only in a very certain way - that Russia violated the rights of the American citizens. So there were no materials that somehow tried to analyze the roots of the problem as well as why it was growing into a nation-wide campaign in the United States. They were also no attempts to explain or make any suggestions why the terms of the Treaty that satisfied both countries for almost eighty years had to be revised. It was also not very clear why the commercial treaty had to be sacrificed when the passport question had nothing to do with commerce or trade between the two countries.

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<sup>5</sup> "Organize to Break Treaty With Russia." The New York Times, October 24, 1911.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Joins Fight Against Treaty with Russia." The New York Times, November 13, 1911.

<sup>9</sup> "Newark Clergy Join in Russian Protest." The New York Times, November 28, 1911.

In December 1911 the New York Times paid a lot of attention to the discussion over the Russian-American conflict, the month that occurred to be an apogee of the whole campaign when members of the Congress from whom the decision for abrogation of the treaty depended on were involved into the debates of the subject. In a lengthy article issued by the newspaper it was argued that "Three-fourth of the 400 members of the House of Representatives have joined the National Committee, as have the Governors of at least a dozen States, the Mayors of 100 large cities and the heads of principal educational institutions in the country."<sup>10</sup> The members of the American Jewish Committee therefore had done a great deal attracting a lot of public attention to the problem and, what was of great importance, discussing it with the officials and Congressmen. The main goal was to win the final vote over the resolution and persuade the public through the press that it was the last and the only possible way to cut the Gordian knot when no more diplomatic means could be of any help.

The article was also very informative and mentioned the most active Jewish organizations among which were the American Jewish Committee which "for several years engaged in a systematic campaign to end Russia's abuse of the passport treaty", the Independent Order of B'nai Brith, the National Jewish Fraternal Congress and the Board of Delegates of the Union of the American Hebrew Congregations that worked a lot "urging the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to consider the violation of the passport treaty."<sup>11</sup> And all this work had that very result when, as published by the New York Times, many Congressmen had no doubts that Russia violated the rights of the American citizens. The author emphasized this viewpoint and mentioned dozens of Congressmen from whom the Citizen's Committee had obtained expressions in sympathy with the abrogation.

In several days a large article of the New York Times was devoted to the meeting which took place in Carnegie Hall and was organized as "it was many times declared, on behalf of American citizens" where among speakers were ex-Ambassadors and Congressmen, Bishops and U.S. Senators, and "Gov. Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey, who was repeatedly hailed from the galleries as the next President..."<sup>12</sup> The publication described in details that meeting and the debates among its participants, the great majority of whom had no doubts in what decision the American Government had to make. From this article one could learn about an offer made by ex-Ambassador Andrew D. White who stood for giving Russia one more chance and taking actions only after the Hague Tribunal. He, who spent several years in Russia and who clearly understood, perhaps better than anybody else at the meeting, what it could mean for Russian-American relations if the trade treaty would be abrogated, tried to persuade the audience not to come to quick decision, saying that Russia was "one of the proudest countries on earth." He then added that her "desire for the good opinion of the world entered very largely into the reasons why the Hague Conference was called in the name of the Czar."<sup>13</sup> This idea, however, did not find any support among the audience which in fact did not want to listen to any reasons against the decision that it had already made.

The position of Mr. White and his views on the prospects of Russian-American relations in case of cancellation of the trade treaty, was the only one expressed during the meeting that opposed the unanimous chorus of other speakers. All of them, like James Creelman, the President of the

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<sup>10</sup> "Congressmen Join in Passport Fight." The New York Times, December 4, 1911.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> "Demand Break with Russia." The New York Times, December 7, 1911.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Civil Service Committee, called upon Congress to vote for the abrogation of the treaty with Russia. The last words of his resolution "were drowned in a volume of ayes which fairly shook the building."<sup>14</sup> He focused on that very fact that "...what cannot be accomplished directly by the Government, has, for more than forty years, been effectuated with respect to our citizens by the Government of Russia; which in the face of the continued protest of our State Department, has deliberately disregarded passports issued under our great seal to American citizens, who happen to be Jews."<sup>15</sup>

We can assume that this article, reflecting a great eagerness of the participants to make the American Government undertake strong measures towards the Russian Empire, was very important first of all for the leaders of the anti-Russian pressure group who were attracting at that period as much attention to the matter as possible. Through such meetings many of which were later described in press, the ideas expressed by a large number of prominent Americans had to shape very definite public opinion which in turn had to make indirect influence on the position of the President.

Almost all the speakers pointed out that it was a question of justice, of right, and patriotism, but not just a question of Judaism. That was the position imposed by the Jewish leaders who totally ignored the reasons of the Russian officials. They were not even mentioned during the meetings to avoid any possibility to really discuss the problem. All the claims made by the speakers were very emotional and being of such kind they a priori were not aimed at discussion rather than at public agitation which had to support the American values that the speakers appealed to. Participation of great many Congressmen, State officials, Jewish leaders, etc. in such meetings whose names appeared in newspapers had to put additional pressure first of all and mainly on the U.S. President who during his underhand negotiations with the Jewish leaders several months before had rejected to announce about the abrogation of the Russian-American treaty, the fact that was never published in press.

One of the most influential politicians of that period was W. Wilson who also took part in the conference in Carnegie Hall and was one of the its core speakers. First of all W. Wilson stated that "The object of this meeting is not agitation; it is the statement of a plain case in such terms as may serve to arrest the attention of the Nation with regard to a matter which ... touches the dignity of our Government and the maintenance of those rights of manhood which that Government was set up to vindicate."<sup>16</sup> Actually it was a wide-scale agitation that the Jewish leaders urgently needed and that was vital for the success of the whole campaign. Mentioning the dignity of the American Government and the rights of manhood the speaker appealed first of all to the U.S. President whose duty was among others to defend the rights and interests of his fellow-countrymen. Moreover, he addressed himself to every American countryman and expected to gain support from him, to make him think the same way on the matter. The open public campaign had one of its goals to make it impossible (or at least immensely hard) for the President Taft to be against of the opinion of the "whole Nation".

In his speech W. Wilson stressed Article I of the Treaty and pointed out that "For some forty years the obligations of this treaty have been disregarded by Russian in respect to our Jewish fellow-citizens."<sup>17</sup> W. Wilson decided not to explain the reasons of this saying that "it is not

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

necessary"<sup>18</sup>, however, it was of great importance. Thus the leaders and supporters of the anti-Russian campaign decided to leave behind the curtains for the public the information that could clarify the matter, or express the alternative point of view. The idea was not to solve the problem (taking into account that the position of the Russian Empire in the "Jewish question" was firm and obviously nothing could change it at that time, and what was more it was hardly possible to do anything about it in the way the Jewish leaders offered) but to "punish" Russia, to slap her in the face by abrogating all the treaties that the United States had had with her by that time. Such meaning of these measures and their consequences were clearly understood by both the U.S. President and the State Administration, and we can assume by the adherents of denunciation of the trade treaty between the two countries too.

W. Wilson also blamed the American Government for letting the Russian officials ignore the protests of his country. It was possible because the latter "spoke for special interests or from some special point of view, and not for the American people."<sup>19</sup>

Mr. Schurman, the President of the Cornell University, in his turn talked about any sort of discrimination and its effect. He claimed that "The Russian procedure of which we complain is as dangerous as in its principle it is vicious" and that the American Government should "adopt once for all the policy of securing equal treatment by all foreign Governments of all American citizens."<sup>20</sup> His ideas were supported warmly by the audience which actually supported all of the speakers of the meeting.

Among those who stood for radical sanctions towards Russia was Mr. N.E. Kendall, a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Having studied "the subject as diligently as I am capable of doing," - he said, - "I have arrived at the conclusion that if we cannot compel a correction of the sinister injustice ... we must terminate at once all amiable relations with the Russian Government."<sup>21</sup>

The apogee of the conference was when W. Sulzer, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs who would become a core person of the campaign representing this resolution for the abrogation of the trade treaty with Russia, expressed his certainty that it would be definitely adopted, when saying: "This resolution is as sure of becoming a law as the sun is sure to rise tomorrow morning."<sup>22</sup>

When analyzing the materials published in this article that were devoted to the conference in Carnegie Hall, as well as the whole atmosphere of it, we can affirm that: first, it was more emotional and agitating than informative. Numerous speakers stood eagerly for immediate sanctions against Russia. They put a stress that for a long time the Russian Empire ignored the position of the American Government and there was no other way to change the situation than to alter radically the previous politics of the United States. All in all, there were only a few facts that were a little bit helpful in understanding the origins of the matter.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Second, the information that dealt with the reasons of the "conflict"<sup>23</sup> was represented from the adherents' of the treaty abrogation point of view that was obviously biased. No clear arguments that supported an alternative view were offered during the conference.

Third, from numerous speakers who eagerly stood for immediate sanctions against the Russian Empire we could learn that it was, according to them, the only possible way to make Russia do anything about the "Jewish question" if she wanted to have amiable relations with the United States. It was proclaimed on behalf of the whole American nation and should have had its definite effect on the people who would read the article.

Finally, the author of the publication offered no any comments and expressed no his personal position about the meeting and the matter itself. He let the readers know the facts that such a meeting had recently taken place and that the participants shared the common view on the problem. Thus, the New York Times did not try to influence in some way the public opinion by means of interpretations or comments. From the other hand, until that time the newspaper did not publish the materials that could represent the matter from different sides. It can be suggested that for the reporters it occurred possible to describe the news that was open for public and the information about which it was possible to gain - that means the top of the iceberg, the rest part of which remained hidden. Thus, by that time (the first decade of December 1911) it was lack of information about the matter and the articles published at that period reflected the anti-Russian campaign that was becoming wider and stronger day by day. Such fact was impossible to ignore - it became an important issue of the American domestic and foreign policy.

### **3. The apogee of the campaign against Russian-American Trade Treaty.**

Soon after the public campaign had started and aimed at gaining people's support to the idea to denounce the trade treaty with Russia as an additional unanimous and powerful voice of the nation, it was about to enter its final phase.

It was in the vote eve when the "House Foreign Affairs Committee sat all day until 6 o'clock tonight to hear distinguished Jews, who appeared to present their protest against the violation of the treaty of 1832, and to urge that the treaty be abrogated."<sup>24</sup> In this article it was said that Russia "has persistently refused to recognize passports issued to such citizens as are Jews."<sup>25</sup> This affirmation was presented without any comments and made a distorted impression that the Russian Empire violated the rights of the American citizens who were Jews.

Thus, the one when got the information from the newspapers that illustrated the development of the conflict, had to be sure that the position of the Jewish leaders who fought for the rights of all the Americans and claimed that it was the whole nation's question, was absolutely competent. Too many slogans, appeals to the nation proud, etc. but not the reasons and facts of the matter were expressed by the leaders of the movement which afterwards appeared in the American press.

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<sup>23</sup> From the historical point of view it should not be interpreted as a conflict between the two countries, but as a struggle of American Jews for their rights when being abroad. This struggle in fact presupposed putting a hard pressure on the American President and lobbying actively the resolution for abrogating the treaty in Congress.

<sup>24</sup> "Will Press Treaty Annulment at Once." The New York Times, December 12, 1911.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



The meeting of the Committee was not exception to this rule. According to the New York Times, among those who took part in it were: "William G. McAdoo, Jacob H. Schiff, Dr. Simon Adler, Representative Henry M. Goldfogle, Henry Green, Bernard Nolan, Representative Jefferson M. Levy, Representative Burton Harrison, the Rev. Dr. Silverman, M.E. Miller, Louis Marshall, Rabbi Solomon Foster, Oscar Straus, Judge Meyer Sulzberger, and many others..."<sup>26</sup> - all of them were undoubtedly very firm in their views.

It should be pointed out that the article described the meeting in details and from it one could learn that Judge Sulzberger in his speech emphasized sufferings and the legal oppression of the Jewish race in Russia. However there was not a word about rights and opportunities offered for Jews which were outlined in the code of laws of the Russian Empire.

Louis Marshall made the principal speech of that day and affirmed that "the consequence to Russia ...would be isolation from trade with the United States", and what was more important he mentioned far-going plans of this sanction against Russia - to inspire European countries to follow the American initiative. He was absolutely sure in this when saying: "Germany and England ... would follow. The entangling alliances and secret treaties that these powers have with Russia are believed to be in the way of any diplomatic protest on their part against the way that Russia now treats the Jewish race."<sup>27</sup> What made him to be so convinced when there had not been any evidences that the main European countries would change their politics to Russia or at least that the reason for this change could be the one mentioned by Louis Marshall? We cannot explain it rather than it was his great wish and enthusiasm which did not have any real political support in Europe.

The conference in Carnegie Hall was highly important for the final resolution and the whole procedure was described in details by the New York Times.

The next article was devoted to the crucial for the whole campaign day when the Sulzer resolution denouncing the treaty passed the House Committee by 300 to 1. The only person who was against it was George R. Malby. In an interview he explained that "He thought it was doing the Jew a very great injury to single him out for legislative emphasis, and he saw no good to the race by the adoption of the resolution. To the Jews in Russia,"- he continued,- "it would probably result in even greater oppression, while the American Jew would possibly have the same rights, following the abrogation of the treaty that other American citizens would have, and no more. The effect of such action on American commerce not only with Russia, but with the world at large, would...be bad."<sup>28</sup>

The article mentioned an important detail which dealt with the language of the proposed resolution. During the debates there were those (e.g. Mr. Olmsted who represented Pennsylvania, Mr. Mann of Illinois) who stood for modifying the reasons for the abrogation as they were outlined in the Sulzer resolution that "The Government of Russia had violated the treaty between the Unites States and Russia ... refusing to honor American passports for passports duly issued to American citizens on account of race or religion."<sup>29</sup> Again there were no explanations of this fact given in the article but it was a matter of concern for those (including President Taft) who were able to predict the political consequences of such language for Russian-American relations. The

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> "Vote 300 to 1 Against Treaty." The New York Times, December 14, 1911.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

violation of the rights as it was presented first of all by the adherents of the abrogation and then published in the article, was the position shared by the pressure group who did not want to recognize legality of the procedure that the Jews who arrived in Russia had to undergo as it was outlined in the Code of laws of the Russian Empire.

Here we deal with the fact that actually the Jewish leaders did not like how American citizens of that nation were treated in Russia and wanted for them the same rights as for other Americans who entered that country. They wanted that the Jews who came to Russia would be considered to be first of all as the American citizens and their nation would not be taken into consideration. But that was hardly possible in Russia in those times. And this also means that those who joined the campaign for abrogation of the treaty knew little about the social history of that country and did not realize how complicated the situation with different classes and nations in Russia was. They did not want to take into account that it was not just the claim to respect American passport and American citizenship, in fact it was the claim to change Russian laws regarding Jews.

This idea was only mentioned by Mr. Mann who took part in the discussion and whose words were repeated in the article. He claimed that "It was not our province to say that Russia has violated the treaty, but simply to say that, from our point of view, that was the case." He also deprecated "that belligerent tone of the resolution, and said that such language in another Parliament might provoke war."<sup>30</sup>

The unanimous position to denounce the treaty was also expressed in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations where the Culberson resolution which contained the same claims as the Sulzer's one had a hearing and brief discussion. It was decided "not to press the resolution for a vote by the Senate until there has been time to allow the President to communicate with Congress, as he intimated in his recent message he would do."<sup>31</sup> The article warned that in case of a delay due to this communication the convention would be in force for one more year until January 1914, the idea that was greatly opposed by the Jewish leaders who wanted to terminate the treaty at the earliest possible time.<sup>32</sup>

All in all the campaign was successful and the resolution passed the House Committee - the fact that Russian and American officials had to respond to.

#### **4. Respond to the abrogation of the treaty in the United States and Russia.**

The New York Times was entirely focused on this political issue that was of core importance for the American Administration that found itself to be "between the hammer and the anvil". Since the resolution was adopted, President Taft had to think over his future relations with two different political forces - the one that supported the idea of termination of the treaty that appeared in the United States and the other - the political elite in the Russian Empire. The following after the vote day was the one when the attention of the newspaper was riveted to the two great powers.

It should be pointed out that Russian public opinion appeared in press immediately while the position of the officials of both countries was expressed much later. On December 15, the first

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "Russian Treaty May Stand Until 1914." The New York Times, December 13, 1911.

article devoted to the analyses of the situation in Russia - the only one of such kind that appeared in the paper during the whole period of the campaign - was published in The New York Times. From it one could learn about public opinion and the prospects of abrogation of the treaty that "does not seem to disturb anyone."<sup>33</sup>

It was mentioned that public interest was very slight.<sup>34</sup> That was generally true as one could hardly expect that the passport question could be widely discussed by Russian people or that they were very concerned about it.

But the respond of the Russian officials that was being waited for in Russia and overseas was very important and had to predict the future relations between the countries. Finally The New York Times represented the point of view of M. Sazonoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, which was first published in the Russian paper *Novoe Vremia*. There the Minister mentioned what Russia was most of all concerned about: "Many agitators, revolutionaries and anarchists,"- he said,- "who were adherents of the Hebrew religion had emigrated to America during the recent troubles ... and it was not to be expected that Russia should encourage the return of these elements."<sup>35</sup> This idea was commented in the same article by Professor P.N. Miliukoff, the leader of the Constitutional Democrats and later the Foreign Minister in the Provisional Government, who explained that the Foreign Minister "has classified all the Jews who could possibly come to Russia in two divisions. First, businessmen, and second, revolutionists and Anarchists."<sup>36</sup> At the same time he mentioned that Sazonoff "omitted or forgot a large class, namely, ordinary citizens, ... who are neither businessmen nor revolutionists, but whose visits and residence in Russia are desirable."<sup>37</sup> The view of the latter was non-Governmental whereas the position of Sazonoff was shared by many in the Russian Government. "Their [Jews] coming,"- the article said,- "armed with American passports and with the right to claim Consular aid, ...would endanger public peace and cause ultimately diplomatic friction and a serious aggravation of Russo-American relations."<sup>38</sup>

So, from this article it became possible for the American public to make some guesses that the Jewish question in Russia was much more complicated and could not be reduced just to a passport matter. But that was a brief remark in the article, much more lengthy explanations about the subject would be presented in the newspaper later.

In four days after the vote The New York Times published the information about the respond of the officials in the United States and the position of the Russian Government. There it was written that M. Bakhmetieff, the Russian Ambassador in the United States had a meeting in the White House where he expressed the official and firm position of the Russian Government concerning the abrogation of the treaty and the text of the resolution. M. Bakhmetieff told the President "that should the Sulzer resolution be passed by the Senate in its present form and signed by the President, thus representing the formal expression of the American Government as to Russia`s action under the treaty, it would be considered by the Czar`s Government an insult to Russia."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "Russia Unperturbed." The New York Times, December 15, 1911.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> "Fight on Treaty Arouses Russia." The New York Times, December 17, 1911.

Indeed, the idea that Russia violated the treaty belonged to the Jewish leaders. It was shared neither by President Taft nor by the Russian officials who did not consider passport matter to be a serious problem in Russian-American relations. But the American President had no doubt what the abrogation of the treaty would mean for both countries and that was the main reason why he "in order to forestall Congressional sanction to offensive language in the Russian resolution, had decided to go ahead on his own initiative and denounce the treaty..."<sup>40</sup>

The text of the resolution was evidently very sharp and abusive. It could definitely worsen Russian-American political relations which was not the desire of the two countries. However, the attitude of the Jewish leaders to the passport question and the position of Louis Marshall, the author of the resolution, was steadfast: "I waited every word and every word means just what it stands for."<sup>41</sup> That is why he was very irritated when he learnt about the interview of the President with the Ambassador M. Bakhmetieff, and could only suggest what it was about. L. Marshall exclaimed: "I would not give a red cent to know what Bakhmetieff said to the President or Mr. Knox. But I would give five red apples to know what Mr. Knox said to M. Bakhmetieff."<sup>42</sup>

The idea of abrogation of the treaty was as it was presented in the same article of The New York Times generally supported by the members of the political parties, and the real meaning of that measure "is not to penalize Russia, but to secure a new arrangement guaranteeing substantial justice to Americans of every faith." At the same time the "more conservative Senators feel that harsh language in the resolution aimed at achieving that results would be worse possible beginning of renewed negotiations."<sup>43</sup> The latter point of view was more objective than the former as it could predict the reaction of the Russian Government on the accusations outlined in the resolution and the consequences of such measure in general.

Anyway for the American public it was evident that the treaty would be denounced soon and both countries would need to build relations between each other on another basis. But before that there would be a period of the official respond of the Russian Government which was also unshakable in the view on the Jewish question. There were no evidences to expect that the relations between the two powers would remain the same and there were some not very optimistic predictions expressed in different newspapers of both countries that concerned the future of Russian-American relations - political and economic.

Taking into account that the United States were much more interested in the development of commerce and trade with Russia and increased her annual trade balance (which was always positive) with her, the American businessmen would expect very hard consequences in almost all spheres of foreign economy. The New York Times even warned about the possibility of the outbreak of a commercial war between the two countries.

The attitude of the Jews to the adoption of the resolution was predictable - all of them were completely satisfied with such a victory. Several short articles appeared in the newspaper that described their respond which was addressed first of all to the President of the United States. In one of such cables signed by Abraham M. Liedling, its author wrote: "Accept from the citizens of Chicago their sincere appreciation of your fearless stand for justice and equality, even in the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

face of innumerable difficulties. Be assured that the American people of all nationalities will remember this historic day with gratitude."<sup>44</sup>

The influential *The Jewish Record* was also "thankful for arousing a favorable public opinion against Russia and its discrimination against American passports."<sup>45</sup>

On December 20, 1911 the debates in the Senate took no more than forty minutes and the House resolution was concurred almost unanimously. The only representative who was against it was Mr. Macon of Arkansas.

Representative Sulzer pointed out the importance of this measure. At the same time he told about readiness to continue friendly relations with Russia and that he personally "would be the last man in the House to put a single straw in the way of lessening the best feeling between the two countries."<sup>46</sup> The tone of this statement contradicted with the one during the campaign when Sulzer himself was one of the most devoted leaders for abrogation of any treaty with the Russian Empire. When he had no doubts in denunciation of the treaty he did not want to seem as if he were against that country or even her political opponent. On the contrary, his language became milder and he tried to persuade other Representatives in his best wishes toward Russia: "We desire to continue friendly relations with Russia. We will welcome her more than half way in making a new treaty."<sup>47</sup> It could be supposed that Sulzer meant those who were among the eagerness supporters of the abrogation of the treaty when using "we" in his speech.

The article offered its readers to learn about the attitude of the Representatives to this matter. One of them was Mr. Malby who voted against the Sulzer resolution. He predicted the audience that "it would be ten years before we would have another treaty with Russia."<sup>48</sup> He continued that "The man in Russia who seeks liberty as we enjoy it in this country is a criminal, and he is treated as a criminal. If he flees to the United States he can be seized and carried back to Russia on some pretext and punished. Russia would feel vastly worse over the termination of that treaty."<sup>49</sup> That was not far from the real situation in Russia as she had her emigration laws that regulated the number, period of time and categories of those who were allowed to go from Russia to the United States. It is interesting, however, that when the idea of abrogation of the treaty was being discussed among the Russian officials many of them expressed their concerns that the United States would not allow or would make it much harder for the poorest Russian people to come to that country for earning money than it had been before.

From the same article the one could learn about the first respond in Russia to the adoption of the resolution. As it was written above, the U.S. Ambassador Curtis Guild informed the Russian Government about the American wish to terminate the Trade treaty of 1832. The article says: "The officials decline to publish the text of the note, but admit its contents have been well outlined in the news dispatches from St. Petersburg. Hence it is inferred that the Russian Foreign Office made no response to Secretary Knox's invitation to embark upon negotiations for a new treaty."<sup>50</sup> That means that the Russian Government decided to spend some time in analyzing the

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<sup>44</sup> "Chicago Jews Commend Taft." *The New York Times*, December 19, 1911.

<sup>45</sup> "Chicago Jews Thankful." *The New York Times*, December 17, 1911.

<sup>46</sup> "Repeal of Treaty Ratified by House." *The New York Times*, December 21, 1911.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

situation and its consequences first of all for Russian economics. Only after careful scrutiny of this matter it would be possible to make an official statement.

The situation over the abrogation of the Trade treaty between the United States and Russia was discussed in the Russian non-governmental circles and the New York Times could learn about any initiatives made by them from the Russian newspapers. There was a series of publications devoted to the official position of the leaders of different political parties of the Russian Empire in that matter.

One of the first articles was published soon after the resolution was adopted and appeared in the New York Times on December 21, 1911. It was devoted to the proposal of the bill introduced in the Russian State Duma by its ex-President Alexander I. Gouchkoff and signed by a group of Octobrist and nationalist parties. The proposal implied the raise of Russian duties by 100 per cent, "and also impose a duty of 100 per cent on articles which are admitted free under the present Russian tariff. Besides these impositions, the bill proposes also to double the gross weight tax established by the law of June 21, 1901, on merchandise arriving by sea, and to levy a double tonnage tax."<sup>51</sup>

The debates in State Duma reflected generally negative response of its members to the matter. Aside from the tariff proposal the accompanying declaration proceeded that "The question of the admission or non-admission into Russia of certain classes of foreigners belongs to the province of internal legislation upon the general principles of international law, as well as on the strength of Article I of the Treaty of 1832."<sup>52</sup> It was also mentioned during the regular meeting that the United States also had very strict regulations that limited the entry of foreigners to that country.

The lack of the official information about the response of the Russian Government to the whole matter inspired the New York Times to make predictions, some of which were very far to become true. For example, in a very short article published on December 28, 1911 its author expected that negotiations about a new trade treaty could start not earlier than in September 1913. He also claimed that there would be two treaties: "One would deal entirely with matters of trade and commerce and the other would relate to matters of citizenship and naturalization, which, of course, would involve some treatment of the Jewish question. The adoption of this course may be suggested by the Russian Government."<sup>53</sup> It is not very clear, however, what made the author jump to such conclusions as the position of the Russian Government was very far from the ideas expressed above. They could be understood by the American public as if the Russian Empire accepted the accusations of the American Jews - that was totally wrong opinion that could be imposed by the article. The real facts were that the Russian Government did not have any plans to launch negotiations about a new treaty. On the contrary, a special committee was organized very after Curtis Guild informed the Imperial Russia about the decision of his Government. Its main goal was to elaborate means by which it would be possible to lessen Russian dependence from American goods - first of all, from American cotton and agricultural machinery. Taking into account that Russian-American trade volume was very insignificant for the Empire that would make no need to have trade treaties in the nearest future at all. Moreover, the author of the article mentioned above did not realize how complicated the "Jewish question" was in Russia and what

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<sup>51</sup> "Duma Bill Makes Tariff War on Us." The New York Times, December 23, 1911.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Untitled article. The New York Times, December 28, 1911.

kind of politics the Government pursued towards them. It was totally unreasonable to expect that there would be any changes made in the Russian Code of laws, and even less in the politics.

John G. Snodgrass, American Consul General, expressed his opinion about the matter in a diplomatic manner which was published in the New York Times on January 5, 1912. According to him "Should the two countries agree to continue amicable commercial relations and permit the passport question to be settled later, no disturbance in business will follow, and even though part of the press and all the advocates of the Government's position express decided views, America's growing influence will not be seriously checked."<sup>54</sup> The American Consul who lived in Russia and understood her main (domestic and foreign) political trends implied that Russia would not make changes in passport question in the nearest future, and that a lot of time would past before some shifts about it could be offered.

The respond of the European countries on the announcement of the United States to terminate trade treaty with Russia was predictable and definitely frustrating for the leaders of anti-Russian campaign. The New York Times devoted a long article published in the end of January, 1912 which was wholly devoted to the comments in the foreign newspapers concerning the matter. In fact it was pointed out that "Other nations think we were not only justified in asserting that Russia had violated that treaty, but that we were cutting off our noses to spite our faces and generally acting in a ridiculous manner."<sup>55</sup>

The British Times focused on the immigration rules and their implementation in the United States. In fact it was said that "The Supreme Court, when considering the question of Chinese exclusion, admitted that the power of excluding foreigners was not a matter of barter or contract. Since then Mr. Taft and a committee of Congress in an official report have both admitted that such powers belong to every Government."<sup>56</sup> The United States also regulated the immigration of aliens in their own way - the practice that was commonly used by many countries at that period. The idea of inconsistency of the real practice of the United States of America and the main reason for termination of the treaty with Russia implied in the article was an additional argument that it was not President Taft's will but that he was forced to make this decision.

The German Norddeutsche Zeitung explained the whole situation as "not so much a move against Russia as a means to win the Jewish votes, particularly in the state of New York, for the Presidential election of 1912. Hence, it is reported from Washington that the leaders of both parties in the United States desire to derive the greatest possible political advantage from the situation, without endangering American foreign trade."<sup>57</sup> The idea of gaining the votes especially in New York was one of the assumptions but very far from the real situation. It is indisputable that Taft had to think over his policy very carefully especially before the Presidential elections. The whole campaign therefore was a sort of severe ordeal for him. From the one hand, the open public campaign reached its apogee and it became obvious that its leaders would do everything they could to achieve the result that they had aimed at. And the open opposition of the U.S. President of what was proclaimed as the struggle for equal rights for all American citizens could be misunderstood by the American society which could make their judgments learning

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<sup>54</sup> "American Trade with Russia. John G. Snodgrass, American Consul General, Discusses Effect of Abrogation of Treaty of 1832." The New York Times, January 5, 1913.

<sup>55</sup> "Break with Russia Criticized Abroad." The New York Times, January 21, 1912.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

about the matter from the newspapers. The early articles as it was said above were able to present the situation from only one side.

From the other hand, there was no any information available for the newspaper editors about the negotiations between President Taft and the Jewish leaders and the meeting in the White House several months earlier when Taft expressed his strong position against the abrogation of the treaty with Russia. We can assume, therefore, that Taft thought less about political repercussions of this campaign that could influence the Presidential elections, but more about its consequences for Russian - American relations.

Another main European country - France - also devoted several articles to the "passport question" and the conclusions were not optimistic for the United States. And, what is essential, it outlined very strong and grounded reasons having very clear idea about possible responds of the Russian Government. In fact, the Paris Temps argued: "...Russia could not permit a foreign power to interfere in what she considers an internal matter; even less will she consent to bind herself on this point by a formal treaty to hold for a definite number of years."<sup>58</sup> Here as we can see it is stated clearly that it was an internal matter of the Russian Empire and as it was said above it was regulated by the Law of that country. So, for the French press there were no doubts in this. And despite all the assurances of L. Marshall that termination of the trade treaty would only slightly influence American commercial relations with the overseas country the Paris Temps raised the question: "...what will Wall Street people say if they have to furnish England and Germany the opportunity of cutting them out of one of the greatest markets of the future?"<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps the Belgium press was the only one, according to the New York Times that believed that abrogation of the treaty would change dramatically Russian policy toward the Jews and that "the establishment of a ...treaty of commerce on a more liberal basis is indispensable."<sup>60</sup>

The position of the Russian mainstream media was also expressed in the New York Times and in general it was partly concerned about the drop of prices for American cotton and agricultural machinery - that was according to them inevitable. Partly it expressed the populist ideas of the members of different parties where the Octobrists` was one of the most active. One of its members - Mr. Shubinskiy - was very confident when he argued that " The main idea of the conflict is that the Jews wish to get hold of Russian trade and industry and are using pressure through America."<sup>61</sup>

Thus the publications in European newspapers mainly shared the idea that it was at least not wise for the American Government to abrogate the trade treaty with Russia. The reason for this according to them was not so serious as to lead to termination of treaties with the great power and thus lose her vast and promising market for American goods. And even more delusive was the hope to inspire the main European countries to follow this sample and to terminate treaties which they had had with Russia. That would mean radical changes in the foreign policies of all main European powers during the period of very tense relations among them, the consequences of which could be unpredictable.

On January 25, 1912 the New York Times published a large article that was totally devoted to the response of the Russian Premier Vladimir Kokovtsoff to five questions that were submitted to

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



him by Collier's Magazine. That was one of the first publication that dealt with the position of the Russian officials to the matter. There V. Kokovtsoff explained that "Russia has not afforded the United States any ground for abrogating the treaty" which "was made exclusively for commercial purposes, and a clause in the very first article stipulated that American citizens arriving in Russia, and Russian subjects arriving in the United States, should be subjects to the internal laws and regulations of the respective countries."<sup>62</sup> That was the principal subject that was the cornerstone in the conflict.

The Russian Premier gave detailed explanations concerning Russian citizens of Jewish faith and foreign Jews. In fact he emphasized that "These rules were established by Russian internal legislation which permits the entry into Russia of foreign Jews only in definite cases. The rules have been in force ever since the treaty was concluded, and there never has been any cause to doubt the legality, and there could not be any because the enforcement, as before pointed out, was stipulated in the treaty itself."<sup>63</sup>

V. Kokovtsoff then added that Russia treated American Jews on the same basis as all other foreign Jews - that meant that the Russian officials considered them to be first of all of Jews nation and only then - American citizens. That was due to the rules of the Russian Empire. From this point of view, as it could be suggested, Russia did not violate the terms of the treaty with the United States, and the whole campaign for abrogation of the Russian-American trade treaty was no more than disagreement of the American Jews with the rules that existed in Russia. The U.S. immigration policy was also very strict and prohibited the entry to that country of "undesirable aliens," determining them "by qualifications of an economic, sanitary, moral, social, and even religious character."<sup>64</sup>

As it was said above the whole history of coexistence of Jews and Russians in that country was very complicated. And in his interview the Russian Premier shed some light on that problem offering the facts that as we assume were unknown for the foreigners. It is essential therefore to quote what exactly V. Kokovtsoff said about the Jewish matter in Russia. "For economic and social reasons Russian legislation established a whole range of restrictions upon its Jewish subject. To allow free entry of foreign Jews into Russia is obviously impossible under the circumstances. They would then enjoy greater rights in Russian than Russia's own Jewish subjects. Therein lies the special reason for the discrimination which Russia practices toward foreign Jews wishing to enter Russia. I must add that existing restrictions are considered a measure of defense for the Russian masses against alien domination. Concern for such measures of protection must be understood by the United States which for similar reasons prohibited the entry of Asiatics."<sup>65</sup>

So only in the end of January 1912 the opinion of one of the core Russian officials appeared in the U.S. press that made it possible for the public to learn the position supported by the Russian Government. From it therefore it was evident that the Jewish subject was deeply rooted in that country and any changes in it were made very slowly. Thus there were no reasons to expect that denunciation of the trade treaty would become the catalyst that would shift the main political

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<sup>62</sup> "Russian Premier Answers on Treaty." New York Times, January 25, 1912.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

trend towards it. But the fact that Russia and America would need time to reconstruct their relations was obvious for the political elites of both countries.

Russian Government did not accept the accusations in violation of the trade treaty and did not intend to initiate negotiations with the United States about the terms of a new one. It was likely to take measures necessary for the country to find the ways to avoid its dependence on American exported goods. In the end of February, 1912 the State Duma discussed the project prepared by the Russian Minister of Commerce which "proposes to permit the entry duty free of certain machines and machine parts, to offer manufacturers credit on easy terms, and to reduce taxes in their favor. It also proposes a temporary reduction in the tariff on the whole range of farming machines after July 14, 1912 - the date of the expiration of the present tariff - to be prolonged indefinitely."<sup>66</sup>

The apogee of the campaign had passed by that time and that was the period when the United States waited for the respond of the Russian officials but the latter looked for opportunities to help her economy and substitute American goods increasing her export from European countries and creating comfortable terms for economic development in Russia.

Since that time on the New York Times lost its interest to the problem that not long ago was very sharp. Only a few articles appeared in it in 1913. One of them outlined the point of view of Mme Carriere who was the wife of the Russian Imperial Council of State. She expressed her personal opinion related to Russians and Jews, trying to find the roots of the problem in Jewish "superior business ability." In fact she argued that "It was when the Russian nobility began to see their estates slipping away from them and all branches of business controlled by the Jews that measures were taken to prevent the old Russian families from being wiped out by a competition they were not used to."<sup>67</sup>

The other articles dealt with the prospects of Russian-American trade and possibilities to negotiate new trade convention. It should be pointed out that the United States needed such treaty much more than Russia as the former desired to increase significantly her trade with the Empire and had to secure trade privileges. Without such agreements the United States were not able to benefit from their trade with Russia competing with European countries in Russian market. However, any idea to negotiate new trade convention was opposed by American Jews who played the key role in the campaign. They were very concerned that a new treaty "will contain no provision relating to the passport, reserving that subject for separate and independent negotiation..."<sup>68</sup> So the Jewish leaders insisted that the passport subject had to precede any initiatives from any of the two countries in their desire to elaborate the terms of a new treaty of trade and commerce.

The outbreak of the World War I and a series of political upheavals in Russia made it totally unnecessary for that country to discuss this subject with the American officials. The country was undergoing severe hardships that in the end led to the civil war in the country and totally destroyed her political, economic, and social systems.

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<sup>66</sup> "Duma Discusses Trade Bill." The New York Times, February 29, 1912.

<sup>67</sup> "Says Russia Won't Yield on Passports." The New York Times, June 26, 1913.

<sup>68</sup> "Points to Injustice in Russian Treaty." The New York Times, March 20, 1915.

## 5. Conclusions.

Abrogation of the Russian-American Trade Treaty of 1832 was the result of the large-scale campaign of a group of prominent American Jews who actively lobbied their idea in U.S. Congress and made President Taft accept it. Then the Russian Government was officially informed about the denunciation of the treaty and, therefore, the main leaders of the campaign could celebrate their local victory - the United States and the Russian Empire did not have the treaty any more. However, the global aim - to inspire other European countries to follow the Americans and dissolve the treaties with Russia that they had had - was not achieved.

The whole campaign initiated by the Americans of the Jewish faith was their respond to the laws that regulated life and activities of Jews who lived in Russia or arrived in that country. They considered them to be discriminative and humiliating as they did not ensure the Jews the same rights that other Russian citizens or foreigners had in that country.

So the campaign for abrogation of the treaty and its results could be considered as one of the unique examples of how a pressure group could make the President of the United States and the Government of that country obey the opinion of the national minority (though influential) which in the end had a very important influence on the Russian-American relations.

For the public it became possible to learn about the essence of the problem from the main American newspapers, one of them was the New York Times. It should be pointed out that it became possible and desirable for the supporters of the campaign to attract to the matter as much attention of the public through the press as possible. That was their last chance to do anything about "passport question" as their arguments were not strong enough and did not convince President Taft to support their decision. The latter did not leave any doubts during his meeting with the Jewish leaders in the White House. Thus, being not supported both by the U.S. President and the Secretary of the State, the pressure group had nothing to do but to agitate public opinion and attract Congressmen to the issue. Since that time on the U.S. press was able to inform American citizens about numerous meetings which were attended by very influential American politicians, Congressmen and ex-ambassadors.

The New York Times devoted a lot of attention to this matter keeping public informed about everything that somehow dealt with it. The authors of the publications described in details all the meetings and cited the main leaders of the campaign. It is essential that there were no any attempts to interpret or offer a biased opinion on the matter. On the contrary, the articles were mainly descriptive with no judgments on the issue and told the readers about what was "on the surface" of the conflict, that means - open for public. The interpretation of the matter by the Jewish leaders, a lot of slogans for abrogation of the treaty with the Russian Empire, opinions of many influential and prominent people whose views were also very essential - all these was meticulously outlined in the articles of the New York Times and became a very important resource for the researchers of how the open phase of the campaign was hold.

However, there was no any alternative information that could shed the light on the matter. That was the main reason why the articles that appeared in The New York Times in November-December 1911 described only populists measures of the pressure group, but not the position of the American or Russian officials.

The materials that could be used by the American press for making an unbiased public opinion were very limited. Actually the goal was not to investigate the problem, but to highlight the core events that were important for the country at a certain period of time. That was the reason why the first information about the position of the Russian Government appeared in the New York Times rather late, only in January 1912, when it was expressed officially and published in Russian newspapers.

To sum up, the idea to use mainstream American press to attract public opinion as a crucial part of the campaign was only partly successful. We should admit that the main goal was achieved and both countries had to take a break and think over the perspectives of their commercial and political relations. On the other hand, the United States lost all their commercial privileges in that country. Moreover, the anti-Russian propaganda which searched the support from the main European countries was totally ignored by them as the political relations with the Russian Empire were much more essential for them than the matter that the American Jews were against of.