

Jews in Wartime Urban Space: Ethnic Mobilization and the Formation of a New
Community in Kyiv, 1914-1918

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a case study of wartime Jewish politics and social life Jewish life in Kyiv from 1914 to the end of 1918. The research engages the larger questions of Central and Eastern European history during the Great War in general, and of the Russian Empire in particular—mass mobilization, social engineering, and the emergence of new social and political communities.

Kyiv, the capital of the South-Western region of the Russian Empire, was situated in the center of the Pale of Jewish Settlement. During the war, Kyiv was the closest major city to the South-Western front and as such became the transit city for Jews deported for resettlement. Philanthropic activity, developed to aid the Jewish refugees, – the Jewish “home front” – mobilized the Jewish population and significantly democratized communal life. I argue that relief work during the war created a new and officially-sanctioned Jewish public space that enabled the development of a Jewish civil society and established an imagined national community. The wartime turmoil, growing state anti-Semitism, and the activity of Jewish relief organizations all stimulated political activity and furthered the development of a civic collective identity, which enabled an impressive Jewish national movement from 1917–1920.

The revolutionary events of 1917 changed Kyiv’s identity and its status in the region. It became the capital city of the Ukrainian state, but also a true Jewish metropolis, the center of regional Jewish political and cultural life. Though the new national freedoms ushered in by the revolution created openings for civic initiatives, it also accentuated the differences between national social groups. The development of the

Ukrainian national movement compelled Jews to gravitate to Jewish national organizations, staffed by experienced social and political organizers, which enabled the representation and defense of Jewish national interests. However, Jewish political identity was always multilayered. Jewish nationalism as it emerged in 1917 was not fully developed or exclusive of other allegiances. It coexisted with contested loyalties and identities, constantly adapting to local discourses and remaining advantageously fluid.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| ark. | arkush (page) |
| CUPOK | the Council of United Public Organizations of Kyiv |
| EKOPO | the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims |
| f. | fond (collection) |
| KMD | the Kyiv Military District |
| KOPE | the Kyiv Jewish Society to Aid the Victims of War |
| op. | opys (register) |
| OPE | the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment Among Jews |
| ORT | The Society for Handicraft and Agricultural Work among the Jews of Russia |
| OZE | the Society for Preserving the Health of the Jewish Population |
| RSDLP | the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party |
| SERP | the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party |
| spr. | sprava (file) |
| SSRP | the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party |
| TK | the Committee of the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna |
| UNR | the Ukrainian National Republic |
| VGS | the All-Russian Union of Towns |
| VZS | the All-Russian Zemstvo Union |
| z. | fond (collection) |

NOTE ON USAGE

Until February 1918, the Russian Empire and its successor states used the Julian calendar, which ran thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar. In my dissertation, dates are given in the Julian (Old) style until January 31, 1918, when Russia adopted the Gregorian calendar (New Style). I used both styles (NS in parentheses), when I thought that it would help the reader follow events.

I have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration for Russian, Ukrainian, except for names already common in English (for example, An-sky instead of An-skii).

INTRODUCTION

The Great War was a decisive moment for world history in general, and for Eastern Europe in particular. The collapse of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires, the slogan of national self-determination, and the formation of nation-states changed the regional and global balance of power.¹ These developments also shaped the political aspirations of ethnic groups in Eastern Europe and caused mass mobilization of the population.

The Jewish population of Eastern Europe was no exception. On the eve of war, almost half (46%) of the world's Jewry lived in the empire of the tsars.² The majority of them were urbanites, who lived in the Kingdom of Poland and in the Pale of Jewish Settlement, the western provinces of the Russian Empire where Jews were permitted to reside permanently. Kyiv, known as a "second Jerusalem" to Orthodox Christians, was situated in the center of the Pale. Modernization, urbanization, and industrialization—the social processes that significantly changed the social fabric of the Russian cities in the second half of the nineteenth century—also altered the social communities in Kyiv. Access to institutions of secular education, libraries, and public organizations encouraged Jews to develop new forms and expressions of secular Jewishness, which transcended

¹ Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5.

² Richard H. Rowland, "Geographical Patterns of the Jewish Population in the Pale of Settlement of Late Nineteenth Century Russia," *Jewish Social Studies*, 3/4 (1986): 207–34, 207–09; Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 4; A. K. Tikhonov, *Katoliki, musul'mane i iudei Rossijskoj imperii v poslednej četverti XVIII-nachale XX v.* (Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo S.-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2007), 261.

religious boundaries.³ As David Weinberg formulated it: “It was in the city that Jews first faced the challenge of modern life: how to balance their religious and ethnic loyalties with the commitment to the larger society.”⁴

The life of the Jewish community in Kyiv during the last decade before the Great War was significantly shaped by secularization and acculturation to the Russian culture. Yuri Slezkine, in his book *The Jewish Century*, provides a very provocative account of Russian Jewry, which Kenneth Moss summarized succinctly as “the average Jew was a Russian-speaking Menshevik.” Indeed, urban milieux provided more possibilities for personal and social growth, but also presented larger risks of assimilation or Russification than small towns. At the same time, as Moss noted, researchers should not exaggerate the level of Jewish Russification.⁵ The upper- and middle-class Jews, who were highly educated and well integrated into Gentile society, continued to exhibit religious and cultural distinctiveness and took part in Jewish public and political life. For Jews, Russian imperial civic identity co-existed with a separate Jewish ethnonational one.⁶ As for the lower classes, they understood or even spoke Russian in their daily lives, but generally maintained a traditional Jewish way of life at home. Natan Meir has shown that Jewish identity during the Russian Empire’s last two decades was very fluid and “each individual Jew developed his or her own brand of Jewishness.”⁷ I argue that the

³ Tobias Metzler, *Tales of Three Cities: Urban Jewish Cultures in London, Berlin, and Paris (1880-1940)*, Jüdische Kultur, Bd. 28 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 16.

⁴ David Weinberg, "Jews and the Urban Experience," *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 49, no. 3 (2000): 278–79, 278.

⁵ Kenneth B. Moss, "At Home in Late Imperial Russian Modernity—Except When They Weren't: New Histories of Russian and East European Jews, 1881–1914," *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 2 (2012): 401–52, 408.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Natan M. Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 186.

experience of war and revolution accentuated the situational nature of Jewish identity and the degree to which it was dependent on the environment.

From the end of the nineteenth century and under the influence of a revolutionary *zeitgeist*, the traditional organization of Jewish communal life and the Jewish elite changed, acquiring a more secular and democratic character.⁸ Although Jewish civil society, represented by voluntary associations, functioned with the help of financial support from merchant notables, new social institutions under the leadership of nationalist-minded intellectuals, professionals, and artisans claimed to speak for the masses. A big city such as Kyiv had the necessary “network for communicating information and points of view”⁹ (clubs, associations, media resources) and a professional elite, which could create the public sphere required for the development of public opinion. By discussing communal life, this new public influenced the crystallization of a modern national community. The wartime turmoil, growing state anti-Semitism, and the activity of Jewish relief organizations all stimulated political activity and furthered the development of a civic collective identity, which enabled an impressive Jewish national movement from 1917-1920.

In the last twenty years, historians have published numerous works on the social history of modern European Jewry. However, very few of them have explored the influence of the Great War on the experience of Jewish community in a large Eastern European city or the role of the War in the process of establishing a Jewish national

⁸ Ibid., 262–263, 309.

⁹ Jürgen. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 360.

community.¹⁰ Readers still await publications that shed light on the wartime experience of Jews in urban Russia.¹¹ In 2010, Andrew Koss defended at Stanford University a dissertation on “World War I and the Remaking of Jewish Vilna, 1914-1918,” but he has not yet published his results. He stated that the Great War was a “turning point in the history of Vilna’s Jews,” and many “trends associated with the Russian Revolution in fact originated during the war itself.”¹² Prewar Jewish communal and personal life was dramatically changed before the revolutionary events of 1917. The topic of cities at war, and the accompanying changes in everyday practices, urban institutions, and the urban landscape in Eastern Europe, is more than worthy of historians’ attention, for it helps us to understand better the political, social, and cultural realities of the interwar era.

Western European cities at war have not been neglected by historians. One can mention the three-volume collection *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*, edited by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert.¹³ Urban locations and institutions, such as railway stations, streets, popular entertainment venues, schools, universities, hospitals, municipal institutions, sites of worship, and public societies, functioned during the war as sites where social and political identities were displayed and constructed. Economic problems caused by the war divided the urban population and raised hostility and suspicion; the war also created new social divisions and hierarchies. In urban public places, city dwellers defined themselves as subjects, citizens, refugees, pacifists or

¹⁰ Konrad Zieliński, "The shtetl in Poland, 1914-1918," in *The Shtetl: New Evaluations*, ed. Steven T. Katz (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Konrad Zieliński, *Żydzi lubelszczyzny 1914-1918* (Lublin: Lubelskie Tow. Naukowe, 1999).

¹¹ Andrew Noble Koss, "World War I and the Remaking of Jewish Vilna, 1914-1918" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2010).

¹² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³ J. M. Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital cities at war: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914-1919*, Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007). J. M. Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: A Cultural History: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

patriots, and finally, by drawing the line between “us” and “them,” they defined their national belonging.¹⁴ By examining the life of the Jewish community during the war in a particular city, we can answer a number of important questions: How did warfare change communal life? How did the Jews as an urban minority react to wartime turmoil? How did they cope with the social and economic problems produced by the war? How did relief organizations function and what kind of assistance did they provide to the population?

In the Russian context, the history of the Jewish community is intertwined with questions of social engineering and nation-making in the Russian Empire during the Great War. Eric Lohr, Joshua Sanborn, and Peter Holquist have recently published monographs on these topics. Lohr explores the nationalizing practices (such as expropriation and deportation of ethnic groups) in the Russian Empire, which changed the ethnic profile of the population. Joshua Sanborn investigates the same field of study, but from a military angle: how military conscription, which enabled mass participation in politics, together with the violence of total war, led to the emergence of a multiethnic Russian imperial nation.¹⁵ Both historians state that because of the war’s totalizing character it served as a “mobilizational event” for the formation of the Russian nation.¹⁶ Peter Holquist conceptualizes “Russia’s continuum of crisis” as a part of wider European period of mobilization and violence which started in 1914 and continued until the 1920s.

¹⁴ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I*, Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare, vol. 17 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004); Ross J. Wilson, *New York and the First World War: Shaping an American City* (Farnham, Surrey, 2014); Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914-1918*, Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian nation: Military conscription, total war, and mass politics, 1905-1925* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011).

¹⁶ Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign Against Enemy Aliens during World War I*, Russian research center studies, vol. 94 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 9.

The mass mobilization of the population increased its involvement in politics, leading to politicization and the construction of new social identities.¹⁷

The Jewish population of the wartime Russian Empire is usually represented in historiography as a passive object of the state policy of social engineering. For example, Eric Lohr and Simon Goldin focus on Jewish deportations from the front zone and more generally on the government's policy towards the Jews. Most scholars, however neglect Jewish responses to state policies.¹⁸ Peter Gatrell fills this gap by paying attention to refugees and 'refugeedom' in Russia in general, and to Jewish refugees in particular. He demonstrates that the social and political practices forged during the war provided a crucial experience for future national elites, who had started their participation in mass politics during the earlier 1905 Revolution.¹⁹

The activity of Jewish relief organizations in wartime is the focus of Steven Zipperstein's essay "The Politics of Relief: The Transformation of Russian Jewish Communal Life during the First World War." He describes the politicization of Jewish life during the war and links this process to relief work.²⁰ His ideas were developed by Simon Rabinovitch in his new monograph *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia*. Rabinovitch demonstrates that the democratization of Jewish communal self-government and the creation of new

¹⁷ Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 4.

¹⁸ Semion Goldin, "Deportation of Jews by the Russian Military command, 1914-1915," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 41, no. 1 (2002): 70-78; Eric Lohr, "The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportations, Hostages, and Violence during World War I," *The Russian Review* 60, no. 3 (2001): 404-19; Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*.

¹⁹ Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I*, Indiana-Michigan series in Russian and East European studies (Indiana University Press, 1999a).

²⁰ Steven J. Zipperstein, "The politics of relief: The transformation of Russian Jewish communal life during the First World War," in *Studies in contemporary Jewry*, vol. 4, *The Jews and the European crisis, 1914-21*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 22-40.

Russian Jewish national-cultural and government institutions were the result of expanded Jewish communal activity during the war. Nevertheless, both historians consider these changes within the greater context of Jewish history rather than that of East European social history. Their works do not explore the experience of Jews in urban space. Zipperstein and Rabinovitch focus on central Jewish organizations in St. Petersburg/Petrograd that coordinated the work of relief institutions throughout the empire and to a certain extent made the imperial capital also a Jewish political capital. Consequently, they leave unexplored the experience of urban Jewish communities in the western borderlands, located at the epicenter of the events where the vast majority of the Jews lived.

Nevertheless, a history of a Jewish community in a wartime city is not a new topic for European historiography. David Rechter focuses on the Jews of Vienna during the Great War and seeks to explain how World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire affected the life of Jewish communities in the multinational state.²¹ Marsha Rozenblit's work also shaped the contours of my dissertation. She does not concentrate on the history of Jews in one city; rather, she explores the question of wartime Jewish identity and shows how Austrian Jews understood their Jewishness and Austrianness.²²

My dissertation focuses on the Jewish community in Kyiv during the war as a case study of wartime Jewish politics and social life. As Kyiv also played a major role in the revolution, I go beyond the concept of a city transformed by war. It was also a city of liberated minorities organizing politically. My work engages the larger questions of

²¹ David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007); Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I*, Studies in Jewish history (Oxford, U.K., New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²² Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*.

Central and Eastern European history during the Great War in general, and of the Russian Empire in particular—mass mobilization, social engineering, and the emergence of new social and political communities (social groups which had common values or identity). Historians have largely neglected Kyiv’s wartime history. Yet, as the closest major city to the south-western front, Kyiv is a crucial site for investigation and discussion about the changes wrought to Jewish social life during the war. My dissertation analyzes the life of the Kyivan Jewish community, and its social and political transformations during the war. It will also help understand the effects of the war on imperial Russia’s national minorities. Additionally, a history of the Jewish community in one urban center sheds light on the social politics of European powers during the war. Beginning in 1917, Kyiv became the epicenter of revolutionary events for the region’s Jewish population, a city where Jewish autonomy was proclaimed by the Third Universal of the Ukrainian Central Rada. For these reasons, urban Kyiv merits study.

Steven Zipperstein noted that scholars had a tendency to look at the history of the Russian Jewry during the Great War as unworthy of attention; those years were usually seen as “dark” and “barren” due to the absence of Jewish political party activity.²³ Therefore, the majority of the studies on the history of Russian Jewry during the late-imperial period end at 1914. Scholars have, however, lavished attention of the Revolution and the Civil War, times of rampant anti-Semitism and pogroms. However, scholars should not forget that events of the Great War and the Revolution overlapped. My research focuses on the war as a mobilizing event, which provided Russian Jewry a public sphere separate from political parties. As Mark von Hagen notes, the intended and unintended consequences of state policies (forced expulsions, stigmatization of the Jews

²³ Zipperstein, "The politics of relief," 22.

as unreliable and treacherous social group) during the Great War offers an explanation for the emergence of national conflict in the disintegrated Russian Empire.²⁴ Wartime policy and its economic and social consequences undermined the positions of traditional elites and accelerated democratization of national elites. Thus, the mobilization of the Jewish political movement and its dynamic in 1917–1918 can be understood only in the greater context of the wartime “mobilization of ethnicity.”

In the context of Ukrainian history, my research demonstrates that imperial collapse opened up possibilities for the development of both Ukrainian and Jewish national identities. My dissertation presents the events of 1917–18 in Ukraine in a new light, arguing that the “Ukrainian” revolution was also a Jewish one. The revolution opened the way for multiple imagined communities, developing their public spheres and aiming to shape and promote the national interests of each particular nationality (Jewish, Ukrainian, Polish, Russian). At the same time, the case study of Kyiv’s Jewish community shows that the creation and development of multiple imagined communities in 1917 was possible due to the war, which served as a catalyst for the social development even of those national communities that were stigmatized and persecuted (in many ways even because of their desparate situation).

My research also contributes to scholarly understandings of Kyiv’s social and cultural history before the Second World War and Holocaust. During the war and revolution, the city became a laboratory of identities, where old institutions were made anew (modern, secular, and democratic). Those who are interested in the history of the interwar Soviet Union should also find my research relevant, for it shows how the city

²⁴ Mark von Hagen, “The Great War and the Mobilization of Ethnicity in the Russian Empire,” in *Post-Soviet Political Order: Conflict and State Building*, ed. by Barnett R. Rubin and Jack Snyder (New York: Routledge, 1998), 34-97.

and ethnic communities, transformed by the war, gave the way for the new modern identities (in this case, Jewish one), which were not completely the result of the Soviet social and political transformations, but had took their roots in the time before the Bolsheviks came to power.

Jewish nationalism and the formation of a national Jewish community are at the centre of my research. Using the case study of Kyiv, I show that the emergence of the Jewish nation in 1917 was a complex process of transforming a pre-existing ethnoreligious community through mass mobilization during the war into an “imagined community”—a nation.²⁵ According to Rogers Brubaker, ethnicity and nationalism are basic forms of social and cultural identification, which can be used to construct sameness and difference, to place oneself in relation to others, and to identify one’s interests and to orient one’s actions. Religion also acts as a means for division of the social world, as a principle of self-identification, and as a frame for imagining community.²⁶ In the Jewish case, religion and ethnicity were tightly intertwined. Nevertheless, a growing secularization of Jewish communal life beginning at the end of the nineteenth century and the contemporaneous institutionalization of Jewish political movements reduced the significance of religion in Jewish life, transforming it into an important cultural component of communal identity, but without real control over such agencies of socialization as schools or media.

The professionals (the so-called “third element”), who embraced such modern ideologies as nationalism or socialism, came to prominence during the war as activists of

²⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 2006).

²⁶ Rogers Brubaker, "Religion and nationalism: four approaches," *Nations Nationalism* 18, no. 1 (2012): 2–20, 4.

the national welfare movement. Zipperstein described them as “professionally trained men and women, who showed a considerable interest in the public sphere.”²⁷ Before the war, these professionals could not take an active role in Jewish communal affairs, for they were under the control of the Jewish financial elite who, as the main sponsors of Jewish philanthropic activity, did not want to share their power and successfully resisted any attempts to democratize the Jewish public organizations, which were mostly charitable in character.²⁸ When the refugee crisis arose, welfare programs for refugees exceeded the scope and number of the traditional system of private charity that predated the war. Thus, these institutions needed a larger staff with better technical skills to effectively manage purchases, storage, and distribution of food, clothing, and medicines, organize shelters, orphanages, etc. Although Jewish notables did not lose their power completely, they had to share their leadership roles with relief workers who had mobilised around a common goal of helping their “suffering brethren.”

I argue that the war and revolution in Russia, a state in which Jews were legally discriminated against, was a mobilizing event for the Jewish ethnoreligious community, which by the end of the war was transformed into a democratic national community. Rogers Brubaker states that a nation is realized in practice and depends on surrounding circumstances. Legal restrictions and anti-Semitism in the Russian Empire were not necessarily factors working against nation-building. These measures institutionalized national identities and enabled mass mobilization of the population. Growing mobility due to forced expulsions or voluntary movement of the population was an additional

²⁷ Zipperstein, "The politics of relief," 28.

²⁸ The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment Among Jews (Russian acronym—OPE); the Society for Manual Work Among Jews (Russian acronym—ORT); the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA).

factor that mixed Jews and Gentiles, and reinforced interactions between them.²⁹ When the regime excluded Jews from the ranks of loyal subjects and neglected their economic, social, and cultural interests, it institutionalized them as a separate group. This created a feeling of solidarity, and the war acted as a factor stimulating Jewish social and political activity.

My study examines this new understanding of “Jewish community” that derived from the martial experiences of the Jewish population. This dissertation argues that the government’s anti-Semitism and the military’s expulsions of the Jewish population from the war zone ultimately destroyed any hope for Jewish integration into Russian society and forced Russian Jews to rethink their identity. Jewish philanthropic activity during the war created a new and officially-sanctioned Jewish space, which enabled the development of a Jewish civil society and established an imagined national community.

Although Jewish welfare organizations, such as the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims (*Evreiskii komitet pomoshchi zhertvam voiny*; Russian acronym – EKOPO) and its Kyiv branch (the Kyiv Jewish Society to Aid the Victims of War; Russian acronym – KOPE), functioned under the auspices of Russian government bodies and were partly sponsored by the state, they represented the Jewish population as a separate nationality. This notion included not only the “Russian” Jews proper, but also the Jewish subjects of the Habsburg Empire who had inhabited recently conquered Galicia and Bukovina and were then in the process of being forcibly deported to inner Russian provinces. The mixing of Russian and Austrian Jews and the literal and figurative necessity of finding a common language of communication created a feeling of

²⁹ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17–18.

community and fraternity.³⁰ Awareness of commonness, regardless of citizenship, was the crucial condition for the testing of modern Jewish national slogans, and it enhanced the fight for equality, which in turn became the basis for the political mobilization of Jewry in 1917.

Ronald Grigor Suny has defined this transformation as the moment when “people begin to believe that they can communicate more easily with some than with others, when they begin to define who is within the group and who are the ‘others,’ when they begin to gain the capacity to act in whatever “interests” they believe they share (which may be opposed to those of the ‘others’).”³¹ This perspective aligns with that of Rogers Brubaker, who characterizes a nation “as collective individuals, capable of coherent, purposeful collective action.”³² My dissertation shows that Russian Jews as a secular national entity finally “happened” in 1917, but not as a single event. Rather, it was a process of identity formation which started in 1905, advanced considerably during the Great War, and culminated in 1917, when the Jewish population of the former Russian Empire claimed its right for national-personal autonomy.

My analysis also draws on the scholarship of urban space. Henri Lefebvre argues that space does not exist in a vacuum; it is produced socially through representations. To describe the production of space, Lefebvre constructs a spatial triad: spatial practices (perceived space), representations of space (conceived space), and representational spaces (lived space). The interplay of these three dimensions makes up social space. Spatial practices, according to Lefebvre, embody “a close association, within perceived

³⁰ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 148.

³¹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 6.

³² Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 14.

space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, ‘private’ life and leisure.”³³ This interplay between the landscape and social practices constitutes everyday life and facilitates communication and social exchange. Lefebvre argues that social space contains “natural and social objects,” relations, and “the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information.”³⁴ In other words, the landscape and urban social practices interact in myriad ways, through the mediation of the architectural environment and public rituals, among others. As I will show in this dissertation, one can literally “map” the Jewish presence in Kyiv as both everydayness (life and work in several suburbs) and public presence (which unfolded in public, sometimes even ceremonial space).

As a city, Kyiv was conceptualized in the Russian imperial discourse as a centre of Russian Orthodoxy and as the “mother of Russian cities,” linking Imperial Russia to the rich heritage of Kyivan Rus’. At the same time, it was a physical space, in which people constructed their everyday lives and where they engaged in social interaction. The Great War and the revolutionary events of 1917 changed not only the daily routine of the urban population, but also Kyiv’s identity and its status in the region. Before the war it had been the capital of the South-Western region of the Russian Empire. During the war, Kyiv was the closest major city to the South-Western front and as such became the transit city for Jews deported for resettlement. As a multiethnic city, Kyiv included multiple spaces of representation, which challenged the “official” representation of urban space as religiously Orthodox and culturally imperial Russian. For example, the Jewish

³³ Henri Lefebvre and Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 38.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

community of Kyiv was represented by synagogues, prayer houses, and the Jewish Hospital, which appropriated urban space for the needs of one particularly marginalized ethnoreligious group. Thus, focus on urban space offers a conceptual framework for undering Kyiv as a multiethnic urban centre.

When discussing Jewish experiences of war and revolution, I also deploy the term “public sphere,” which Jürgen Habermas defined as a community “made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state.”³⁵ Habermas points out three preconditions for the emergence of the public sphere: disregard of status, domain of common concern, and inclusivity.³⁶ In the context of early twentieth-century Russia, the term “public sphere” corresponds with the term ‘*obshchestvennost*’, which according to Joseph Bradley was “a sense of public duty and civic spirit, increasingly in an urban context, and the groups possessing these values.”³⁷ The new voluntary organizations created during the war in Russia (All-Russian Union of Zemstvos, the Union of Towns, national relief organizations) performed services essential for Russian imperial society in general and for the interests of the national communities in particular.

This research focuses on the Jews of Kyiv during the Great War. Chronologically it will encompass the period from July 19 (August 1), 1914, when Germany declared war on Russia, until the end of the German occupation in December 1918, when the

³⁵ Jürgen Habermas and Burger, Thomas (trans), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (The MIT Press, 1989), 176, 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 36–37.

³⁷ Joseph Bradley, "Voluntary Associations, Civic Culture, and *Obshchestvennost*' in Moscow," in *Between tsar and people: Educated society and the quest for public identity in late imperial Russia*, eds. Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 131.

Ukrainian territories ceased to be part of a pan-European wartime space and entered the chaotic period of the civil war.

A diverse array of primary sources is available for the exploration of the wartime political development and social activity of the Jewish community in Kyiv and the creation of new forms of communal organization. The State Archive of the Kyiv Region (DAKO) houses the KOPE files, which contain information about the society's activity in Kyiv and the South-Western region of the Russian Empire. The Central State Historical Archive in Kyiv (TsDIAK) holds the records of the Chancellery of the Kyiv, Podolia, and Volhynia Governor General, the Kyiv Gendarme Administration, and the personal records of Naftali Fridman, a Jewish parliamentarian in the Third and Fourth State Duma from Kovno province. At the State Archive of the City of Kyiv (DAK), I worked with the collections of the Kyiv City Administration and the Kyiv City Police. The Central State Archive of Supreme Bodies of Government and Administration of Ukraine (TsDAVOVU) holds the collections of the Executive Committee of the Council of United Public Organizations of Kyiv and the Ministry for Jewish Affairs of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine (TsDAHOU) holds the records of Jewish political parties and other organizations. Finally, the Judaica Department of the Manuscript Institute of the Vernads'kyi National Library of Ukraine preserves the personal records of Simon An-sky, a collection of Jewish documents, and the collection of the local Yiddish-language Jewish Socialist newspaper *Naye Tsayt* [New Times] (1918).

From the start of the war until 1917, Yiddish- and Hebrew-language publications and correspondence were prohibited in the Russian Empire, ostensibly to relieve the work

of censors. Local newspapers and journals as well as the all-Russian Jewish (in the Russian language) press provided information about communal activity and the general position of Jewish activists towards political events. Published and unpublished annual reports of relief organizations supplied quantitative and qualitative data.

The main challenge for my research was the scarcity of personal records (memoirs and diaries) of the Jews who played an active role in Jewish philanthropic organizations during the war. Some records from 1917-1918 that describe the events in Kyiv were published in the interwar period in Berlin by emigrants from the former Russian Empire. Among them are, for example, “*Iz Kievskikh vospominanii*” (From My Kiev Reminiscences) by Aleksei Gol’denveizer, *In golus bay di ukrainer: briv fun a idishn sotsial-demokrat* (In Ukrainian exile: the letters of a Jewish Social Democrat) of Solomon Goldelman (later translated into Ukrainian and English).³⁸ The memoirs of Moyshe Zilberfarb, the Minister of Jewish Affairs of the Ukrainian People’s Republic were published in 1918-19, and an English translation appeared in 1993.³⁹ My dissertation, which combines “personal” and press records, the archives of public organizations, political parties, and state institutions, uncovers the dynamics of urban life in Kyiv during the war and revolution in order to analyze the experiences of the local Jewish community during this period.

In keeping with the broad goal of studying Kyiv’s Jewish community during the war, this dissertation starts with a description of Kyiv’s social composition and Jewish settlement patterns. Jews were a visible social group in the urban landscape, but they did

³⁸ A. A. Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," in *Arkhiv Russkoi Revolutsii*, vol. 6, ed. I. V. Gessen (Berlin, 1922), 161-303; Solomon I. Goldelman, *Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine 1917-1920* (Chicago: Ukrainian Research and Information Institute, 1968).

³⁹ Moses Silberfarb and David H. Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine: Kiev, 1918/19* (New York: Aleph Press, 1993).

not predominate in any particular city district. “Otherness” pushed Jews to unite around common ideas and values, and the city’s multi-ethnic environment helped to strengthen ethnic awareness among them. Chapter One shows that although the Jewish community was ruled by the local Jewish financial elite, Jewish professionals and intellectuals had already started to democratize the communal governing board before the war.

Chapter Two examines the ways in which Kyivan Jews and Gentiles reacted to the outbreak of war. The war was a mobilizing event, which ushered state-led nationalism into public and private life. The exclusion of some ethnic groups from the imperial body politic, however, accelerated the fragmentation of imperial society and accentuated ethnic fault lines. The Jewish population of Kyiv was not homogeneous in its attitude to Russian military efforts. Although Jews took steps to show their loyalty to the state and the tsar, some of them were quite sceptical about Russia’s prospects of victory. This chapter examines Kyiv’s wartime urban routine, providing the background to the life of urban population.

In the next chapter, I discuss interethnic relations in the city. The idea of unanimous support for the war, regardless of religious or political affiliation, proved ephemeral. The chapter shows that the negative attitude of Gentile population towards Jews as an ethnoreligious group led to their further segregation and social marginalization, while at the same time it shaped Jewish their self-perception and strengthened their sense of solidarity. Although there was no open violence against Kyivan Jews during the war, anti-Semitism increased notably, which created the basis for the pogroms of 1918–19, when weak central and local authorities could not maintain civic and regional order.

Chapter 4 focuses on the social profile of different categories of Jewish refugees that came to Kyiv. This chapter prepares the groundwork for understanding why and in what circumstances the relief work in Kyiv started. Kyiv, as a city excluded from the Pale, was a transit city for refugees, expellees, and deportees, all of whom constituted a very unstable social group. The chapter suggests that activists of the local Jewish relief organization, which worked with refugees not only in Kyiv but also in the region, saw an opportunity to build bridges between Jewish intellectuals and professionals, and the Jewish masses inside and outside of the Russian Empire.

Chapter 5 discusses the Jewish “home front” in Kyiv. Relief efforts led to a massive expansion of Jewish communal work. At the start of the war, the main goal of welfare work was to show Jewish loyalty to the Russian state and society, but the arrival of refugees significantly changed the character of relief activity. This chapter shows how philanthropic activity mobilized the Jewish population, brought educated professionals into the new philanthropic institutions, significantly democratized communal life, and united the Jewish population around one goal.

The final chapter explores Kyiv as the epicentre of Ukrainian and Jewish political and cultural life from 1917-1918. New-found freedoms, however, were not equally shared by all ethnic groups. During the revolutionary years, the city became a place of competing identities. The “boundary-defining drive” of Ukrainians compelled Jews to gravitate to Jewish national organizations, staffed by experienced social and political organizers, which enabled the representation and defense of Jewish national interests. However, the political bureaucracy was too weak and did not have sufficient leverage to prevent violence against Jews.

CHAPTER ONE. KYIV'S JEWISH COMMUNITY ON THE EVE OF WAR

The City and its People

Osip Mandelstam once described Kyiv as “the oldest, most indomitable city in Ukraine.” Though Mandelstam was born to a Jewish family in Warsaw, his wife Nadezhda *née* Khazina was a native of Kyiv. In her memoirs, Khazina wrote that her family lived on Instytuts’ka Street across from the City Duma. In 1926, after the Civil War, Mandelstam wrote about his adopted city: “the Dnieper reenters its banks. Space bursts into the city everywhere, and the broad thoroughfare of Bibikov Boulevard is open once again—but this time not to enemy hordes, rather to the warm winds of May.”¹ This description of the city told of a new future and rebirth after a harsh period of war and revolution.

Kyiv’s central position in Jewish life owed a lot to its place in the Russian Empire. The city was an important religious and cultural centre that directly linked Imperial Russia to the rich heritage of Kyivan Rus’. In turn, this reinforced Russia’s pretensions to ancient origins and sacred statehood allegedly traced back to Andrew the Apostle, who was said to have been the first Gospel preacher in Slavic lands. According to legend, Andrew erected a cross on the top of a hill and announced that a mighty city would sprawl forth along the river, boasting many beautiful churches. Tsar Aleksandr II

¹ Osip Mandelstam, "Kiev," in *Mandelstam: The Complete Critical Prose and Letters*, eds. Jane Gary Harris and Constance Link (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979), 256; on Mandelstam and Kyiv see Leonid F. Katsis, "The Russian Jew Osip Mandelstam and Jewish Kiev," *East European Jewish Affairs* 40, no. 2 (2010): 159–72.

even called Kyiv the “Jerusalem of the Rus’ land” [*Ierusalim zemli Russkoi*].² The cityscape was replete with Imperial symbols and monuments. Though its urban culture was thoroughly Russified, the city also featured Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish cultural and social traditions. Kyiv was, in short, a cosmopolitan contact zone of peoples and cultures, histories and legacies, faiths and practices.

In the 1860s, Kyiv lacked big stone buildings, trams, electric lighting, and a central water supply. The birth of the sugar industry in the 1870s ushered Kyiv into modernity. The city’s “Sugar Quarter” was located in the Upper City; Khreschatyk Street soon harboured the best shops, restaurants, and hotels.³ At the beginning of the twentieth century, Kyiv was a city trying to move with the *zeitgeist*, but its imperial image was tightly bound up with its glorious past.

On the eve of the Great War, a local newspaper described Kyiv as a “big city,” building transportation infrastructure and growing in geographic size and economic importance. The paper even contended that Kyiv had the potential to become a metropolis equal in importance to Saint Petersburg, Moscow, or Berlin.⁴ Undoubtedly, modern urbanization was shaping the city’s geography. The population of Kyiv and its territory grew rapidly, which in turn accelerated the growth of the city’s transportation network, its water and power supply, and its sewer system.

The city administration had to ensure public safety and expand the public school system. The city’s growth outpaced the development of city amenities (water and sewer systems). Kyiv, located on the shores of the Dnipro, one of Europe’s longest rivers, had

² Nikolai Sementovskii, *Kiev, ego sviatyni, drevnosti, dostopamiatnosti i svedeniia, neobkhodimye dlia ego pochitatelei i puteshestvennikov* (Kiev: Izdanie N.IA. Ogloblina, 1900), 23.

³ Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800-1917* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 24, 28, 32-33.

⁴ “Vykup kievskogo gorodskogo tramvaia,” *Kievlianin*, 190 (12 July 1914): 2.

two main problems at the beginning of the twentieth century: sewage disposal and “water hunger.”⁵ Solutions to these problems were complicated by the private ownership of the city’s utilities and the city administration’s inability to influence these companies.

Kyiv’s urban space rapidly embraced modernity. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Ginzburg House was the Russian Empire’s most modern building and only “high-rise,” made possible by an American-made Otis elevator. The building, finished in 1911, had 11 stories and was located on Instytuts’ka Street, where the Hotel Ukraina stands today. The building’s owner, Lev Ginzburg, was “the king of Kyivan builders,” an elder of the Jewish Hospital, and a well-known philanthropist.⁶ Though urban inhabitants were impressed by the building’s grandeur, the city’s construction committee started an anti-high-rise campaign. In June 1914, the city passed an ordinance limiting buildings to ten stories because of fire safety.⁷

In the two decades preceding the Great War, Imperial Russia experienced rapid economic growth and social development. In the 1890s, Kyiv province’s population growth of 16.6% was more than double the national figure of 7.5%.⁸ The 1897 census also established that Kyiv province had the highest population density of all Russian provinces.⁹ In 1913, Kyiv’s population was about 520,000, or roughly 60% of Kyiv province’s urbanites and just over 10% of the province’s total population.¹⁰ It was the fifth largest city in the Russian Empire after Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, and

⁵ K. Voblyi, “Ocherednye zadachi gorodskogo khoziaistva v Rossii.” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 8.

⁶ Mikhail Kal’nitskii, *Evreiskie adresa Kieva* (Kiev: Dukh i Litera, 2012), 225.

⁷ “Kampaniia protiv neboskrebov v Kieve” *Poslednie novosti*, 2461 (11 July 1914): 3.

⁸ A. G. Rashin, *Naselenie Rossii za 100 let (1811-1913 gg): Statisticheskie ocherki* (Moskva: Gogudarstvennoe statisticheskoe izdatel’stvo, 1956), 28, 217.

⁹ M. B. Kal’nyts’kyi and N. M. Kondel’-Perminova, eds., *Zabudova Kyieva doby klasychnoho kapitalizmu: abo koly i iak misto stalo ievropeis’kym* (Kyiv: Varto, 2012), 22.

¹⁰ Rashin, *Naselenie Rossii za 100 let (1811-1913 gg)*, 90, 101.

Riga, whose populations stood at 2.1 million, 1.7 million, 0.91 million, and 0.56 million respectively. Łódź and Odessa followed Kyiv with populations of 506,000 and 499,600.¹¹ The city was also a centre of sugar manufacturing; it was home to the “sugar kings,” such as Lazar Brodsky, Mykola Tereschenko, and Yona Zaitsev, among others. The city’s continuous growth, however, was hampered by the onset of war.

Table 1. Distribution of Population in Kyiv by City Districts, 1916¹²

| Districts | Population |
|---|-------------------|
| Lybid’ | 101,170 |
| Lukianivka | 92,788 |
| Starokyiv (Old Kyiv) | 84,413 |
| Plos’kyi, with | 68,190 |
| Kurenivka, | 5,464 |
| Pryorka, | 7,197 |
| Puscha-Vodytsia | 1,114 |
| Pechers’k (Caves), with Zvirynets | 55,801 (13,585) |
| Podil (Lower City), with Trukhanov Island | 43,021 (3,655) |
| Bul’varnyi (Boulevard), with Shuliavka | 49,293 (19,650) |
| Dvortsovyi (Palace District) | 25,904 |
| Demiivka | 24,713 |
| Solomianka | 23,384 |
| Grey zone | 2,925 |
| Total in the city | 546,889 |
| Total | 571,602 |

At the beginning of 1914, Kyiv was the capital city of the Kyiv, Volyn, and Podolia Governorate General [*general-gubernatorstvo*] headed by General Fedor F. Trepov (1854-1938).¹³ Nikolai Sukovkin, the Governor of Kyiv province until 19 August 1915 (hereafter I am using the Julian calendar), was subordinate to the Minister of the

¹¹ Ibid., 135–36; Gawryszewski Andrzej, *Ludność Warszawy w XX wieku* (Warszawa: PAN IG i PZ, 2009), 353.

¹² Mikhailov G. “Ischislenie naselenia, kvartir i vladenii v Kieve v fevrale 1916.” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1916): 92.

¹³ This was an administrative-territorial division of the Russian Empire from 1775–1917, which consisted of several guberniias headed by a governor-general who was the military leader of the territory and supervised the civil governors, who were in charge of individual guberniias.

Interior. Count Aleksei Ignat'ev succeeded Sukovkin as governor, when the latter became a senator.¹⁴ “Discipline, decency and order” were maintained by the Chief of Police [*polizeimeister*], Colonel Aleksei A. Skalon, who became Lviv's city governor [*gradonachal'nik*] at the beginning of 1915. Lieutenant Colonel Sergei Gornostaev assumed the post of Kyiv's Chief of Police next. The administration of the Governorate General included the position of so-called “learned Jew” [*uchënyi evrei*], which at that time was occupied by German M. Barats (1835–1922), a well-known lawyer and historian who had graduated from the rabbinical school [*ravvinskoe uchilische*] in Zhytomyr and later from St. Vladimir University in Kyiv.¹⁵ The main task of the “learned Jew,” who was required to have a university degree, was to advise the Kyiv, Volynia, and Podolia Governor-General on Jewish affairs. Sholom Aleichem vividly described Barats in his autobiographical story *From the Fair*:

...a man with sparse side-whiskers dashed into the room. He was extremely myopic and seemed to be in a dither. Could this be a Jewish advisor to the governor-general? If not for the bare chin, Sholom would have sworn that he was a Hebrew teacher or a Talmud instructor. This Jewish advisor spit when he spoke and seemed to be quite scatterbrained. Sholom later discovered that all kinds of stories and anecdotes circulated about him in Kiev. For example, he was never able to find his own house until he saw its nameplate: HERMAN MARKOVITCH BARATS.¹⁶

Ippolit D'iakov, the mayor of Kyiv, mostly spent his time in St. Petersburg as a member of various central government committees. As such, the daily problems of managing the city fell to Fedor Burchak, his deputy. D'iakov was not very popular

¹⁴ L. M. Lysenko, *Gubernatory i general-gubernatory Rossiiskoi imperii: XVIII-nachalo XX veka* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo MPGU, 2001), 109.

¹⁵ S. M. Boguslavskii, ed., *Ves' Kiev na 1914 g. Adressnaia i Spravochnaia Kniga* (Kiev: Tipografia 1-i Kievskoi Arteli Pechatnogo Dela, 1914), 400–02.

¹⁶ Sholem Aleichem, *From the Fair: the Autobiography of Sholom Aleichem* (New York: Viking, 1985), 263; Victoria Khiterer, *Jewish City or Inferno of Russian Israel? A History of the Jews in Kiev before February 1917* (Academic Studies Press, 2016), 363.

among the people and was especially disliked by the local liberal press, represented by the newspaper *Kievskaiia Mysl'* [Kiev's Thought]. The mayor loved ballet and automobiles, which occupied more of his time than questions of city administration. Before the war, Governor General Vladimir Sukhomlinov prohibited newspapers to publish feuilletons about D'iakov and his extra-curricular activities. Thus, "the press kept silent, because newspapers could only cover the activity of D'iakov in [critical] feuilletons."¹⁷

The Jewish Population of Kyiv.

On the eve of war, almost half (46%) of the world's Jewry lived in the Russian Empire.¹⁸ The great majority of them lived in the Pale of Jewish Settlement, which was created by tsarist statutes in 1804 and 1835. The Pale consisted of fifteen provinces: Bessarabia, Vilna (today Vilnius), Vitebsk, Volhynia, Grodno, Ekaterinoslav (today Dnipro), Kovno, Minsk, Mogilev, Podolia, Poltava, Taurida, Kherson, Chernihiv, and Kyiv. However, Sevastopol, Mykolaiv, and Kyiv were excluded. Jews were allowed to live in the Kingdom of Poland, but it was not formally a part of the Pale. Kyiv, known as the "second Jerusalem" to Orthodox Christians, or "*Egupets*" ("little Egypt," which referred to the position of Jews, who were deprived of rights and lived there in exile) as Sholem Aleichem called it, was a major city situated at the center of the Pale. However, due to its exclusion from the Pale, Kyiv had a smaller percentage of Jews compared to its total population than did Vilna, Odessa, or Warsaw. Although it was not quite the

¹⁷ "Otvstavka I. N. D'iakova," *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 95 (4 April 1916): 2.

¹⁸ Richard H. Rowland, "Geographical Patterns of the Jewish Population in the Pale of Settlement of Late Nineteenth Century Russia," 207–09; Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 4; Tikhonov, *Katoliki, musul'mane i iudei Rossiiskoi imperii v poslednei chetverti XVIII-nachale XX v.*, 261.

“Jewish metropolis” as described by Natan Meir, the city certainly attracted a large and growing Jewish population in the late imperial period, one that expanded greatly during the war.¹⁹

The Russian government selectively integrated Jews into Russian society, allowing “useful” categories of Jews (such as first-guild merchants, retired soldiers, university students, and skilled artisans) to settle “beyond the Pale.” The right of residence was a sword of Damocles for every Jew in the Russian Empire, for they could be expelled from their homes at any time. Jews were prohibited from living in Kyiv from 1827 until 1859, and even afterwards only certain categories were allowed to settle there:

- 1) Individuals with a university degree;
- 2) Merchants with the honorable rank of councillor of commerce or manufacture;
- 3) Rank-and-file soldiers who were conscripted according to the Recruit Statute of 1831, the so-called “Nicholas’s soldiers” [*nikolaevskie soldaty*];
- 4) Veterans of military operations in the Far East;
- 5) Merchants of the first guild;
- 6) Pharmacy and medical assistants, dentists, midwives, students who studied pharmacy, midwifery or medicine [*fel’dsherstvo*];
- 7) Artisans who practiced their officially sanctioned craft.²⁰

Nonetheless, as the following table demonstrates, Kyiv’s Jewish population grew rapidly: from 3% of total population in 1863 to almost 15% at the eve of the Great War and 18.6% in 1917.

¹⁹ The phrase “Jewish metropolis” was used by Natan Meir to describe Kyiv in his book, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*.

²⁰ D. M. Tseitlin, *Zakony o pravozhitel’stve evreev v Kieve i drugikh mestnostiakh vne cherty evreiskoi osedlosti* (Kiev: Knigoizdatel’stvo “Vympel”, 1914), 9–10.

Table 2. Ethnic Composition of the Population of Kyiv²¹

| Year | Jewish | % | Russian | % | Ukrainian | % | Polish | % | Others | % | Total |
|------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|--------|------|---------|
| 1863 | 3,000 | 3.01 | | | | | | | | | 68,400 |
| 1874 | 12,900 | 10.25 | 59,652 | 46.87 | 38,553 | 30.29 | 10,409 | 7.7 | 4,524 | 3.55 | 127,251 |
| 1897 | 29,937 | 12.9 | 134,278 | 54.2 | 55,064 | 22.22 | 16,579 | 6.6 | 6,627 | 2.67 | 247,700 |
| 1908 | 46,986 | 10.89 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 431,425 |
| 1910 | 50,792 | 10.84 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 468,702 |
| 1913 | 76,318 | 14.7 | - | - | - | - | 60,000 | 11.52 | - | - | 520,500 |
| 1917 | 87,246 | 18.65 | 231,403 | 50.26 | 76,792 | 16.68 | 42,821 | 9.3 | 22,150 | 4.81 | 467,703 |
| 1919 | 114,524 | 21.1 | 232,148 | 42.8 | 136,923 | 25.3 | 36,828 | 6.8 | 20,228 | 3.7 | 544,369 |

In late imperial Kyiv, Jews had few rights. They were not equally able to settle in the city, use and share urban space and urban amenities, and produce urban space. Henry

²¹“Tuberkulioz u evreev (pis’mo iz Kieva),” *Novyi Voskhod*, 26 (3 July 1914): 8-9, 26; Yakov Lestschinsky, “Di Idishe Bafelkerung in Kiev fun 1897 biz 1923,” *Bleter Far Idishe Demografie = Blätter Für Demographie, Statistik Und Wirtschaftskunde Der Judeu*, no. 5 (June 1925): 49–67, 49, 51; Rashin, *Naselenie Rossii za 100 let (1811-1913 gg)*, 90-91, 93; Oleh Humeniuk, “Etnichniy sklad mis’koho naselennia Kyivs’koi huberniia za materialamy perepysnykh dokumentiv Rossiis’koi imperii 1897 roku,” *Kraieznavstvo*, 1-4 (2008): 71–76; *Pervaia vseobschaia perepis naseleniia: T. 16. Kievslaia guberniia* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1904), 182–85; Serhii Shamrai, “Kyivskiy odnodennyi perepys 2-go berezolia 1874 roku,” in *Kyiv ta iogo okolytsia v istorii ta pam’iatkakh*, ed. Mykhailo Hrushevskiy (Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo, 1926), 367–368; Mykola Borovs’kyi, “Natsional’no-sotsiial’ni perehrupuvannia naselennia m.Kyiva v porevoliutsiinyi period (1917-1923),” in *Kyiv ta iogo okolytsia v istorii ta pam’iatkakh*, ed. Mykhailo Hrushevskiy (Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo, 1926), 434; *Pamiatnaia knizhka Kievskoi gubernii na 1909 god* (Kiev, 1909), 184–85; Mozhevitinov V. “Dvizhenie naselenia Kieva za poslednie desiatiletie (1905-1914).” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 8 (August 1915): 34-68; “Naselenie g. Kieva” *Kievskaiia mysl’*, 97 (7 April 1913): 4; “Chislennost’ naselenia g. Kieva” *Kievskaiia mysl’*, 56 (21 April 1915): 3; I. S. Bisk, *Perepis’ goroda Kieva 16 marta 1919.*, Chast’ 1. Naselenie (Kiev, 1920), tab. 2.

Lefebvre states that urban space is socially produced; it “serves as a tool of thought and of action; [...] in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power.” Jews were not allowed to take part in the city administration. According to the City Statute of 1892, they could not participate in the city electoral assemblies or take posts in the city government.²² In Kyiv, Jews were not strictly confined to a ghetto, though the majority were officially restricted to Plos’kyi and Lybid districts. The wealthy and/or well-educated Jews who had the right to live in any city of the Russian Empire could settle anywhere in Kyiv. The city outskirts—Demiivka, Shuliavka, Sviatoshyno and Slobodka on the left bank of the Dnieper—were exceptions to the rules that regulated Jewish residence in Kyiv.²³ Obviously, Jews tended to live close to one another and the presence of Jews in a particular neighbourhood tended to attract others. Podil, for example, was 40% Jewish. While the Jewish working class and petty tradesmen huddled in the Lower City, the Jewish *nouveau riche* contemplated the plight of their poor co-religionists from their splendid mansions in the Upper City (Lypky). Jews who had residence rights could also freely move around the city. In this way, they were producing urban life. Thus, “the right to the city,” as a “demand [...] for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life,” was defined by religion, cultural belonging, and way of life, which could be reinforced by wealth or family connections.²⁴ At the same time, the right to the city was the right to urban life, a privilege granted by

²² Robert W. Thurston, *Liberal City, Conservative State: Moscow and Russia's Urban Crisis, 1906-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 60.

²³ Tseitlin, *Zakony o pravozhitel'stve evreev v Kieve i drugikh mestnostiakh vne cherty evreiskoi osedlosti*, 7–8.

²⁴ Henri Lefebvre, Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 158; Kafui A. Attoh, "What kind of right is the right to the city?," *Progress in Human Geography* 35, no. 5 (2011): 669–85, 674.

the state. Urbanites could then produce, access, occupy, and use Kyiv’s urban space accordingly.²⁵

Table 3. Distribution of the Jewish Population in Kyiv²⁶

| Neighbourhood | Jewish Population | Jews as a Percentage of the Neighbourhood’s Population |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Lybid’ | 30,787 | 32.35 |
| Plos’kyi | 25,757 | 40.43 |
| Podil | 11,145 | 28.91 |
| Other | 19,557 | 7.30 |

As we can see, Jews were not a majority in any city district. Together with Poles and Russians, they mostly lived in the city center. The urban lower classes were concentrated in Plos’kyi, Lybid’, and Podil, as these had the cheapest accommodations. Osip Mandelstam even described Podil as “a lacustrine and petty bourgeois Venice [that] has always paid for the splendor of the upper city.”²⁷

Kyiv’s economic growth offered new opportunities and a higher quality of life. This was the main factor that attracted new migrants. However, according to statistics from Jewish charitable institutions, 28% of Kyiv’s Jewish population in 1913 were indigent and lived in the poorest city districts.²⁸ At the beginning of the twentieth century, Podil, Plos’kyi, Lybid’, and Starokyivs’kyi were the city’s main Jewish neighborhoods.²⁹ According to Jakob Lestschinski, in 1917, Jews constituted roughly 19% (87,246 people) of Kyiv’s population (467,703).

²⁵ Lefebvre, Kofman and Lebas, *Writings on Cities*, 158-159; Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant," *GeoJournal*, 2/3 (2002): 99–108.

²⁶ Lestschinsky, "Di Idishe Bafelkerung in Kiev," 52.

²⁷ Mandelstam, "Kiev," 254.

²⁸ "Tuberkulioz u evreev (pis'mo iz Kieva)," *Novyi Voskhod*, 26 (3 July 1914): 8.

²⁹ Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 119–120.

Statistical information from 1917 shows that although roughly 93% of Kyiv's Jews indicated Yiddish as their mother tongue, just under 70% of them listed Yiddish as their language of daily use. Almost 5% of Kyiv's Jewry indicated that they spoke Yiddish at home and Russian in the streets. A little more than 5% claimed Russian as their mother tongue, but just under a quarter of Jews spoke Russian because of their education and everyday necessity.³⁰ Only 1.25% spoke Hebrew as a mother tongue, and this number dropped to 0.25% when it came to a language of daily use.³¹ Therefore, it is not surprising that during the revolutionary years Kyiv became a center of Yiddishism during the revolutionary years.

Osip Mandelstam described Kyiv as a "Ukrainian-Jewish-Russian" city, stressing its intertwined imperial and local histories: "The city has a splendid and indomitable soul. This Ukrainian-Jewish-Russian city breathes a deep triple breath."³² It was a diverse city, a place of sharp social contrasts and complexities that shaped Jewish life. Kyivan Jews contributed to the city's diversity and were key players in its economic life, helping turn it into the economic centre of the Empire's south-west. Kyiv was a place where tradition and modernity, and the Christian and the Jewish met. Although different cultures did not always amicably interact, interactions were inevitable. The city became a laboratory for the formation of a diverse urban Jewish culture.

The Jewish Community: Between Tradition and Modernity

On the eve of the war, Kyiv's Jewish community had two Crown rabbis [*kazennyi ravvin*] and two rabbinical districts, Podil and the Upper City. In 1914, Abram Gurevich

³⁰ Lestschinsky, "Di Idische Bafelkerung in Kiev fun 1897 biz 1923," 52–53.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 53.

³² Mandelstam, "Kiev," 256.

and Iakov Meerovich Aleshkovskii were Kyiv's Crown rabbis and they had each served for three five-year terms. The leading spiritual rabbi of Kyiv was Solomon (Shlomo) Aronson.³³ Menachem Nachum ben Jacov Weisblatt also had considerable status in Kyiv and his religious authority reached far beyond the city.

Unfortunately, little is known about the religious leaders of Kyiv's Jewish community. However, it is clear that they were well educated, having studied at both traditional Jewish schools and often at universities. Aleshkovskii was born in Moscow in 1874. He studied at the Volozhyn *yeshiva* (now in Belarus), which was established in the eighteenth century by Elijah of Vilna, a prominent Jewish leader. Later, he graduated from Kyiv University but declined to continue his career as a lawyer. He became the Crown rabbi in Aleksandria, in Kherson province, starting in about 1894; in 1907 he moved to Kyiv where he assumed the same position and became active in local Jewish life.³⁴ Solomon (Shlomo) Iakovlevich Aronson was born in Mohilev province in 1862. He had a traditional religious education, then served as rabbi in Hlukhiv and Nizhyn (Chernihiv province); from 1904 he was the spiritual rabbi of Kyiv.³⁵ Nachum Weisblatt was a well-known Jewish theologian and a descendant of Baal Shem Tov (or Besht), a founder of Hasidic Judaism. He was the rabbi of the Merchants' and Artisans' synagogues from 1902 until his death in 1925.³⁶

³³ A crown rabbi or "official" (*kazennyi*) rabbi was appointed by the government. He controlled the population registers and other administrative matters. A spiritual (*dukhovnyi*)rabbi, however, was entrusted with religious and pastoral matters. Vladimir Levin, "Civil Law and Jewish Halakhah: Problems of Coexistence in the Late Russian Empire," in *Studien zur Europäischen Rechtsgeschichte*, Band 280, *Religion in the Mirror of Law: Eastern European Perspectives From the Early Modern Period to 1939*, ed. Yvonne Kleinmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2016), 213–214.

³⁴ Manuscript Division of the Vernadsky Library of Ukraine, Kyiv (hereafter—MDVLUK), f. X, 4790, ark. 1.

³⁵ MDVLUK, f. X, 6536, ark. 1.

³⁶ Artur Rudzitskii, "'Iskat', derzat', myslit'. Delo khudozhnika Iosifa Vaisblata (Po materialam Arkhiva NKVD-KGB)," *Antikvar*, no. 84 (2014): 72–82; about Vladimir Weisblatt, a son of the rabbi, see Artur

A list of the prayer houses and synagogues which participated in the “plate collection” [*tarelochnyi sbor*] in 1916 demonstrates the diversity of the Jewish community. Kyiv had three “official” synagogues: the progressive Choral Synagogue on Mala Vasyl’kivs’ka Street led by Rabbi Abram Gurevich, the Merchants’ Synagogue also on Mala Vasyl’kivs’ka Street, and a prayer house in Luk’ianivka, on Lvivs’ka Street.³⁷ Additionally, there was a synagogue on Shchekavyts’ka Street and one in Slobodka, a Kyiv suburb.³⁸ Poor Jews who lived in the suburbs attended a prayer house at the Galician market [*Galitskii bazar*, later known as the Jewish market (*Evreiskii bazar* or *Evbaz*)] and prayer houses at Shuliavka, Demiivka, and Solom’ianka. The synagogues and prayer houses of the second rabbinical district which embraced the congregants of Podil, Plos’k, Kurenivka, and Luk’ianivka, were represented by Makariv, Tal’ne, Hornostaipol’ Prayer Houses, Ner-Tamid, Shaarei-Zion, Ashkenazim, Lithuanian, Hrinshstein, Rozenberg, Kugel’, Soldiers’ and Artisans’ Prayer Houses.³⁹ In August 1914, Iosif Marshak, Srul’-Ber Zborovskii, and Itsko-Gersh Esman, Kyivan merchants of the first guild, asked the city administration for permission to open temporary public prayer houses in their mansions for Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and *Sukkot* (Feast of the Harvest). However, the petition was rejected “using the example of the previous year” [*po primeru proshlogo goda*].⁴⁰ Belonging to one or another prayer house was an important identity marker, which corresponded to a certain court of Hasidic tsaddik or

Rudzitskii, 'Kiev ponemnogu prevrashchaetsia v glukhuiu provintsiu...'. *Pis'ma V.N.Vaisblata P.D.Ettingeru* (2007), http://judaica.kiev.ua/old/Eg_17/Egupez17-06.htm (accessed March 12, 2018).

³⁷ Boguslavskii, *Ves' Kiev na 1914 g. Adressnaia i Spravochnaia Kniga*, 398.

³⁸ „Molebstviia,” *Luzhnaia Kopeika*, 1259 (22 July 1914): 2.

³⁹ For more details about these synagogue and prayer houses, see I. K. Darevskii, *K istorii evreev v Kieve ot poloviny VIII v. do kontsa XIX v.* (Kiev, 1907); Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, "Hasidism, Havurot, and the Jewish Street," *Jewish Social Studies*, no. 2 (2004): 20–54., 41–43; Kal'nitskii, *Evreiskie adresa Kieva*, 72–73, 128–129.

⁴⁰ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 667, spr. 1, ark. 270, 271, 295, 297, 316, 319.

region of origin (from Lithuania, Poland, and South-Western region of the Russian Empire etc).⁴¹

Nevertheless, on the eve of war, Jews were generally less religious when compared to the previous century. Some Jews could not maintain basic religious practices, such as observing the Sabbath and *kashrut* (dietary law). Many factories and enterprises that employed Jews did not give them Saturdays off. Kosher meat was heavily taxed, making it less accessible to both urban and rural communities. The government also restricted the number of prayer houses in Kyiv, and Jews who lived in remote neighborhoods often lacked synagogues in which to pray. As such, many Jews gathered in their homes to worship on the Sabbath or high holidays. Yet, the risk of being caught was great and this was too big a risk for the Jews who lived in Kyiv illegally.⁴² The decline in the religiosity of Kyiv's Jews was matched by the rise of secular political movements, such as Jewish nationalism and socialism, which provided Jews an alternate identity.

The Jewish *kahal*, a self-governing communal body (elected council of lay leaders), was abolished in the Russian Empire in 1844. There was no official governing institution of the Jewish community on the eve of war, but there were alternative social organizations that made key decisions on behalf of the community, helped the state with

⁴¹ Hasidism (Hebrew “piety”) is a Jewish religious movement that arose in the eighteenth century in the territory of modern Ukraine. *Tsaddikim* (pl. of *tsaddik*, from Hebrew “righteous man”) are Hasidic rabbis (*rebbe*s) who act as intercessors between their followers and God. *Hasidim* (Hebrew “pious men”; disciples) of one particular *tsaddik* belong to his “court.” A *tsaddik* resided in a particular town and his *Hasidim* were categorized by the name of the settlement where their *tsaddik* lived (of Vyzhnytsia, Tal’ne, Ruzhyn, Liubavychi, Chornobyl’ etc.). More about Hasidism see, David Biale, David Assaf et al. *Hasidism: A New History* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 1-17.

⁴² Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 178.

collecting taxes from the Jewish population, and provided conscripts.⁴³ The Jewish Hospital Committee served as the de facto communal body from the 1880s–1890s. In 1895, the City Duma established the Representation for Jewish Welfare [*Predstavitel'stvo po evreiskoi blagotvoritel'nosti pri gorodskoi uprave*], which officially represented and connected the Jewish community of Kyiv with the city administration. Both the Representation and the Hospital were ruled by Kyiv's wealthy Jews.⁴⁴

The Jewish Hospital was not just a medical institution; it carried a much broader symbolic meaning. It symbolized “Jewish modernity” and progress, and fought against notions of stereotypical Jewish backwardness. Additionally, it underlined Jewish contributions to the city's wellbeing and that of the broader urban community.⁴⁵ Before 1913, city administrators regarded members of the hospital board, who were among the wealthiest people of the city and of the region (merchants of the first guild, entrepreneurs, and industrialists), as the Jewish elite (see Table 3).⁴⁶ The Hospital board comprised the following members in 1913–14:

*Table 3. The Composition of the Jewish Hospital Governing Board*⁴⁷

| Individual | Position | Social Status |
|-------------------|------------------|--|
| Brodsky, Lev | Honorary Trustee | Proprietor of several sugar factories; financier |
| Gal'perin, Mark | Honorary Trustee | Proprietor of several sugar factories; merchant of the first guild |
| Ginzburg, Lev | Elder | The owner of a |

⁴³ Simon Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia*, Stanford studies in Jewish history and culture (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014), 29-35.

⁴⁴ Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 75, 80-85.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 223–25.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁴⁷ Boguslavskii, *Ves' Kiev na 1914 g. Adressnaia i Spravochnaia Kniga*, 660.

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------|--|
| | | construction company |
| Gintsburg, Vladimir | Honorary Trustee | Industrialist; son of Baron Goratsii Gintsburg, the leader of the Jewish community of Saint Petersburg and one of the wealthiest man in the Russian Empire; son-in-law of Lev Brodskii |
| Gol'denburg, Aleksandr | Trustee | Merchant of the 1 st guild |
| Korngol'd, G. F. | Elder | Merchant of the 1 st guild |
| Margolin, David | Trustee | The owner of the local transport enterprises |
| Marshak, Iosif | Elder | The owner of a renowned jewellery factory |
| Poliakov, Iakov | Trustee | Merchant of the 1 st guild; son-in-law of Lev Brodskii |
| Rabinerzon, S. L. | Elder | Merchant of the 1 st guild |
| Rubinchik, Efim | Elder | Merchant of the 1 st guild |
| Zaks, Il'ia | Elder | Entrepreneur; son of Markus Zaks |
| Zaks, Markus | Honorary Trustee | Proprietor of several sugar factories |

In 1910s, the Hospital and Representation were criticized by Jewish professionals, who were independent from community leaders. Their complaints about mismanagement were more than fair. The founding charter of Kyiv's Jewish Hospital established neither the procedures through which "honorable" Jews were recommended to Kyiv's Duma by trustees nor who was eligible to vote for the elders.⁴⁸ This oversight opened the door to electoral manipulation. However, the power of the elders was very limited. They were

⁴⁸ "Iz zhizni Kievskoi obschiny," *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 5 (May 1914): 25.

dependent on the community bosses who provided financial support to communal institutions. The Jewish Hospital received 60% of its annual budget from the Representation for Jewish Welfare. Although the elders knew about hospital mismanagement, they lacked experience and courage, which prevented them from denouncing abuses.⁴⁹ The elders were supposed to be obedient and silent, and were certainly not to air the hospital's dirty laundry in public.

All efforts of the local Jewish community were focused on religious needs and philanthropy. Even these spheres suffered from poor organization and weak and unqualified leadership. Judaism treats charitable activity as a religious obligation and the wealthy were obliged to practice *noblesse oblige*. Thus, the famous Kyiv entrepreneurs David Margolin and Vladimir Gintsburg, as well as Goratsii Gintsburg, the son-in-law of Lazar Brodsky and son of the prominent Saint Petersburg business leader, donated ₪6,400 to help meet the educational needs of Kyiv's Jewish community from 1910-1914.⁵⁰ In 1913, the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society opened an asylum at Kurenevka. The heirs of a Kyivan merchant named Shirman donated ₪50,000 for its construction. Baron Gintsburg and other benefactors purchased land for the building. The asylum was relatively small, only able to house 12 patients, and it functioned as a division of the Boiarka Sanatorium for those with tuberculosis.⁵¹ Although Jewish notables were generous, mismanagement and abuses were a usual part of Jewish philanthropy in Kyiv at this time. For example, the Department for Medical Help to the Poor was unable to police effectively the actions of its medical personnel, who created a constant flow of

⁴⁹ Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 236–37; Ger. Bad-sa, “Kievskaiia Evreiskaia Obschina v 1913 g.,” *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 2 (February 1914): 52-53.

⁵⁰ Ger. Bad-sa, “Kievskaiia Evreiskaia Obschina v 1913 g.,” *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 3 (March 1914): 33.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

complaints for the Department.⁵² The Legal Department of the Representation for Jewish Welfare did not have enough money to provide free consultations. Yet, at the same time, the Representation was able to spend lavishly on a new building and a Jewish cemetery, which was again connected to prestige and the desire of the Jewish elite to inscribe the Jewish community and themselves into urban space as worthy of respect.⁵³

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Jewish intellectuals were preoccupied with modernizing, reorganizing, and liberalizing the Jewish community. Kyiv's Jewish intelligentsia struggled to take part in the community's decision-making process, trying to use mass demonstrations to gain influence. On the eve of the Great War, the crisis within the Jewish community stemmed from a lack of energetic young cadres and the reluctance of established Jewish leaders to relinquish power. Important Jews were frequently absent from their posts, further inhibiting the effective management of Jewish institutions and community groups. Often a single person had to perform multiple jobs; the enormity of the workload was frequently too much. The only solution was to change the community's election policy and professionalize the management of community institutions responsible for welfare.⁵⁴

In 1913, Jewish circles that were independent of community bosses attempted to persuade Kyiv's City Duma not to confirm the entire list of elders of the Hospital board presented by the Jewish community and to leave two positions open for "independent" officials. G.Y. Gurevich, the secretary for the Representation for Jewish Welfare, and Lev Mandel'berg, a doctor, were elected to speak on behalf of the Representation, itself a

⁵² Ibid., 34-35.

⁵³ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 68-75.

part of the city administration that represented Kyiv's Jews.⁵⁵ In response, trustees of Kyiv's Jewish Hospital tried to convince Gurevich and Mandel'berg to turn down these new posts. Several days later, they met with Markus Zaks, Aleksandr Gol'denberg, and Lazar Brodsky, who again tried to persuade them to reject the positions. Brodsky argued that Gurevich and Mandel'berg might "strengthen the faction of doctors on the Hospital's Board" and were afraid of additional financial costs.⁵⁶ Despite the trustees' concerted efforts, Gurevich and Mandel'berg assumed their new posts; in response, the trustees failed to pass a new budget, thus closing the hospital for two months.⁵⁷ The Jewish population petitioned for it to be reopened immediately. Doctors from Odessa, afraid of an influx of ill Kyivans, unsurprisingly supported this initiative.⁵⁸

Gurevich and Gol'denberg discussed the election of new elders in the pages of the "Jewish Community Herald" [*Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny*], a monthly published in St. Petersburg in 1913-1914. The discussion was provoked by Gurevich's pseudonymous article about Kyiv's Jewish community. He criticized Jewish notables, described a community in crisis, and stressed the need for youth to renew institutions. Gol'denberg, however, supported continuity, arguing that only the current elders had the requisite experience. It is clear from his letter that Jewish notables used their connections with local authorities to address these issues privately. The municipality even tried to stop the election campaigns of the new candidates.⁵⁹ Established community leaders stressed the "dangers" of the independent candidates' agitation efforts. Gol'denberg indicated that

⁵⁵ Ger. Bad-sa, "Kievskaiia Evreiskaia Obschina v 1913 g.," *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 2 (February 1914): 53; "Iz zhizni Kievskoi obschiny," *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 5 (May 1914): 25.

⁵⁶ "Iz zhizni Kievskoi obschiny," *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 5 (May 1914): 26; *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1238 (1 July 1914): 2.

⁵⁷ "Evreiskaia bol'nitsa (po sluchaiu segodniashniago zakrytiia)," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1238 (1 July 1914): 2; "Obshchinnye dela," *Novyi Voskhod*, 25 (26 June 1914): 21.

⁵⁸ "Protesty po povodu zakrytiia Evreiskoi bol'nitsy," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1239 (2 July 1914): 2.

⁵⁹ "Iz zhizni Kievskoi obschiny," *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obschiny* no. 5 (May 1914): 23-24.

this was a new election tactic in Kyiv's Jewish community.⁶⁰ In his response, Gurevich underlined his and Mandel'berg's independence, stating that "they were neither relatives nor godparents, neither servants nor dependent on the bosses of the Jewish hospital. This independence gives us an advantage over the others."⁶¹ However, years were needed to break with these old community traditions.

Although the members of the Representation and of the Jewish Hospital governing board regulated Jewish life in Kyiv, they were far removed from the problems of the lower classes. They even preferred Russian high culture to the Yiddish of the surrounding Podil neighborhood. The Jewish masses were separated from the Jewish elite by education, wealth, and differing worldviews. The masses maintained traditional values that prized religious education and practices according to Jewish religious law, the *halakha*. The elite, however, valued a modern, secular education and adopted the cultural norms of Western Europe. There were few points of overlap between the two worlds. Even synagogues failed to elide social differences, if only temporarily, as Jewish intelligentsia and notables did not frequent popular local prayer houses. The wealthy had their own temples, while the intellectuals tended to shun religious worship. As such, the Jewish elite isolated themselves from the Jewish masses, though elite youth tended to reject their parents' worldviews.

Ilya Ehrenburg (1891–1967), a Soviet writer and journalist, was born "into a bourgeois Jewish family" in Kyiv. He recalled in his memoirs that his "mother [Hanna] cherished many traditions: she had grown up in a devout family, where they feared both the God whose name could not be uttered and those 'gods' which had to be offered

⁶⁰ Ibid., 24, 27.

⁶¹ Ibid., 27.

plentiful sacrifices in order that they should not demand blood. She never forgot either the Day of Judgment in heaven or the pogroms on earth.”⁶² It was common among Central and Eastern European Jewry that women acted as the guardians of Jewish traditions. Although Judaism ceased to regulate daily life for acculturated families, Jewish women continued traditional family gatherings to celebrate Jewish holidays or family events. As Marion Kaplan contends, they served as the gentle midwives of modernity.⁶³ By contrast, Ehrenburg’s father was an engineer and a merchant of the second guild who “belonged to the first generation of Russian Jews who had broken out of the ghetto. [His father] had cursed him because he had gone to study in a Russian school.” Russian secular education directly contradicted “traditional” Jewishness. Moreover, Jewish traditional learning and secular education were different in their initial purpose: the former referred to God and piety, the latter to state and bureaucracy. The traditional Jewish community looked derisively at the Jewish intelligentsia as “artisans,” because they worked as lawyers, doctors, engineers, and refused the “noble” occupation of serving God by studying the Torah and Talmud. Consequently, they did not play a notable role in communal life.⁶⁴

Jewish educational institutions were ground zero in the rhetorical and argumentative battles between the secular Jewish intelligentsia and the notables. *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obshchiny* informed readers about the situation with the Talmud Tora School in Bila Tserkva, a town not far from Kyiv. *Talmud-toras* together with the *kheyders* were

⁶² Ilya Ehrenburg, *People and life, 1891-1921* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 16–17.

⁶³ Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 64, 84; Shulamit S. Magnus, "Sins of Youth, Guilt of a Grandmother: M. L. Lilienblum, Pauline Wengeroff, and the Telling of Jewish Modernity in Eastern Europe," *Polin* 16 (2005): 87–120.

⁶⁴ “V evreiskom Literaturno-Nauchnom Obshchestve,” *Rassvet*, 2 (12 January 1914), 33; “O evreiskoi intelligentsii,” *Rassvet*, 4 (24 January 1914), 7-9; “O evreiskoi intelligentsia,” *Rassvet*, 5 (31 January 1914), 4-6.

traditional Jewish educational institutions. They were supervised by spiritual rabbis and notables who were convinced that secular education reforms had not yielded positive changes and had only uprooted the “true Jewish spirit” from the schools. The old Jewish elite supported a traditional religious education that focused on the Talmud, the Torah, and the studying of prayers; secular subjects were at best a secondary concern. Thus, religious students had a relatively good knowledge of Hebrew, but they had a narrow understanding of Jewish history, which was seen by Jewish nationalists as a prerequisite for the development of a secular Jewish identity. Jewish intellectuals stressed that history was “the first and best teacher of a sense of national belonging and of national aspirations.”⁶⁵

Jewish traditional elementary schools [*kheyders*] were in crisis during the final years of imperial rule. The Kyiv Branch of the Society for the Dissemination of the Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia (hereafter—Russian acronym OPE), which concerned itself with Jewish education and culture, together with the Society for the Dissemination of Correct Information about the Jews, tried to reorganize and modernize Jewish traditional schools. Kyivan Jews maintained two Talmud Toras, an orphanage in Slobodka, and *kheyders*. The boys of lower- and middle-class Jews formed the majority of the students in the *kheyders*. The first problem faced by the traditional schools was their teachers’ [*melameds*] poor didactic training and weak knowledge base. Additionally, *kheyders* did not have a set curriculum, and communities did not usually establish criteria to certify the schools. Almost anyone could be a *melamed* and open a *kheyder*. The students, boys aged 4–13 years old, learned to read the Hebrew alphabet and the Torah,

⁶⁵ “Khronika,” *Vestnik Evreiskoi Obshchiny* no. 2 (February 1914): 60; “Kievskie pis’ma,” *Rassvet*, 6 (7 February 1914), 32.

but lacked the language skills to understand what they were reading. Youth from well-to-do families obtained a secular education in either Russia or abroad. After all, Russian universities had numerous conditions, including a Jewish quota (three percent for Kyiv) set to limit Jewish enrollment.

According to a 1910 poll of Kyiv's Jewish students, 84.5% of respondents knew Yiddish, but only 32 percent spoke it on a daily basis. Additionally, students were asked about the language in which they thought. Strikingly, only four percent of respondents thought in Yiddish, 10% in both Yiddish and Russian, and 82% in Russian.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, young and well-educated Jews did not share the traditional values of either their grandparents or parents: piety, love of God, obedience to religious laws, and knowledge of the Torah and Talmud. However, the one Jewish virtue shared across the Kyivan Jewish community was righteousness [*tzedakah*], which signified charity.

As Pierre Birnbaum, Ira Katznelson, and other scholars have shown, assimilation and acculturation as paths to emancipation (attainment of equal rights by Jews) did not mean total integration into Gentile society. Jews were able to maintain their distinctiveness: they were “French,” “German,” or “Russian” in the streets, but Jews at home.⁶⁷ In Russia, Jewish “emancipation” is not quite an accurate description of events,

⁶⁶ G. Estraikh, "Languages of 'Yehupets' Students," *East European Jewish Affairs* 22, no. 1 (1992): 63-71, 64; About Jews in the educational institutions of Kyiv province, see "Evrei v Kievskom uchebnom okruge v 1911 g." *Vestnik OPE*, no. 16 (October 1912), 56-63; Gennady Estraikh, "From Yehupets Jargonists to Kiev Modernists: The Rise of a Yiddish Literary Centre, 1880s-1914," *East European Jewish Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2000): 17-38.

⁶⁷ Jacob Katz stated that emancipation was a linear and gradual process eroding the Jewish ethnic-religious community. Thus, he focused on the negative impacts of assimilation and acculturation. See Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 214-15. More recent scholars claim that Jewish ethnicity persisted, if often in new forms of Jewish cohesion developed when the old forms were destroyed. See Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, *Paths of emancipation: Jews, states, and citizenship* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Jonathan Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Towards a New Historiography?," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); David Sorkin, "The

as no one was actually emancipated. John Klier has pointed out that the terms “assimilation” and “Russification” were rarely used in the Russian Empire. Instead, “in the 1850s rapprochement became a common term of state officials. It was understood as ‘a one-sided process, a reworking and transformation of the Jews [reduction of Talmudic influence and acquisition of Russian language and culture] through the direction and will of an outside agency, the Russian state.’”⁶⁸ In the 1860s and 1870s the term “merger” came into use, but it did not mean assimilation and was seen by state officials as the extension of equal rights to Jews.⁶⁹ Although many Kyivan Jews were acculturated into Russian imperial culture, they were able to preserve their Jewishness.

In his 1913 novel *Joseph Schur*, the famed Yiddish writer David Bergelson (1884–1952) depicted the conflict between the traditional and modern Jewish worlds. Bergelson, born in Kyiv province to an affluent and pious family, received both a secular and religious education.⁷⁰ Though he initially wrote in Hebrew and Russian, he later switched to Yiddish.⁷¹ *Joseph Schur* describes the provincialism of a dying life in small towns with large Jewish populations (*shtetls*) and the urban world of the Jewish bourgeoisie. The novel deals with prewar Jewish life in Kyiv and Kyiv province. The eponymous protagonist, a successful merchant, appears in the middle of the novel, reflecting his “middle” life between the traditional and the modern. He surely differed from Jacob Nathan Viderpoler of Great Setternitz, “Schur’s former Talmud teacher,” “a

Impact of Emancipation on German Jewry: A Reconsideration," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶⁸ John Doyle Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 75.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 75–76; Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 27, 107.

⁷⁰ Joseph Sherman, "David Bergelson: A Biography," in *David Bergelson: From Modernism to Socialist Realism*, ed. Joseph Sherman, Gennadii Estraikh (Leeds: Legenda, 2007), 7.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

learned man [...] in Hasidic garb.” Although, his father “had been a fanatical and stingy Hasid,” Schur was “a well-mannered [and] cultivated man [...] into whose twenty-four years was packed a world of Jewish and secular training.”⁷² He dreamed about getting married to Sarahle, Moishele Levin’s daughter, whom he met on a train from Warsaw where his Aunt Reisel lived. Following Jewish tradition, Schur asked Jacob Nathan to make the match. Sarahle lived in Kyiv with the family of her uncle Abraham Rappaport, a wealthy and powerful Kyivian entrepreneur. There were rumors that Rappaport was “a Zionist who had large land holdings in Palestine; he owned sugar mills worth millions; and his only daughter, a hunchback, was a sculptress who studied in the Petersburg Academy.”⁷³ For Jacob Nathan, a *shadkhan* [matchmaker], “a wealthy Zionist” whose daughter was a sculptress, was a “bad omen for his venture, since rich, freethinking Jews always made him uncomfortable. More uncomfortable even than true gentiles, born and bred.”⁷⁴ Thus Rappaport appears as the polar opposite of Jacob Nathan, and only their innate Jewishness, some Jewish traditions, and to a certain extent Yiddish and Hebrew still preserved by the wealthy family, connected them.

Rappaport’s family accurately described the inner and private life of Kyiv’s Jewish bourgeoisie. They adopted Russian high culture, the Zionists spoke Hebrew, and at home or among friends, they rarely used the popular “jargon” (Yiddish). When away from home, Abraham Rappaport routinely used “engraved visiting cards—an expensive, embossed affair, with gilt Russian script.” Yet, he and his family were not fully assimilated. They supported or at least sympathized with the Zionist movement. It was a

⁷² David Bergelson, “Joseph Schur,” in *Ashes Out of Hope: Fiction by Soviet-Yiddish Writers*, eds. Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 46, 49, 55.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

“terrible burden” for Jacob Nathan to learn that Rappaport was not as pious as his father. However, he also learned that Abraham Rappaport “kept a kosher kitchen” and “had not turned entirely secular” as he “was still quite capable of delivering a handsome piece of Talmud[ic] commentary.”⁷⁵ In reality, though, Rappaport skipped morning prayers and “worried about the stock he had recently bought and forgotten about.” Religiosity was not a virtue of bourgeois Jews.

Kyiv appears to Joseph Schur to be a Christian city of “noisy streets” full of “haunted, yearning sounds.” Coincidentally, while out for a walk, he witnessed a gathering at a Jewish theatre. For Schur, “the place had an aura of shy intimacy about it; it was a sort of Jewish hiding place amidst the tumult and probing of Christian bells and candles [Easter days].”⁷⁶ Kyivan Jews did not have their own public space in the city. Though they were always present in urban life, Jews could not claim public space in which to organize freely. The phrase “hiding place” stressed the Jewish community’s lack of rights. It was a new world for Schur. The audience of young women and students was very unusual for him, and although “all that the student[s] said was true [...] Schur felt himself a stranger to this audience and aloof from their concerns.”⁷⁷ The contrast between Jews who had just arrived and the secular Jewish audience was the same as between the “isolated [...] empty” Jewish *shtetls* and the region’s urban center.⁷⁸

The highly Russified educated Kyivan Jews lived a life divided between two worlds—the Russian and the Jewish. After the Revolution of 1905 and the 1908 Czernowitz Conference, which recognized Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish as Jewish

⁷⁵ Ibid., 39.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 62.

⁷⁸ “Koe-cto o provintsial’nom evreistve,” *Rassvet*, 11 (14 March 1914), 12-15.

national languages, Zionism, diasporaic nationalism, and various inflections of socialism became leading ideologies among Jews. Jewish liberals, who represented the moderate wing of Jewish political thought, were active in the liberal Kadets (the members of the Constitutional Democratic Party; “Kadets” from the Russian abbreviation of the party’s name) and were seen as integrationists or assimilationists. Russian political reaction caused Jewish intellectuals and professionals to switch from political activity to organic work among the Jewish masses in order to raise their cultural literacy and to develop their secular Jewish national identity. Jewish activists sought to establish new Jewish public organizations or to democratize already existing ones (the OPE, Jewish Colonization Association, the Society for the Promotion of Artisan and Agricultural Labour etc.).⁷⁹ Culturally Russified and politically active, educated Jewish youth were searching for ways to communicate with the Jewish people [*narod*].⁸⁰

In 1907, Zionist organizations were banned in the Russian Empire. According to the order of the Governing Senate, Zionists were banned because their political aims disturbed Jewish life, they wanted additional Jewish legal rights, and they preached hostility against the “native nations” of the Empire.⁸¹ In 1914, Hillel Zlatopol’skii , a forty-nine year old Kyiv merchant of the first guild, owner of several sugar factories, and an active participant in local Jewish social life, was accused of being a member of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish society “Kogeles.” Police searched his home, finding two ledgers—a donation receipt book and the receipts of the publishing house

⁷⁹ Joshua M. Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 26–40; David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, Pitt series in Russian and East European studies (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

⁸⁰ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 432, ark. 119, 121, 122.

⁸¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 46, ark. 28, 79, 80; spr. 47, ark. 1, 6, 8, 9.

“Kogeles.” All charges were based on these findings. Iurii Lesch, Zlatopol’skii’s lawyer, recognized that this material evidence proved that “the defendant is interested in the destiny of Jews and their situation as well as in Jewish literature and history, but his correspondence does not contain any evidence that he is a member of a Zionist organization.”⁸² Moreover, he contended, such “interests in Jewish literature were, of course possible, without being a member of the Zionist organization, not even being a Jew. For example, Hebrew language and literature are included in the program of the Faculty of Oriental Languages at the Imperial Petrograd University.”⁸³ Crown Rabbi Aleshkovskii explained that “Kogeles” was a joint stock company for the publication of scientific and educational books in Hebrew for educational institutions; the Russian Empire censored “Kogeles” books, and thus they were able to circulate legally. In spite of his lawyer’s efforts, in September 1916, Zlatopol’ski was found guilty of being a member of the World Zionist Organization and was sentenced to solitary confinement for one month; however, the punishment was commuted to a fine of ₴200, which can be explained by his high social status and wealth.⁸⁴ Interestingly, it was widely known that Zlatopol’ski was in fact a Zionist; he published articles in the Zionist Russian press where he clearly stated his position.⁸⁵ Zlatopol’skii was indeed a known Zionist activist. As a noted Hebraist, he supported Hebrew-language schools, teacher training courses, the Hebrew daily *Ha-Am*, the Habimah Theater in Moscow, and a Hebrew-publishing house. His daughter Shoshana was educated in Jewish religious texts, but also in the Russian and

⁸² TsDIAK, f. 318, op. 1, spr. 2675, ark. 2, 18; f. 274, op. 5, spr. 23, ark. 380, 401, 403.

⁸³ TsDIAK, f. 318, op. 1, spr. 2675, ark. 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 16zv, 17, 20–21.

⁸⁵ Zlatopol’skii, G. “Ob’edinenie,” *Rassvet*, 10 (8 March 1915), 13–14; Zlatopol’skii, G. “Rassvet” I sionistskaia mysl’,” *Rassvet*, 51–52 (21 December 1914), 15–16.

German cultures and modern Hebrew literature.⁸⁶ Though the police could easily have established his guilt, he was protected by his wealth and social status.

Zlatopol'skii was an active member of the local branch of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among Jews (Russian acronym—OPE), a Jewish organization which promoted secular Jewish education, and he personally sponsored many of its undertakings.⁸⁷ The OPE subsidized primary and secondary schools, which were required to promote knowledge of Jewish history, literature, Judaism, Hebrew, and Yiddish among Jewish youth. It is clear that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the OPE was more nationalistic than in 1860s and 1870s, when the Society had started its activity.⁸⁸ Apparently, the idea of studying Hebrew and the “bible” (the Torah or the Pentateuch) was not very popular among Kyivan Jews. For example, a group of parents whose children attended a school subsidised by the OPE at Demievka, voted against teaching the Torah and Hebrew. They insisted that their children needed only Yiddish. As a result, the OPE and Jewish charitable societies refused to pay subsidies, which threatened the very existence of the school.⁸⁹ The dispute around the Demievka School highlighted a long existing conflict between the Yiddishists and Hebraists in the Kyivan branch of the OPE.⁹⁰ Yiddishists were the proponents of the Yiddish language and culture, while the Hebraists promoted Hebrew. The acuteness of the situation forced Committee Chair,

⁸⁶ Kenneth B. Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), 23-24.

⁸⁷ DAKO, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 51, ark. 2zv.

⁸⁸ Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, 33–47.

⁸⁹ DAKO, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 51, ark. 7-7zv.

⁹⁰ The first decades of the twentieth century witnessed a dispute over Yiddish as *the* language of Jews. At an international conference in Czernowitz (Chernivtsi) in 1908, Yiddish was officially recognized as a national Jewish language, along with Hebrew and Russian. See, *ibid.*, 60; Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution* (University of California Press, 1993), 99.

Baron Vladimir Gintsburg, to interfere.⁹¹ He put forward a proposition for the Yiddishists wing of the Committee to establish their own organization if they disagreed with the ideology of the OPE.⁹²

The Kyiv Branch of the OPE subsidized 14 modern Jewish schools in Kyiv province in 1914. Additionally, it supported the purchase of a building for a women's school in Rzhyschchiv, the building of a Jewish people's house in Malyn, and paid subsidies to women's schools in Bila Tserkva, Bohuslav, and Vasyl'kiv. From February-April 1914, the Kyiv Branch of the OPE was purchasing books in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian for school libraries in Kyiv province.⁹³ The OPE maintained several schools for boys and girls in Kyiv: two separate specialized schools [*uchilische*] for men and women on Zhylians'ka Street in Lybid', a specialized school for women on Khoreva Street in Podil, and a men's school in Podil.⁹⁴ Thus, Kyiv was a regional cultural centre, which promoted Jewish enlightenment, Jewish secular nationalistic ideas, the rise of nation and class, breaking with tradition, changing identities, and thus introduced Jews to modernity.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Vladimir Gintsburg was the son of Baron Horace Gintsburg, the head of the Jewish community of St. Petersburg and one of the richest men in the Russian Empire. Vladimir was married to Clara, a daughter of Lazar Brodskii. See, Alexandra Fanny Brodsky, *Smoke Signals: From Eminence to Exile* (London, New York: Radcliffe Press, 1997), 7.

⁹² DAKO, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 51, ark. 7-7zv, 8zv, 9, 9zv. About language dispute in the OPE, see also Davidson A. "Soveshchanie Obshchestva Prosveshchenia". *Rassvet*, 1 (5 January 1914), 3-7, 25-30.

⁹³ DAKO, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 50, ark. 12; spr. 51, ark. 1, 1zv, 5, 8, 12zv.

⁹⁴ DAKO, f. 348, op. 1, spr. 51, ark. 3zv, 10-10zv, 7zv, 14.

⁹⁵ Marci Shore, "Tevye's Daughters: Jews and European Modernity," *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 1 (2007): 121-35.

Conclusion

Kyiv, one of the most conservative cities in the Russian Empire, limited the rights of Jews to settle there. However, since the mid-nineteenth century the Jewish population of Kyiv grew constantly, united by shared values and ideas due to their estrangement from broader society. The Representation for Jewish Welfare, added by the representatives of the local financial elite, governed Jewish communal life in Kyiv and represented the interests of the community to local municipal authorities.

As Natan Meir states, Jewish identity before the Great War was “fluid and dynamic, always interacting with other individual and corporate identities and changing in response to those interactions.”⁹⁶ It was not solely defined by ethnicity or religion—class, political affiliation, and profession, among others, also shaped Jewish identity.⁹⁷ Although upper- and middle-class Jewish families embraced Russian culture, they preserved their “Jewishness” and remembered Jewish traditions. Jewish intellectuals and professionals, who had graduated from Russian or Western European universities and were imbued with ideas of nationalism, liberalism, and socialism, worked for the democratization of Jewish communal life. They actively participated in Jewish organizations that undertook organic work, promoting a secular nationalist agenda among the Jewish masses. Thus, a new Jewish elite was taking the lead in modernizing Jewish life.

⁹⁶ Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 15.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

CHAPTER TWO. PRACTICES OF URBAN LIFE IN KYIV DURING THE GREAT WAR

On the eve of the Great War, the population of the Russian Empire did not think of itself as a political nation. The central government represented Imperial Russia, but in the regions, people had developed local “imagined communities.”¹ The development of national consciousness among many non-Russians brought into question the idea of a united and indivisible empire. At the same time, the government promoted an inclusive imperial Russian identity based on a narrow cultural Russianness.² If before the war the multiethnic empire could not afford “ideological extremism” and simply maintained a *modus vivendi* with various ethnic groups, from July 1914 onwards the Russian government actively developed the idea of popular solidarity and patriotism.³ As Eric Lohr has shown, the war unleashed a painful process of imperial transformation.⁴ It was a manifestation of what Benedict Anderson termed “official nationalism.” He argued that “these “official nationalisms” can best be understood as a means for combining naturalization with the retention of dynastic power, in particular over Russia’s huge polyglot domains accumulated since the Middle Ages. To put it another way, Russian official nationalism ‘stretch[ed] the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire.’”⁵ The central idea was imperial but it was “Russian” in character.

¹ Melissa K. Stockdale, "Mobilizing the Nation: Patriotic Culture in Russia's Great War and Revolution, 1914–20," in *Russia's Great War and Revolution, Cultural History of Russia in the Great War and Revolution 1914-22*, ed. Murray Frame, Steven Marks, Melissa Stockdale, Boris Kolonitskii (Slavica Publishers, 2013), 4–5.

² Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010), 171–72.

³ Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Festern Frontier, 1863-1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 44.

⁴ Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 1–9.

⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86.

Katherine Verdery argues that nation-states in the process of their formation create “myths of homogeneity” in order to stop or delay the struggle of different groups for legitimacy. However, by trying to integrate different ethnic groups, nation-states accentuate ethnic differences. Thus, the push for homogeneity that marks the process of making modern nation-states is simultaneously exclusionary.⁶ With the beginning of the war, Russian military and administrative authorities stigmatized the national minorities that allegedly had dual loyalties (Germans, Ukrainians adhering to the Uniate Church, Jews, the Turkic peoples of Central Asia). Calls for unity and solidarity to defend Mother Russia were very soon used to cleave the population into reliable and unreliable elements. As Aviel Roshwald states, “[f]orced into confining ethnic pigeonholes and labeled as threats to the welfare of Russia, people naturally became eager for “liberation” at the hands of the enemy and more inclined to think of themselves in unidimensionally ethnic terms.”⁷

This chapter aims to show the initial reactions of Kyiv’s Jews and other Kyivans to the outbreak of war and how the war changed the city and its population. This chapter presents a picture of urban routine, which was significantly changed by the war. This chapter also discusses state patriotism, promoted by state officials, which aimed to unite the peoples of the Russian Empire. Although the Jewish elite immediately responded to official calls for solidarity and tried to prove their loyalty, the actual reaction of the wider Jewish masses towards the Empire’s military efforts of the war was not so homogenous.

⁶ Katherine Verdery, "Ethnicity, Nationalism, and State-Making," in *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,"* eds. Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers (Het Spinhuis, 1994), 43–46; Charles Steinwedel, "To Make a Difference: the Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russian Politics, 1861-1917," in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices,* eds. David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (Macmillan Press, 1999), 69–70.

⁷ Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, 1914-1923* (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 91.

Though the initial official decrees, which were intended to “manage” the public mood, were not expressly anti-Semitic, early appeals for unity and solidarity quickly gave way to suspicion and mistrust. Jews were systematically “othered” and thus could not be an integral part of the nation at war.

Bringing State Patriotism to the Masses

The Russian Empire entered the war on July 19 (August 1), 1914, when Germany declared war on France and Russia. The next day, German troops crossed into Russian Poland. Austro-Hungary declared war on Russia on July 24 (August 6), though Russian military mobilization had started after Austria-Hungary’s declaration of war on Serbia on July 15 (July 28), 1914.⁸ The following day, Tsar Nicholas II signed an order about general mobilization.

On July 17, 1914, martial law was introduced in the Ukrainian provinces located near the Austro-Hungarian border; Kyiv, Volyn, Podil, Poltava, and Chernihiv.⁹ All orders issued by the commander of the Kyiv Military District were mandatory for all civil institutions and their officials. The commander could dismiss any official who served in a military or civilian capacity, whether that be in the military, state, zemstvo, or city administration.¹⁰ The Commander of the the Kyiv Military District (hereafter–KMD) was

⁸ Laura Engelstein, *Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War, 1914-1921* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 34–35; I. I. Rostunov, *Russkii front Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moskva: Nauka, 1976), 107–09.

⁹ “Prikaz Glavnokomanduiushchego armiiami Iugo-Zapadnogo fronta,” *Kievlianin*, 210 (1 August 1914): 4; *Polozhenie o polevom upravlenii voisk v voennoe vremia* (Sankt-Peterburg: Voennaia Tip. Imperatritsy Ekateriny Velikoi, 1914).

¹⁰ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 237, ark. 5; *ibid.*, 3, 82; I. Trutko, “Podgotovka tyla Iugo-Zapadnogo fronta (1914 g),” *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 3 (1939): 92–113.

subordinate to the Commander of the South-Western Front.¹¹ At the end of August 1914, Kyiv's Governor Sukovkin explained that all administrative, legal, and economic questions were the responsibility of the Quartermaster General of the South-Western Front, who was the most senior officer below the front's Commander-in-Chief.¹² With the introduction of martial law, life in Kyiv changed and, in many ways, the war highlighted and exacerbated pre-existing problems in civic governance.

“By the Grace of God, We, Nicholas II, Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia. [...] We firmly believe that all Our loyal subjects will rally self-sacrificingly and with one accord to the defense of the Russian soil. At this hour of threatening danger, let domestic strife be forgotten. Let the union between the Tsar and His people be stronger than ever, and let Russia, rising like one man, repel the insolent assault of the enemy.”¹³ With these words, the Russian Empire entered the Great War. The Imperial Manifesto of July 20, 1914 was published in all imperial periodicals. To the people of Kyiv and the rest of the population of the Empire, Russia's entry into the war was not a surprise, however. The press had frequently reported on the events of “the July Days,” including the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Austria-Hungary's declaration of war against Serbia. The newspapers had also published articles detailing Russo-Serbian friendship and pan-Slavic kinship in order to shape pro-Serbian sentiment. Large crowds of curious and excited people filled city squares and public spaces, and demonstrated patriotic excitement and Slavic solidarity. People frequently crowded around newspaper buildings, eagerly waiting for the distribution of the “daily extras.”

¹¹ DAK, f. 18, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 210.

¹² “Srochnyi tsirkuliar,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1293 (25 August 1914): 2.

¹³ Frank Alfred Golder and Emanuel Aronsberg, *Documents of Russian History 1914-1917* (New York, London, The Century Co., 1927), 29–30.

The members of the Kyiv City Duma immediately placed at “the feet of His Majesty the Sovereign Emperor their unquestionable loyalty... assuring [him] that the hearts of Kyiv’s citizens beat in unison with the heart of their sovereign.”¹⁴ The bellicose press fervently supported the government. Newspapers frequently published patriotic articles and reports of enemy atrocities. Women were particularly targeted with messages suggesting that they enroll in nurse-training courses. Obviously, the aim was to excite public opinion and to mould a new sense of patriotic duty.¹⁵ *Kievlianin* described the war as an unavoidable though expected thunder, although it also noted that some “people [had] believed it would not happen.”¹⁶ In an editorial printed by *Kievlianin*, Anatolii Savenko, the chair of the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists, praised the peoples’ unity in the face of war and condemned those who had failed to become “members of the family... a part of Rus’.” In this article, Savenko directly pointed to “Jews and [their] purely Jewish newspaper [*Kievskaiia Mysl'*].”¹⁷ The nationalist press widely used the theme of “Rus’ solidarity” to silence political opposition. As a result, the liberal newspaper *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, which had a circulation of 60,000 copies in 1915, reduced its level of opposition to the government, explaining this action by needing to maintain social harmony during wartime and to serve as a continued counterbalance to the chauvinistic tone of the political right.¹⁸

During the first days of the war, crowds spent hours in the streets listening to updates from the front. Large crowds quickly appeared, poured through the centre of

¹⁴ “Zhurnaly sobranii Kievskoi gorodskoi dumy (20 iulia 1914 g.)” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 8 (August 1914): 4.

¹⁵ Jon Lawrence, “Public space, political space,” in *Capital Cities at War: A Cultural History: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, eds. J. M. Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 282.

¹⁶ “Mysli i vpechatleniia,” *Kievlianin*, 198 (20 July 1914): 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2; TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 13.

Kyiv, and spread throughout the city in smaller groups. The population was living the war and “spoke” the war in ways that were reflected in both daily practices and urban space.¹⁹ Changes in daily life were reflected in the militarization of newspaper advertisements. New words entered daily vocabulary: “reservists,” “the families of reservists,” “donation cup” [*kruzhka*], “relief work” [*delo pomoschi*] and so on. Calls to contribute financially to the war effort were unavoidable; urbanites were constantly reminded about the war.

The Kyiv Club of Nationalists immediately reacted to the start of the war. A huge audience gathered at the Club’s meeting of July 17, 1914. Both regular members and the public were present. Students from the Pedagogical Museum of Tsarevich Aleksei and the Superintendent of Public [*narodnye*] Schools of Kyiv province B. V. Pleskim were in attendance. The main topic was the war between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, and Russian intervention “to defend the national interests of Slavdom.”²⁰ Anatolii Savenko, the head of the Club, stressed that the clash between the Slavic and German worlds was an inevitable consequence of the Austro-Serbian conflict. Vladimir Iozefi noted the need to strengthen nationalist sentiment among all political groups, including social democrats. He stated that “one natural and strong impulse unites everyone, forges all people into one connected by common ideas and feelings.”²¹ The crowded streets were a direct manifestation of this patriotic outburst.

The ordinary noises of the city streets were soon drowned out by patriotic demonstrations. Downtown streets were overcrowded as people waited for the latest war

¹⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 97–102.

²⁰ “V Klube natsionalistov,” *Kievlianin*, 197 (19 July 1914): 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

news and daily extras sold out quickly. Yet, Kyiv's streets became more than sites for finding out news from the front. They served as homogenizing social spaces in which ethnic and class boundaries briefly melted away. All Kyivans were united by feelings of duty and patriotism and all shared the burden of sacrifice and hardship in the time of war.

Patriotic rallies occurred in Kyiv even before Russia's declaration of war.²² Generally, the rallies were all alike: held in the center of the city with national banners, portraits of the tsar, and boisterous singings of the national anthem. The political right was active in a rally held on Sofia Square on July 15. Here, Vladimir Golubev, the head of the patriotic youth society the Double-Headed Eagle [*Dvuglavnyi Orel*], and Adam Liubinskii, the head of the Kyiv department of the Russian People's Union of the Archangel Michael and a member of the City Duma, led a crowd from St. Sophia Cathedral and the monument of Alexander II on Tsar Square to the City Duma. All the while, the crowd sang the national anthem "*Bozhe, Tsaria Khrani*" [God, Save the Tsar] and shouted "Down with Austria!"²³ The rally of July 18, 1914, organized by Kyiv nationalists, involved roughly 1,000 people who initially gathered at the monument to Alexander II and marched down the city's most important thoroughfare, Khreschatyk Street. The crowd stopped near the offices of the Kyiv Club of Nationalists and the *Kievlia*nin, and St. Michael's Monastery. The orchestra from the "Shantser" theatre accompanied the crowd, highlighting the event's carnival character. At Volodymyrs'ka Street, near the city Chancellery [*prisutstvenniie mesta*], the crowd was joined by two automobiles adorned with big black banners that read "Down with Austria!" and "Long

²² TSDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3259, ark. 2.

²³ "Manifestatsii," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1253 (16 July 1914): 2; Omelianchuk I. V., *Chernosotennoe dvizhenie na teritorii Ukrainy (1904-1914)* (Kiev, 2000), 41–42.

live Great Russia!”²⁴ Police, who confiscated the banners, stopped both cars. On Khreschatyk, police stopped the car of a reporter from the right-wing paper *Kiev*, which also had a banner that read “Long live Slavdom.” The reporter was briefly detained.²⁵ Kyiv’s Black Hundreds, an ultra-conservative, nationalist, anti-Semitic group that staunchly supported the House of Romanov, played an important role in this rally. Later that day for example, Golubev was seen by city police as he was driving down Khreschatyk holding a banner that read “Down with Austria!” The police tried to detain Golubev, but he escaped.²⁶ Jubilant crowds marched through the city centre daily, frequently splitting into smaller groups numbering in the hundreds, which were often joined by curious onlookers.

The rallies united both the secular and religious spaces of Kyiv, and reflected the importance of Orthodoxy as a hegemonic ideology. The patriotic march on the first day of the war, July 20, started with prayers for the “victory of the Russian Host” in Saint Sophia Cathedral. The crowds, carrying portraits of the Tsar and nationalistic banners, split into two groups before moving to Khreschatyk Street. From there, one group went to Duma Square and “[sang] the national anthem and praye[d] for Tsar and Motherland.” Unknown speakers appealed to the crowd “to unite in the face of the enemy, for in such a serious moment, there are neither Jews, nor Poles, nor [ethnic] Russians, but only Russian citizens, defenders of the Motherland.”²⁷ The crowd also visited the editorial offices of *Posledniie Novosti* [The Last News], the Governor-General’s residence, and

²⁴ “Manifestatsii,” *Kievlianin*, 197 (19 July 1914): 3.

²⁵ “Manifestatsii,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1256 (19 July 1914): 2.

²⁶ “Manifestatsii,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1255 (18 July 1914): 2. On October 1914, Golubev was killed in a battle near the town of Rudnik (Kholm province); buried in the village Lipiny-Dol’ni, and later reburied in Florivskiyi Monastery in Kyiv. “V. S. Golubev,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1348 (19 October 1914): 2.

²⁷ “Manifestatsii,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1258 (21 July 1914): 2.

the Commander of the KMD. In the evening, the people again strolled through the center of the city.²⁸

The idea of unity topped the political agenda during the war's early days. However, "otherness" is also key to understanding nationalist discourses across time and space; the imagined dichotomy of "the nation" and "the other" serves to define them both. During the war, such a differentiation served as the key criterion in evaluating an individual's patriotism and loyalty. However, "othering" is a process that not only demarcates, but also divides and unites multiple nations of a multiethnic empire around a shared idea of commonality. The process of nationalization of the Russian Empire is just such a process, though it was interrupted by war and the subsequent revolution. However, the first months of the war were marked by a previously unseen popular solidarity, where even Jews were momentarily "pardoned" and became part of the Russian patriotic masses.

The life of Russian Jews underwent a complete change during the Great War. Initially, a patriotic mood engulfed Kyivan Jewry and as soon as war was declared, Kyiv's synagogues and prayer houses prayed for the victory of the Russian host.²⁹ A very noteworthy event in the history of Kyivan Jews and their relationships with urban Gentiles was a common patriotic rally on July 22, 1914. That day, Kyiv's conservative newspaper, *Kievlianin*, informed its readers:

Today, on St. Sophia's Square, at 11.30 in the morning the Metropolitan will lead a prayer for the victory of the Russian armies. A solemn service will be conducted in the main Choral Synagogue on Rognedinskaia Street. After the religious ceremony, the rally will proceed along Mikhailovskaia Street to Khreshchatik Street, to the monument to Petr Stolypin. By that time, the Jewish procession will have moved from the Choral Synagogue

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Molebstviia," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1259 (22 July 1914): 2.

in the same direction and will merge with the Orthodox procession. A unified procession will go to the monument to Alexander II, where the Jewish clergy will offer prayers, followed by speeches delivered by the representatives of Kiev's Russian and Jewish population. Subsequently, the united procession will go to the monument to Stolypin and to other city sites.³⁰

And, indeed, this joint event took place. The Jewish procession placed Torah scrolls and portraits of the Tsar's family and of the French President Raymond Poincaré on the pedestal of the monument to Aleksandr II. Crown Rabbi Iakov Aleshkovskii delivered a speech that called on Jews to defend Russia.³¹ Similar rallies were also conducted in the towns of Kyiv county (Germanivka, Obukhiv, Trypill'ia, Kaharlyk, and others), where Jewish rallies united with those of the peasants.³²

In the early days of the war, it appeared that patriotic impulses united Russia's multiethnic population, which gathered in urban public space near landmarks representing imperial power.³³ The rightist *Kievlianin*, known for its anti-Semitism, informed Kyivites that on July 22 around ten thousand people had gathered near the monument to Tsar Aleksandr II. The rally was described as an "outstanding spectacle." This description was used, the author explained, "not because of its large number of people, but because the huge crowd moving along Kreshchatik was exclusively a Jewish one," and people there were carrying the Russian tri-colour.³⁴ The newspaper wondered how it was possible that these people, who just yesterday had been enemies, now united with Christians: "They were at odds with each other and oppressed each other, but both

³⁰ "Torzhestvennye molebstviia i manifestatsii russkikh i evereev," *Kievlianin*, 200 (22 July 1914): 2.

³¹ "Molebstviia i manifestatsii," *Kievlianin*, 201 (23 July 1914): 1-2; "Manifestatsii," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1260 (23 July 1914): 2.

³² "Manifestatsii," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1263 (26 July 1914): 2.

³³ "Torzhestvennye molebstviia i manifestatsii russkikh i evereev," *Kievlianin*, 200 (22 July 1914): 2.

³⁴ "Molebstviia i manifestatsii," *Kievlianin*, 201 (23 July 1914): 1.

had suffered. They understood in their hearts that this was wrong.”³⁵ At least for a moment, the common danger of war erased old hostilities. United Gentile-Jew rallies aimed to bridge the chasm of Jewish isolation (both self-isolation and isolation imposed on them by the state through different legal norms that regulated Jewish life in Russia). State patriotism permitted Kyivan Jews to represent themselves as equal players in the urban public sphere.³⁶ At the same time, such unification of Christian and Jewish demonstrators, especially as described in the press, highlighted the distance between these two parts of the urban population, their separateness. Further developments showed that this unity could not last long.

Similar outpourings of popular solidarity took place in other cities of the Russian Empire. For example, in Odessa, Vladimir Purishkevich, a member of the State Duma and a well-known activist of the anti-Semitic Black Hundreds, led a patriotic rally at the end of July 1914. When the “Russian” demonstration met a Jewish one, however, Purishkevich kissed the Torah scrolls and declared that he had been wrong about the Jews and that Russia should not have had any national or religious barriers.³⁷ Several days later, one of the leaders of the right radicals even condemned persecution of the Jews because “[Jews] have shown that they are ready to defend the Motherland like the rest of the Russian citizens.”³⁸ The Russian central newspapers similarly sang about brotherhood, love, solidarity, and the unification of all peoples.

Reports from both observers and participants noted strong feelings of patriotism and national purpose. Yet, most people gathered in the city centre around significant

³⁵Ibid., 1.

³⁶ About Jewish self-isolation also see A. Gold’shtein, “Obosoblenie,” *Rassvet*, 36 (5 September 1914), 11-13.

³⁷ “Znamenie vremeni,” *Novyi Voskhod*, 30 (31 July 1914): 3.

³⁸ Ibid.

political and public spaces. These were spaces where people would have gathered regardless. It is difficult to determine just how many people actively participated in celebratory street gatherings, though it is reasonable to conclude that it was a small percentage of the city's total population. As in other European cities, many people were simply curious spectators who wanted to witness events firsthand.³⁹

Here arises an important question: how accurately did the press describe the emotions and feelings of Kyiv's population in 1914? Most historians describe public opinion in 1914 as "enthusiastic" and "patriotic." But how broad was this war "enthusiasm" and what did people really think about the war? What did they feel? Certainly, central and local authorities tried to use ideological norms (imperial nationalism) and values to create a narrative of collective action and common purpose. However, it is doubtful that the population uniformly greeted the war with joy. War is, after all, a frightening event and much war enthusiasm was related to a sense of duty. In spite of the patriotic mood, the population expressed some doubts about Russia's ability to fight. Two peasant women, Maria Levonek and Pelaheia Chudovs'ka denounced Aron Shpigel, a Jew, to the police for allegedly saying: "our enemies are as strong as tigers, but our people [*narod*] are weak," "Germany has an army of eight million against Russia; the Germans are strong and angry people, and God knows, they can defeat Russia." He went on to say, "what kind of war did we start, they will slaughter us."⁴⁰ It is difficult to say if these denunciations had any truth or were pure libel, but they clearly demonstrate that some common people had quite a critical understanding of events and were concerned about the possibility of Russian defeat.

³⁹ Lawrence, "Public space, political space," 285–286.

⁴⁰ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 234, ark. 16.

Jeffrey Verhey has studied the German experience of “war enthusiasm” and concluded that the “spirit of 1914” was created by censors who wanted to build common values in order to shape a common identity.⁴¹ The same was true in Russia. The press, therefore, only partly reflected public sentiment, though it certainly played a role in creating war enthusiasm. The readers of *Kievlianin*, *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, or *Iuzhnaia Kopeika* tended to look to newspapers for informed opinion and advice; the newspapers, in turn, provided their audience with detailed descriptions of patriotic rallies throughout the Russian Empire. Such descriptions served as a pre-existing template for rallies and patriotic activities that Kyivans could copy.⁴² Thus, local newspapers engendered a climate of war enthusiasm.

Religious services of thanksgiving were ordered to be celebrated throughout the empire after the conquest of Lviv and Halych on August 21-22, 1914, and of the Przemyśl fortress in March 1915. Glorifying the victory, Archpriest Ioann Korol’kov, the dean of St. Vladimir Cathedral, delivered a speech about the meaning of those victories “for the Russian national consciousness” and compared them to the military achievements of Prince Dmitry Pozharsky (1612) and of Prince Mikhail Kutuzov (1812). The service was followed by a religious procession with cross and banners carried by parishioners and representatives of the Union of Russian People.⁴³ The seizure of Przemyśl was accompanied by demonstrations, celebrations, and thanksgiving services.

⁴¹ Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth, and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7–8.

⁴² “Stolitsa v ozhidanii voiny,” *Kievlianin*, 199 (21 July 1914): 1-2; “Patriotichaskoe sobranie na Krasnoi ploschadi v Moskve,” 200 (22 July 1914): 1-2

⁴³ “Vchera, vo Vladimirskom sobore,” *Kievlianin*, 234 (25 August 1914): 3; “Blagodarstvennyi moleben,” 240 (31 August 1914): 4; TsDIAK, f. 278, op. 1, spr. 280, ark. 122.

University lectures were canceled and students poured into the streets, drawing passers-by into the demonstration.⁴⁴

The patriotic crowds of summer 1914 used a set of rituals, symbols, and actions, such as praying and singing, to prove their patriotism and loyalty to the state and dynasty. The crowds also visited sites that corresponded to the city's "patriotic geography"—the monument to Aleksandr II, the Mykhailivsky Monastery, St. Sophia Cathedral, the Duma Square. These locations served as the theatrical stage for the city's "war carnival." According to Mikhail Bakhtin, "carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people."⁴⁵ Moreover, it does not distinguish between actors and spectators, as there is no distinction between curious onlookers and engaged participants.

Generally speaking, the job of the press is to provide its readers with explanations and interpretations of important events. Starting in July 1914, Kyiv's newspapers created a spectacle of war for which the whole city was a stage. The press accumulated and distributed information to its eager readers, which actively "regulated ways of seeing and not seeing."⁴⁶ Kyiv's most widely read newspaper, *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, was a popular paper read by the city's lower classes. It frequently published sketches of urban life that depicted patriotism and solidarity. In fact, the paper helped to construct a world of binaries: enemies and allies, Cossacks and Austrians, us and them, courageous Russians and impudent Germans.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ "K padeniiu Peremyshlia," *Kievskaia mysl'*, 69 (10 March 1915): 3; 70 (11 March 1915): 3; "K padeniiu Peremyshlia," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1489 (11 March 1915): 2.

⁴⁵ M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7.

⁴⁶ Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3.

⁴⁷ Here the word "Cossacks" was used not as a name of a certain military community, but as an epithet. It is also a clear reference to the Zaporozhian Cossacks; *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1259 (22 July 1914): 2.

The Kyivan press ran many articles meant to inspire and give the impression of widespread Russian loyalty and Romanov patriotism. Short articles frequently described patriotic demonstrations and acts of charity. The press often published *vsepoddaneishieie telegrammy* [humble telegrams] addressed to the Tsar. One particularly obsequious telegram, from Governor-General Fedor Trepov, conveyed how locals “asked [him] to throw [himself] at the feet of the adorable Monarch and the Highest Chief of the valorous army with feelings of infinite loyalty and readiness to defend the motherland to the last drop of blood.”⁴⁸ Though the style and inflated language of the telegrams reflect a tradition of official correspondence, their reproduction in popular periodicals created a public discourse that the masses were obliged to follow. However, this discourse was not created *sui generis*. Rather, it linked together ideas that had existed long before the war and reframed them to changing circumstances.

Official prayers in Kyiv’s cathedrals and churches were designed to reinforce solidarity and readiness for united action. The metropolitan of Kyiv and Galicia delivered a sermon in St. Sophia Cathedral at a service at which all the main officials of the city and Kyiv province were present. This included Governor-General Trepov and his wife Elizaveta Trepova, the Commander of the KMD General Nikolai Ivanov, other military officials, and representatives of the city administration. He started by urging the audience and the entire population “to unite in defense of the Motherland.” Those who could not serve in the army were encouraged to make donations or to care for the wounded.⁴⁹ After the sermon, parishioners, who were carrying Russian-, Serbian-, and French-language banners, left the cathedral and were “surrounded by a crowd of a thousand people.” It is

⁴⁸ “Vysochaishaia blagodarnost’,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1260 (23 July 1914): 2

⁴⁹ “Molebny i manifestatsii,” *Kievlianin*, 199 (21 July 1914): 3.

clear that the rally was organized or at least supported by state officials, as it would not have been possible without their tacit support.

Religious sermons quickly became one of the most effective transmitters of state policy to the broader society. On September 17, 1914, the Holy Synod decided to publish the newspaper *Prikhodskoi Listok* [The Parish Paper], the goal of which was “to inform the Orthodox clergy rightly and accurately.” Priests in turn were expected to inform “the population about the latest events, especially about the war. [The newspaper was] to support and develop among the clergy a cheerful mood, courage, and belief in the greatness of Russia, which should be transmitted to the parishioners in order to protect them from false rumors.”⁵⁰ The *Kiev Diocesan Journal* published the text of an exemplary sermon at the outbreak of the war. Priests were encouraged to draw the congregation’s attention to popular rallies and to encourage patriotic sentiment. They were expected to explain that such patriotic exultation stemmed from the special role Russians played in the war, for “our pious host [*khristoliubivoe voinstvo*] has become the executor of God’s predestination, for the current war is nothing but the Highest Judgement.”⁵¹ The sermon stressed the importance of unity and condemned those who “separated themselves from the Church and did not protect national interests.”⁵² Public prayers in Kyiv’s churches and the reading of the Tsar’s manifesto were followed by religious processions. On July 22, one such procession marched from the Candlemas Church in Starokyivsky District to the Sinnyi Bazar, carrying icons of the Mother of God “Joy of All Who Sorrow.” On the square, the priest led a prayer for the victory of the

⁵⁰ *Kievskiiie Eparkhialnyie Vedomosti*, 40 (5 October 1914): 596-597.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 971-972, 974.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Russian host followed by kneeling, which was a sign of worship, faith, and great piety.⁵³ Even if the content of the sermons was not controlled by the state, it was heavily influenced by it; nevertheless, sermons functioned as key sources of information and at least helped to shape public opinion on issues of war and politics.⁵⁴

Police reports on the public mood represent more an official position than the real situation (at least describing the general situation in the cities and villages of Kyiv province). In October 1915, the Chief of the Kyiv Police Department Colonel Shredel' stated that

...in spite of frequent mobilizations of youth and reservists into the army, the attitude of the workers and peasants is firm; the common people do not tolerate the idea that the war could end to the detriment of Russia's interests, and they are sure that an honorable peace will be concluded only after a decisive victory over the enemy. People believe that the country has already sacrificed too many material and human victims, and it cannot stop halfway. So they are ready to sacrifice even more.⁵⁵

The police were responsible for controlling the popular mood and had to shape it according to central government requests. Thus, a police officer could not report signs of "war negativity," or at least he had to be very cautious in order not to cast a shadow on his own reputation. According to directives received by Colonel Shredel' from the Ministry of the Interior, the ordinary population had "to support the tsar's initiatives" [*stoiat' za delo gosudarevo*], be "hostile to people of German origin," "be compassionate to POWs," "ignore the activity of the State Duma," "bless alcohol prohibition," and "be religious," among other things. As described above, common people were phlegmatic,

⁵³ "Krestnyi khod," *Kievlianin*, 201 (23 July 1914): 2.

⁵⁴ Tony Claydon, "The sermon, the 'public sphere' and the political culture of late seventeenth-century England," in *Politics and culture in early modern Britain, The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600-1750*, eds. Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter E. McCullough (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 209–210.

⁵⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 9.

but “[they] were still perplexed that there were frequent changes in the composition of the central government.” Moreover, “the common people are now imbued with the belief that all sorts of excesses against foreigners, hostile to us, and the Jewish exploiters can cause confusion and even hurt the combat capability of the army, so people are surprised that there were riots and strikes in the capitals.”⁵⁶

Kyiv’s Streets and Their Inhabitants

A war frenzy gripped the city and the latest news and speculation spread like wildfire. Although Kyiv was not under threat of aerial attack, the fear of such an attack could turn an innocent public joke into a serious incident. On October 1914, on Khreshchatyk Street, which was always overcrowded on weekends, several students stopped to scan the sky. They were noticed by fellow pedestrians and within a few minutes a large crowd had joined them. As the crowd fixed their gaze on the sky looking for a zeppelin, “their faces became pale and sad.” The students, however, left the crowd and laughed at those gathered from across the street.⁵⁷ The militarization of life and the emotional experiences of war made people more nervous and sensitive to their surroundings. Anxiety gripped the streets.

The appearance of the streets changed, too. Though the war did not end overcrowded sidewalks and markets, it definitely changed Kyiv’s urban demographics. Some Kyiv suburbs, Slobodka for example, became thinly populated. Grey military coats soon became ubiquitous on city streets. Prisoners of war of various nationalities travelled through the city in convoys, while refugees from border regions struggled to survive.

⁵⁶ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 10—12, 14zv.

⁵⁷ “Shutka,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1336 (7 October 1914): 2.

The war also reduced the number of vehicles in the city. People moved around the city largely on foot, as fuel was quite scarce. The intensity of the city's private traffic reflected petrol's availability. At the start of the war, the commander of the KMD severely restricted its supply, only to offer a reprieve at the end of August and permit the free movement of private automobiles.⁵⁸ This forced people to change their routine. Additionally, a general economic crisis and a coin shortage (people preferred to save gold or silver coins, and not paper bills, which caused inflation and shortage of small change) forced people to change their daily habits. The city administration tried to use urban transport to support the war effort. In October 1914, Duma councillor Konstantin Grigorovich-Barsky suggested increasing the price of a tram ticket by one kopeck (the regular price was 3-5 kopecks). He proposed that the additional money be used to cover wartime expenses. The proposal was supported by the majority of city councillors. It was expected that this tax could generate ₴2,000 per day.⁵⁹

The rhythms of daily life changed, too. Working hours were extended to increase the income of traders and business owners. In December 1914, 70 Kyiv merchants petitioned to prolong the work day from 11 to 15 hours. The additional hours would generate additional revenue, which would be used to meet their heavy tax burden.⁶⁰ The trade union of bakers and confectioners, in turn, protested the extension. The longer work day and cancelled holidays compounded already low wages and difficult working conditions.⁶¹ The trade union of hat-makers cited the merchant's greed for the extended

⁵⁸ "Razreshenie avtomobil'nogo dvizeniia," *Kievlianin*, 232 (23 August 1914): 3; "K prodazhe benzina," 237 (28 August 1914): 4.

⁵⁹ DAK, f. 163, op. 39, spr. 502, ark. 68, 71, 73, 76, 91-93; "Duma," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1358 (29 October 1914): 2.

⁶⁰ "Khodataistvo melkikh torgovtsev," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1406 (16 December 1914): 2; TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 238, ark. 5-7, 9.

⁶¹ "Zaiavlenie rabochikh," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1852 (23 January 1916): 2.

hours.⁶² In solidarity, the city administration even prolonged its own working day by one hour, to six hours per day.⁶³ However, opening hours of cafes were reduced.

The sombreness of the city reflected an acute awareness of the carnage of war. It was simply impossible to maintain pre-war enthusiasm. Starting on July 17, due to the partial mobilization against Austria-Hungary, all pubs, wine and beer shops, and restaurants were closed. Only the most expensive establishments and the railway station buffet remained open. The cabaret “Buff,” in Alexander Park, was permanently closed by the provincial administration.⁶⁴ Though operas and concerts were permitted, the works of Teutonic composers, such as Richard Wagner, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Franz Schubert, were banned.⁶⁵ In spite of war, the theatres were full of spectators. People lived with the slogan “Bread and Circuses,” enjoying the moment, for they did not know what tomorrow would bring.

The military mobilization campaign followed declarations of war and patriotic rallies. It also significantly changed the urban landscape, as the streets were filled with called-up soldiers, reservists, and curious civilians. On the streets, people read the government’s mobilization announcement and debated the benefits that various institutions provided to recruits. However, the relative peace of the patriotic rallies was shattered by the violent behaviour of conscripts. For instance, a group of conscripts sabotaged a tram, causing it to derail, which injured several people.⁶⁶ Another group of

⁶² “Normirovka truda rabochikh,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2171 (10 December 1916): 2; “Khodataistvo Kievs'kogo kupecheskogo obschestva,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2171 (10 December 1916): 2.

⁶³ “Uvelichenie chasov raboty,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2184 (23 December 1916): 2.

⁶⁴ “Prikazy,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1258 (21 July 1914): 2; “Zakrytie “Buffa,” 1259 (22 July 1914): 2.

⁶⁵ Hamm, *Kiev*, 221. For a treatment of theatrical life in Kyiv during the war see Hryhorii Hryhor'iev, *U staromu Kyievi: Spohady* (Kyiv: Radians'kyi Pys'mennyk, 1961), 269–70; “K funktsionirovaniu v blizhaishee vremia Kievs'kogo gorodskogo teatra,” *Kievlianin*, 207 (29 July 1914): 2; “Zaiavlenie antretrenera gorodskogo teatra,” 213 (4 August 1914): 4.

⁶⁶ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 236, ark. 14; *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1258 (21 July 1914): 2.

recruits insulted and threatened to attack a retired general who commented on the soldiers' boorish behaviour. This also took place on a tram.⁶⁷ Gornostaev, Kyiv's Chief of Police, ordered his officers to help conductors maintain order on public transit and to prevent overcrowding.⁶⁸ This initiative, however, was not very successful, as accidents due to overcrowding continued to occur.⁶⁹

In 1914, young soldiers were celebrated with popular enthusiasm. After the German and Austro-Hungarian declarations of war against Russia in August 1914, two assembly places were assigned for rank-and-file reservists: one near the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute and the other, near the Château-De-Fleur Park. Civilians of military age were obliged to arrive at the assembly points of the district military commander [*uezdnyi voinskii nachalnik*] in Kyiv by July 21, the fourth day of mobilization, at 6 a.m. with all necessary documents.⁷⁰ There were several waves of mobilization. The second one started on January 15, 1915. The conscripts were walking along the streets singing; larger groups marched through the centre of the city, along Fundukleivs'ka and Volodymyrs'ka Streets. The police did not intervene.⁷¹ Railway stations were overcrowded with people who were sending their sons, brothers, or husbands to war.⁷²

Military dress acquired symbolic meaning during the war; it was a sign of prestige and a signifier of popular esteem. For women, the equivalent was the nurse's uniform. However, the population was split in its attitude towards the nurses, moving between

⁶⁷ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 236, ark. 13.

⁶⁸ „Prikazy,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1258 (21 July 1914): 2.

⁶⁹ „Na linii tramvaia,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1262 (25 July 1914): 2.

⁷⁰ „V voinskom prisutstvii,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1255 (18 July 1914): 2.

⁷¹ „Novobrantsy na ulitsakh,” *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 18 (18 January 1915): 3.

⁷² Hryhor'iev, *U staromu Kyievi*, 266–67.

admiration and accusations of immorality.⁷³ The urban visibility of the uniform, which soldiers on leave were required to wear, underlined the idea of an entire nation at war. City authorities, in an act of martial patriotism, felt compelled to introduce free public transit for all rank-and-file soldiers on St. George's Day, the saint associated with the Decoration of the Military Order of Saint George, the highest military insignia in the Russian Empire.⁷⁴ Although soldiers were usually held in high esteem socially, the war furthered enforced their heroism and bravery. The abundance of men in uniform militarized the city streets. One report described the public response to the sight of wounded soldiers: "The wounded in their greatcoats moved slowly, mixing with the colorful crowds on Khreschatik, Fundukleivskaia, and Vladimirskaia. Passers-by simply approached these lonely figures, compassionately asked them questions, and for a long time attentively listened to their simple stories."⁷⁵ In the words of the local penny press, "[t]he wounded soldiers were a source of information and speculation, and not just about the situation at the front. The government mobilized soldiers not only to fight but to strengthen morale and patriotism among the masses."⁷⁶

In the fall-winter of 1915-16, in the city, especially

at the markets and near the monasteries[,] many individuals appeared wearing military uniforms with St. George's ribbons and were telling the common people all kinds of nonsense, for example, that the census had started because Kyiv would be evacuated in the spring; so, all women would be evicted and men would be sent to the front or used for forced labour; and that the Germans would start air surveillance over Kiev soon; and therefore it would be more prudent to sell their property and to leave.⁷⁷

⁷³ Laurie Stoff, *Russia's Sisters of Mercy and the Great War: More Than Binding Men's Wounds*, Modern war studies (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2015).

⁷⁴ "Bezplatnyi proezd v tramvae," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1385 (25 November 1914): 3.

⁷⁵ "Dni nashei zhizni," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1305 (6 September 1914): 2.

⁷⁶ Hryhor'iev, *U staromu Kyievi*, 268–69; TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 527, ark. 103.

⁷⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 618, ark. 107; "Perepis' naselenia Kieva," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1855 (26 January 1916): 2.

Leonid Rozsokhin was one of those rumour-mongerers. He started visiting the Florivsky Monastery on Podil. He looked like a hero, with two St. George ribbons, which impressed the nuns who boarded him and trusted his stories. According to the police, “...he was telling them fables that raised panic among silly women, many of whom were going to leave after Lent.”⁷⁸ Reality and imagination blended, shaping people’s moods and attitudes.

Another change to urban life brought on by war was the increasing public activity of women. Women were, of course, active in the urban labour force before the war. In 1913, they comprised roughly 49.8% of the city’s population, or just under 300,000 people. As men were mobilized, conscripted, and left Kyiv, women entered public life in new ways.⁷⁹ Indeed, women often became the main breadwinners. Women spent more time in public, especially as shopping in conditions of scarcity consumed more time. They also replaced men in the street trade. During the war, women had to walk to work or the market, as they often could not afford public transit. This affected all classes of Kyivan society. In 1916, women constituted 30% of the work force of 225 enterprises in Kyiv, while boys under 17 and men over 45 made up another 12%.⁸⁰ This was a general trend throughout the Empire, as well. The number of women working in factories rose from 192,000 in 1887 to 723,000 in 1914—roughly 40% of the labour force. This figure reached over 1,000,000 during the war.⁸¹ Usually, women were paid less than men for the same type of work, earning between 37-71 kopeks to the ruble.⁸² Mobilized women

⁷⁸ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 618, ark. 107, 111zv.

⁷⁹ *Ves' Iugo-Zapadnyi krai: spravochnaia i adresnaia kniga po Kievskoi, Podol'skoi i Volynskoi guberniiam* (Kiev: Tip. L.M.Fisha i P.E.Vol'fsona, 1913), 229.

⁸⁰ Hamm, *Kiev*, 221.

⁸¹ Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 162.

⁸² *Ibid.*

worked as nurses, seamstresses, and factory labourers, which required a new physical mobility that offered different social and political perspectives.

For women, the home front was *their* front. They fought the Central Powers by sewing warm clothes, working in hospitals, and helping those who suffered from the war. Although women's role on the home front reflected traditional gender roles connected to caring, compassion, and child rearing, their participation in civil society transformed them into active and engaged citizens in ways which they previously were not. In June 1916, due to a shortage of male workers, the chief of the South-Western Railways ordered that male technical services providers be replaced with women. The order also envisaged the establishment of a temporary training school. Additionally, women were permitted to become clerks at railway station offices, positions previously closed to them.⁸³

A letter published in *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, arguing for nursing programs without study limitations, was signed by the universal "Russian Women." As it stood, the author contended, women were unable to enroll in nursing courses without first completing a two-year municipal college program [*dvuklassnoie gorodskoe uchilische*]. This was seen as unfair and left woman unable to "appeal for familial unification to help [their] brothers."⁸⁴ A woman's religion also potentially restricted her ability to help on the home front. In the case of nursing courses, only "loyal" Christians were allowed to apply.⁸⁵ Despite these restrictions, more than 2,000 women registered over a four-day period to study nursing at the Mariinsky Society of the Red Cross in Kyiv. Due to the courses'

⁸³ "Zamena muzhskogo truda zhenskimi," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1988 (10 June 1916): 2; "Baby," 2168 (7 December 1916): 2.

⁸⁴ "Pomoshch brat'iam," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1261 (24 July 1914): 2.

⁸⁵ "Kursy po podgotovke sester miloserdiia voennogo vremeni," *Kievlianin*, 199 (21 July 1914): 3.

popularity, family members of reservists had priority over other applicants, possibly because they were seen as more devoted and thus more reliable.⁸⁶ However, a shortage of medical personnel soon forced authorities to be less fastidious. For example, the Ministry of Transportation permitted South-Western Railway managers to accept female doctors if they were experiencing a shortage of qualified male personnel.⁸⁷ At the same time, Kyiv's Red Cross department was allowed to accept Jews of both genders as doctors and nurses.⁸⁸

Before the Great War, female activists, taking advantage of inclusive education reforms and a liberal intelligentsia, had launched a feminist and socialist women's movement.⁸⁹ A majority of educated women became teachers or entered the civil service. Compared to most uneducated women, they tended to have a relatively progressive worldview: women could have a career outside the home and make a worthwhile contribution to society.⁹⁰ The war changed traditional patterns of female behaviour even among the uneducated by forcing and encouraging them to assume new roles in public spaces as nurses, factory workers, or street vendors, who took over the businesses of their mobilized husbands.⁹¹

Masculinity was traditionally entwined with notions of military service. Nevertheless, the war masculinated images of women due to their entry into the workforce. Though this was not a new phenomenon, women who transgressed traditional gender roles during the war were viewed with suspicion. An interesting accident happened to

⁸⁶ 'Kursy dlia sester miloserdiia,' *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1263 (26 July 1914): 2.

⁸⁷ 'Zhenshchiny vrachi na zheleznykh dorogakh,' *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1268 (31 July 1914): 2.

⁸⁸ 'V Krasnom Kreste,' *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1273 (5 August 1914): 2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁹⁰ Linda Harriet Edmondson, *Feminism in Russia, 1900-17* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 15-22.

⁹¹ 'Damskoe otrezvlenie,' *Kievlianin*, 290 (20 October 1914): 1.

Anna Galinskaia, a teacher, at the end of October 1914. Due to “overactive imaginations,” a crowd on Bol’shaia Vasilkovskaia Street suspected that Galinskaia was a man “and thus a spy,” because of her “hard masculine walk and haircut.”⁹² Someone called the police and Galinskaia was arrested and taken to the Lybid police department. A police officer’s wife determined that Galinskaia was in fact a woman, rendering her unable to be a spy. Galinskaia, however, was treated poorly by the officers. Police Inspector Glushko, for example, lifted her hat and tried to touch her hair in order to determine her gender. Thereafter, she demanded to be released, as the police had no grounds to hold her; her detention continued though, as she had allegedly insulted the officers.⁹³ “Spymania” symbolized the ways the war affected Russian society and reflected how even the slightest “otherness” could provoke suspicion, anxiety, and aggression.

The Jewish Community Faces the War

At a meeting of the State Duma on July 26, 1914, Naphtali Friedman, one of its most well-known Jewish deputies, said that Jews had always felt that they were Russian citizens in spite of their precarious position; “in the world war that will mobilize all nations and peoples, Jews will step onto the battlefield side by side with all other peoples. In this time of troubles, they will perform their duty to the end.”⁹⁴

⁹² “Shpionomania,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1353 (24 October 1914): 2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ “Edinenie narodnostei”, “Deklaratsiia deputatov-evreev”, “Evreiskoe slovo”, *Rassvet*, 31 (1 August 1914), 3-5, 8.

Although hostility towards Jews may have been tempered by the outbreak of war, national restrictions on them were not. In her diary of August 7, 1914, Russian-Jewish writer Rachel Khin-Hol'dovskaia (1863-1928) wrote:

[We] waited for a manifesto, an amnesty for political [prisoners], equality for Jews... there was nothing, except “thanks” for our generous offerings [...] It seemed such a historic moment, but the Jews who escaped from Germany were allowed to stay outside the Pale for only one week. Go, die for Holy Rus', for the tsar-father, for the triumph of the Slavic idea—this is your duty; ghetto, quota throughout your life – this is your right.⁹⁵

The wave of war-related patriotism awoke in Jewish intellectuals a hope for equality and a belief that the tsar would reward them for their loyalty and patriotism. Local and central authorities called for unification and solidarity, and the Jewish elite understood such calls as a promise for a better future. However, when news from the front about Jewish expulsions and pogroms reached Kyiv, such hopes disappeared very quickly.⁹⁶ The words of Khin-Hol'dovskaia reflected this disappointment and bitterness that coarsed through Russian Jewry.

Although local newspapers glorified popular solidarity and patriotism, and the Kyivan Jews manifested this loyalty, private attitudes towards the war were much more complicated and not always as patriotic as authorities would have liked. On July 23, 1914, Moshko Faktorovich was charged with *lèse majesté*, an offence against the dignity of a reigning sovereign. Faktorovich, a Kyivan trader, was believed to be a Chornobyl town dweller [*meschanin*].⁹⁷ Stanislav Gintyllo, who was “Roman-Catholic, a hereditary

⁹⁵ R. M. Hin-Gol'dovskaia, "Iz dnevnikov 1913 – 1917," *Minuvshee. Istoricheskii al'manakh*. 21 (1997): 521–99, 541–42.

⁹⁶ “Edinenie narodnostei”, “Deklaratsiia deputatov-evreev”, “Voina i vyseleniia”, *Rassvet*, 31 (1 August 1914): 3–5; „Voina i evrei,” *Novyi Voskhod*, 30 (1914): 7–10.

⁹⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3303, ark. 7, 9-10, 12, 16; f. 442, op. 864, spr. 234, ark. 31-34zv.

noble, and a doctor,” was the principal witness. The incident occurred in a tram travelling from Kyiv’s suburb Puscha-Vodytsia to the city. According to Gintyllo,

The tram was overcrowded, but I found a place at the front with difficulty. There was a Russian lady and fifteen Jews with soldier’s badges on their hats and chests. One of the Jews [Moshe Faktorovich] started to pester the lady, who started crying and asking the passengers for help. She demanded that the tram stop and expressed her anger with Faktorovich, whose behavior was inappropriate during wartime. Faktorovich answered that “this situation is not for us, but for you, and in two or three years, we [Jews] will have another situation. After this, I [Gintyllo] became involved in the conversation and asked Faktorovich to stop talking and not to insult the social and political order. Instead, he started to berate me, took my newspaper, and started to read the manifesto of the Emperor. He was reading in such a way that the Jews were roaring with laughter [...] One of the Jews said that there had been news about a German defeat in a battle. Faktorovich replied, “We are aware of such claims from the Japanese war!” He also added that the Tsar had been slapped then and that Wilhelm would slap him now.⁹⁸

Faktorovich was arrested because Gintyllo reported the incident to the police. Moreover, Gintyllo stressed that the Jews had threatened to hurt him unless he withdrew his testimony. Faktorovich was sentenced to five years of penal servitude.⁹⁹ In addition to anti-Jewish prejudice, this story illustrates Jewish attitudes towards the war—they expected the institution of equal legal rights. The Jews wanted restrictions on residence, travel, and those related to engaging in business and participation in various commercial endeavors abolished. However, Faktorovich as well as the majority of Jews understood that these goals were not realistic. It is clear that Faktorovich did not associate himself with Russians. At the same time, by denouncing Jews, the Polish Gintyllo demonstrated his active social position and loyalty to the state.

⁹⁸ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3303, ark. 24.

⁹⁹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3303, ark. 32, 54, 59; f. 442, op. 864, spr. 234, ark. 31, 34.

Although the majority of Russian Jews sincerely saw Russia as their motherland and were prepared to fight, the state's constant anti-Semitism inevitably caused anti-Russian sentiment among Jews.¹⁰⁰ For example, Al'shvag, a student at Kyiv's commercial school, expressed in a letter to Austrian friends the hope that "the Austrian army would win and chase the Russians to Siberia."¹⁰¹ Jews of the Hapsburg Empire viewed the conflict as a war to liberate the Russian Jews. Russian Jews, in return, hoped for Jewish unification under the Russian crown.¹⁰² In October 1914, *Kievlianin* published a short article about the plans of Jewish territorialists to create a Jewish autonomous state within a Russian protectorate in Eastern Hungary after an Austro-Hungarian defeat and the subsequent partition of the empire. Should this occur, the territorialists promised to resettle the Jews from Poland, Russian Ukraine, and Galicia.¹⁰³ They believed that the end of the war would free Russia from autocracy and that the state would be rebuilt on a new liberal basis, guaranteeing Jewish cultural autonomy and equal rights. Already in August 1914, the Jewish press started to express these ideas, which envisioned a "renewed" Russia after the war. The topic of "unifying nations" stemmed from the notion that the war would bring Russia closer to ensuring the equality of its national minorities.¹⁰⁴

The Chief Commander of the Russian Imperial Army, the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, in his "Manifesto to the nations [*narodam*] of Austro-Hungary" of August 1914 declared:

¹⁰⁰ About anti-Semitism, see the next chapter.

¹⁰¹ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 234, ark. 129-130; f. 274, op. 4, spr. 430, ark. 256, 257; f. 274, op. 5, spr. 52, ark. 16.

¹⁰² David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (London, Portland, OR, 2001), 24. Marsha L. Rozenblit, "A holy war and revenge for Kishinev: Austrian rabbis justify the First World War," *European Judaism*, no. 1 (2015): 74–82.

¹⁰³ "Evreiskoe gosudarstvo," *Kievlianin*, 299 (29 October 1914): 3.

¹⁰⁴ "Edinenie narodnostei," *Rassvet*, 31 (1 August 1914): 3-4.

[Russia] is also carrying to you, the peoples of Austria-Hungary, freedom and the realization of your national [*narodnykh*] aspirations. [...] Russia, by contrast [with Austro-Hungary], strives for only one thing—that each of you might grow and prosper, preserving the precious heritage of your fathers—language and religion, and being united with the brothers, could live in peace and harmony with your neighbors, respecting their uniqueness [*samobytnost'*].¹⁰⁵

This declaration was especially meaningful for Russian Zionists. The Russian Zionist newspaper *Rassvet* characterized the decree as an outstanding event for Jews and equated it to the Manifesto to the Polish Nation (August 14, 1914), which promised reunification and autonomy of Polish lands under the aegis of the Russian tsar. The anonymous author of the article was sure that the manifesto was equally important for the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Jews:

Something that was so solemnly guaranteed to the nations of Austria—civil and political equality in conjunction with national self-determination—cannot be denied to the Jews, the native Russian citizens [*iskonnnye grazhdane Rossii*], whose blood has flowed and flows in such abundance on the battlefield in Galicia. The mission of liberation of the nations, as the slogan of the current war, is also a slogan of the equality of the peoples of Russia.¹⁰⁶

The manifesto not only guaranteed civil and political rights already enjoyed by Austro-Hungarian Jews but according to the above-mentioned article, it promised the equality of national languages and a right to national self-determination [*samobytnost'*].¹⁰⁷ Neither Yiddish nor Hebrew were recognized as *Umgangssprache* [language of daily use] in Austria-Hungary. As such, Jews were not recognized as a *Volksstamm*, and Yiddish was not recognized as a national language and did not have official protection (public education in Yiddish, right to use Yiddish in state offices

¹⁰⁵ “Vozzavanie Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduiuschego,” *Russkoe Slovo*, (4 September 1914).

¹⁰⁶ “Vozzvanie k narodam Avstrii,” *Rassvet*, 36 (11 September 1914), 3–4.

¹⁰⁷ These rights included freedom of work, residence and property ownership, the right to vote and hold political office, the ability to attain officer ranks in the army.

etc).¹⁰⁸ Thus, “right to language” was equated with the right to national self-determination.

The idea of establishing a Jewish state was popular among local Jewish professionals and intellectuals. In March 1915, *Iuzhnaia Kopeika* polled Kyiv’s Jewish elite on the creation of an independent Jewish state in Palestine. Though the newspaper did not publish its sample size, the poll itself is noteworthy as it demonstrates that the wider non-Jewish public was interested in Jewish affairs. The results of the survey highlight the variety of points of view among Jewish professionals. The newspaper published the opinions of Iakov Gol’denveizer, Naum Aleksandrov (both were lawyers), Moisei Aleksandrov, a physician and a member of the Representation for Jewish Welfare, and D. G. Levenshtein, the treasurer of the local branch of the OPE and “a well-known public figure.” Gol’denveizer completely rejected the idea of a Jewish state. He argued that its creation contradicted the Jewish spirit and history. Moreover, he stated that “true patriotism is a geographical, and not an ethnographical one.” Thus, “healthy and normal patriotism is when a Jew in England is an Englishman, in France—French, and in Russia—Russian.” In contrast, Naum Aleksandrov fully supported establishing a Jewish political center in Palestine. He was sure that this idea was viable and could be soon realized. Moisei Aleksandrov and Levenshtein also sympathized with the idea of a Jewish state;

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36. A propaganda leaflet, almost identical in its content and meaning, was distributed among the Jews of Poland by the German and Austro-Hungarian armies. It was written in Yiddish and Hebrew. The leaflet was a reply to this Russian appeal to Jews and it promised German liberation from Russian oppression. See Zosa Szajkowski, "The German Appeal to the Jews of Poland, August 1914," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 59, no. 4 (1969): 311–20.

however, the former saw it as unrealistic. If one is to believe the poll results, the majority of Kyiv's Jewish elite sympathized with Zionism.¹⁰⁹

Discussing the unification of the population in March 1915, the Kyivan Zionist Zlatopol'skii noted that though unification "was proclaimed together with the war," it was not realized in practice. Using the pronoun "we" and the noun "brothers" to define the Jews as a united group, Zlatopol'skii stressed the readiness of Russian Jewry to unite with Gentiles in a common war effort: "We are working with all the rest and maybe even more than the rest [of the population] without any thought of reward, without any real hope for it. But talking about "unification", they [Gentiles] do not apply [the term] to *us* [italics in the original text] fully or partially. They push us away from unified work by their unfriendly, even hostile attitude."¹¹⁰ Zlatopol'skii cited the example of Purishkevich, who less than a year earlier was kissing Torah scrolls but who now claimed that he would only talk about Jews and their war contribution after the war, though he continued to recognize the great contributions of Poles. Zlatopol'skii, who was very sceptical about possible changes to the legal position of the Jews in the Russian Empire, recognized the war's positive influence on Jewish unity. Jews, both political and apolitical, united to help their fellow Jews.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ "Evreiskoe gosudarstvo (Anketa)," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1498 (20 March 1915): 4; about Aleksandrov, see also TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 532, ark. 323zv, 324.

¹¹⁰ Zlatopol'skii, G. "Ob'edinenie," *Rassvet*, 10 (8 March 1915), 13–14.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Conclusion

From the end of the nineteenth century, the multiethnic Russian Empire was undergoing a complex transformation into a nation-state. The First World War was a mobilizing event, which brought state-led nationalism into public and private life, and significantly changed the lives of ethnic communities. “The claim on people’s loyalty, on their attention, on their solidarity,” made by the Russian government, in many ways narrowed the acceptable choices available to the many national communities: they had to assert unwavering loyalty to the Russian [*rossiiskaia*] Empire, to the Tsar, and to the cultural and political values promoted by the state.¹¹² By excluding some ethnic groups from the imperial body of the state, the nationalizing campaign only accelerated the fragmentation of imperial society and accentuated ethnic fault lines.

During the first months of the war, patriotism was both organic and orchestrated by the state. Patriotic demonstrations had to show and establish mass solidarity. State officials and the Church supported popular outbursts of patriotism. At the same time, some ethnic groups, for example, Jews, also took steps to demonstrate loyalty, as they hoped that their patriotism would help them obtain equal civil rights after the war. Obviously, the Jewish population was not homogeneous in its attitude to Russian military efforts. Economic instability and food and fuel shortages raised social tensions in Russian imperial society. If, before the war, Jews were seen as social parasites who exploited Christians, during the war, as we shall see in the next chapter, this negative image was exaggerated even more.

¹¹² Rogers Brubaker, "In the name of the nation: Reflections on nationalism and patriotism," *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 2 (2004): 115–27, 116.

CHAPTER THREE. ANTI-SEMITISM IN KYIV DURING THE WAR

Before the Great War, Jews were regarded as strangers whose whole way of life differed drastically from Christians. Dietary law, clothing, language, religion, and traditions visually underlined Jewish otherness. Jews could not eat and drink with Christians, they went to synagogue, and they kept the Sabbath on Saturday. Moreover, older restrictive “traditions” emphasized their foreignness, marginality, and even the hostility of Jews toward Christians. Many Jews from the Pale of Settlement moved to the cities to escape their meager existence in the *shtetls*. Both Kyiv and Odesa were desirable locations for Jews. However, the growth of Jewish communities in these urban centers was more than matched by growing anti-Semitism.

At first glance, urban life offered Jews better living conditions, higher incomes, and a chance to integrate into broader Russian society. However, the reality was more complex. The modern city also brought new forms of segregation and marginalization.¹¹³ Sharp social contrasts and poverty, which were even more visible in large cities than in smaller towns, fundamentally shaped Jewish and non-Jewish life. At the same time, urban space had the required critical mass of people and networks that helped to form solidarity at regional and national levels. Jewish organizations, social activists, synagogues, schools, and media spoke for and to the Jewish public, supplying them with information and interpretations of relevant events. Jewish perceptions of anti-Semitism also relied on these same networks and communities. Education quotas, blood libel

¹¹³ Metzler, *Tales of Three Cities: Urban Jewish Cultures in London, Berlin, and Paris (1880-1940)*, 15-16.

slander, ghettoization, and open anti-Jewish hostility deeply concerned Russia's urban Jews, regardless of ideology or background. Urban space also proved a rich environment for anti-Semites and the growth of anti-Semitic networks and communities.

During the war, the Russian autocracy was seeking the impossible—to nationalize the empire at a time of social and economical instability. In other words, the government was trying “to turn all the residents of the Russian state into members of the Russian nation” or to remove (or at least to transform into a marginal social group) those who could not be transformed and thus inserted into the nationalized body of the empire. Geoffrey Hosking defined such a policy as “national imperialism.”¹¹⁴ Eric Lohr, writing about Russian policy towards enemy aliens, uses the term “war nationalism.” He states that the war was a “mobilizing event” and that “nationalism was mobilized” by the war because militaries imposed nationality on citizens.¹¹⁵ “War nationalism,” as described by Lohr, was in fact imperialism because it operated according to the idea of Russianness as “*rossiiskost'*,” which appealed to empire, and not “*russtkost'*,” which appealed to Russian ethnicity. “*Rossiiskost'*” was grounded in the ideas of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and the concept of a “one and indivisible” Russia. During the war, the Russian Empire tried to develop political nationality, which aimed to unite diverse populations, as a state, and create a sense of community.

During the Great War, xenophobia directed against external and internal enemies occurred in all belligerent states. Shortages, the different treatment of ethnic and religious groups, a lack of reliable information, and the rapid spread of rumors raised tensions to

¹¹⁴ Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 397.

¹¹⁵ Eric Lohr, "War Nationalism," in *Russia's Great War and Revolution, The Empire and Nationalism at War*, eds. Eric Lohr et al. (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2014), 93.

dangerous levels. The wartime campaign against “enemy aliens,” based on the Russian national program, worsened ethnic conflict and suspicion.¹¹⁶ Germans and Jews were the main internal “enemies” of the Russian Empire. Anti-Jewishness was a key element in a painful process of building a common Russian political identity. It was used in the multinational Empire as an instrument of “negative solidarity”: if you cannot say who you are, you can at least say who you are not. Thus, the Russian elite used anti-Jewish sentiment to unite otherwise diverse and discordant populations.

The anti-Semitism of the Russian Imperial Army and the military bureaucracy that governed the Pale devastated Jewish communities. Unfair accusations, deportations, and looting of Jewish property destroyed *shtetl* life in Galicia, Bukovyna, and Russia’s north-western provinces. Jewish life in Kyiv was similarly affected. This chapter will highlight how broad social attitudes towards Jews as an ethno-religious group shaped their everyday life and self-perception, while strengthening their sense of solidarity. I will describe how the militarization of everyday life and the increasing interaction between ethnic groups led to society’s further polarization and exacerbated pre-existing ethnic cleavages.

Rightists and anti-Semitism

The 1905 Revolution and the October Manifesto undermined Russian autocracy. The process of gradual homogenization of the multinational empire, started at the end of the nineteenth century, needed champions and slogans; the Rightist movement was a response to the social and political tumult unleashed by the 1905 Revolution. The social

¹¹⁶ Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 1–9.

foundation of the movement consisted of old-fashioned Slavophiles, high-ranking bureaucrats, nationalistic populists, police officers, peasants, town dwellers, and noblemen, all of whom were seeking the Tsar's favor. As Sergei Podbolotov states, they all were united by the idea "[of saving] autocracy as the Russian national foundation."¹¹⁷ Radical rightists could serve as allies of the regime; however, such a union was quite dangerous due to the extremism of rightist organizations and their relatively low level of social influence.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the very existence of such political parties was a sign of inevitable change because it indicated a population willing to criticize both the functioning and the functionaries of the state.¹¹⁹

The pogrom of 1905 (October 18-20) in Kyiv and the Beilis and Fastiv Affairs heightened tensions between Jews and Christians in Kyiv on the eve of the Great War.¹²⁰ During the October pogrom of 1905, more than 50 Jews were murdered, 300 seriously injured, and property losses were estimated as high as ₴40 million. Six years later, on March 20, 1911, the mutilated body of Andrii Iushchyns'kyi was discovered in a cave near the Zaitsev brick factory (Iona Zaitsev, the owner of the factory, was a Jew). The whole case was staged as a ritual murder: Mendel Beilis murdered a Gentile child and drained his blood for the manufacture of Passover matzo. The Beilis trial took place in Kyiv from September 25 to October 28, 1913. Although Mendel Beilis was acquitted by

¹¹⁷ Sergei Podbolotov, "Monarchists Against Their Monarch: The Rightists' Criticism of Tsar Nicholas II," *Russian History* 31, no. 1 (2004): 105–20, 105.

¹¹⁸ Aleksandr Tager, *The Decay of Czarism. The Beiliss trial: A Contribution to the History of the Political Reaction during the Last Years of Russian Czarism* (Philadelphia: The Jewish publication society of America, 1935), 147-148; David G. Rowley, "Imperial versus National Discourse: The Case of Russia," *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 1 (2000): 23–42, 26; Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905*, Cambridge Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet studies, vol. 95 (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹¹⁹ Podbolotov, "Monarchists Against Their Monarch," 112; Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 188-189.

¹²⁰ Hamm, *Kiev*, 191.

the court, the jury declared the murder to be ritualistic, committed by unknown men. When Georgii Dedushkin found the body of Iosif Pasikov, a 12-year old Jewish boy, on November 27, 1913, in Fastiv (Kyiv province), the radical Rightist groups were trying to develop a second Beilis Affair. The anti-Semitic Fastiv Affair was still ongoing as Russian trains sped westward towards the Central Powers.¹²¹ The affairs captivated the city's attention and became known far beyond the borders of the Russian Empire. Sholem Aleichem meticulously described the Beilis Trial and the shockwaves it created in the Jewish community in his novel, *The Bloody Hoax*.¹²² Although Aleichem's account is fictional, it reflected the popular moods of Jew and Gentile alike.

In the novel, two students who had just graduated from secondary school—a poor Jew (Hersh) and a wealthy Gentile (Grigorii)—decided to exchange identities for a year, in order to explore the prejudices and fears that they encountered while in their “new” identities. Hersh-Grigorii was arrested and accused of murdering a child in order to obtain Christian blood for Passover. The story, however, had a happy ending: Grigorii-Hersh saves his friend's life, proving that the accusation was a libel. The story described the difficulties associated with being Jewish. Aleichem highlighted that Judaism was not just a religion; it was also a nationality undergoing acculturation into Russian society, though such a process did not obviate anti-Semitic prejudice.¹²³

¹²¹ Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, 45-46; “Russia. Blood Libel.” In *American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 17, edited by Cyeus Adlee (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1915–1916), 154; “Fastovskoe delo,” *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 125 (8 May 1914): 3; *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 138 (21 May 1914): 5; “Obvinitel'nyi akt,” “Dopros Goncharuka,” *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 57 (26 February 1915): 4–5; 58 (27 February 1915): 4–5; “Prigovor po delu Goncharuka,” *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 59 (28 February 1915): 4; “Delo I. Goncharuka,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1476 (26 February 1915): 2.

¹²² Sholem Aleichem, *The Bloody Hoax*, Jewish literature and culture (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). Sholem Aleichem is the pen name of Solomon Naumovich Rabinovich. “Shalom Aleichem” is a Hebrew phrase, which literally means “peace be upon you.”

¹²³ Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 201-202.

Although religious prejudices continued to define anti-Jewish attitudes on the eve of war, Russian anti-Semitism acquired new features rooted in social and political modernization. Jews were seen by the state and most people as a religious group whose economic interests clashed with those of Christians. At the same time, the revolutionary radicalism of some Jewish youth, caused in part by their unequal legal status, pushed state officials to paint Jews as disloyal and threatening to the existing political order. As Robert Weinberg states, both variants of anti-Semitism intertwined and reinforced one another, becoming part of the Rightist movement's ideology, which was grounded in the ideas of Russianness and Christian Orthodoxy. The south-western region of the Russian Empire was the homeland of the Black Hundreds movement, which promoted the belief that Jews threatened Russia.¹²⁴ The anti-Semitic Kyiv Club of Russian Nationalists was also located in the city. The south-western provinces and Kyiv were multinational territories where national and religious conflicts, based on social, cultural, and political differences, had existed for centuries. Thus, the Rightists could easily use local national tension between Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, and Jews to represent themselves as the defenders of Russian national interests.¹²⁵

Modern anti-Semitism was both a part and a result of the process of the nationalization of the Russian Empire, in which the official ideology was based on the ideas of autocracy and Orthodoxy. It is not surprising that the political actions of groups in the midst of developing their own national identities were opposed by the state and its Myrmidons, the Black Hundreds. Jews often became incidental victims in such clashes.

¹²⁴ Robert Weinberg, *Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis*, Indiana-Michigan series in Russian and East European studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 7-8.

¹²⁵ Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, 218-219.

The Taras Shevchenko commemorative celebrations in 1914, dedicated to the anniversary of the birth or death of Taras Shevchenko, a famous Ukrainian poet and writer, demonstrated how rapidly Jews could become unwanted guests. The Shevchenko celebrations of February 25-26, 1914, “had a somewhat unexpected, but still unremarkable finale.”¹²⁶ The newspaper *Kiev* stated that “groups of Jewish and half-Jewish students and *kursistki* [female students] gathered in the street. Many of them had yellow-blue ribbons,” the colors of the Ukrainian national banner.¹²⁷ The vision of Jews wearing the Ukrainian national movement’s colours provoked an accusation of a Jewish-Ukrainian separatist alliance. The “Mazepist-Jewish outrages” resulted in a pogrom against the Jews. The so-called “Unionists” (*soiuzniki*, from the name of the radical right organization, the Union of the Russian People) launched attacks on Jews. The radical right press started a campaign against “Jewish traitors” and termed them “Mazepists.”¹²⁸ A correspondent of *Rassvet*, the Zionist newspaper, called these insinuations “misanthropic ravings.” However, the author of the article about the Kyivan pogrom insisted that “still there is a grain of truth. The self-determination of small nations must be close to the heart of every oppressed nation. And when the Ukrainians cannot freely commemorate their “*bat’ko Taras*”, we, the Jews, can sincerely sympathize with their grief, forgetting that the haidamaks [participants of popular uprisings in Right-Bank Ukraine in the 18th century] who were praised by him [Shevchenko] redden their hands with the blood of our people.”¹²⁹ The correspondent was complaining that Ukrainians did

¹²⁶ “Shevchenkivskii den’,” *Poslednie novosti*, 2314 (25 February 1914): 3.

¹²⁷ “Mazepinsko-evreiskie bezobraziia,” *Kiev*, 53 (26 February 1914): 2.

¹²⁸ The participants of the Ukrainian national movement were derogatorily referred to by the Russian authorities as *Mazepintsy* (Mazepists; derived from the last name of the Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who, according to the Russian historical tradition, sided with King Charles XII of Sweden and betrayed the Russian Emperor Peter the Great). Mazepa’s name was synonymous with treason.

¹²⁹ “Smazochnoe maslo,” *Rassvet* n. 10 (March 7, 1914), 5.

not show solidarity with Jews, who were targeted by the Rightists and beaten during the Ukrainian celebration.¹³⁰ Ultimately, police arrested 104 people, mostly Ukrainians, for organizing an illegal political gathering.¹³¹

The pogrom was the work of a group of “unionists” (at the beginning there were around 20 people; somewhat later the crowd grew to 200), headed by Vladimir Golubev, the head of the patriotic youth society the Double-Headed Eagle [*Dvuglavyi Orel*]. On the evening of February 26, they smashed the windows of Jewish stores (including those of Dudnik, Ziberman, Rashkin, Bleish, Mitnitskii, etc.) on Oleksandrivs’ka Street in Podil. Shouting “Down with Shevchenko!” and “Beat the Jews!”, the pogromists approached Ihor Lane, where the police finally dispersed the crowd. Witness reaction wavered between direct participation in the pogrom and silent observation. During the attack, eight Jewish stores were damaged and one Jew was injured. Three pogromists were arrested; Golubev and the rest of his gang, however, escaped.¹³²

Vladimir Zavitnevich, a professor at the Kyiv Theological Academy, in a letter to Colonel Anatolii Zavitnevich, stated that a ban on the celebration had precipitated the unrest; the radical youth came out in protest. The police and Cossacks, in turn, were too zealous to disperse the crowd, whose fight with the *Soiuzniki* further worsened the situation. According to Zavitnevich, the commemoration had a special symbolic meaning only for Ukrainians.¹³³ After the ban, however, “Poles, Jews, Caucasians, and social-democrats—all those elements against whom state power could be enacted—stepped

¹³⁰ Ibid; Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-bank Ukraine and the invention of a Russian nation* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 269–70.

¹³¹ “Otgoloski shevchenkovskogo iubileia,” *Poslednie novosti*, 2317 (February 28, 1914), 3.

¹³² “V Kieve,” *Rassvet* n. 10 (March 7, 1914), 33; TsDIAKU, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 23, ark. 133, 136, 150; “Soiuznicheskie pokhozheniia na Podole,” *Poslednie novosti*, 2316 (February 27, 1914), 3; “K pokhozheniiu soiuznikov,” *Poslednie novosti*, 2317 (February 28, 1914), 3.

¹³³ Zavitnevich used the word “*khokhly*.”

forward in support.”¹³⁴ The “unionists” were irritated by the support for the Ukrainian nationalists expressed by Kyivan Jews.¹³⁵

In the context of the Russian Empire, it was not surprising that Jews and Ukrainians expressed mutual support for each other’s nationalist aspirations. Joshua Karlip states that Jews and Ukrainians had some similarities. Their national movements, for example, “developed and thrived despite, and in good measure because of, increasing tsarist oppression”; the tsarist government attempted to Russify both nations, who spoke languages long disparaged by the Russian elite as “jargon.”¹³⁶ However, compared to Ukrainians, Jews were a highly urbanized social group with economic advantages who played a very important role in the empire’s financial life. At the same time, they were politically powerless. At the end of the nineteenth century, as Eli Lederhendler states, Russian Jewish political activists envisioned two possible solutions to the Russian Jewry’s powerlessness: a social revolution as the “reordering [of] the political environment to seize power ‘for the people’ (through an electoral and parliamentary system) or national self-determination, as the “creation of an environment in which Jews might constitute the majority and, eventually, the state itself.”¹³⁷ Both solutions meant that Russian Jews had to be “refashioned,” becoming a “secular, socialist, and autonomist nation.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ TsDIAKU, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 432, ark. 40–42.

¹³⁵ “Pokhod pravyykh,” *Poslednie novosti*, 2317 (February 28, 1914), 3; TsDIAKU, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 200, ark. 4.

¹³⁶ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 16.

¹³⁷ Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics: Political Tradition and Political Reconstruction in the Jewish Community of Tsarist Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 155. This is known as autonomism; the state would sanction a Jewish semi-sovereign body for internal jurisdiction and external representation.

¹³⁸ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 24.

Right of Residence in Kyiv

After the enactment of a quasi-constitutional monarchy in 1905, Jews remained second-class citizens. The Pale of Settlement remained and the expulsion of Jews from Kyiv was a regular urban phenomenon. Almost daily, bulletins announced the corralling of Jews who did not have the legal right to reside in the city. In 1913, the local government acknowledged that nighttime identification checks in private dwellings were poor policy. However, all Jews, regardless of class, lived under constant threat of police investigation.¹³⁹ A particularly aggressive campaign of expulsions began in spring 1914 because local authorities wanted to reduce the number of Jewish artisans in the city in order to make commercial life easier for Gentiles. Right before the Great War, Jewish artisans who legitimately lived in Kyiv but who had even the slightest problem with their documents faced expulsion.¹⁴⁰ Most of Kyiv's Jews were extremely poor and could not afford to return to their *shtetls*, where they would live an even more miserable life. Nonetheless, in July 1914, around 6,000 Jewish artisans and their families, approximately 30,000 people, were expelled from Kyiv.¹⁴¹ Their only hope was for legal or financial help from local Jewish charitable institutions.

The expulsions and the threat of more expulsions created a very tense situation in Kyiv. At the beginning of July 1914, Sonia Rozen, in a letter addressed to her friend in Paris, complained:

Dear Zelik, You cannot even imagine how happy should be the Jew who has left Russia. Jews were always happy in Russia and in Kyiv but what is

¹³⁹ "Pravovoe polozhenie v 1913 godu," *Rassvet*, 2 (12 January 1914), 26.

¹⁴⁰ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 667, spr. 331, ark. 6, 12-13, 17, 20.

¹⁴¹ "K vyseleniiu remeslennikov," "Vechnye stranniki," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1238 (1 July 1914): 3; "Pravovoe polozhenie," *Rassvet*, 11 (14 March 1914), 32; "Kievskie vyselenia," *Rassvet*, 28 (11 July 1914), 24, 32; "Kievskie remeslenniki," *Rassvet*, 29 (18 July 1914), 24; "Kievskie napasti," *Novyi Voskhod*, 26 (3 July 1914), 1-4.

going on here now is worse than anyone could imagine. You should be happy that you are not experiencing these insults and humiliations, which are now a part of life... We have to believe in ourselves, in our skills, and abilities. I think, ultimately, we will have to flee as the atmosphere is too stifling.¹⁴²

Interestingly, Sonia refers to the “happy life” in Kyiv and Russia. It should be recalled that the most recent Kyvian Jewish pogrom was just several months earlier (Shevchenko commemorations) and the terrible pogrom of late-1905 happened less than ten years ago. It is possible that the intervening years of peace had coloured Sonia’s memories. Jewish life in Kyiv and in Russia generally consisted of both constant persecutions and hostility, and periods of peaceful coexistence with their Gentile neighbours. As Natan Meir noticed, we also cannot discount the fact that Jews felt at home in Kyiv and Russia.¹⁴³

This instability and constant fear of expulsion created fertile terrain for rumors. One such rumor was that Aleksei Derevitskii, the superintendent of Kyiv’s school district [*Kievskii uchebnyi okrug*], had decided that Jewish parents whose children were in school would no longer be given residency rights in Kyiv.¹⁴⁴ This decision was understood as just another restriction on the ability of Jewish students to enter gymnasiums. Like most rumors, however, this one had a grain of truth; the superintendent had indeed stopped accepting students whose parents did not have the legal right to be in Kyiv.¹⁴⁵

The loss of a study permit, which was connected to one’s right to settle in Kyiv, often resulted in poverty and bankruptcy. In 1914, Derevitskii issued a decree restricting

¹⁴² TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 432, ark. 291.

¹⁴³ Natan M. Meir, "Jews, Ukrainians, and Russians in Kiev: Intergroup Relations in Late Imperial Associational Life," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 03 (2006): 475–501, 476.

¹⁴⁴ If the underage child from Jewish family got into school, the parents received residency permit and could live together in the city.

¹⁴⁵ “V kantseliarii popechitelia okruga,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1238 (1 July 1914): 3; “Kievskie pis’ma,” *Rassvet*, 16 (18 April 1914), 34.

the right to sit exams to those children whose parents had the right to reside in Kyiv and only if that right was not connected to their child's upbringing. In September 1914, 1,235 families had the right to live in Kyiv only because they had children in school.¹⁴⁶ When Derevitskii issued his controversial decree, those families had to leave the city. Fortunately, this order was canceled in March 1915 by a special decree of the Minister of Education, P. N. Ignat'ev.¹⁴⁷

In spring 1914, three girls' schools in Kyiv (Liakhareva, Khitrovo, and Poliakova), which accepted Jewish and non-Jewish students, were closed. More than 500 Jewish families were expelled. Those with means went to other cities in the Russian Empire, particularly Warsaw.¹⁴⁸ The poorest tried to settle in Slobodka, a de-facto Kyiv suburb on the left bank of the Dnieper, though a de-jure part of Chernihiv province and thus outside of Kyiv proper. However, until 1914, Slobodka was overpopulated and was known for its extremely poor Jewish population that "was suffocating in the damp hovels of this new ghetto" and was a constant target of Kyiv police on the city's labor market [*rabochaia birzha*].¹⁴⁹

Jews also needed special permission from the governor to rent summer cottages in the suburbs, such as Boiarka, Pushcha Vodytsia, or Sviatoshyno. Jews whose residence rights were not restricted due to social status, wealth, or education, did not need permission; those who did receive special permission, however, could only stay in the

¹⁴⁶ "Zhreb'evka v srednie uchebnye zavedeniia," *Rassvet*, 34 (22 August 1914): 20–21; "Tsirkuliar g. Derevitskogo," "Prava uchashchikhsia v uchilische Brodskogo," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 176 (29 June 1914): 3; "Po povodu tsirkuliara Derevitskogo," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 177 (30 June 1914): 3; "O tsirkuliare Derevitskogo," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 179 (2 July 1914): 5; "K evreiskomu pravozhitel'stvu," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 250 (11 September 1914): 2.

¹⁴⁷ "Rasporiazhenie gr. P. N. Ignat'eva," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 67 (8 March 1915): 3; "Uchebnyi okrug i pravozhitel'stvo evreev," *Iuzhnaia kopeika*, 1189 (11 March 1915): 4.

¹⁴⁸ "Zakon i praktika," *Novyi Voskhod*, 18 (8 May 1914), 24.

¹⁴⁹ "Kievskie pis'ma," *Rassvet*, 20 (16 May 1914),

above-mentioned suburbs until September 1. However, in April 1914, the governor of Kyiv province supported the petition of V. Ia. Demchenko, the Head of the Kyiv county administration, requesting permission for Jews to spend summers in Boiarka.¹⁵⁰ All other cottage villages in Kyiv province were only open to those Jews who had a universal residence right.¹⁵¹ Obviously, these settlements were especially popular during the war, as people could not go abroad and many still wanted to leave the city.¹⁵²

On account of their recently demonstrated patriotism, the governor of Kyiv decided to suspend the expulsion of Jews from the city and to not further exacerbate the generally difficult living conditions of Jews.¹⁵³ Yet, on August 1, Kyiv police arrested eight Jews in Podil (Verkhni Val) who did not have permission to live in the city.¹⁵⁴ At the end of August, Kyiv's governor ordered the expulsions to stop because the Minister of the Interior had stipulated that "the families of conscripted Jews can stay where they live until the end of the war."¹⁵⁵ For example, on September 2, 1914, the petition of Pesia Dubinskaia, who applied to stay in Kyiv and continue her mobilized husband's business, was granted.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Abram Bukhbinder, a Jew from Bila Tserkva (a town in Kyiv province), in a letter from December 14, 1914, written to Iakov Tsederbaum, who lived in Odesa, noted, "As for the residence right in Kiev, the situation is not better than it was earlier, that is, if you do not pay a policeman, [they will] expel you the next day. I know you, and I doubt that you will be able to settle there. The damned Jewish question

¹⁵⁰ "Evrei na dachakh," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 93 (3 April 1914): 3.

¹⁵¹ "Evrei i dachnyi vopros," *Iuzhnaia kopeika*, 1514 (8 April 1915): 4.

¹⁵² "K prozhivaniiu evreev na dachakh," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 87 (23 March 1915): 3.

¹⁵³ "Vyseleniia," *Rassvet*, 31 (1 August 1914), 24.

¹⁵⁴ "Vyseleniia i repressii," *Rassvet*, 33 (15 August 1914), 28.

¹⁵⁵ "Pravovoe polozhenie," *Rassvet*, 34 (22 August 1914), 19-20; "K prozhivaniiu evreev v Kieve," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 222 (14 August 1914): 2; "Iz prikaza po politsii," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1282 (14 August 1914): 2.

¹⁵⁶ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 667, spr. 1, ark. 281; "Priostanovlenie vyseleniia evreev," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 201 (24 July 1914): 2.

[*prokliatyi evreiskii vopros*], I wish it was resolved finally.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, bribery was often the only guaranteed way to stay in the city, and ordinary Jews understood that only the attainment of equal legal rights—the right of residence, choice of occupation, access to education—could bring about lasting change.

Life in Kyiv was harsh, especially for poor Jews lacking residence permits who struggled to earn a living. An unknown woman in an undated letter to Samuil Gorzhenkel’, a recent immigrant to the United States who lived in Kansas City, complained about Kyiv’s high unemployment. She identified herself as “rightless” and living in Kyiv illegally; based on the letter, she had this identity imposed on her by authorities. Nonetheless, the word “rightless” signified and embodied the general plight of Jews in the Russian Empire and was a legible shorthand between the correspondents. She wrote, “...your questions about the liberation movement in Russia sound to me like bitter humour. This is the third night that I have nowhere to sleep as a person without rights [*kak bezpravnaia*]. In general, we cannot even talk about the liberation movement, when the war is at its height. We do not know how and when it will end. This is a hard time, when the rich have become poor, and the poor—their situation cannot get worse.”¹⁵⁸ Daily hardships inevitably influenced local Jewish political activity. Kyiv’s population was making every effort to survive wartime economic dislocations.

On August 15, 1915, the Ministry of the Interior issued an order allowing Jews to live in urban areas outside the Pale of Settlement, except for Moscow, Petrograd, and localities administered by the Ministry of the Imperial Court and the military. The expansion of the Pale of Settlement in August 1915 was the only positive consequence of

¹⁵⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 531, ark. 7.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., spr. 430, ark. 301.

mass Jewish deportations. However, such an “improvement” was meaningless given the circumstances that I discuss in the next chapter.¹⁵⁹ The government conceived the Pale’s expansion in connection with the overpopulation of the provinces that were designated for the resettlement of the Jewish refugees (Chernihiv, Poltava, Kyiv, Katerynoslav, Kherson, Mogilev, Vitebsk, Taurida provinces; later also Voronezh, Penza, and Tambov provinces). The other reason for the expansion was a labour shortage.¹⁶⁰ Thus, this order just legally formalized the pre-existing situation. *Kievslaia Mysl’* stressed that this measure was provisional, “an accidental circular,” and that “there is no possibility to fully abolish the infamous Pale. It will continue to divide the population between ‘us’ and ‘strangers’.”¹⁶¹ Even Rightists recognized that expansion of the Pale was, in fact, a step to restrict the corruption of local administrators who took bribes from Jews.¹⁶²

Jews were generally ambivalent about the Pale’s expansion. An anonymous correspondent, who signed a letter to Naftali Fridman, a State Duma deputy, as “a Jew” [*Evrei*], argued:

Recently, the newspapers talk a lot about extending the Pale of Settlement, as if it has already been approved by the “powers” [government]. The bureaucracy, writhing in convulsions of fear, and the “powers” have decided to lift the “fatal shackles” of the secular Jewish slavery, which has lasted for centuries. In fact, [they] have only slightly opened [the shackles], so when the British are able to tame the terrible German, [you] will again wall up the crypt of the medieval “pale” with your favorite circulars and explanations. And this time even stronger. If the Jews do not turn away with a sense of disgust from this forced handout of the terrified bureaucracy, they will be covered with shame like a slave people

¹⁵⁹ G. B. Sliozberg, *Dela Minuvshikh Dnei: Zapiski Russkago Evreia* (Parizh: Izd. Komiteta po chestvovaniu 70-ti lienego iubileia G.B. Sliozberga, 1933), 336–42; E. Valeitok, *K rassshireniiu cherty osedlosti* (Kiev, 1915).

¹⁶⁰ “Cherta evreiskoi osedlosti,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 222 (12 August 1915): 1; TsDIAK, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 59, ark. 207, 249, 281–283.

¹⁶¹ “Otmenu cherty,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 235 (25 August 1915): 1; “Cherta osedlosti,” *Kiev*, 570 (11 August 1915): 1; “Cherta osedlosti,” *Kiev*, 574 (15 August 1915): 1; “Pravozhitel’stva evreev v Kieve,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1665 (7 September 1915): 1; 1668 (10 September 1915): 1, 2; 1670 (12 September 1915): 1.

¹⁶² “Cherta osedlosti,” *Kiev*, 570 (11 August 1915): 1.

[*kholuiskii narod*]. We, the Jews, need to be free among the free Russian people. Let them give full freedom to the Russian people to start, and the Russian people will introduce us [the Jews] to their family. This slightly opened Pale and [abolishment] of some restrictions is a bribe (in the Russian tradition) to the destitute Jewish people in order to keep their positions in the forthcoming struggle for freedom. In 1905, [they] organized pogroms for us, and now [they] have decided to bribe us. The Jews have suffered for millennia, and by suffering, they forged freedom for other nations. So is it worth it now to grasp at these small handouts of miserable people, who are trying to hold [their] power...? Let history, let the fateful course of inevitable events [*rokovoe techenie neizbeznykh sobytii*], let the supreme court of justice decide the fate of the long-suffering tribe.¹⁶³

Obviously, the author of the letter was well-educated and integrated into Russian culture, though he clearly thought of the Jewish people as a nation separate from Russia and Russians. At the same time, he did not blame Russian civilians for Jewish misfortunes because, in his opinion, the government and bureaucracy were the ones responsible for Jewish restrictions. The expansion of the Pale was a calculated *legerdemain*, which Jews should wholeheartedly reject. Only the dissolution of the monarchy and autocracy, and the liberation of the Russian people would bring freedom for Jews in a new and democratic Russia. The events that followed proved this point of view.

On August 22, 1915, General Alexei Mavrin, Chief Quartermaster for the South-Western front, issued an order, according to which the city was to be cleansed of its “unwanted” population. This included refugees and re-located institutions from the Empire’s occupied western provinces.¹⁶⁴ The city administration decided that Jews who

¹⁶³ TsDIAK, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 59, ark. 168-168zv.

¹⁶⁴ “Ob”iavlenie glavnogo nachal’nika snabzhenii armii Iugo-Zapadnogo fronta,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 242 (1 September 1915): 1

had settled in Kyiv before September 10, 1915 would be allowed to stay.¹⁶⁵ On September 21, Kyiv military authorities adopted a new resolution that fully prohibited all categories of Jews from settling in the city.¹⁶⁶ Another question was whether they could reside in city districts other than Plos'kyi and Lybids'kyi. Hundreds and thousands of Jews flooded city police departments, although not all of them could establish when they had arrived in Kyiv.¹⁶⁷

Slobodka on the left bank of the Dnieper was a part of Chernihiv province, but also a Kyivan suburb, a shanty-town, and a last hope for many Jews to live “almost in Kyiv.” After 1914, many Jewish refugees from the front zone found temporary asylum there. However, the governor of Chernihiv ordered refugees to leave his province in August 1915. Even local Jews had to leave Peredmostova and Nikol's'ka Slobodka, and they could not live closer than 30 *verst*, roughly 32 kilometers, from Kyiv. Moreover, the police confiscated their passports and gave them transfer documents [*propusknye svidel'stva*] that equated them with refugees.¹⁶⁸ Only employed Jews who were not receiving subsidies from charitable institutions and whose children were in school could stay. At the beginning of September 1915, the local police in Slobodka received an order to exorcize Jewish expellees from Kyiv.¹⁶⁹ Thus, the local civil and military administration filtered the Jewish population, dividing it according to the categories of wanted/unwanted, useful/burdensome, and defining who was and who was not a worthy

¹⁶⁵ “O prave zhitel'stva evreev v Kieve,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 251 (10 September 1915): 1; 252 (11 September 1915): 2; “Pravo zhitel'stva evreev v Kieve,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1668 (10 September 1915): 1.

¹⁶⁶ “Prikaz,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 265 (24 September 1915): 2; “Zakrytie v"ezda evreev v Kiev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 266 (25 September 1915): 2.

¹⁶⁷ “K pravu zhitel'stva evreev v Kieve,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 253 (12 September 1915): 1; “K rassshirenniu cherty osedlosti,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 254 (13 September 1915): 3; “Zaiavka evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 255 (15 September 1915): 1; “K pravu zhitel'stva evreev v Kieve,” *Kiev*, 649 (29 October 1915): 4.

¹⁶⁸ “Vyselenie evreev so Slobodki,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1635 (8 August 1915): 4.

¹⁶⁹ “Vospreschenie zhitel'stva v Slobodke,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1666 (8 September 1915): 4.

member of the urban community. The orders were executed and the “unwanted” Jewish refugees left the city; however, this did not mean that refugees stopped arriving in Kyiv.

Instead of relieving administrative burdens and reducing social tension caused by a competitive labour market, these new rules complicated Kyiv’s economic situation and posed obstacles to the efficient functioning of the state. For example, Ioffe, a merchant of the first guild from Pskov, did not receive permission to visit Kyiv and only his petition presented to Kyiv’s city government solved the problem. Vladimir Iakobson, a former deputy of the First State Duma who arrived on official business related to railroads, also did not receive permission from the city police to stay in Kyiv and was forced to petition the commander of the Kyiv Military District, adjutant-general Vladimir Troitskii, who allowed Iakobson to stay in the city for three days.¹⁷⁰ At the end of September, Fedor Burchak, the city’s deputy mayor, supported the petition of the Jewish public representatives to the headquarters of the South-West Front to abolish the recent resolution about Jewish residence. Although he admitted that it was harmful to the city’s economy, the resolution was not abolished until March 1917.¹⁷¹

Education and Numerus Clausus

A university degree afforded ambitious Jews and their families unrestricted residence and occupation rights. Thus, as Benjamin Nathans states, it defined Jews’ geographic and social mobility.¹⁷² Due to the growing number of university-educated

¹⁷⁰ “K v”ezdu evreev v Kiev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 269 (28 September 1915): 2; “K voprosu o v”ezde v Kiev evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 268 (26 September 1915): 2.

¹⁷¹ “K pravu zhitel’stva evreev v Kieve,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 271 (30 September 1915): 1-2; “Pravo zhitel’stva evreev,” *Kiev*, 774 (5 March 1916): 4.

¹⁷² Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 268. TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 23, ark. 94, 95, 98.

Jews, the Russian government started limiting Jewish enrollment in higher education. In 1887, the Council of Ministers established a *numerus clausus* for the admission of Jewish males to all institutions of higher and secondary education run by the Ministry of Education (the same regulation was introduced for female students in the 1890s).¹⁷³ The quotas were as follows: 10% for institutions within the Pale (and for Kyiv), 5% outside the Pale, and 3% in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In private commercial and technical high schools, the quotas were more relaxed. Moreover, in order to diminish the Jewish presence in universities, in May 1913, the Ministry of Education introduced a new rule, according to which applicants would be admitted not on merit but by chance (*zhreb'evka*).¹⁷⁴ Jewish candidates had to pass rigorous entrance exams to even be entered into the lottery admissions system.

“Jewishness” [*evreiskost*] was also an obstacle to receiving teaching positions in higher education. In February 1914, Ruvim Shneider, a graduate of the Kyiv Polytechnical Institute, complained in a letter that “associate professors whom I know have tried to nominate [me] as a candidate for a certain position in the institute, even insisted that I could hold an office, but the whole thing was a total fiasco. Just because of ‘Jewishness.’ For a minute this fact terribly spoiled my mood. But now I am used to living with it. I passed the exam, and now I work in the sub-department, honing my expertise.”¹⁷⁵ Of course, such restrictions forced some students to convert to Christianity; those who had wealthy parents went abroad to receive degrees in Central or Western European universities. As a result, at the beginning of the twentieth century more Russian

¹⁷³ Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 266-267.

¹⁷⁴ Pozner, S. V., *Evrei v obshchei shkole: K istorii zakonodatel'stva i pravitel'stvennoi politiki v oblasti evreiskago voprosa* (S.-Peterburg: Razum, 1914), 99–100.

¹⁷⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 23, ark. 94.

Jews studied abroad than in the Russian Empire; at a time when only 5,000 (5%) non-Jewish Russian students studied abroad, roughly 7,500 Jewish students studied in Western Europe and around 5,000 in Russia.¹⁷⁶ However, even a degree from a Western European university did not guarantee a residence right in Kyiv. In April 1914, Kyiv province administrators claimed that Jews who received medical degrees abroad and worked in Kyiv's hospitals as paramedics [*fel'dsher*] did not have the right to reside in the city and had to leave.¹⁷⁷

In addition to being humiliating, the quotas also created the image of the “smart Jew,” who by pursuing medical, technical, or juridical careers, took positions that were “the exclusive right” of Christians. These professions also allegedly offered Jews new opportunities to exploit Christians. Stereotyping Jews as extremely smart and cunning was racially prejudicial, defining Jews as inherently intellectually different.¹⁷⁸

The education system was disrupted by the war. In 1915, many schools and universities were forced to relocate eastward in the face of the advancing enemy. In practice, it meant that students and often their parents also had to move. Although most educational institutions resumed operations between September and December 1915, their normal rhythms were broken. The students of the Faculty of Medicine of Warsaw University, for example, were moved to universities in Kyiv, Novorossiisk, Iur'ev, Kazan and Saratov (including Jewish students, who were allowed to stay in those cities).¹⁷⁹ Some schools split. In September 1915, the Sixth Kyivan gymnasium reopened both in Kyiv and in Voronezh, where it had been evacuated earlier in the year; the *realschule*

¹⁷⁶ Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 280.

¹⁷⁷ “Raz'iasnenie o pravakh evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 114 (26 April 1914): 5.

¹⁷⁸ Eli Weinerman, “Racism, racial prejudice and Jews in late imperial Russia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no. 3 (1994): 442–95.

¹⁷⁹ “K perevodu varshavskikh studentov v Kiev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 21 (21 January 1915): 5.

[*Real'noe uchilische*] resumed its activity in Kyiv and Beliaev in the Don Host Oblast.¹⁸⁰

Those students who could not follow their schools to these new locations had to find spots in institutions that had remained in Kyiv. This was highly unlikely, especially for Jews, due to residence restrictions.

The war also caught many subjects of the Russian Empire abroad, often as tourists, enjoying themselves at resorts, or as students in German or Austrian universities who had not come home for the summer. Officials of all belligerent states introduced discriminatory policies against the children of enemy aliens. On August 30, 1914, the Prussian Minister of Education and Church Affairs ordered the removal of enemy nationals from all educational establishments.¹⁸¹ At least six Jewish students, who were from Kyiv and studied in occupied Liège, were confined in Münster.¹⁸² As subjects of a hostile state, students found themselves desperately trying to return home via neutral states (Sweden, Denmark, and Finland). Jewish students who returned to Russia or who were at home on vacation still had to solve a problem they had previously escaped—how to enrol at a Russian university, made difficult by *numerus clausus* and restricted residence rights.¹⁸³

Due to the war, the Ministry of Education introduced minor amendments to the “quota legislation”: this norm, however, was not applied to the children of soldiers who

¹⁸⁰ “Begletsy,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1668 (10 September 1915): 1; “V uchebnykh zavedeniakh,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1668 (10 September 1915): 2; “Ekzameny na Kievskikh vysshikh zhenskikh kursakh v Saratove,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 103 (13 April 1916): 2; “Zaniatiia v uchebnykh zavedeniakh,” *Poslednie novosti*, 2503 (1 August 1914): 3.

¹⁸¹ Stefan Goebel, “Schools,” in *Capital Cities at War: A Cultural History: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, eds. J. M. Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 206–207.

¹⁸² “K sud'be l'ezhskikh studentov,” *Rassvet*, 44 (31 October 1914): 17–18.

¹⁸³ “Priiom proshenii o prieme doktorov meditsyny zagranichnykh universitetov,” *Kievlianin*, 198 (20 July 1914): 4; “O dopuschenii k ekzamenam studentov zagranichnykh universitetov,” *Novyi voskhod*, 38 (September 1914): 25–26; “Kievliane za granitsej,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 212 (4 August 1914): 2.

had received military awards, were wounded, or died in combat.¹⁸⁴ For instance, Leia Zel'bershmidt, who lived in Kyiv, was trying to arrange acceptance of her son Zhorzh, who was nine years old, to the Fourth Kyiv Gymnasium. In order to escape the quota, she acquired documents from a Kyivan rabbi certifying that Zhorzh was the nephew of Iakov Zel'bershmidt, who was also his guardian and was called-up. Thus, Zhorzh was entitled to study in Kyiv. However, Leia also bribed a worker at the gymnasium and was caught by police.¹⁸⁵ The legislative amendments that allowed Jews to study in Kyiv were so burdensome that few students benefitted from this very minor concession.

The students returning from abroad desperately sought places at Russian universities. In August 1914, Kyiv University had 4,875 students, which included 396 Jews or 8.12% of the student body. This meant that the university could accept only 91 Jewish students of the 639 who applied and of the 452 who qualified for the lottery.¹⁸⁶ Those who were not accepted had to wait and apply the next year. In August 1914, a group of Jewish students, who had studied in Germany before the war appealed to the president of Kyiv University for permission to participate in the August 25 lottery. Another delegation of students from Kyiv appealed to the Ministries of Education, and Trade and Industry for transfer to Russian universities.¹⁸⁷ The Ministry of Trade and Industry sent 28 student petitions, who studied abroad before the war, to the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. The Ministry explained that students in their final year could finish their studies notwithstanding their religious affiliation. At the same time, local Jews who

¹⁸⁴ "Novye pravila o zhereb'evke," *Novyi voskhod*, 14 (April 10, 1915): 4–5; "Po uchebnym zavedeniim," "O poriadke priioma evreev v uchebnye zavedeniia," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1511 (5 April 1915): 2; "Pravila o poriadke privlecheniia na voennuiu sluzhbu studentov," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 308 (8 November 1914): 2.

¹⁸⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 613, ark. 142–144.

¹⁸⁶ "Zhereb'evka v universitete," *Poslednie novosti*, 2553 (26 August 1914): 3.

¹⁸⁷ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 271, ark. 114; "Uchebnaia zhizn'," *Novyi voskhod*, 36 (11 September 1914): 28–29.

wanted to study at institutions of higher learning had to deal with the quota. For example, the Kyiv Commercial Institute accepted only eight Jewish students in the 1914-1915 academic year.¹⁸⁸ The chancellor of Kyiv University requested documents to prove that these student had in fact been released from conscription as students of foreign universities. Technically, this was no longer their status.¹⁸⁹ On September 1, 1914, the Council of Ministers issued special temporary explanations about military duty: students of foreign universities, who were subjects of the Russian Empire and were liable to military conscription, would not be released from military service. Only students in their final year of studies were exempt.¹⁹⁰

Service evasion was a common phenomenon in all belligerent states and people from all national groups tried to dodge army service. Schools and universities were used as safe havens for those who did not want to join the army. In March 1916, the G. I. Verevskii Gymnasium, a private all-boys school, found itself at the center of a scandal over service evasion by its students. An investigation revealed that the advanced classes were overcrowded with young people who were avoiding conscription and who bribed the gymnasium director. The school even ordered that walls between rooms be removed to accommodate more students. Tuition at the gymnasium was very high and not fixed, permitting bribery. As a result of the investigation, all of the students who were accepted to the gymnasium in 1914–1915 lost their service deferral and were conscripted.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ “Priem evreev v kommercheskii institut,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 26 (26 January 1915): 2; “V Kommercheskom institute. Priiom evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 52 (21 February 1915): 3.

¹⁸⁹ “Voina i zagranichnye studenty,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 222 (14 August 1914): 2; “V universitete. K priiomu evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 231 (23 August 1914): 2.

¹⁹⁰ “Uchebnaia zhizn',” *Novyi voskhod*, 36 (11 September 1914): 28–29; “Voina i zagranichnye student,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 222 (14 August 1914): 2.

¹⁹¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 612, ark. 442, 444; spr. 535, ark. 606, 610–611; “Zloupotreblenia v gimnazii G. I. Verevskogo,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1892 (3 March 1916): 2; *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1893 (4 March 1916): 2; *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1964 (10 May 1916): 2; see also TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3686, ark. 6.

Vladimir Rebizov, a former student at Verevskii Gymnasium, was a *praporshchik* [a junior officer rank] in the 243th Infantry Cholm Regiment. Rebizov mentioned in the letter that he was aware of the Verevskii affair, because he read *Russkoe Slovo* [Russian Word], which was the cheapest newspaper in the Russian Empire, known for its right-leaning opinions. The newspaper was distributed freely among the soldiers because it maintained the “patriotic” spirit of the army, while spreading anti-Semitism at the front. According to the letter, the whole affair was organized by Jews (the author used the pejorative “*zhidami*”—the plural of Yid or kike): “...their fraud is now known. Possibly, it was unsuccessful, but they made big money on this. It's what they deserve, and I am very happy. They must pay the penalty for their deeds. They did not want to give certificates to the poor, and God punished them for this. However, I do not enjoy the fact that this happened when I was absent. I would have told them [police] even more about the ‘*zhidy*’.”¹⁹² Only the Rightist newspapers made an effort to describe the affair as “Jewish.” The newspaper *Kiev* mentioned that “Verevskii’s origin has something Semitic about it” [*proiskhozhdenie g. Verevskogo otdaet chem-to semicheskim*] and that he used Jewish agents to find “clients.” However, the newspaper did not unambiguously declare that the affair was organized by Jews and for Jews.¹⁹³ Rightist anti-Semitic propaganda at the front pushed soldiers and officers to see intrigue, protest, and infighting among Gentiles as part of a wider Jewish conspiracy.

Although the war necessitated some changes to Russian legislation concerning Jewish admission to schools, quotas remained and were not canceled until March 1917. Many Jewish students were conscripted during the first wave of mobilization in July

¹⁹² TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 612, ark. 442, 444.

¹⁹³ “‘Blagotvoritel’noe’ uchebnoe zavedenie,” *Kiev*, 776 (7 March 1916): 2.

1914; however, some students could avoid conscription due to their status. Perhaps the only “victors” were school administrators who sold spots to the desperate. However, events around school admissions could easily be turned against Jews, who were often accused of profiteering dodgers using the war for personal enrichment.

Jews, Mobilization and the Army

Interactions between soldiers and civilians made the war all the more real and dangerous for urbanites. Not surprisingly, some people tried to avoid conscription, and being a university student was one possible way to avoid service. In 1914, Evhenii Bershenko, a young man from Elizavethrad, enrolled at the Kyiv Commercial Institute. His friend Galina (Ginda) Ul'man, who was the daughter of Meer Ul'man, a Jew and a *meschanin* [town dweller] from Kobeliaky in Poltava province, wrote:

You needed this matriculation, because [military] service is death for a man. I wish you a better destiny, where you will work, and you will become a person [*chelovekom*]. In a big city you will see the horrors of war. So many people dead, and the injured—they are not long for this world. What awaits them in the future? Why are they killing each other? They are worse than animals. Still, they will be friends afterwards. Russia will remember her hastiness. It is not possible to restore the losses in a couple of years. Hardships are knocking on our doors. These are the fruits of war. Horror.¹⁹⁴

The idea that Jews actively avoided mobilization was at the top of the list of accusations against them. Jews did indeed try to avoid military service; they were pariahs in the Russian Army. In fact, one of the main motives for the mass Jewish migration of

¹⁹⁴ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 432, ark. 424, 426-427.

the proceeding 20 years was to avoid conscription.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, during the Great War, around 500,000 Jews, roughly 10% of the entire Jewish population, served in the Russian Army. Although Christians also dodged military service and state officials were aware that they used the same methods as Jews, letters denouncing Jews were full of primordial malice stressing their treachery and guile.¹⁹⁶ The accusations against Motl Yurovskii, who lived on the Brest-Litovsk Highway, in the Sviatoshyn suburb of Kyiv, contrasted the patriotism of the “Russian” and the treachery of Jews:

...where is the justice on earth, if any Jew or *zhid* can do what he wants? The Russian people are the most wretched ones now. Militiamen of the second rank are often sick, even blind, but they go to struggle for the Tsar and faith and to shed their blood for the truth... But this *zhid* or Jew is afraid of the army and ransoms himself. ...he should be expelled from Kiev, but instead he is walking around like a baron, without fear. And he is opening a bakery again. He is going to be a baron which means a *zhid*. If something happened with a Russian, – God forbid! – he would not survive, he would be conscripted. It means that the *zhids* know what to do, while the Russians are wretched. And this *zhid* is the best in the world... and the name of this *zhid* or Jew is Motl Yurovski.¹⁹⁷

The author knew that the neutral term “Jew” was used in formal writing, but he used “*zhid*” and “Jew” interchangeably. *Zhid* has a strong pejorative connotation and emphasizes “otherness”; it evokes certain clichés, easy associations that are clear to everyone.¹⁹⁸ Such a negative image of the Jew reflects cultural stereotypes that already

¹⁹⁵ O. V. Budnitskii, *Rossiiskie evrei mezhdru belymi i krasnymi (1917-1920)* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2006), 165–66. I was unable to determine the number of Jews in the army as a percentage of the total number of soldiers in 1914–1917. However, in 1895, 272,992 Jews were conscripted (5.2% of the total number of Russian subjects entering military service, when the total Jewish population of Russia was 5,189,000, or 4.73 % of the entire population). See *ibid.*, 160.

¹⁹⁶ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3686, ark. 92, 96, 179.

¹⁹⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 535, ark. 52.

¹⁹⁸ Elena M. Katz, *Neither with Them, Nor Without Them: The Russian writer and the Jew in the age of realism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 9; Gary. Rosenshield, *The Ridiculous Jew: The Exploitation and Transformation of a Stereotype in Gogol, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 115; John D. Klier, "'Zhid': Biography of a Russian Epithet," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, no. 1 (1982): 1–15.

existed in society and appealed to the differences between the good-hearted Russians and the devious Jews. The denunciations of Jews because of alleged mass evasion of military service were widespread.¹⁹⁹ They were designed to settle old rivalries and to demonstrate loyalty to the state. Joshua Sanborn calls the Jews in the tsarist period “the national pariah,” whose image was used to define the boundaries of the nation and to preserve the image of the *narod*.²⁰⁰ The war showed that Jews were not a part of the Russian political nation—they were rootless, cosmopolitan, and unproductive “guests.”

As self-mutilation and dissimulation were the most common ways to avoid conscription, Jewish doctors and lawyers were targeted as accomplices in a conspiracy to forego Jewish participation in the war.²⁰¹ Jews, however, were not alone in inflicting self-harm; malingering was widespread among all national groups. Though Jewish rates of self-mutilation were in fact higher than those of Gentiles, Jews were disproportionately targeted in efforts to track down army evaders.²⁰² Draft evaders were stereotypically quitters and cowards, qualities associated with Jewishness. In light of pervasive anti-Semitic prejudice, the veracity of army medical statistics is suspect. Were military doctors more likely to deny Jews military deferments? How objective were their reports and to what degree was their work tainted by stereotypes?²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 535, ark. 63, 70, 136, 139, 144, 148, 157, 191–192, 228zv, 231, 269.

²⁰⁰ Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905-1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), 116; Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 299.

²⁰¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3651, ark. 1–3, 6; f. 274, op. 4, spr. 530, ark. 14, 15, 17, 19, 25, 27, 38, 167, 170; TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 612, ark. 162, 166; spr. 535, ark. 431, 449. A. B. Astashov, "Chlenovreditel'stvo i simuliatsiia boleznei v russkoi armii vo vremia pervoi mirovoi voyny," *Novyi istoricheskii vestnik*, no. 4 (2012), 6. Doctors were accused of artificially inducing tumors, causing hernias and infections, and perforating tympanic membranes.

²⁰² Astashov, "Chlenovreditel'stvo i simuliatsiia boleznei," 9.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Grigorii Kulagin, originally a peasant from Riazan' province, lived on Great Vasyl'kivs'ka Street in Kyiv in a house owned by Meer and Iosif Leshchiner. Kulagin quickly became dissatisfied with his landlords and found a way to settle accounts with the Leshchiners. In February 1916, Kulagin denounced the Leshchiners—"these Jews"—who allegedly preached "that the war is lost and that Russia must conclude a shameful peace; that Russian troops are unable to fight and can only plunder civilians; [...] that the enemy will soon be in Kyiv." According to Kulagin, the Leshchiners offered to defend him from the German, but instead he had to defend them against the Cossacks.²⁰⁴ In his accusations against the brothers, Kulagin repeated two widespread beliefs among Gentiles. First, the idea that Jews were potential German allies and second that Jews believed that Cossacks were the main instigators of pogroms at the front. Even worse, the Leshchiners were trying to expel the family of Yesaul Anichkin, a Cossack officer of the Russian army who was killed in battle leaving his wife and children destitute. So, Kulagin also petitioned the police to defend the family from "the attacks of the Jewish *kahal*." Police investigated and determined that Kulagin had rented a house from the Leshchiners a year prior; however, their relationship quickly deteriorated because Kulagin's rent was in arrears. Unfortunately for the Leshchiners, another tenant also testified that the landlords were anticipating the arrival of German troops, which "would provide them with bread and money."²⁰⁵ Police did not persecute the Leshchiners because they were unable to "verify [the reliability of] the petition." Perhaps, also, some officers were simply bribed. Nevertheless, yet again Jews were presented as parasites who sucked

²⁰⁴ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 618, ark. 69.

²⁰⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 618, ark. 72.

Christian blood, demanding money from the family of a Russian warrior and eagerly awaiting the arrival of hostile troops.

Jews were seen as cowardly by nature and not disposed to heroism. The very idea that a Jew could be rewarded for courage and bravery was unimaginable and such an attitude was reinforced by military propaganda. In February 1915, an anonymous letter signed by a “wounded soldier” asked police to check the legality of the insignia of David Lur’e, “a known Kyivan socialist,” “who walked along the street [wearing] a St. George Cross [...] As a right-wing Russian warrior, it is unbearable for me to see a converted kike wearing a St. George, which he stole from a wounded soldier, since he is a medical attendant.”²⁰⁶ This very simple letter imbricates several stereotypes about Jews: the converted Jew is still a Jew, Jews were cowardly, and Jews avoided “real” army service and preferred hiding at the rear as doctors, medical attendants, or officers of the All-Russian Zemstvo Union (*Vserossiiskii Zemskii Soiuz*, hereafter—Russian acronym VZS).²⁰⁷

The police files reveal numerous denunciations of Jews for alleged draft-dodging. For example, the sons of the well-known Kyivan merchant Moisei Gal’perin were also attacked for alleged draft dodging because they were “settled in the medical detachment of the ‘princess’.”²⁰⁸ And thus, the accusations asserted, “Christian blood was sold for silver.”²⁰⁹ Gershko Broide, the son of a merchant mother, served the All-Russian Zemstvo Union; Sem’en Rokhlin, also a merchant’s son, served as a driver for Kyiv’s

²⁰⁶ The Cross of Saint George was the highest and the most honorable military insignia for “undaunted courage,” intended as an award for the lower ranks. TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 532, ark. 233–234.

²⁰⁷ About denunciations against Jews, see also TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr., 256–272, 305, 323–324, 398, 439, 434; spr. 535, ark. 63, 70, 73, 85, 191–192, 209, 228, 231, 269, 274, 366, 378, 507, 508, 511, 516, 521, 523, 525, 540, 612.

²⁰⁸ Several relief organizations were established by the Grand Princess of the Romanov dynasty. One of Gal’perin’s sons served in the medical detachment of the Grand Duchess Mariia Pavlovna.

²⁰⁹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 532, ark. 136, 139.

railway battalion. Broide and Rokhlin were allegedly draft dodging because they were hiding from combat duty in the rear.²¹⁰ The Kyivan police investigated and determined that Broide had been drafted and was then serving in the 18th reserve battalion. Mark Gal'perin, as a soldier of the people's militia of the 2nd category [*ratnik vtorogo razriada*], was in Kursk province. Samuil Gal'perin really worked in the medical detachment of the Great Princess Mariia Pavlovna and Solomon Gal'perin had a military deferral until March 1916. Therefore, legally the merchant's sons had not evaded their duties.²¹¹

The Chief of Staff of the Kyiv Military District, in a letter to the Chief of the Kyiv Police Department, stated that although denunciations about army evasions had to be checked, it was not always possible to do so, especially if the Military Offices of the Registrar [*voinskoe prisutstvie*], the offices responsible for conscription, were involved. Obviously, the officers of the Registrar would not provide potentially compromising information, which, for example, could prove that they were bribed. Thus, the only source of information was possibly unreliable secret information received via police agents.²¹² Therefore, all decisions depended on the will of the police or army officers.

Colonel Shredel', the Chief of the Kyiv Police Department, describing the attitude of the population towards Jews, stated that "it is very negative, due to their general evasion of army service, simulation of diseases, bribery, desertion and espionage, about which the population learn from the lower ranks," who were staying in hospitals or were

²¹⁰ The officers of the VZS, who worked in its hospitals or were responsible for food distribution, and railway troops, who performed rail services (preparation, construction, reconstruction, and protection of the objects of railways) could not be conscripted and their service was equated to military service.

²¹¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 532, ark. 136, 139, 144, 148, 157.

²¹² Ibid., spr. 535, ark. 518.

on leave in the city.²¹³ The Kyivan police routinely collected information about the Jewish attitude towards the war and army service. The majority of reports stated that Jews “did not show an explicitly hostile attitude towards the war interests [of Russia] and the army”; however, they also “did not sympathize with war interests,” and mass service evasion by Jews served as evidence of this.²¹⁴ Accusations against Jews of speculation, raising prices, concealment of metal coins, army evasion, and espionage significantly deteriorated interethnic relations. According to police reports, Gentiles saw Jews as an “internal enemy that dreamed of Austrian domination, because they [Austrians] allowed Jewish land-ownership and open [Jewish] state service.”²¹⁵

The strengthening of anti-Jewish moods in Kyiv inculcated Zionism in Jewish youth. Anti-Semitism inspired young Jews to struggle for equal Jewish rights in the diaspora as a short-term goal and the creation of a Jewish state in the long-term.²¹⁶ In 1915, a group of Kyivan Jewish youth was trying to establish a central Zionist organization. The group used the Hebrew word *Haverim* [Brothers] on their banners.²¹⁷ Foreseeing changes that necessarily had to come after the war, they understood the necessity of preparing personnel who could politically organize the Jewish population. Girsh Pisarevskii, who was 18 years old, active in the Zionist movement and wanted to study at Kyiv’s School of Art, urged his fellow Jews to “organize [...], because at the end of the war, we will need people; try to prepare yourself for that time; the main thing now

²¹³ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 14zv.

²¹⁴ DAK, f. 237, op. 1, spr. 50, ark. 11–12.

²¹⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 39.

²¹⁶ Zionism was not a monolithic movement. Zionists with a socialist worldview promoted the idea that Jewish national aspiration could be fulfilled not only in Palestine but also in the diaspora (Jewish national-personal autonomy in Russia).

²¹⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 58, 73.

is to arrange readings, to write papers.”²¹⁸ Galina (Ginda) Ul’man, a twenty-year-old student at the Commercial School in Kobeliaky in Poltava province, in a letter to Evgenii Bershenko, a Russian Orthodox student at the Kyiv Commercial Institute, was also forward-looking. She was sure that “every young man must diligently preserve his life; except the zealous patriots, everyone must dodge [military] service, because the remaining youth are the only hope of humanity. An extra pair of hands now is tremendously important [...] We have to put public life above ourselves.”²¹⁹ The revolutionary and millenarian rhetoric of the letter describes devoting one’s energy to the service of humanity. Possibly, Galina (Ginda) and Evgenii were Russian social democrats. Jewish youth certainly were not united around one idea of Jewish nationalism; however, the war heightened their political and social activism, stimulating them to think about the future and the ways in which society could be transformed.

Pogrom Moods in Kyiv during the War

City authorities tried to maintain peace in the city. Though, police were instructed to ruthlessly suppress protests and riots, Kyiv remained relatively calm during the war.²²⁰ Strikes were infrequent, as men were mobilized and women and POWs became the main labour force. Kyiv itself did not witness mass unrest related to mobilization. Neighbouring *uyezd* [counties] were not so lucky.²²¹

²¹⁸ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 46, ark. 41–42, 56; spr. 47, ark. 1, 6, 8, 9; spr. 48, ark. 1–2, 17, 20, 21, 24.

²¹⁹ Ibid., op. 4, spr. 432, ark. 424.

²²⁰ Ibid., op. 1, spr. 3259, ark. 2.

²²¹ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3259, ark. 42; “Rasporiazhenie g. gubernatora,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1268 (31 July 1914): 2.

The mobilization of conscripts was one of many possible pretexts for pogroms. The mobilization campaign in the Russian Empire during the Great War was accompanied by the debauchery of conscripts and violence towards social pariahs, in particular Jews and Germans.²²² In July 1914, the reservists of Ol'khov volost' in Podolia province, on their way to the rally point in Kaniv in Kyiv province, looted a liquor store. The reservists of Hornostaipol' and Prybor volosts in Kyiv province en route to Radomyshl', also in Kyiv province, also destroyed liquor stores in passing villages, raided gardens, and stole tobacco from Jewish stores; they broke fences, windows, and set fire to the harvest. Local military authorities desperately asked the Commander of the Kyiv Military District to send troops to suppress the disorders.²²³ The debauchery of conscripts lasted for several days before it was finally curbed. The reservists' anti-Jewish violence can hardly be separated from general violence. Jews were rather "incidental" targets because most shop-owners selling alcohol or tobacco were Jewish. However, anti-Jewish moods, which were widespread among the peasants who constituted the majority of conscripts, definitely had an impact on the level of violence.

Violence during the mobilization campaign can be explained by the conscripts' anxiety about their future; they were off to war, while Jews stayed home. Here again, Jews were seen as parasites who sucked Christian blood. The report of the deputy chief of Kyiv's Provincial Gendarmerie Department explained the pogrom in Radomyshl' *uyezd* to the chief of staff of the Kyiv Military District as follows:

...the majority of the owners of the wine shops located in the northern part of Radomyshl' uezd, despite the order to cease completely the sale of alcohol [...] voluntarily fulfilled the request of the reservists and

²²² Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian nation*, 114–17.

²²³ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 236, ark. 3-4, 8, 21, 22, 35, 36, 38-39; "Prikaz gubernatora," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 208 (31 July 1914): 2.

continued to sell [them vodka]. The intoxicated and animated reservists gradually started to make more radical demands on the Jews, the owners of the wine-stores. Then the reservists, who had not got alcohol earlier, started to sack [the stores], saying, “we are going at the war, while you are making a profit here.”²²⁴

Reservists also looted four wine shops in Kyiv *uyezd* at the end of July 1914. The same police report mentioned that the reservists “opened the stores by force and took bottles of wine. A peasant, a driver of a horse-car [*voznichii*], decided to join the reservists, but “they caught and beat him for robbery, because [the peasant] was not a reservist, and thus he did not have the right to take the wine.”²²⁵ Liquor stores were the main targets during draft riots. Joshua Sanborn has made the point that induction into the active forces was traditionally accompanied in Russia by the drunkenness of young men.²²⁶ Liquor sales were banned during the mobilization campaign. The logical solution for the reservists was looting liquor, food, and clothing stores.²²⁷ Violent outbursts were also a form of war protest. Although it was their duty to shed blood “for the Faith, Tsar, and Fatherland,” the reservists understood the danger of war. Jews were an easy target of violence because they were deprived of civil rights and stigmatized by the state as potentially disloyal subjects. As Fridman commented in a speech to the Duma in August 1915, “in a long war lucky events alternate with unlucky ones, and in any case it is naturally useful to have scapegoats in reserve. For this purpose there exists the old firm:

²²⁴ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 864, spr. 236, ark. 55zv.

²²⁵ Ibid., ark. 58zv.

²²⁶ Josh Sanborn, "The Mobilization of 1914 and the Question of the Russian Nation: A Reexamination," *Slavic Review* 59, no. 2 (2000): 267–89, 276; Hubertus Jahn, *Patriotic culture in Russia during World War I* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 171-173.

²²⁷ Sanborn, "The Mobilization of 1914 and the Question of the Russian Nation," 276; Olga Porshneva, *Krest'iane, rabochie i soldaty Rossii nakanune i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2004), 175-214; Nikolai N. Golovin, *Voennye usiliia Rossii v Mirovoi voine*, 2 vols. (Parizh: Tovarishchestvo ob'edinennykh izdatelei, 1939), 119-122.

the Jews.”²²⁸ Such marginalization and victimization was caused by cultural alienation from the surrounding society, but also by the idea, spread among the staff of the Russian army and among the population, that the Jews constituted a danger to the Russian military efforts.²²⁹

The Kyivans definitely knew about the rural riots. Although, newspapers did not widely discuss them, *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, for example, published an order of Governor Sukovkin, to the provincial police chiefs. The Governor condemned the violence and reprimanded senior police officials, who were unable to prevent the riots. Sukovkin stressed that the riots were caused by the “negligence of authorities.”²³⁰ The main aim of urban and rural authorities was to prevent outbreaks of open violence.²³¹ After the anti-German riots in Moscow in October 1914 and May 1915, local authorities lived in constant anticipation of a pogrom. On October 17, 1914, the Kyiv governor issued an order to the Kyiv police. Sukovkin stated that violent actions did not manifest patriotic feelings, but constituted hooliganism, for if the German enterprises and stores were in fact harmful to state interests, the government would “certainly have taken measures to defend the motherland.”²³² Thus, the Governor pointed out that state institutions had a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, and they certainly would protect the subjects of the state from any harmful German economic dominance.²³³

²²⁸ *The Jews in the Eastern War Zone* (New York, 1916), 111–17; Joshua A. Sanborn, "Unsettling the Empire: Violent Migrations and Social Disaster in Russia during World War I," *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 2 (2005): 290–324, 302–08.

²²⁹ Jonathan Frankel, *Crisis, revolution, and Russian Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 135.

²³⁰ “Prikaz gubernatora,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 208 (31 July 1914): 2.

²³¹ TsDIAKU, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 539, ark. 89.

²³² “Ob’iavlenie Kievskogo gubernatora,” *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 288 (19 October 1914): 3; *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1268 (31 July 1914): 2.

²³³ About anti-German riots in Moscow, see Eric Lohr, "Patriotic Violence and the State: The Moscow Riots of May 1915," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, no. 3 (2003): 607–26, 607.

Secret police reports reflect the concerns of local authorities about the possibility of similar anti-German and anti-Jewish riots in Kyiv. The Black Hundreds' anti-Semitic propaganda and calls to violence appeared in newspapers and leaflets. On May 28, 1915 a police officer in Kyiv's Luk'ianivka district reported to the chief of the city police that a policeman had removed a note from a fence that read: "Attention Russian people. Beat the Jews, slash Germans who have become Russian subjects. Save Russia!"²³⁴ On June 8, 1915, the Commander of Kyiv Military District ordered the Kyiv Police Department to monitor pogromist moods in the city.²³⁵ One week later, a gendarme officer argued that the public mood of ordinary people outside Kyiv was very tense. Moreover, he stated that such a situation was a consequence of the rumors circulating among the population about a forthcoming pogrom.²³⁶ Certainly, the appeals for pogroms were disquieting for the Gendarmerie Department. After the Moscow riots and a subsequent investigation of the steps taken by the local authorities to prevent and halt disturbances, Kyivan officials were also worried about their future.

Although rumors represented uncertain knowledge, they affected human behavior, emotions, and attitudes. Public transport and the market were the two main public spaces (one modern and the other traditional) where rumors circulated. Both were overcrowded places where people from different localities communicated with each other and in which information widely circulated. The ubiquity of rumors about pogroms created an atmosphere of fear and tension in the city. People anticipated violence. In June 1915, the chief of the Kyiv Provincial Gendarmerie Department reported to the chief of staff of the Kyiv Military District:

²³⁴ TsDIAKU, f.274, op.4, spr.539, ark. 3.

²³⁵ Ibid., spr.581, ark. 1; spr.539, ark. 54.

²³⁶ Ibid., ark. 55.

According to information received from secret sources, the mood of the common people in the suburbs of Kiev is very tense as a result of the rumors about an imminent massacre of the Germans and Jews.

Sectarians of different trends (Stundists, Baptists, Adventists) are spreading various absurd rumors which show a sympathy for Germans as “brothers.” In Kiev specifically, the conductors of the trams who belong to these sects are responsible for the dissemination of rumours. Therefore, we took measures to identify all such conductors.²³⁷

The urban lower class, military recruits, and peasants were the main instigators of pogroms. Their discontent and aggression were connected with food shortages and rising prices; very often pogroms started in markets and developed from banal disagreements between Jews and Christians. The very nature of markets, where disagreements were typical, invited conflict. In Kyiv, Jewish vendors predominated in the Galician market. The police report, quoted above, also contains information on the popular sentiment there.

According to the information I have received, tramps and the unemployed are gathering daily from 12 until 4 p.m. at the Galitskii market, at the dairy row, near the trunks, and are threatening the traders that they will destroy their trunks and stores. Therefore, I made the suggestion to the chief of police to carry out round-ups of vagrants in order to prevent disorders.

The railroad station was a modern place where rumors also appeared and spread. On June 13, 1915, a police officer received information from a porter about an expected pogrom of Jewish and German stores in Kyiv: “...potential targets are already identified. But somebody informed the police about the pogrom, and several people were arrested. Still, sooner or later, the intended aim will be achieved.”²³⁸ On June, 13, Novitskii, a police detective working on the Karavaev Bridge, “received information from unknown working-class men” that on June 11 at a house near Protasov Ravine, some 300 people

²³⁷ Ibid., ark. 55.

²³⁸ Ibid., ark. 89.

had gathered for a meeting (mostly students and workers) at which they planned a pogrom. The dates of the proposed pogrom would coincide with the Russian retreat from Galicia as a result of the Gorlice–Tarnów Offensive of the German-Austrian armies—on May 20 (June 3), Russian troops had evacuated Przemyśl and on June 9 (22), L’viv.²³⁹ The pogrom as an act of collective violence can be linked to the failures of the Russian army. Thus, those who planned the pogrom envisioned violence as a curative against Jewish treachery, especially when the state appeared unable to confront enemies both at home and abroad and address social problems allegedly caused and exacerbated by Jews.²⁴⁰

According to Peter Holquist, surveillance as information-gathering aims to collect data “in order to act better upon [population].”²⁴¹ The Kyivan police gathered information, perusing the mail to trace popular moods in order “to foster the full potential of civilians and society.”²⁴² In October 1915, the Minister of the Interior ordered local officials to compile regular monthly reports on popular moods, using a standardized set of questions.²⁴³ Holquist explained that the information obtained was used to maximize state resources—economic, physical and psychic—for the war effort. For example, the Russian government exploited popular hostility against Germans and Jews.

²³⁹ Rostunov, *Russkii front Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, 145; Goldin, "Deportation of Jews by the Russian Military command, 1914-1915," 57-58, 71.

²⁴⁰ Werner Bergmann, "Ethnic Riots in Situations of Loss of Control: Revolution, Civil War, and Regime Change as Opportunity Structures for Anti-Jewish Violence in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe," in *Control of Violence: Historical and International Perspectives on Violence in Modern Societies*, ed. Wilhelm Heitmeyer (New York: Springer, 2011), 488.

²⁴¹ Peter Holquist, "What's so Revolutionary about the Russian Revolution? State Practices and the New-Style Politics, 1914-21," in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, eds. David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (Macmillan Press, 1999), 91-92.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 92.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 94. See also Peter Holquist, "'Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work': Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context," *The Journal of Modern History*, no. 3 (1997): 415–50; Peter Gatrell, *Russia's First World War: A social and economic history*, 1st ed. (Harlow, England: Pearson/Longman, 2005), 180-182.

German-owned firms were closed or nationalized; Jews were used as a collective “scapegoat” to explain all possible failures and mismanagement. However, maintaining public order topped the list of state interests. Thus, police had to control popular hostility because widespread unrest could pose a danger to the existing state order. During the summer of 1915, detachments of mounted guards patrolled Kyiv’s streets and bazaars, and protected Jews from pogroms.²⁴⁴ The draft riots at the end of July 1914 were also stopped by force, and the next waves of mobilization (there were 19 of them from July 18, 1914 to March 1, 1917) were comparatively calm.²⁴⁵

Military expenditures exploded the state budget; the deficit of GDP reached 100%. On July 27, 1914, the State Duma passed a law which prohibited the exchange of bank bills for gold coins, but by that point gold and silver coins had already disappeared from the market.²⁴⁶ People preferred to hoard coins, not paper bills. This caused inflation and a shortage of small change. Jews, who were strongly associated with trade, were accused of precipitating this shortage. A police officer in Starokyivsky district reported:

Yesterday [August 12, 1915], in the district entrusted to me, the lack of small coins was especially strong. Traders refused to sell their products to buyers who did not have change. Tram conductors also need coins in small denominations. They refuse to take passengers who do not have coins. On this basis, there were conflicts with the public, which was extremely

²⁴⁴ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 456, ark. 14zv; spr. 548, ark. 15.

²⁴⁵ Scholars have different opinions about the success of the Russian military mobilization in 1914. The Soviet historian, Andrei Zaionchkovskii, and modern Russian historian, Olga Porshneva, stated that it was not successful. Although Russia had the largest standing army in the world with a total of 6.5 million soldiers, the mobilization campaign was behind schedule due to Russia’s vast territory and its lack of a developed transport system. Porshneva, *Krest'iane, rabochie i soldaty Rossii nakanune i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, 179; Andrei M. Zaionchkovskii, *Mirovaia voina 1914-1918 gg.: obshchii strategicheskii ocherk* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924), 20-21; David Stone states that though “Russian mobilization went unexpedely smoothly,” it was slow. See, David R. Stone, *The Russian Army in the Great War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1918*, Modern war studies (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2015), 55-56; Joshua Sanborn says that the mobilization was rather successful, in spite of “initial missteps.” See, Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse*, 22–23.

²⁴⁶ Gatrell, *Russia's First World War*, 27; Hryhor'iev, *U staromu Kyievi*, 265. “Ischiznovenie monety,” *Kiev*, 574 (15 August 1915): 4; TsDIAK, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 190, ark. 21; “Obiazatel'noe postanovlenie” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1855 (26 January 1916): 2.

disturbed by this situation. There are a lot of rumors among the population, especially among the lower classes, that the Jews are hiding small silver coins, and they need to be taught a lesson.²⁴⁷

The newspapers tried to influence public opinion about the coin shortage, stating that the crisis had passed. For example, just five days after the above-cited police report, *Iuzhaia Kopeika* published a short article, which argued that the situation with metal coins had improved: “there are enough coins everywhere, but not everyone wants to exchange them,” and “some are still profiting from coin speculation.”²⁴⁸ Apparently, the press was trying to shift responsibility for the coin shortage from state mismanagement to individual speculative hoarding.

The liberal newspaper *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, which was known as “a defender of Jewish interests” and was sponsored by the Brodskii family, noted that nobody knew the real cause of “coin hunger.” Many fantastic rumors circulated in the city, however, “which were evidence of our society’s strained nerves.”²⁴⁹ Rabbis in the synagogues appealed to Kyivan Jews to refrain from coin accumulation in order to mitigate anti-Semitism and prevent violence.²⁵⁰

David Margolin, a Kyiv industrialist and Jewish notable, tried to solve the problem of “coin hunger.” Margolin was one of the shareholders of the Kyiv tram company, which the anti-Semitic press referred to as “Margolin’s enterprise” [*Margolinskoie predpriatie*]. In 1916, he introduced a system of tram coupons, which functioned as change when the conductors did not have coins. It was an inventive move,

²⁴⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 539, ark. 350.

²⁴⁸ “Nedostatok razmennoi monety,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1644 (17 August 1915): 2.

²⁴⁹ “Kiev, 15 avgusta,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 225 (15 August 1915): 1; “Namechaiushchiesia techeniia v oblasti resheniia evreiskogo voprosa,” *Kiev*, 543 (16 July 1915): 3; Š. An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej: Wrażenia i refleksje z podróży po kraju* (Przemyśl: Południowo-Wschodni Instytut Naukowy, 2010), 337.

²⁵⁰ “Molebny v sinagogakh,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 226 (16 August 1915): 2.

particularly when compared to the seeming paralysis of the state.²⁵¹ The problem with “Margolin’s money” [*Margolinskie den’gi*] was that it started to be used as a universal currency. This initiative was a commercial measure aimed to facilitate the functioning of the urban transit system and raise his company’s income, but also to diffuse interethnic tension in Kyiv caused by the coin shortage. This latter goal was not realised and, indeed, the measure probably had the opposite result. Rightists used this initiative in their anti-Semitic propaganda claiming that Margolin had usurped the authority of the state.²⁵²

Kyiv’s sugar shortage pushed *Kiev* to publish an editorial titled “Behind the scenes of sugar hunger.” The author, writing under the pseudonym Figaro, pointed to the city’s three main sugar suppliers: the refinery association in Demievka, Brodskii’s factory, and the Grigorovskii association in Podil. The last two were accused of selling sugar only to Jews. The biggest local wholesalers, Gorenshtein and Tzeitlin, also Jewish, were accused of arranging the outflow of sugar from Kyiv to the provinces and engaging in price speculation. The article described Jews as the main culprits of food shortages, inflation, and treachery.²⁵³ They were stigmatized as dangerous and undesirable, as people who represented a threat to social order.

At the end of October 1916, the Kyiv police, acting on the order of the military command, arrested Izrail’ Babushkin, Iovel’ Gepner, and P. G. Gepner. A couple of days later, Kyivan banker and sugar-dealer Abram Dobryi was also arrested.²⁵⁴ They were accused of sugar price speculation and monopolistic practices that had resulted in sugar

²⁵¹ It should be noted that the state also issued stamps [*marki*] to be used in place of metal coins.

²⁵² “Nechto ‘margolinskoe’,” *Kiev*, 805 (6 April 1916): 1-2.

²⁵³ “Za kulisami sakharnogo goloda,” *Kiev*, 490 (23 May 1915): 1-2.

²⁵⁴ Nikolai Batiushin, *U istokov russkoi kontrrazvedki: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moskva: IKS-History, 2007), 185–86; “Arest sakharozavodchikov,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2122 (22 October 1916): 2; “Geroi tyla,” 2124 (24 October 1916): 1; “Sakharnye koroli,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2131 (31 October 1916): 2.

shortages. Throughout 1916, due to a faltering transportation network and higher costs, sugar was rarely found at affordable prices. Publications that labeled sugar dealers “sugar kings” and “heroes of the rear” reinforced popular resentment.²⁵⁵

Kyiv was relatively calm in 1916. Some Kyivan Jews still hoped that the conflict would end in the near future and that the Russian government would give Jews equal rights. Yet, only a few believed this, wrote a police officer:

The old and the young laugh[ed], because they are sure that Russia is too weak to defeat Germany [...] Jews are hostile to Christians, because the latter blame them for high prices, they call them ‘speculators’ and ‘robbers.’ People in the markets see the Jews as responsible for inflation and shortages. At the same time, Jews are convinced that prices are raised not by particular traders, but by the government and the quartermaster service that gave orders irrespective of the situation at the market.²⁵⁶

In March 1916, a police officer from the Bul’varnyi district reported that the poorest elements of the city had started to blame meat shortages on the state. There were rumors that authorities had restricted the meat supply to cause hunger and to force people to accept the idea of a peace with the Germans.²⁵⁷ Obviously, the state supported the idea of Jewish responsibility for economic calamity in order to divert attention from its own clear economic mismanagement. There was no official declaration to contradict the widespread belief that the Jews were responsible for high prices and shortages. Instead, in January 1916, Konstantin Kafafov, the chief of the Police Department of the Ministry of Interior issued regulations [the so-called ‘Kafafov circulars’ (*kafafovskie tsirkuliary*),] which were sent to all governors, mayors, and chiefs of provincial and city police departments. The decrees stated:

²⁵⁵ “Arest sakharozavodchikov,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2122 (22 October 1916): 2; “Geroi tyla,” 2124 (24 October 1916): 1; “Sakharnye koroli,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 2131 (31 October 1916): 2.

²⁵⁶ TsDIAK, f.274, op.4, spr.548, ark. 145, 128, 135, 180.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ark.125, 138, 296.

According to information received by the Police Department, Jews vigorously conduct revolutionary propaganda through numerous underground organizations. In order to provoke popular discontent in Russia, they not only engage in criminal agitation for strikes in the army, large industrial centers, and in factories, but they also used two other important measures—the artificial raising of prices on daily essentials and the disappearance of metal coins from the market.²⁵⁸

Thus, anti-Semitic state policies stigmatized Jews as traitors, “enemy aliens,” exploiters of the Christian population, and as participating in a global Jewish conspiracy to establish Jewish domination throughout the world. This, in turn, triggered and further intensified people’s discontent and aggression connected with food shortages and rising prices. During the war, lower-class urbanites, recruits, and peasants were the main instigators of pogroms. Additionally, Kyiv, as a city and regional center, had the necessary network for communicating both reliable and unreliable information; this circulation of information heightened social discontent and escalated interethnic tension. In turn, growing anti-Semitism triggered Jewish solidarity, as the community was prompted to unify in order to defend itself.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the nationalizing campaign in the Russian Empire during the war was to develop a concept of a political nation, which was to unite the population to

²⁵⁸ TsDIAK, f. 301, op. 1, spr. 1878, ark. 3–3zv; spr. 1742, ark. 53; “Istekshii god,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, №1 (3 January 1917): 2, 5–7; R. Ganelin, “Gosudarstvennaia дума i antisemitskie tsirkuliary 1915–1916 godov,” *Vestnik Evreyskogo universiteta v Moskve*, no. 3 (1995): 4–37; P. Ie. Shchegolev, ed., *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima. Stenograficheskie otchety doprosov i pokazanii, dannyykh v 1917 godu v Chrezvychainoi Sledstvennoi komissii Vremennogo Pravitel'stva*, vol. 2 (Leningrad-Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925), 134–45; V. E. Kel'ner, “Politicheskoe biuro pri evreiskikh deputatakh IV Gosudarstvennoi Dumy v gody voyny 1914–1917 gg.,” *Peterburgskii istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 1 (2015): 69–95; see also the memoirs of Kafafov, Konstantin Kafafov, “Vospominaniia o vnutrennikh delakh Rossiiskoi imperii,” *Voprosy Istorii*, 2, 3, 5 (2005): 73-96, 90-110, 79-95.

create a sense of community, based on the ideas of autocracy and Orthodoxy. However, anti-Semitic accusations against the Jews excluded this marginalized ethnoreligious community from the political concept of the “nation at war.” Jews were seen as the promoters of capitalism in Russia, which posed a danger to Russian traditionalism, and as a religious group whose economic interests clashed with those of Christians. Contrasting images of heroic and loyal “Russians” and rootless, unproductive, cowardly, and treacherous Jews were used to define the boundaries of the Russian imperial (political) nation.

Although the legal conditions for Jews in Kyiv did not change substantially, general interethnic tension increased dramatically during the war. Wartime accusations against Jews (speculation, raising prices, army evasion etc.) almost completely destroyed any hope for peaceful national co-existence. If during the first months of the war Jews in Kyiv and in the Russian Empire generally believed in popular unity in the face of the common enemy, widespread anti-Semitic propaganda showed that Jewish acculturation into Gentile society did not lead to equality. All Jews were “equal” in the eyes of anti-Semites, notwithstanding how “Russian” they were in their everyday lives. The anti-Jewish moods of the Gentile population led not only to further segregation and marginalization of Kyivan Jews, but also pushed the Jewish population, especially the politically active younger generation, to unify around the ideas of Jewish nationalism and socialism. This raised their social activity and stimulated them to think about the future of the Jewish nation and Russia.

Before the war, the government saw pogroms as “volatile and dangerous expressions of popular violence, and as such generally tried to restrain or prevent

them.”²⁵⁹ Even during the war, civil administrations maintained this policy, though, as the example of Kyiv show, they were unable to control the level of anti-Jewish hatred in the Empire’s large urban centres. Kyiv was under military rule and this can possibly explain the relative absence of open violence against the Jews. In fact, there was no open violence against the Jewish population in Kyiv until 1917, when the state collapsed and soldiers, who had been exposed to anti-Semitic propoganda at the front, came to the city en masse.

²⁵⁹ Eric Lohr et al., eds., *The Empire and Nationalism at War*, Russia's Great War and Revolution (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2014), 103.

CHAPTER FOUR. REFUGEES AND EXPELLEES IN KYIV

The Great War caused an unprecedented movement of peoples. According to Peter Gatrell, while Europe's militaries "frequently encountered immobility and deadlocks," civilians "enjoyed the dubious privilege of physical mobility."¹ In his fundamental work, Gatrell discussed the "phenomenon of refugeedom" as an unprecedented event in the history of the Russian Empire, a phenomenon that significantly shook the state and remade society. Indeed, he argues that charitable support for refugees led to the crystallization of new social identities and strengthened ethnic bonds.²

This chapter introduces and foregrounds the next chapter, which addresses the Jewish home front and its meanings for the local Jewish community. As I described in the previous chapter, the Jewish population lived in an atmosphere of constraints and hostility, which were supported and exploited by state policy. Steven Zipperstein has discussed the victimization of Polish, Lithuanian, Galician, and Bukovynian Jews, who were branded spies by the Russian military and forced to leave because of the harm they could ostensibly do to Russia. In this context, Jewish relief work importantly "resulted in a new and widely ramified institutional framework and unified Russian Jews under the aegis of one over-arching communal body for the first time since the Polish partition."³ In this chapter, I describe the different categories of Jewish refugees that came to Kyiv. How and when did Jewish refugees come to Kyiv? Where did they come from? What

¹ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 2.

² *Ibid.*, 141–45.

³ Zipperstein, "The politics of relief," 23–24.

was the social composition of the Jews that arrived? What was unique about Kyiv? This chapter will help to explain the origins of relief work in Kyiv. I argue that the expulsions of Jews from the front zone ruined devastated traditional Jewish life in the *shtetls* of the Pale and led to the emergence of a new social group—refugees. They constituted a very unstable social group, and in case of Kyiv, such instability was further reinforced by the special status of the city in the Pale (see Chapter 3). This chapter will discuss the experiences of refugees in Kyiv, while the next explores professionally organized relief work.

Refugees as a Social Group

Refugees were a very unstable and fluid social group, vulnerable to the decisions of authorities who could suddenly decide to move them. As Peter Gatrell noted, Eastern European refugees did not move according to a “predetermined timetable or a definite schedule of resettlement.”⁴ As a consequence, hard data and statistics are scarce, and even tsarist officials complained that they had little accurate information about the numbers and conditions of refugees, a challenge that extends to researchers today.

The meaning of the term “refugee” was also ambiguous during the Great War, and it could be used to describe numerous kinds of people who had left their original homes. Regulations “On Securing the Needs of Refugees” [*Polozhenie ob obespechenii nuzhd bezhentssev*], adopted on August 30, 1915, defined the term “refugee” as “individuals, who have left places that were threatened by the enemy or have already been occupied, or those who were expelled by the order of the military or civil authorities

⁴ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 53.

from the territory of military operations, or those who were native of powers hostile to Russia.”⁵ Thus, the term encompassed not only individuals who voluntarily left the places where they were living, but also expellees who were transferred to faraway Russian provinces [*vnutrennie gubernii*]. Individuals who were expelled and were under police surveillance (such as Jewish deportees and hostages taken from the local civilian population in the occupied territories of Galicia and Bukovyna), and enemy aliens (Germans, Hungarians, and Turks) were not treated as refugees and thus could not rely on the aid of such relief organizations as the All-Russian Zemstvo Union, the All-Russian Union of Towns (*Vserossiiskii Soiuz Gorodov*, hereafter—Russian acronym VGS) or the Committee of the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna [*Tat’ianinskii komitet*; hereafter—TC]; however, Jews could receive aid from their own national organizations.⁶

This chapter discusses internees, evacuees, and deportees. Internees (also known as enemy aliens) were civilians of the Central Powers who were coercively removed from territories occupied by the Russian army (Galicia and Bukovyna). The main goal of this resettlement was to prevent the male population from serving in the armies of hostile states. Evacuees, by contrast, were civilians who had been removed from western border regions of the Russian Empire located within 200 *verst* of the front line; many were employees of state factories and institutions, and they and their families were moved to provinces in the rear. The last category—deportees—was made up of German and Jewish populations from the Russian border regions, who were seen by Russian authorities as unreliable and socially dangerous due to their real or imagined sympathies with the

⁵ *Zakony i rasporiasheniia o bezhentsakh. Tom 1.* (Moskva: Iuridicheskii otdel Glavnogo komiteta Vserossiiskogo soiuzna gorodov, 1916), 2.

⁶ Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie (hereafter — AAN), z. 51, syg. 975, st. 27-33, 172; z. 50/2, t. 531, st. 9-11, 62-64, 104.

Central Powers. In this chapter, I use the term “refugees” to discuss both internees and evacuees. As for Jews who were expelled as representatives of an unreliable population, I use the term “deportees” or “expellees” [*vyselentsy*], terms that were also used by contemporaries. Jewish hostages constituted a separate category and the sources clearly differentiated them from the rest of the deportees.

The treatment of enemy aliens by belligerent states attracted the attention of international correspondents and scholars during the war. In 1918, James W. Garner, an American professor of political science, published an article titled “Treatment of Enemy Aliens: Measures in Respect to Personal Liberty.”⁷ Although it did not discuss the Russian Empire and its treatment of enemy aliens, the article provides a general survey of the issue’s treatment in international law. According to Garner, “writers on international law are now in substantial agreement that a belligerent ought not to detain enemy subjects, confiscate their property, or subject them to any disabilities, further than such as the protection of the national security and defense may require.”⁸

In the Russian case, the category of enemy aliens included the subjects of the Central Powers, as well as Germans and Turks who had lived in Russia for several generations, and Jews of the occupied territories of Austria-Hungary. International law recognized “the right of belligerents to detain males liable to such [compulsory military] service, in order to prevent them from returning home and enlisting in the enemy’s army.” Moreover, Garner conceded that “residence in the enemy country and the opportunity thus afforded of acquiring more or less familiarity with its topography and

⁷ James W. Garner, "Treatment of Enemy Aliens: Measures in Respect to Personal Liberty," *The American Journal of International Law* 1, no. 1 (1918): 27–55; see also M. Stibbe, "Enemy Aliens, Deportees, Refugees: Internment Practices in the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918," *Journal of Modern History* 12, no. 4 (2014): 479–99.

⁸ Garner, "Treatment of Enemy Aliens: Measures in Respect to Personal Liberty," 27.

the location of military forts, arsenals, munitions depots, the extent of its resources, and the like, [so] their service would be of special value to their own country.”⁹

Spymania swept the Russian Empire from the very beginning of the war, and Jews, who were widely engaged in trade and thus had a wide-ranging network of contacts abroad, were accused of spying on behalf of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Furthermore, Russian political and military officials understood that multiple legal restrictions placed upon Jews in Russia hardly promoted their loyalty to the state. How serious were the accusations of spying levelled at the Jewish population? By January 1, 1914, Russian counterintelligence registered around 1,500 individuals suspected of spying for Germany or Austria-Hungary.¹⁰ Jewish traders, who were constantly moving from one province to another, had contacts with foreign merchants and companies, and communicated with numerous people, were under especially strict surveillance. The Headquarters of the General Staff, however, did not require direct evidence of counterintelligence activities, and Germans and Jews became the main targets of such preventive measures. Germans were guilty due to their origin, and Jews were seen as unreliable if they had relatives or other connections abroad, had visited Germany before the war, or simply because Yiddish sounded like German to many Russians, and it greatly facilitated Jews’ ability to communicate with German speakers.¹¹ As Peter Gatrell states, the army command targeted vulnerable minorities “in an attempt to find scapegoats for military failure.”¹² It was easy to accuse the Jews of transmitting valuable information to

⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰ S. A. Pivovarchik, "Tragediia Pervoi mirovoi voiny: "evrei-shpiony" (po materialam Natsional'nogo istoricheskogo arkhiva Belarusi i Grodno)," in *Mirovoi krizis 1914–1920 godov i sud'ba vostochnoevropskogo evreistva*, ed. O. V. Budnitskii (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2005), 78–81.

¹¹ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 17–18.

¹² Ibid., 16.

the enemy about troop numbers, for example, and there was a long history of such accusations. Jews were associated with concerns about frontier security from the time of Nicholas I, who prohibited Jews to live within 50 kilometres of the western border.¹³ Thus, Jewish deportation was seen as the best way to combat “spying” and a necessary measure to secure the success of the Russian Army.

Russia was anything but unique in terms of policy toward enemy aliens. The Austro-Hungarian Empire adopted the same strategy with respect to Italians, Ukrainians, and the Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁴ At the same time, Russia was less efficient in its deportation of enemy aliens, which can be explained by logistical problems, poor cooperation between military command and civil authorities, and weak state management in general. There was nothing like the Thalerhof Camp near Graz in Austrian Styria, located in the southeast of modern Austria.¹⁵ Deportations and expulsions were disorganized, which had a negative influence on the Russian war effort.

Statistical information about the overall number of refugees in the Russian Empire during the Great War is confusing and unclear, largely because of chaotic registration by numerous institutions. Estimates vary from 5 to almost 7.5 million

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Stibbe, "Enemy Aliens, Deportees, Refugees: Internment Practices in the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918," 480-481; Matthew Stibbe, "The Internment of Civilians by Belligerent States during the First World War and the Response of the International Committee of the Red Cross," *Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 1 (2006): 5-19; see also Matthew Stibbe, ed., *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe During the First World War* (Taylor & Francis, 2013); Matthew Stibbe, "Gendered experiences of civilian internment during the First World War: a forgotten dimension of wartime violence," in *Gender and Conflict since 1914 : Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Ana Carden-Coyne (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Matthew Stibbe, *British civilian internees in Germany: The Ruhleben camp, 1914-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

¹⁵ For more about the persecution of the Galician Russophiles in the Habsburg Empire, see Anna V. Vendland, *Rusofily Galychyny. Ukrain's'ki konservatory mizh Avstriieiu i Rossiieiu, 1848-1915* (L'viv: Litopys, 2015), 585-95.

people—either way, this is a staggeringly large number of migrants.¹⁶ The majority of refugees settled in rural areas (65.2%) and the rest lived in urban centers (34.8%).¹⁷ Russian historian Sergei Nelipovich has determined that more than 250,000 subjects of the Central Powers were deported to Russian provinces. As early as March 1915, for example, 12,000 people had been expelled from Eastern Prussia, while the Russian military command expelled about 20,000 Jews from Galicia and Bukovyna in 1916–17.¹⁸ Moreover, Eugene Kulischer has estimated that more than 600,000 Russian Jews were displaced even before mass deportations started in summer 1915.¹⁹ Jews were removed en masse from Polish, Belorussian, Lithuanian, and Kurland provinces, as well as Galicia and Bukovyna. In September and October 1915, for example, Russian troops expelled the entire Jewish population of 36 towns in Minsk province; they were not allowed to return until the military command granted them permission.²⁰

The first refugees arrived in Kyiv at the beginning of August 1914. Among them were Russian subjects expelled from the “front zone” [*prifrontovaia zona*] and subjects of Austro-Hungarian territories occupied by the Russian army. Several hundred evacuees

¹⁶ Irina Belova, *Vynuzhdennye migrant: bezhentsy i voennoplennyye Pervoi mirovoi voyny v Rossii, 1914-1925 gg.* (Moskva: AIRO-XXI, 2014), 39–40; L. I. Lubny-Gertsyk, *Dvizhenie naseleniia na territorii SSSR za vremia mirovoi voyny i revoliutsii* (Moskva: Planovoe khoziaistvo, 1926), 86; E. Z. Volkov, *Dinamika narodonaseleniia SSSR za 80 let* (Moskva-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1930), 72; I. A. Poliakov, *Sovetskaia strana posle okonchaniia grazhdanskoi voyny: territorii i naselenie* (Moskva: Nauka, 1986), 86; S. I. Bruk and V. M. Kabuzan, *Migratsionnye protsesy v Rossii i SSSR* (Moskva: Institut nauchnoi informatsii po obshchestvennym naukam, 1991), 92–93; V. M. Kabuzan, *Russkie v mire: dinamika chislennosti i rasseleniia (1719–1989)* (Sankt-Peterburg: Blits, 1996), 23; Aleksandr Nikolaevich Kurtsev, "Bezhentsy Pervoi mirovoi voyny v Rossii (1914–1917)," *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 8 (1999): 98–113.

¹⁷ Aleksandr Nikolaevich Kurtsev, "Voennyye bezhentsy v gorodakh Rossii (1914–1917)," in *Kul'tury gorodov Rossiiskoi imperii na rubezhe XIX - XX vekov: materialy mezhdunarodnogo kollokviuma, Sankt-Peterburg, 14-17 iyunia 2004 goda*, eds. Mark Steinberg and Tamara Abrosimova (Sankt-Peterburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 2009).

¹⁸ S. G. Nelipovich, "Naselenie okkupirovannykh territorii rassmatrivalos' kak rezerv protivnika," *Voennohistoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 2 (2002): 60–69, 69.

¹⁹ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 18; Eugene M. Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 31.

²⁰ Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*, 22–23.

and internees were accommodated in the Contracts House in Podil. At first, they received food from the kindergarten [*detskii ochag*] located in the same building. The deputy mayor of Kyiv immediately contacted the State Duma for financial help, which would cover food and accommodation for the refugees.²¹ According to information collected by the TC, around 60,000 refugees had settled more or less permanently in Kyiv by December 1915.²² However, the real number was much higher, as not all refugees were registered at the TC office; the wealthiest, for example, who were not in need of financial help, would not have been counted.

Aleksandr Kurtsev, a Russian scholar, defined four periods of migration: the initial period (1914 and early 1915), when people left their places of residence voluntarily; the period of forced expulsion (April–December 1915); the period of stability, when the refugees settled (1916 to the beginning of 1917); and the period in which the refugees spontaneously started to return to their former places of residence (summer 1917 onward).²³ The same periods can be used to discuss Jewish deportees, but with one clarification—the majority did not leave their places of residence voluntarily. In her dissertation about Jewish refugees in the Russian Empire, Maria Zlatina defined three periods of migration. The first was July 1914 to April 1915, when expulsions were chaotic and disorganized. The next period was April 1915 to August 1915, characterized by the mass expulsion of Jews from Galicia, Bukovyna, Volhynia, Vistula Land, Courland, Grodno, Kovno, Cholm, Vilno, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Podol'sk provinces. This

²¹ “Kievskaiia munitsipal’naia khronika,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 110–111; B-anov M. “Gorod i bezrobotitsa,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 1 (January 1915): 40–61.

²² Levitskii V. “Gorod Kiev i bezhentsy,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 12 (December 1915): 6, 3–33.

²³ Aleksandr Nikolaevich Kurtsev, “Bezhentsy Pervoi mirovoi voiny v Kurskoi gubernii: 1914–1917,” *Kurskie tetradi. Kursk i kuriane glazami uchenykh* 1 (1997): 33–64.

event forced the Russian government to extend the Pale of Settlement due to the massive influx of Jews into Poltava, Chernihiv, Kherson, and Katerynoslav provinces. The final period, from August 1915 until the end of winter 1915-16, was a time of relative stability and gradual settlement of deported Jews in the Russian provinces.²⁴ With regard to refugees in Kyiv, I will use Zlatina's periodization.

Kyiv's location—with its proximity to the front, its status as capital of the southwestern region of the Russian Empire, and its position at the epicentre of a dense network of railways—inevitably transformed the city into the central transit point for refugees travelling to the east and south. Many stayed in the city, however, and significantly changed its social composition and patterns of everyday life. Apparently, most refugees and expellees tried to settle permanently in big cities. Immediately after arriving, cities offered aid in the form of different relief institutions. They also allowed Jews to find jobs and thus incomes, and their children might attend local schools. Cities also offered more opportunities to meet co-religionists and fellow-countrymen, and in the urban hustle and bustle they could dissolve into the crowd and be less visibly “alien” to locals.

At the same time, Kyiv was the least industrial city among the empire's big urban centres, and by the end of 1915, city administrators and public organizations faced the problem of high unemployment among refugees. Here, the Russian government and local administrations relied on the VZS, which began to develop a plan for resettlement in villages where refugees could be involved in agricultural work, which, at the same time, could compensate for the shortage of rural male workers. But this was hardly a solution for Jews, who did not have the right to live in the villages. Some stayed in Kyiv, while

²⁴ Maria A. Zlatina, "Problema evreiskogo bezhenstva v Rossii v period Pervoi mirovoi voiny" (Ph. D. dissertation, Russian A. I. Gertsen State Pedagogical University, 2010), 5, 24-52.

others were moved to the interior, where they briefly stayed before returning to where they had lived before the war.

To coordinate relief work, the Ministry of the Interior finally established the Special Council on Refugees [*Osoboe soveshanie po ustroistvu bezhentsev*] in August 1915, when the refugee crisis could no longer be ignored. The Special Council was a state institution headed by the Minister of the Interior, who was obliged to report information regarding refugees to both the State Council and State Duma.²⁵ The Special Council consisted of representatives from the State Duma, the State Council, various Ministries, the TC, the VZS, the VGS, the Russian Society of the Red Cross, and relief organizations of national minorities (*natsional'nye komitety pomoshchi*; hereafter called “national relief organizations”). In addition to these numerous organizations, the *zemstvos*, as well as city and town administrations, were responsible for caring for refugees locally, and all Orthodox parishes also had the right to organize aid for those in need, their religion or nationality notwithstanding.²⁶

This proliferation of charitable organizations meant chaos in practice. According to the regulations “On Securing the Needs of Refugees” (August 30, 1915), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the chief representatives charged with the accommodation of refugees [*glavnoupolnomochennye po ustroistvu bezhentsev*], governors and mayors [*gradonachl'niki*], *zemstvo* and city administrations, as well as local committees, were all

²⁵ Levitskii V. “Gorod Kiev i bezhentsy,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 12 (December 1915): 3. On refugees in the Russian Empire, see Belova, *Vynuzhdennye migrant: bezhentsy i voennoplennye Pervoi mirovoi voiny v Rossii, 1914-1925 gg*; Liubov Zhvanko, *Bizhentsi Pershoi svitovoi viiny: ukrains'kyi vymir* (Kharkiv: Apostrof, 2012); David Tsovian, “Deiatel'nost' gosudarstvennykh organov i obshchestvennykh organizatsii po okazaniiu pomoshchi bezhentsam v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny. 1914-1917 gg.,” (Ph. D. Thesis, Gosudarstvennyi universitet upravleniia, 2005).

²⁶ Levitskii V. “Gorod Kiev i bezhentsy,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 12 (December 1915): 3-4.

responsible for the “material and spiritual needs of refugees.”²⁷ In fact, the different responsibilities of different institutions were unclear; they often overlapped, which inevitably led to confusion.

But the war did give relative freedom to public philanthropic organizations. “On Securing the Needs of Refugees” stated that the main government task was satisfying refugees’ most critical needs—food and accommodation. The law clarified that state rations [*pravitel’stvennyi paiok*] for refugees were not charity but a state duty. But public organizations were welcome, indeed invited, to help the government by opening barracks and offering free or cheap food stations and kitchens. The law recognized that the state needed the help of public organizations.²⁸

The central government and the local Kyiv city administration developed a vast relief system for helping the families of reservists and wounded soldiers; the City Duma’s agenda included managing medical field divisions, hospitals, medical courses, and special workshops to help reservists’ wives earn income.²⁹ They also organized orphanages for children who lost their parents, which were located in secondary schools [*gorodskie uchilisha*] and used teachers and students from those schools to care for orphans.³⁰ Thanks to such local activity, more than 100 infirmaries already existed in Kyiv by September 1914.³¹

²⁷Ibid., 9.

²⁸ “Tsirkuliar Komiteta Eia Imperatorskogo Vysochestva Velikoi Kniazhny Tat’iany Nikolaevny,” *Pomoshch*, no. 1 (24 December 1915): 53-54.

²⁹ “Zhurnaly sobranii Kievskoi gorodskoi dumy,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 8 (August 1914): 3–5.

³⁰ “Doklad po voprosu o prizrenii detei zapasnykh, ushedshikh na voinu,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 8 (August 1914): 14–15.

³¹ Iasnopol’skii L. “Obshegorodskie komitety, ikh znachenie i zadachi,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 18; See also Veselovskii B. “K voprosu o soglasovanii na mestakh deiatel’nosti gorodov i zemstvo,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 22–26.

From the outset of the war, it was obvious that individuals—even rich individuals—could not organize relief work without an institution to coordinate aid at the local level. On August 13, the city дума made the decision to establish the General City Committee [*Obschegorodskoi komitet*], which consisted of members of the Kyiv Duma [*glasnye*], the local elite, and representatives of institutions that donated money to the committee.³² The Committee for Care of the Families of Reservists was established almost simultaneously. However, the General City Committee was dead on arrival, and its functions were later taken up by the local branches of the VSZ, VSG, and TC, which worked at the state and national levels.³³

Enemy aliens and deportees

Xenophobia toward external and internal enemies sharply increased during the war. Deportations, expropriations, and spy-hunting sorted populations according to their religion or ethnicity. Jews and Germans, the main targets in Russia, were accused of sympathizing with their religious and national kin in the Central Powers. This campaign against the enemy within was fed by the Russian nationalizing program—based on the ideas of Orthodoxy, autocracy, and the principle of “one and indivisible”—which only further enflamed ethnic tensions.³⁴

Approximately 2.1 million ethnic Germans were subjects of the Russian Empire, and around 1 million of them lived in the border regions. Since they were mostly

³² Ibid., 20; “Obschegorodskoi komitet,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914):113–116.

³³ “Vserossiiskii soiuz gorodov,” *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 80–109. For an excellent discussion of war relief activity in the Russian Empire, see Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, *Mobilizing the Russian nation: Patriotism and citizenship in the First World War*, Studies in the social and cultural history of modern warfare, vol. 45 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 106–39.

³⁴ See Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire* and Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian nation*.

colonists and thus land-owners, the Russian patriotic press on the eve of war started a campaign to demand the transfer of land from Germans to the “Russian people” and to fight German domination in the Russian economy and culture, a campaign that accelerated after July 1914.³⁵ In October 1914, Russian Germans from the border regions (Volhynia, the Baltic provinces, and Poland), who had lived in the Russian Empire for generations, were deemed hostile and were slated for deportation to the Russian provinces (mostly Siberia, the Far East, and the Volga region). At the same time, families of German colonists who were mobilized to the Russian army were treated as “reliable” and could stay where they lived.³⁶

Moreover, immediately after the declaration of war, foreigners from all enemy nations were denounced and told to leave the country; “neutrality” was inconceivable in the eyes of both the state and society. The Kyiv governor immediately ordered that all German and Austro-Hungarian subjects be screened for “reliability,” and he stressed that German colonists from Radomyshl’ *uyezd* should be subjected to particular scrutiny as “they undoubtedly sympathized with the enemy.”³⁷

As a result of this radical policy, the consulates of the belligerent states were flooded with large crowds. International law mandated that all subjects of hostile states and the officers of their embassies and consulates were required to leave. French and German citizens besieged their consulates, demanding information and immediate passage home in order to join the Allied Army (in the French case) or because they were

³⁵ A. IU. Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional'naia politika v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–1917 gg)* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2004), 101.

³⁶ S. G. Nelipovich, "General ot infanterii N.N.Ianushkevich: “Nametskuiu pakost’ uvolit’, i bez nezhnostei...” Deportatsii v Rossii 1914–1918 gg.," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 1 (1997), 47, 51–52.

³⁷ TSDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 240, ark. 173-173zv; Vladimir Rozenberg, *Sovremennye pravootnosheniia k nepriyatel'skim poddannym: s prilozheniem uzakonenii po etomu predmetu* (Petrograd, 1915).

no longer welcome in Russia (in the German case).³⁸ The German consulate in Kyiv, however, did not receive its instructions from the embassy in Moscow in time and its officials were late to depart.³⁹ On July 25, the German consulate on Levashivs'ka Street was sealed by order of the commander of the KMD.⁴⁰ Pogroms were a serious danger and the German and Austro-Hungarian consulates were guarded by fortified police detachments.

On July 24, 1914, General Ivanov, the commander of the South-Western front, ordered the German consuls Erik Gering and Dragoman Roman Forner deported—along with their families—to the inner provinces of the Russian Empire, far from the front zone. They were sent to Menzelinsk in Ufa province and Sarapul' in Viatka province, respectively. The Secretary of the Consulate, Otto Gerold, was exiled to Malmyzh in Viatka province. Consular officials were told that they could leave the Russian Empire, but only via Finland or the Far East.⁴¹ While in Kyiv, they were under arrest, as was the Austro-Hungarian Consul Robert von Rein.⁴²

The campaign against enemy allies infiltrated Russian industrial and economic life as well, as the government worked to pivot Russia's economy from Germany to France and Britain.⁴³ The authorities implemented several decrees that liquidated the Russian subsidiaries of companies whose headquarters were located in the Central Powers, and inspectors also required all firms to terminate the employment of

³⁸ "Po konsul'stvam," 1256 (19 July 1914): 2.

³⁹ "V mestnykh konsul'stvakh," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1259 (22 July 1914): 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ TSDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 240, ark. 124.

⁴² *Ibid.*, ark. 130.

⁴³ "Osvobozhdenie ot germanskoj zavisimosti," *Kievlianin*, 246 (6 September 1914): 1-2.

“unreliable” Russian subjects of Jewish, German, or Polish origin.⁴⁴ Eric Lohr states that such sequestration and confiscation, part of the campaign against “enemy aliens,” became a new tool to nationalize the economy.⁴⁵ Indeed, in Kyiv the Sviatoshyn tram system was sequestered in autumn 1914, and in February 1915, military authorities ordered the nationalization of the electric company “Simmens and Gal’ske,” which provided electricity to the city.⁴⁶ Kyiv’s police sealed up the office of the company on Pushkins’ka Street and its factory on Velyka Vasyl’kivs’ka Street at the end of January 1915. Later, the company was permitted to operate, but only under the close watch of an officer appointed by Kyiv’s provincial administration.⁴⁷ At the same time, city authorities started to examine the ownership of the city tram company, as there were suggestions that it was owned by German banks.⁴⁸ In August, the administration of the Kyiv railway asked the Quartermaster General of the South-Western front to release the manager of Kyiv’s power station, as his arrest would inevitably stop city trams.⁴⁹ The Kyiv engineering plant “Gretel” and “KrivaneK” faced a similar problem when its administration petitioned for the release of director Emil’ Cheshlik.⁵⁰ “Loyalty tests” for employees of important city enterprises evidently changed the economic climate and strengthened the general atmosphere of suspicion and chaos.

⁴⁴ Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 73; “K sekvestu predpriatiia kievskogo elektricheskogo obshchestva,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 67 (8 March 1915): 3; “Sekvest predpriatiia kievskogo elektricheskogo obshchestva,” *Kiev*, 353 (4 January 1915): 3; “Kievskaiia nemetchina,” *Kiev*, 380 (31 January 1915): 3; “K sekvestu predpriatiia Simmens i Gal’ske,” *Kiev*, 381 (1 February 1915): 5; “K sekvestu osvetitel’nogo predpriatiia,” *Kiev*, 386 (1 February 1915): 5; “Likvidatsiia deiatel’nosti Kievskogo elektricheskogo obshchestva,” *Kiev*, 416 (8 March 1915): 5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 66. Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 66.

⁴⁶ “Vopros o sekveste elektricheskogo predriatiia,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1418 (30 December 1914): 4.

⁴⁷ TSDIAK, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 52, ark. 29-30; “K sekvestu predpriatiia Simmens i Gal’ske,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 32 (1 February 1915): 3.

⁴⁸ “Razsledovanie o kievskom tramvae,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 63 (4 March 1915): 3.

⁴⁹ TSDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 240, ark. 247.

⁵⁰ TSDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 240, ark. 249, 250, 253.

Starting at the end of July 1914, city authorities began to remove German signs from Kyiv's stores and offices.⁵¹ At the end of August, the governor of Kyiv province prohibited the installation of large commercial advertisements (including movie posters) that attracted crowds and limited free movement on streets and sidewalks. Hebrew and Yiddish were also totally prohibited in window advertisements, a catch-all strategy that was likely meant simply to reduce the censors' workloads; indeed, from the outset of the war, the censors had even confiscated correspondence written in these languages, and by April 1915, the commander of the KMD prohibited the publication and distribution of any material in Jewish languages.⁵² At the same time, the commander of the KMD prohibited the use of German, Hungarian, and Turkish in public, and in May 1915, the City Duma even ordered the names of "German-sounding" streets changed.⁵³ Thus, Novo-Nimets'ka (New German) Street was changed to Pecherska, and Sakson'sky Yar [Saxon Ravine] to Soliana [Salt] Street.⁵⁴ Although the local Ukrainian-language newspaper *Rada* urged its readers to forget old quarrels and support the government in its struggle with the enemy, it was closed during the first days of the war by order of the Commander of the KMD. It was clear that the government did not trust its national minorities.⁵⁵

Germanophobia was overwhelming and aimed to remove all "Germanness" from the Russian landscape. In October 1914, the Council of Ministers banned the children of Austrian, German, or Ottoman citizens from studying at state schools until they (or their

⁵¹ "Sniatie nemetskikh vyvesok," *Kievlianin*, 209 (31 July 1914): 3.

⁵² TSDIAK, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 94, ark. 20; "Rasporiazhenie gubernatora," *Kievlianin*, 230 (21 August 1914): 3.

⁵³ TSDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3259, ark. 74.

⁵⁴ DAK, f. 163, op. 39, spr. 512, ark. 19.

⁵⁵ Hamm, *Kiev*, 221; V. G. Sarbei, ed., *Istoriia Kyieva*, Vol. 2: Kyiv periodu pizn'ogo feodalizmu i kapitalizmu (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1986), 361.

parents) applied for Russian citizenship.⁵⁶ At the same time, educational, scientific, charitable, and other public institutions were ordered to expel all subjects of hostile states.⁵⁷ In February 1915, General Trotskii ordered all German, Austro-Hungarian (German, Hungarian, and Jewish), and Ottoman (Muslim and Jewish) subjects who were still living in the KMD, notwithstanding their gender or age, to leave the Russian Empire by March 28, 1915. They could travel through Finland or Romania's two border towns of Reni and Ungeni. Slavs and Turkish Christians were permitted to stay only if they adopted Russian citizenship; otherwise, they had until April 30, 1915 to leave the Empire.⁵⁸

Many German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman subjects were reluctant to leave, but the military authorities did not have resources to organize forced expulsion beyond the front zone. They resorted to drastic measures: on July 28, 1915, Governor-General Trepov ordered all business and property owners to report on the citizenship (German or Austro-Hungarian) of their employees or tenants. Subjects of belligerent states were ordered to leave Russia immediately, but those of Slavic origin (though also subjects of Germany or Austro-Hungary) could apply for citizenship.⁵⁹ On September 11, 1915, the commander of the KMD ordered all non-Slavic subjects of enemy states (excluding Galicians) expelled from Kyiv province, notwithstanding their age and gender or when they had arrived in the area. Though the Slavic population was seen as more "reliable" than non-Slavic Germans and Jews, they could still be enlisted in the enemy's army, so

⁵⁶ "Poddnye vrazhdebnykh gosudarstv," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1357 (28 October 1914): 2.

⁵⁷ DAK, f. 18, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 224; TSDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3259, ark. 46-47, 51.

⁵⁸ "K vyseleniiu inostrantsev," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1479 (1 March 1915): 2; TSDIAK, f. 274, op. 1, spr. 3259, ark. 46-47, 51; "Vyselenie inostrannykh poddanykh" *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 55 (24 February 1915): 3.

⁵⁹ TSDIAK, f. 280, op. 1, spr. 19, ark. 38, 84, 182, 209, 480, 676; "Obiazatel'noe postanovlenie," *Kievlianin*, 208 (30 July 1914): 1; "K voprosu o perekhode slavianskikh avstriiskikh poddanykh v russkoe poddnastvo," *Kievlianin*, 213 (4 August 1914): 3.

even male Slavic subjects of enemy states (again, excluding Galicians) aged 17 to 50—who could potentially be mobilized—were expelled.⁶⁰

Jewish Refugees, Expellees, and Hostages in Kyiv

As discussed in the previous chapter, martial law was immediately introduced in the western, north-western, south-western, and Vistula provinces of the Russian Empire. This meant that the civil administrations of those provinces were subordinated to the command of the corresponding military districts (in the case of Kyiv, General Nikolai Khodorovich commanded the KMD), and orders for expulsion and deportation of the Jewish population were issued by these authorities.

Waves of refugees coincided with military operations, as populations fled the front. The first military operations, and thus the first outflow of refugees, occurred in Radom, Lublin, Suwalki, Łomża, Grodno and Kalisz provinces, which were densely populated with Jews; 31% of Kalisz's population, for example, was Jewish.⁶¹ Their exodus was caused in part by fear of the enemy, but the arrival of the Russian army was hardly peaceful either. For example, "on August 12, Russian troops came to Izbitsa, Lublin province. Soon the Jewish population was accused of damaging the telephone communications. Fortunately, the situation was clarified. It turned out that a boy and his friends had taken the wire for a game. Someone advised them to tell the soldiers that the Jews had given the wire to him. The Jews were released [they had been put under arrest].

⁶⁰ "Ob"iavlenie kievskogo gubernatora," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1670 (12 September 1915): 4.

⁶¹ Jacob Lestchinsky, "The Jews in the Cities of the Republic of Poland," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science*, no. 1 (1946): 156–77, 165–166.

However, the Jewish population began to leave Izbitsa, and on August 17, the entire population left the city after a fire broke out in the village.”⁶² In August and September 1914, accusations of Jewish espionage on behalf of the Austro-Hungarian or German armies grew more frequent, and the Russian military command also started to expel the Jewish population from Radom and Lublin provinces, as well as the Modlin [Novogeorgievskaiia krepost’] and Ivangorod Fortress and their precincts.⁶³

In January 1915, the Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters (Stavka) General Nikolai Ianushkevich, ordered Jews and [other] suspects to be removed from regions of military operation, “should even one Jew be suspected of espionage.”⁶⁴ One week later, General Mavrin, the general quartermaster of the South-Western front, sent a telegram to Georgii Bobrinskii, the General Governor of Galicia and Bukovina. He explained:

The experience of the war has proved the hostility of the Jewish population of Poland, Galicia and Bukovina to us [the Russian army]. Each regrouping of forces, which causes temporary abandonment of territories, entails harsh enemy measures towards the [local] population that sympathized with us. The Jews incite the Austrians and Germans against [our sympathizers]. In order to protect the loyal population from atrocities, and our troops from Jewish espionage, the Supreme Commander ordered [...] the Jews to be expelled after the retreat of the enemy and [or] to take the most prosperous Jews or those that occupy public or other posts hostage.⁶⁵

Jews who were expelled from Galicia and Bukovina were allowed to stay on the left bank of the Dnieper with the permission of the Minister of the Interior, but they were

⁶² Quoted in Zlatina, "Problema evreiskogo bezhenstva v Rossii v period Pervoi mirovoi voyny," 29.

⁶³ "Dokumenty o presledovanii evreev," in *Arkhiv Russkoi Revoliutsii*, ed. I. V. Gessen (Moskva: TERRA, 1993), 19-20:247.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-20:247–249; TsDIAK, f. 361, op.1, spr. 674, ark. 4, 5, 15, 17, 77-78, 80, 84, 75, 101; Alexander Victor Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914-1920*, Judaic studies series (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

⁶⁵ "Dokumenty o presledovanii evreev," 19-20:251–252; An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*, 52; An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*, 52; An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*, 52.

allowed no closer than 200 *verst* (around 213 km) from the army headquarters.⁶⁶ The military command warned Jews that they were guilty of slander and responsible for inciting the hostile armies' violence against civilians. At the same time, according to the order of General Mavrin from January 25, 1915, the military command had to "inspire confidence in the local population that these measures are taken for their security; and this is a result of six months of patience and persistent disloyalty and cruelty of the local Jewish population."⁶⁷ Thus, the Russian command tried to present its deeds in a positive light and to impose its own mindset on the local Gentile population.

Hostages constituted a separate group of displaced people. Immediately after the occupation of Galicia and Bukovyna, Russian military authorities forced Jews to pay a kind of ransom (allowing them to stay) and took hostages (instead of simply expelling them). Officials of former-Austrian state institutions and representatives of the local elite were the main targets of this approach, with the motive being the alleged collective responsibility of the Jewish communities from which the hostages were taken. Thus, the hostages were responsible for the supposed deeds of their entire culture, and both—hostages and communities—were treated as "dangerous." Russia was not the only country to take such hostages. Austria-Hungary and Italy similarly used confinement ("forced residence") to control more well-to-do aliens, who were put under police surveillance in certain towns and villages.⁶⁸ The purpose of such confinement was

⁶⁶ B. D. Gal'perina, ed., *Osoby zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii: 1915 god* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2008), 305.

⁶⁷ TsDIAK, f. 361, op.1, spr. 647, ark. 50; for more on the expulsion of the Jewish population, see Przemysł, J. B. Chołodecki, *Lwów w czasie okupacji rosyjskiej (3 września 1914 – 22 czerwca 1915). Z własnych przeżyć i spostrzeżeń* (Lwów: Nakł. Redakcji wydawnictwa "Wschód", 1930), 139–40.

⁶⁸ Stibbe, "Enemy Aliens, Deportees, Refugees: Internment Practices in the Habsburg Empire, 1914-1918," 485-486.

“combatting domestic subversion” and individuals under arrest were seen as “dangerous.”

Beginning in May 1915, the Russian military command started to take hostages from Jewish communities in the front zone, but they did not have to relocate; this helped prevent further overcrowding in the provinces, which had already accommodated thousands of deported Jews (particularly Poltava and Katerynoslav provinces). The Office of the Governor General compiled lists of potential hostages; once in custody, they had to sign a written declaration that in the case of espionage or assistance to the enemy by a member of their community, they would be executed. The order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army from November 1914 stated that “Two hostages will answer [be executed] for every denunciation by civilians to the enemy power or for every Jew caught as a spy.”⁶⁹ The property of the hostages was sequestered—that is, transferred to the state—until the end of the war, which in practice meant confiscation. Moreover, any civilians who showed even slight hostility to the government or were suspected of espionage had their property confiscated as well.⁷⁰

In Lviv, the Russian military command took hostages from the population several times. The first was in early September 1914; the second occurred after the pogrom on September 27, 1914, while the third occurred on June 20, 1915, when Russian troops were evacuating the city. At the end of June 1915, the Russian military command took 40 hostages from Lviv: 12 Poles, 10 Ukrainians, and 15 Jews. Three vice presidents of the

⁶⁹ "Dokumenty o presledovanii evreev," 19-20:251–252; Lohr, "The Russian Army and the Jews: Mass Deportations, Hostages, and Violence during World War I," 413.

⁷⁰ TsDIAK, f. 361, op. 1, spr. 674, ark. 41; spr. 906, ark. 2–3; f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 53, ark. 10.

city were also among them: Tadeusz Rutowski, Leonard Stahl, and Filip Schleicher.⁷¹ The hostages of Lviv's Jewish community included Adolf Beck (a doctor of medicine and a professor of the Lviv University), Bernard Breitman (a merchant), Jakób Diamand (a lawyer), Szymon Feller (a landlord), Salo Goldfrucht (owner of the vodka distillery), Artur Goldmann (owner of a publishing house), Leon Goldmann (a restaurant owner), Berl Mischl (a merchant), Maurycy Oberlender (a pharmacist), Samuel Pordes (a merchant), Jakób Reich (a lawyer), Izaak Shore (a merchant), Jakób Schreiher (a merchant), Mojżesz Sekler (a merchant), and Oswald Zion (an ophthalmologist). On June 23, 1915, the hostages from Lviv arrived in Kyiv in freight cars. There they were separated into two groups—Christian and Jewish—and put into so-called “custody houses” [*arestnyi dom*]. The hostages were finally released in September 1915 and given permission to rent private apartments in Kyiv. However, under the threat of approaching German troops, the hostages were soon deported to Nizhny Novgorod.⁷²

In addition to these hostages from Lviv, Kyiv was also a transit city for hostages en route to Tomsk, Tambov, Penza, Kazan, and other cities and towns of the remote eastern provinces of the Russian Empire. Usually, they lived in Kyiv's “custody houses” for one or two months before being transferred. The local Jewish community paid the rent for the custody houses and supported them financially. KOPE (the Kyiv Jewish Society to Aid the Victims of War) and the Committee on Local Needs [*Komissiiia*

⁷¹ J. B. Chołodecki, "Rosyjskie rabunki we Lwowie 1914-1915," *Panteon Polski* 44 (Maj) (1928): 7–8. After 1867, Lviv/Lemberg was headed by a President.

⁷² Chołodecki, *Lwów w czasie okupacji rosyjskiej (3 września 1914 – 22 czerwca 1915). Z własnych przeżyć i spostrzeżeń*, 165–67; J. B. Chołodecki, *Zakładnicy miasta Lwowa w niewoli rosyjskiej 1915-1918: Z fotograficzna odbitką zakładników* (Lwów, 1930), 10-11, 17, 100-102; Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny pro nedavnie mynule (1914-1920 rr)* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2007), 54–55; “Osvobozhdenie iz-pod strazhi zalozhnikov,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 205 (26 July 1915): 2; “O zalozhnikakh,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1649 (22 August 1915): 4; An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*, 134.

mestnykh nuzhd], for example, maintained the custody house for Jewish hostages at Lvivs'ka Street, which consisted of five rooms for 25 to 30 people. KOPE also paid the salary of three police officers who were needed to guard the hostages. Thirty-eight hostages from Galicia lived in this custody house from February to March 1915, after which this number dropped to eighteen.⁷³

Some hostages were moved back and forth. For example, three officials from Chernivtsi—a member of the Reichsrat Bazil Duzinkevych, prosecutor L. Norbert, and the *burgomaster* of Chernivtsi Solomon Weisselberg—were first taken as hostages on September 15, 1914 and sent to Kyiv. Afterwards, they were sent to Tomsk before returning to Kyiv in February 1915. In contrast to refugees, however, these hostages were well-to-do; they traveled by passenger train and lived in hotels, comforts that they apparently paid for out of their own pocket. When they arrived in Kyiv in February 1915, it was under the guard of two police officers, and they chose to stay at the Regina Hotel on Oleksandrivs'ka Street.⁷⁴ Finally, in November 1915, the Russian command exchanged hostages. Duzinkevych, Norbert and Weisselberg were released and the Austrians released several Russian internees in exchange.⁷⁵

Information about these Galicians of “different ranks and estates” arriving in Kyiv started to appear in the newspapers at the beginning of August 1914.⁷⁶ On August 1, for example, Kyiv's Chief of Police informed the mayor that “he receives petitions every day from families who were expelled from the border regions. Due to their poverty, [they] ask

⁷³ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 78, ark. 10—17; spr. 151, ark. 11-12.

⁷⁴ Iulius Veber, *Rosiis'ka okupatsiia Chernivtsiv*, edited by Serhii Osadchuk (Chernivtsi: Vydavnytstvo XXI, 2016), 51—53, 106, 108; “Vozvraschenie iz Tomska,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 52 (21 February 1915): 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁶ “Ob”iavlennie Kievskogo gubernatora,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1670 (12 September 1915): 4.

for temporary accommodation.”⁷⁷ The Polizeimeister asked for permission to use the former office of the registrar [*adresnyi stol*] as a shelter. On September 12, the Kyiv governor clarified that minors whose parent(s) were either Russian subjects or of Slavic origin could stay in Kyiv province.⁷⁸ Refugees from Galicia and Bukovyna moved east in so-called “general” (the lowest class) or freight cars. They could also be granted special permission to travel at their own expense in order to “improve” their travel conditions. For example, Doctor G. Ebner, an Austro-Hungarian subject who was arrested in Chernivtsi, was delivered to Kyiv and jailed at the Starokyivsky police department in January 1915. He was able to arrange his own transportation to Tomsk province.⁷⁹

The relocation or expulsion of enemy aliens was evidently causing logistical headaches for local authorities. On September 15, 1914, the chief adjutant of the headquarters of the KMD, General Nikolai Dukhonin, reported to the commander that 2,000 enemy aliens and former residents of the borderlands were now living at the site of the former Kyiv exhibition. Previously, they had resided in the Contract House in Podil. The Kyiv exhibition site was especially inadequate in winter, lacking water, sewage facilities, and shelter. Dukhonin stressed the site’s unsanitary conditions, the risk of an epidemic, and its proximity to a military hospital as reasons for the refugees to be resettled. Moreover, he argued that the accumulation of a large number of “unreliables” in one place could provoke violence from Kyiv’s thoroughly Germanophobic population.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ “Pomosch vyseliyamym iz pogranychnykh gorodov,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 209 (1 August 1914): 2.

⁷⁸ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 864, spr. 240, ark. 325; “Bezhtentsy,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1692 (28 September 1915): 2; “Bezhtentsy,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1684 (20 September 1915): 3.

⁷⁹ “Vysylka inostrannogo poddanogo,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1420 (1 January 1915): 5.

⁸⁰ TsDIAK, f. 442, op. 667, spr. 4, ark. 254.

The local press, however, usually differentiated between refugees and deportees/expellees. The first term was used mostly to identify Galician and Bukovynian peasants, who had left the region voluntarily looking for safety and work; the second was reserved for Jews, Germans, and “mazepists.” For example, on February 21, 1915, *Kievskaiia Mysl'* reported that “several groups of Galicians and Bukovynians, who escaped from the Russians [Russian troops] during their last offensive near Stanislavov, arrived in Kyiv. The peasants escaped from the villages located near the border of Galicia and Bukovyna. Initially, they joined a military field hospital and later they joined a group of POWs travelling to L'vov. They stayed there for several days, received permission to go to Russia and arrived in Kyiv. They plan to find a job here.”⁸¹ Another report stated that, “Yesterday, a new group of convicts [*etap*] from Galicia arrived in Kiev; it consisted of 33 people, men, women and children; they were arrested for various reasons in the occupied territories [Galicia and Bukovyna] and expelled by the order of the Governor General of Galicia to Tomsk Province.”⁸² This movement of people became an everyday reality, visible at railway stations and in city streets.

Dmytro Doroshenko, who would go into exile in 1919 and later became a well-known Ukrainian émigré historian, noted that the deportees and expellees were treated as criminals, regardless of ethnicity. He wrote in his memoirs,

...from September 3, 1914, the “criminals” of the special category started to arrive at Kyiv’s police stations. Every day, the trains, which came from the west, brought to Kyiv dozens and hundreds of people of both genders, of various ages, social positions, and professions. Crowds of people, under the armed guards, were walking along the city streets. Among them we could see the robes of the priests, the hats and coats of

⁸¹ “Bezhtensy iz Galicii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 52 (21 February 1915): 3.

⁸² “Bezhtensy iz Galitsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 136 (18 May 1915): 4; “Iz Galitsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 69 (10 March 1915): 3; 72 (13 March 1915): 3; “Galitsiiskie chinovniki i deiateli,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 73 (14 March 1915): 2; “Iz Galitsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 21 (21 January 1915): 2.

the intelligentsia, the *sardaks* and *keptars* of the Hutsul peasants, the red scarves of the women. It was a real ethnographic exhibition. They all were imprisoned in the police stations with the criminals.⁸³

The deportees came fast and furious. A group of 41 people, who were arrested in Galicia and were on their way to Tomsk, arrived on January 9. The next group of 21 people arrived on January 17, another on January 21.⁸⁴ Several days later, there came a group of 33 people—“men, women, and children.”⁸⁵ They were all identified as “arrested” or “detained” in Galicia, mostly without specifying their ethnicity or religion. On February 9, a group of “Ruthenians, Hutsuls and others” (totalling 62 people) arrived in Kyiv.⁸⁶ From April 1915, however, the groups of deportees became more “Jewish.” For example, on April 22, a group of 147 people arrived, 100 of whom were Jews. That evening, an additional 60 to 70 arrived, and the next day 86 more “unreliable people from Galicia” came to Kyiv. On April 28, 14 more people, “including one rabbi,” arrived in the city, and around 90 Galician Jews were sent from Kyiv to Kazan on April 29.⁸⁷

On May 19, 359 Jewish deportees with their wives and children arrived in Kyiv from Kovno province. They stayed in freight cars at the Kiev-Passenger railway station. According to *Kievskaiia Mysl'*,

All of them left their homes on 5 May, and after travelling for a week, they came to Lubny... Here they spent almost a week, having support from the local Jewish community. Then, in view of the information that all deportees were allowed to return to their homes, all 359 deportees left

⁸³ Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny pro nedavnie mynule (1914-1920 rr)*, 42.

⁸⁴ “Sbor produktov dlia galichan,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 9 (9 January 1915): 3; “Vchera iz Galitsii,” 17 (17 January 1915): 3; “Vchera iz Galitsii,” 21 (21 January 1915): 3

⁸⁵ “Vchera iz Galitsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 26 (26 January 1915): 2; 32 (1 February 1915): 3; “Cherez Kiev,” 88 (30 March 1915): 2.

⁸⁶ “Novaia partiia iz Galitsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 40 (9 February 1915): 2; “Etap iz Galitsii,” 46 (15 February 1915): 2; “Novaia partiia,” 61 (2 March 1915): 2; “V Tomskuiu guberniiu,” 64 (5 March 1915): 3; “Etap,” 69 (10 March 1915): 3; 72 (13 March 1915): 3; 89 (31 March 1915): 3; 92 (3 April 1915): 3.

⁸⁷ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 50, ark. 13-15; “Iz Galitsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 111 (22 April 1915): 3; 112 (23 April 1915): 3; 117 (28 April 1915): 2; 118 (29 April 1915): 3.

Lubny. They had to stay in Kyiv, because information about the conditions of their return to their homes was not entirely clear. Now this party is divided into two groups; one of them has been sent to Berdychiv, and the other one — to Bila Tserkva. The deportees are leaving to their places of residence with the assistance of the Kyiv Jewish Committee of Aid to the Victims of the War, which provided them with food and medical care at the railway station. The majority of the deportees are poor people; there are many artisans and workers among them.⁸⁸

Groups of expellees were usually accompanied by a representative of a Jewish relief organization. In Kyiv, for example, the local Committee for Evacuation [*evakuatsionnaia komissiia*] met the refugees and expellees, and decided where to rehouse them—in Kyiv itself, or in other nearby cities and towns.⁸⁹

The expellees had been arriving in Kyiv by train and via the Dnieper on steam boats, and in August 1915, the Ministry of Transport issued an order declared that all refugees could be transferred free of charge. The circular explained that “individuals and their families, who have been expelled from the front zone by order of the military command, those who have been stopped on their way [to their new place of settlement], can travel to the place of their destination for free.”⁹⁰ The order’s timing was fortuitous: the summer of 1915 saw the height of Jewish deportations from Galicia and Bukovyna. The Russian army was retreating from the territories that it had occupied in 1914. Suffering considerable losses during the joint Austro-German offensive, the Russian command ordered the implementation of a scorched-earth policy, which targeted everything that could be used by the enemy, including the civilian population. Masses of local civilians, especially Jews, Germans, and Ukrainians, were deported. If Vitebsk and Minsk were close to the front and thus the nearest safe place for settlement of the Jewish

⁸⁸ “Vyselentsyy,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 141 (23 May 1915): 2.

⁸⁹ “Vyseliaemye,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 151 (2 June 1915): 3.

⁹⁰ “Bezplatnyi provoz bezhentssev,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika* 1635 (8 August 1915): 4.

refugees from the Polish provinces; Chernihiv, Poltava, Katerynoslav, and Tavia (without the Crimean peninsula) were the only provinces in the Pale that were not under military rule and thus they were the only legally valid destinations for Jewish deportees from Galicia and Bukovyna.⁹¹ When the Pale was extended in August 1915, Samara, Tambov, Kazan, and Penza also became legally accessible to Jewish refugees and deportees, though with some limitations, as noted in the previous chapter.

The massive movement of people in the summer of 1915 wrought even more chaos than usual. On July 29, 1915, Serhiy Shlykevych, the chairman of the South-Western Committee of the All-Russian Zemstvo Union (VZS), informed Prince Georgii L'vov, the chairman of the VZS, that in Kyiv “nobody knows where to direct refugees from Galicia and the Russian provinces.” Trains loaded with deportees usually stayed in the city for several days. Moreover, “nobody takes care of their accommodation, because the civil and military authorities think that Kyiv has to be free of this element.”⁹² Indeed, dozens of groups of Galician Jews passed through the city from July 25 to September 9, 1915, some as large as 1,000 people. Representatives of KOPE met them in Kyiv and later accompanied them to their resettlement places and provided food. Even when Jewish and Christian refugees were mixed together in trains, KOPE fed everyone, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also to mitigate potential hostility. Even once they had been assigned new places to live, refugees had to be ready to relocate. Refugees moved back and forth, depending on the decision of the military command and the administration of the various Russian provinces, which were often already overcrowded with refugees and deportees (for example, Poltava and Katerynoslav) and might refuse to

⁹¹ Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 173; Gal'perina, *Osobyie zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii*, 305-306, 364.

⁹² TsDIAK, f. 715, op. 1, spr. 32, ark. 33-35.

accept more.⁹³ Some groups were transported *from* Penza and Tambov provinces back to Galicia, because the military command had revised its Jewish deportation policy, in part because of logistical problems caused by mass expulsions.

The overwhelming movement of peoples is exemplified by just a few days in August 1915. For example, in the afternoon of August 16, 1915, a group of 1,024 Galician Jewish refugees arrived from Penza, and another group of 720 Galician Jews arrived that evening. They received food but left the same day. On August 18, a group of 920 Galician Jews went through Kyiv, and the next day, a much smaller group of 40 arrived and stayed in the city for four days. Soon thereafter, a group of 80 Galicians from Tambov spent the night at the synagogue on Zhylians'ka Street.⁹⁴

With so many people arriving in Kyiv, the city was bursting at the seams. The correspondent for *Kievskaiia Mysl'* reported on July 25 that “over the last several days, [we] can observe crowds of people who have arrived in Kyiv from western regions and are going beyond the Dnieper. Every day, there are several thousand such passengers at the railway station. They occupy the floors in all of the halls, platforms, corridors and passages; and they stay there one, two, three days, or even longer.” These were evacuees who had left the border regions of the Russian Empire, fleeing the war. The railways, however, could not accommodate their huge numbers, and they had to stay in the city. In contrast to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, there were no refugee camps in Russia, and solutions had to be improvised. The administration of the South-Western Railways established barracks, where people could get hot water and cheap food.⁹⁵ They were used

⁹³ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 20, ark. 140-141, 143, 145; spr. 303, ark.1-2.

⁹⁴ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 84, ark. 1—3.

⁹⁵ “Na vokzale,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 202 (25 July 1914): 2.

as temporary shelters for those who briefly stayed in Kyiv. Though they were seen as a potential public health threat, refugees could not easily be segregated from the local population. Even hostages could walk around the city and visit friends, who often lived in temporary housing for refugees.

Table 4. Groups of Jewish Refugees, Expellees, and Deportees that came through Kyiv, May-November 1915⁹⁶

| Month | Big Groups | Individuals | Applied for Aid to KOPE |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| May | 1,712 | 59 | - |
| July | 1,282 | 131 | - |
| August | 5,125 | 797 | 523 |
| September | 240 and 800 | 1,269 | 1500 |
| October | 1,066 | 900 | 787 |
| November | 298 | 559 | 541 |
| December | - | 391 | 667 |
| TOTAL | 10,523 | 4,099 | 4,018 |

For the refugees, the upheaval was overwhelming. Many tried to stay as close to their homes as possible. Moreover, they preferred not to leave the Pale, where they could communicate with their co-religionists, find a synagogue, or simply talk to their rabbi. They were tired and wanted to settle; unknown cultural and economic situations were indeed frightening. A correspondent for the Jewish journal *Pomoshch* [Help] argued that Siberia and other distant provinces were particularly terrifying, as they were associated with exile and deportation. Negative attitudes to remote Russian provinces were additionally strengthened by stories from “fugitives,” refugees who were sent far away

⁹⁶ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 50, ark. 5-6.

from the front zone but “escaped,” for “the unknown places, where no man has gone before, frightened them.” Many became “professional beggars” and wandered “with a certificate of refugee status,” looking for free food rations and accommodation.⁹⁷

The right of residence for the Jewish refugees was defined by the same rules that existed before the war. Initially, refugees could not settle in Kyiv. Though this was not new to “Russian” Jews, who were well aware of residence limitations, many Galician and Bukovynian Jews, who came to Kyiv as expellees or even hostages, were shocked. In February 1915, the Kyiv provincial administration [*Kievskoe gubernskoe pravlenie*] received a number of petitions from Jewish refugees who came from the Polish provinces asking for permission to settle in the city until the end of the war. The administration declined them all, explaining that in the future all similar petitions would be declined without consideration.⁹⁸

Many refugees, however, settled in Kyiv illegally. In September 1915, after the influx of Jewish refugees to Kyiv from May to August 1915, the command of the KMD started to “cleanse” Kyiv province of the “undesirable and unreliable element.” According to KOPE, the city then held 3,600 Jewish refugees, and a huge number were removed to Astrakhan, Kherson, and Orel provinces.⁹⁹ Refugees moved from Kyiv, Poltava, and Chernihiv provinces in October 1915 were resettled primarily in the urban centers of Nizhnii Novgorod, Tambov, Penza, Saratov, Kharkiv, and Voronezh provinces (35,940 in total).¹⁰⁰ On September 28, 1915, for example, a large group of 689 Galician Jews was sent by train from Kyiv to Novgorod. All the deportees (including 162 women

⁹⁷ “Stranniki,” *Pomoshch*, no. 1 (24 December 1915): 21; DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 41, ark. 2.

⁹⁸ “Khodataistva bezhentshev-evreev,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1460 (10 February 1915): 2.

⁹⁹ “O razselenii bezhentshev,” *Pomoshch*, no. 1 (24 December 1915): 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

and 88 children) had been arrested in Galicia as “unreliable” and moved to Kyiv, where they lived for several months in two private detention facilities, equipped by Kyiv’s Jewish community, at 37 Konstantynivs’ka Street and 62 Kyrlyivs’ka Street (both in Podil district).¹⁰¹ However, the removal of Jewish refugees and expellees from Kyiv did not mean that new refugees did not arrive to replace them. Between August and October 1916, KOPE registered 1,800 more Jewish refugees and expellees who were moving through Kyiv, the majority from Volynia. Additionally, during the final months of 1916, Galician deportees and expellees from the border territories of Podolia province (Sataniv) started to return home in large numbers, with the permission of the military command. In September 1916, 131 Jewish deportees went to Russian Galicia and 60 expellees to Sataniv. Eighty-one refugees from Stolin (Minsk province) were also sent from Kyiv to Odesa and Rostov.¹⁰² Thus, although the movement of Jewish refugees, expellees and deportees was not as massive and intensive as it had been from May to September 1915, it hardly stopped after October 1915.

KOPE dealt mostly with the Jewish population en route to the Russian provinces, where the Ministry of the Interior had decided to settle them; with the relocated Jewish population in Galicia, Bukovyna, Volynia, Podolia, Chernihiv and Kyiv province; and with “transit” refugees, who had left their homes in the territory occupied by the enemy and were wandering from one place to another.¹⁰³ The most notable KOPE activists who left Kyiv to work in Galicia and Bukovyna were Fridrikh Lander, a military doctor, Semen An-sky, who worked for the VZS and KOPE, David Fainberg, who headed a

¹⁰¹ “Vysylka galitsiiskikh evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 270 (29 September 1915): 2; 275 (4 October 1915): 2.

¹⁰² “Bezhtentsy,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 284 (12 October 1916): 2.

¹⁰³ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 7, ark. 1-7; spr. 219, ark. 14-15; spr. 78, ark. 1-4, 10-12, 14-17; spr. 172, ark. 2-6; spr. 283, ark. 1-4; spr. 19, ark. 1-2; spr. 151, ark. 10-23; spr. 151, ark. 6, 19, 21, 26, 41, 43, 57, 61, 68, 90; spr. 20, ark. 166; spr. 284, ark. 1-5; spr. 168, ark. 11-12.

relief committee in Lviv, founded with the help of KOPE, and S. Gomel'skii, who spent two years working with refugees and expellees in Galicia.¹⁰⁴

The majority of the deportees moving through Kyiv were from Galicia and Bukovyna. By contrast, most of the Jewish refugees came from the north-western and Polish provinces. There were 211,691 registered Jewish refugees and expellees in the Russian Empire in September 1916.¹⁰⁵ According to EKOPO's statistics, by November 1916, the number of Jewish refugees in Kyiv province registered by KOPE had reached 5,540 people. The majority were receiving financial support from KOPE [*izhdeventsy*]. Although the number of refugees in Kyiv dropped by January 1916, it remained substantial. According to KOPE, around 3,000 refugees needed support in 1916.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, local Jewish orphanages and kindergartens also sheltered some 600 children.¹⁰⁷ The majority of Jewish refugees in Kyiv province were women and children (34 and 33.5%), while men constituted 32.5% of refugees. This discrepancy in the figures can be explained by the military mobilization of the male population.¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, the sources do not show what percentage of the people moving through Kyiv were Jews. However, historian Liubov Zhvanko states that 24,192 refugees of all nationalities lived in Kyiv in November 1916.¹⁰⁹ In September 1916, Kyiv province hosted 2,309 Jewish refugees and expellees, and assuming the number was more or less the same in

¹⁰⁴ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 151, ark. 13; I. A. Serheeva, *Arkhivna spadshchyna Semena An-s'koho u fondakh Natsional'noi biblioteky Ukrainy V. I. Vernads'koho* (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2006), 29–50; Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, Stanford studies in Jewish history and culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*.

¹⁰⁵ G. Prusakov, "Sostav i razselenie bezentsev i vyselentsev-evreev," *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 1-2 (20 January 1917): 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 151, ark. 16.

¹⁰⁷ "K statistike bezhentsev," *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 12 (20 November, 1916): 49-54.

¹⁰⁸ "Bezhtentsy," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 307 (4 November 1916): 5.

¹⁰⁹ Liubov Zhvanko, *Bizhenstvo Pershoi svitovoi viiny v Ukraini: Dokumenty i materialy (1914-1918 rr)* (Kharkiv: KhNAMH, 2009), 42.

November, we can estimate that Jews constituted around 9.5% of all refugees who moved through Kyiv in 1916. A year earlier, this percentage was much higher.

Table 5. Place of Origin and Number of Jewish Refugees and Expellees. Kyiv province, 1916¹¹⁰

| Place of Origin (province) | Number (June 1916) | Number (September 1916) |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Kovno | 561 | 669 |
| Cholm | 330 | 533 |
| Volynia | 255 | 449 |
| Grodno | 88 | 155 |
| Lublin | 83 | 100 |
| Łomża | 63 | 66 |
| Vilno | 12 | 19 |
| Minsk | 12 | 15 |
| Courland | 9 | 24 |
| Vitebsk | 6 | 6 |
| Suvalki | 4 | 13 |
| Podol'sk | 4 | 7 |
| Warsaw | 4 | 25 |
| Livonia | - | - |
| Other | 36 | 102 |
| Undefined | 110 | 126 |
| Total | 1,577 (1.3% of all refugees in the whole empire) | 2,309 (1.1 % of all refugees in the whole empire) |

Refugees were not only transferred via Kyiv to other places of resettlement. Some, for example, came from provincial towns to buy food at lower prices from a KOPE-established store. Former Jewish communal workers (rabbis, slaughterers, cantors, and teachers in traditional schools) who were forced to leave their places of permanent

¹¹⁰ G. Prusakov, "Sostav i razselenie bezentsev i vyselentsev-evreev," *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 1 (1 June 1916): 1-7; *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 1-2 (20 January 1917):11-14.

residence were often fully reliant on local aid societies, and the city offered more opportunities for such charity.¹¹¹ Another category of Jewish “refugees” were those who came to Kyiv for medical care. They might sell their food ration at their previous place of settlement in order to get money to go to Kyiv, which as a big city, offered better medical services, better chances to find work, and more generous food rations and financial assistance. A bigger Jewish community was another draw of bigger cities, though Jews might also face greater competition on the labour market, higher prices, and the indifference of the local population.¹¹²

These waves of refugees led to price increases for everyday essentials, which reduced the local population’s standard of living. Competition on the labour market also destroyed the petty trades which, in turn, worsened the attitude towards refugees in general and towards Jews in particular; they were accused of causing high prices, concealing gold rubles, or spying for the enemy.¹¹³ In a report for internal use, the Jewish Committee stated that “the [local] workers [showed] a rather negative attitude towards the refugees; the workers saw them as competitors, who reduced wages in the local [labour] market, when the prices of necessities has almost doubled.”¹¹⁴ Donations to KOPE and other local charitable institutions that worked with the refugees dropped.¹¹⁵ Even the so-called “professional poor” [*professional’nye bedniaki*], who had lived on charity since before the war, were competing with refugees, and they grew hostile when the latter were treated better.

¹¹¹ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 78, ark. 2.

¹¹² G. Prusakov, “Sostav i razselenie bezentsev i vyselentsev-evreev,” *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 1 (1 June 1916): 1–7.

¹¹³ Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire*, 137; “Iz odnoi ankety,” *Delo pomoschi*, no.7 (1916): 15.

¹¹⁴ “Iz odnoi ankety,” *Delo pomoshchi*, no.7 (1916): 15; “Iz Kievskogo raiona,” *Delo pomoschi*, no.3 (1 June 1916): 36–37.

¹¹⁵ “Iz Kievskogo raiona,” *Delo pomoschi*, no.3 (1 June 1916): 36–37.

Yet life was hardly easy for Jewish refugees. In terms of occupation, the majority of refugees who turned to Jewish relief organizations were artisans (53.8%)—the largest number working as shoemakers or tailors—and traders and clerks (34.7%), who could not adjust to changing economic conditions and needed temporary financial and juridical support, for example, in order to start new businesses in their new place of residence.¹¹⁶ They had lived mostly in small towns, where the customers were less fastidious than in a big urban center like Kyiv, and they needed more money and improved skills to manage in their new setting. In February 1916, the Labour Bureau, which was a department of KOPE but worked only with Jewish refugees who settled in Kyiv, registered 415 Jews who were looking for work, as well as 76 employers. Ultimately, only 54 refugees (13%) found work that month.¹¹⁷

Adjustment to these new living conditions and to the new status of “expellee” or “refugee” was very difficult for Jews and non-Jews who were forced by the military command to leave their homes. The need to change profession according to the demands of the labour market led to the loss of previous social status, especially as many local firms and individuals used the refugees and expellees as a cheap labour force.¹¹⁸ In his memoirs Doroshenko described Contract Square in Podil during the summer of 1915 as resembling a “slave market somewhere in Kaffa or Kozlov in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries: crowds of people of different ages and genders are sitting and lying near the

¹¹⁶ “Sostav i razselenie bezentsev i vyselentsev-evreev,” “Kreditnaia pomosch bezentsam-evreiam cherez posredstvo Ssudo-Sberegatel’nykh tovarishestv po danym na 1 maia 1916,” *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 2 (1916): 11, 15—22; G. Prusakov, “Professional’nyi sostav bezhentsev-evreev,” *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 12 (20 November, 1916): 4-6.

¹¹⁷ “Delo pomoshchi v Kievskom raione,” *Delo pomoschi*, no.1 (1 June 1916): 12; “V evreiskom biuro truda,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 356 (24 December 1915): 2.

¹¹⁸ “Iz odnoi ankety,” *Delo pomoschi*, no.7 (1916): 11-14.

horse-carts; the merciful Kyiv dwellers are coming to choose people for service.”¹¹⁹ *Kievskaiia mysl'* stated that the city's Christian population, along with the municipal government and local public organizations, was indifferent towards the Galicians because they were the subjects of a hostile state and thus enemy aliens.¹²⁰ At the same time, refugees and expellees who were “lucky” enough to stay in Kyiv were often easy victims for criminals. *Iuzhnaia Kopeika* stressed the danger of the city for women in particular, who could be easily forced into prostitution. Although a Society for the Protection of Women existed in Kyiv, the author described its activity as insufficient and called for the establishment of a special bureau under the aegis of city administrators, which would take care of women as a “special category of refugees.”¹²¹

War and deportations also inevitably affected the religious life of the Jewish community. Under harsh living conditions and enormous material pressure, Jewish refugees and deportees could not perform the basic practices of Judaism such as Sabbath observance, *kashrut*, and family purity (in the absence of ritual baths or *mikvehs*). Jews who were lucky enough to find a job had to work regardless of what day of the week it was, especially if the employer was not a Jew. Rabbi Ya'akov Landa, who also had been expelled and spent several months with the Jewish communities in Voronezh, Tambov, Penza, Saratov, and Samara, noted that the activists of the Jewish relief organizations, to which the Jewish refugees and deportees turned for support, tended to be “very distant

¹¹⁹ Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny pro nedavnie mynule (1914-1920 rr)*, 51.

¹²⁰ “U galichan,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 174 (25 June 1915): 3; 176 (7 July 1915): 2.

¹²¹ “Letuchiia zametki,” *Iuzhnaia Kopeika* 1669 (11 September 1915): 2.

from the ways of Judaism.”¹²² However, in his view, it was economic dislocation that posed the greatest threat:

While one son is employed in the shop of a non-Jew and does his work on the Sabbath as on any workday, the second son [works] for one of the [native] Jewish residents and does his work on the Sabbath like on any weekday, and sometimes their father, too, is like that. It should thus not be surprising that the feelings of holiness of the Jewish people on the Sabbath day are lost from their memories. [...] It is self-evident that public desecration of the Sabbath is a growing plague (Merciful One be with them!) that is enveloping more and more [Jews] in its net—may God grant them atonement.¹²³

Orthodox rabbis had cause for anxiety, as traditional Jewish life was gradually disintegrating. Jewish refugees and deportees were not simply dislocated; they were taken by force from habitual *shtetl* life and brought to the city with all its dangers. Nevertheless, the Jewish refugees still tried to keep kosher during high holidays, such as Passover. KOPE’s activists observed with some bitterness in February 1917 that “the masses of refugees still preserved religious-patriarchal ideology, and they would prefer starvation during the eight days of Passover rather than eat simple bread instead of matzo.”¹²⁴ Although, as we will see, KOPE was facing very serious financial circumstances at the beginning of 1917, the Committee did not remove the so-called Passover assistance (*paskhl’naia pomoshch*) from its budget.

¹²² The report of Rabbi Ya’akov Landa is discussed in Andrew Koss, "War within, War without: Russian Refugee Rabbis during World War I," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 34, no. 2 (2010): 231–63, 231–32. See also Andrew Koss, "Two Rabbis and a Rebbetzin: The Vilna Rabbinate during the First World War," *European Judaism* 48, no. 1 (2015): 116–28.

¹²³ Quot. by: Koss, "War within, War without: Russian Refugee Rabbis during World War I," 232.

¹²⁴ “V evreiskom komitete pomoshchi bezhentsam,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 59 (28 February 1917): 4.

Conclusion

Expulsions and deportations of the civil population during the Great War were a tactic of Russian military strategy. Relocation and hostage-taking were meant as preventive measures against spying and sabotage. The Jewish population of the border regions of the Russian Empire was seen as particularly unreliable, “suspicious,” and “dangerous” to the interests of the Russian army. Suspicion placed Jews outside the law. While some Jews left their homes voluntarily and moved east in search of safety, the majority of Jews of the western, north-western, and south-western provinces of the Russian Empire were expelled by the military command. Meanwhile, Galician and Bukovynian Jews were treated as enemy aliens. Entire families were forcibly deported inland, while military operations at the front defined the intensity of the expulsions and deportations. The first refugees arrived in Kyiv as early as July 1914, and the period from May to September 1915, when the Russian army retreated from Galicia and Bukovyna, saw massive deportations of Jews, causing logistical problems for the Russian command. Trains had to be used to transport expellees and deportees instead of military equipment and troops, for example, and the provinces of the Pale most distant from the front zone became so overcrowded with Jews that the Russian government had to abolish the Pale and open the Russian interior to Jews, albeit with some limitations.

Kyiv was a transit city for refugees, expellees, and deportees, and most relocated peoples spent no more than a few months in the city, and often only days. In other major cities, such as Warsaw, Vilno, Minsk, Poltava, and Katerynoslav, Jewish relief organizations usually had to deal only with a settled population (refugees, expellees). In Kyiv, however, they assisted Jews who were constantly on the move, as the majority

were not permitted to settle in the city. At any given moment in 1915, Kyiv might accommodate three or four thousand Jewish refugees and deportees. Kyiv's unique status was a key cause of this instability: it was excluded from the Pale, and even its extension in August 1915 did not change the situation.

As KOPE's records make clear, Kyiv's status as a big city in the centre of the Pale attracted Jewish refugees hoping to find a job, to receive more aid from relief organizations, and to find solace in community with their co-religionists.¹²⁵ However, such benefits also came with costs: tougher competition on a labour market and the indifference or even hostility of locals. However, activists from local Jewish relief organizations working with refugees, expellees, deportees, and hostages established powerful connections across the various provinces. This opportunity to build networks between Jewish intellectuals and professionals, and Jewish masses across the Empire and beyond is the topic of the next chapter.

¹²⁵ "Iz odnoi ankety," *Delo pomoshchi*, no.7 (1916): 15; "Iz Kievskogo raiona," *Delo pomoshchi*, no.3 (1 June 1916): 36–37.

CHAPTER FIVE. JEWISH RELIEF WORK IN KYIV.

The beginning of war changed life for all of Kyiv's Jews. Most experienced financial hardship, although large enterprises and Jewish entrepreneurs engaged in the sugar business were relatively well off during the war's first months. However, many vendors and stockbrokers lost their jobs and had to turn to charitable institutions. Kh. Vainshelbaum described the life of the Kyivan Jews in August 1914 as an "embarrassment" [*zameshatel'stvo*], for they did not know what to do. After some initial confusion, the Jewish community launched relief efforts to help the poorest urban Jews—later the families of reservists and wounded soldiers (Jewish and non-Jewish) received assistance.¹

Kyiv was a special city in terms of its relative social stability during the war. It can be compared with Odessa and Kharkiv. However, cosmopolitan Odessa, "mythologized as a Jewish city of sin," was distant from the main refugee routes. Moreover, the city was close to the Romanian Front, which was created in December 1916.² Kharkiv and Kharkiv province were not a part of the Pale before the war. Infact, Kharkiv's inhabitants had relatively limited experience with the Jews, who constituted only 5.7% of the population.³ Only the mass influx of refugees opened the city for Jews. The situation in Kyiv was different. Although this city was never seen as a "Jewish city,"

¹ "Pomosch," *Rassvet*, 32 (8 August 1914), 2-4; "Kievskie pis'ma," *Rassvet*, 37 (12 September 1914), 25-26.

² Ievgen Dzhumyga, "The Home Front in Odessa during the Great War (July 1914 - February 1917): the Gender Aspect of the Problem," *Danubius* 31 (2013): 223-42; Jarrod Tanny, *City of Rogues and Schnorrers: Russia's Jews and the Myth of Old Odessa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 17-20.

³ Vladimir Kravchenko, *Khar'kov/Kharkiv: stolitsa Pogranich'ia* (Vil'nius: EGU, 2010), 179.

it was in the middle of the Pale and had all necessary financial resources and social conditions to become a centre for Jewish aid organizations working with Jewish refugees.

This chapter focuses on Jewish relief work during the war. It shows how philanthropic activity mobilized Jews, brought educated professionals into the new philanthropic institution, significantly democratized communal life, and united the Jewish population around one goal. I argue that the state-created refugee crisis, permitted the establishment of Jewish public space represented by Jewish philanthropic organizations.

The Jewish Home Front

Kyiv's city life changed rapidly because of the war; the earlier commercial-economic focus was replaced by militarized nationalism. On July 21, 1914, Fedor Burchak, the Deputy Mayor of Kyiv, called an extraordinary meeting to discuss questions of wartime urban life. The main topic was how to best organize medical relief to wounded soldiers in Kyiv and at the front. It was decided to provide financial support to the Kiev Mariinsky Community of the Red Cross [*Kievskaia Mariinskaia Obshchina Krasnogo Kresta*], which had started to organize a local detachment of nurses. The city also decided to allocate ₱150,000 to aid the families of soldiers and to establish asylums for their children.⁴ Thus, the city administration acted as an adjunct of central imperial authority. The aim of its activities was to model loyalty and solidarity, which public associations and the city-at-large could then mirror.

This appeal to action precipitated a local fund-raising initiative. During the first days of the war, the Kyiv Stock Exchange created a charitable committee, whose first

⁴ "Chrezvychainoe sobranie gласnykh Kievskoi gorodskoi dumy," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1259 (22 July 1914): 2.

meeting raised ₴156,000. The local water supply association decided to aid the families of its conscripted employees. The association indicated that it would act according to city established rules. *Dacha* owners in the suburb of Sviatoshyn agreed to turn their summer homes into asylums for wounded and sick soldiers. Newspapers reported that their generosity was part of a “holy cause” encouraged by local authorities.⁵

On the initiative of the City Duma, the City Committee was established in August 1914. The purpose of the newly created organization was to coordinate public organizations that had cared for wounded soldiers and the families of reservists since the beginning of the war. In fact, the city administration recognized that it was not able to perform these new functions, though it remained reluctant to share its responsibilities with public organizations.⁶ As *Kievskaiia Mysl'* later wrote, D'iakov not only “could not allow ‘the street’ to rule the city, but he refused to recognize ‘the street’ in general.”⁷ However, the extent of the problems (wounded soldiers, reservists and their families, refugees and expellees) forced the local and central governments to make concessions to public organizations. As Melissa Stockdale has noted, “the scale and nature of the war itself essentially required the active involvement of the civilian population,” and authorities realized “almost immediately that they would need the public’s help in caring for the wounded.”⁸ Moreover, the central government invoked the heroic myth of the 1812 Fatherland War and “its narrative of an enemy repulsed by the united efforts of the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Iasnopol'skii L. “Obschegorodskie Komitety, ikh znachenie i zadachi”. *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 18-21; “Kievskaiia munitsypal'naia khronika”. *Izvestiia Kievskoi Gorodskoi Dumy* 9 (September 1914): 113-116.

⁷ “Otvstavka I. I. D'iakova,” *Kievskaiia mysl'*, 95 (4 April 1916): 2.

⁸ Stockdale, *Mobilizing the Russian nation*, 108.

entire people and their tsar.”⁹ Thus, central authorities, perhaps gudgingly, accepted public initiative in organizing and delivering war relief.

The Jewish community forgot old political disagreements and united in the face of war. News about the destruction of Jewish communities in Poland inspired Kyivans to raise funds and to unify for self-preservation.¹⁰ At the end of January 1915, the well-known Russian and Yiddish writer and ethnographer Semen An-sky (Shloyme Rapoport) led an assembly that discussed ways to better communicate Jewish war and relief efforts. A Jewish correspondent who attended the meeting noticed that “the statement, made by a prominent local Jewish publicist [An-sky], that [the Jews] should not isolate themselves [*obsobliat’sia*], that the Jewish question would be solved together with the all-Russian question [*obshcherusskii vopros*], was met with a bitter smile of the majority present at the meeting.”¹¹ It is clear that those in attendance of the meeting did not believe that Jews as an ethnic and religious group could ever be included as equal with other Gentile minorities into the body politic of the Russian [*rossiiskaia*] nation. The first decision was to collect information about Jewish participation in the war and Jewish activity on the home front, in order to use this information in future (after the war) negotiations about equal rights for Jews as citizens of a new democratic Russia.

The Jewish relief organizations followed the example of the Russian self-governmental organizations such as the Union of Zemstvos and the Union of Towns, which took on the responsibility of supplying the army, organizing hospitals for wounded soldiers, and caring for refugees, including Jews. Of course, Jewish relief societies were

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ I. Rotberg, “Kiev,” *Rassvet*, 6 (8 February 1915), 30–31.

¹¹ Ibid. The “all-Russian question” [*obshcherusskii vopros*] meant the question of social justice for all members of Russian society, regardless of ethnic belonging or social status, and political democratization.

not the only national organizations of this kind established during the war. Ukrainian and Polish societies also functioned civically and regionally. Such multiple national *obschestvennosti* (plural form of *obschestvennost'*; “educated and politically conscious segments of society” with a feeling of social responsibility) represented the activities of the politically engaged intellectual elite of national minorities.¹² Permission to organize a national relief organization, particularly Jewish ones, implied the recognition of the Jewish community as a separate national and religious group.

Kyiv’s national communities started to organize relief organizations from the first days of the war. On August 9, 1914, Jews assembled for the first meeting of the Kyiv Jewish Committee to Aid Wounded Soldiers and the Families of Reservists Regardless of Religious Affiliation [*Komitet dlia okazania pomoschi ranenym soldatam i sem'iam zapasnykh bez razlichii veroispovedovania*; hereafter — JCAWS], the precursor of KOPE (the Kyiv Jewish Society to Aid the Victims of War; Russian acronym—KOPE). The very name stressed the Jewish desire to include themselves in imperial society as equal members, to overcome their exclusiveness, and in turn to highlight the loyalty of their community. Petr Neishtube, a well-known physician and the director of the Kyivan Jewish Hospital, argued that the duty of the Jewish community was to establish an

¹² Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 131; Abbott Gleason, "Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia," in *Between tsar and people: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 22–23; Gregory L. Freeze, "The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History," *The American Historical Review*, no. 1 (1986): 11–36; Leopold H. Haimson, "The Problem of Social Identities in Early Twentieth Century Russia," *Slavic Review*, no. 1 (1988): 1–20; John D. Klier, *The Russian Jewish Intelligentsia and the Search for National Identity* (Houndsmills: Macmillan Press, 2000), 131–45; Gregory L. Freeze, "The Soslovie (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History"; Catriona Kelly and David Sheppard, "Obschestvennost', Sobornost': Collective Identities," in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, eds. Catriona Kelly and David Sheppard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 27.

organization that would enable the Jewish population of Kyiv to join in the “holy cause”—to help those who were shedding blood for their common fatherland. He called for the unification of Jewish society around one cause.¹³ Among the newly elected members of the Jewish Committee were representatives of the local Jewish financial elite—Moisei B. Gal’perin, A. O. Brodskii, Markus R. Zaks, Iosif Marshak, Abram Dobryi—who were also the main donors. The Committee also involved professionals, who were active in local Jewish life and promoted the ideas of democratizing traditional communal organizations. The statute of the JCAWS also stated that women could join, if they had already proved their worth in prewar charitable activity.¹⁴

Women actively took part in this common endeavor. First of all, they prepared linen for hospitals. More than 30 talented seamstress worked for JCAWS, while Liubov’ Dobraia and Mrs. Mazor and Blankman created a sub-committee to furnish clothes and footwear to needy Jews. They organized the subcommittee’s business and negotiated with the Moscow Committee and the Industrial Committee about purchasing manufactured goods [*prodovol’stvennye tovary*].¹⁵ Whereas Dobraia and Mazor were the wives of a Kyivan banker and well-known lawyer respectively, some young women who occupied administrative positions at KOPE were students [*kursistki*] from Kyiv’s Medical Institute or recent secondary school graduates.¹⁶ Relief work helped to overcome class barriers, for KOPE united the representatives of the wealthiest Jewish families (Liubov’ Dobraia was also a member of the Labour Bureau of KOPE) and the educated middle class. For

¹³ “Evreiskii komitet dlia okazaniia pomoschi ranenym,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 219 (11 August 1914): 2.

¹⁴ “Evreiskii komitet dlia okazaniia pomoschi sem’iam zapasnykh i ranenym,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 222 (14 August 1914): 2; “Ko vsem evreiskim obschinam Rossiiskoi imperii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 220 (12 August 1914): 2.

¹⁵ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 30, ark. 6, 7, 10, 11.

¹⁶ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 86, ark; TsDIK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 506, ark. 34, 37, 44, 53.

example, Rivka Ginzburg, who worked for the Labour Bureau, was the wife of an agronomist; Maria Blokh was the wife of a doctor; Ida-Lidiia Bykhovskaia was the wife of Grigorii Bykhovskii, a famous surgical oncologist who was also a member of the same Bureau and was connected with the Russian Social Democratic Workers' party, though it is unclear if he was a member.¹⁷ Thus, participation in relief organization dismantled social, economic, and even age barriers between members of relief organizations.

The first initiative of JCAWS was to organize and financially support city hospitals, particularly the Jewish Hospital, which was the best in Kyiv at that time. Gal'perin agreed to provide funds for 10 beds until the end of the war, Simkha Liberman, the owner of a Kyivan sugar factory, would also fund 10. Ariia-Girsh Liberman, the son of Simkha Liberman would support five beds, while Abram Gel'blum, a Kyivan merchant of the first guild and the father-in-law of Ariia-Girsh Liberman would fund three, and Avraam Gol'denberg, a lawyer and an elder of the Choral Synagogue could support one.¹⁸ The relief committee arranged a hospital with 200 beds and three meal stations that provided the families of reservists with thousands of daily meals. Moreover, the Jewish community opened several kiosks for selling cheap bread, as well as infant day nurseries and youth shelters.¹⁹ Three cheap Jewish dining-halls operated in Kyiv in September 1914; one in Podil (55 Iaroslavs'ka Street) and two in Lybid (16 Prozorovs'ka Street and 25 Kuzniechna Street). In December 1914, David Margolin personally delivered the first consignment of goods collected by JCAWS for the South-Western Front: several thousand warm gloves, wool socks, and sweaters, as well as soap, tobacco, matches, and chocolate. The second consignment of goods, which additionally included

¹⁷ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 506, ark. 28, 34, 37zv, 44.

¹⁸ "V evreiskom komitete," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 225 (17 August 1914): 5.

¹⁹ "Komitety pomoschi," *Rassvet* 36 (5 sentiabria 1914): 24.

several thousand boots, was prepared for the North-Western Front.²⁰ Every day the Committee distributed 700 free dinners to soldiers and their families, who received tokens from Crown Rabbi Aleshkovskii, Iosif Marshak, a well-known jeweller, or the Representation for Jewish Welfare.²¹ Thus, the first wartime charitable initiatives undertaken by Kyiv's Jewish community were organized and controlled by the same Jewish local oligarchs who had controlled communal affairs before the war. The main goal of this welfare work was to demonstrate Jewish loyalty to the state and society, but it served also as the first stage in the gestation of a new communal life.

In September 1914, JCAWS published an address "To Brothers-Jews!" [*Brat'ia-Evrei!*] in *Kievskaiia Mysl'*. It appealed to the "peaceful Jewish population" and their "sacred duty as citizens and sons of Russia" to unite and help wounded soldiers and their families, "for there is not and cannot be in our hearts at this harsh time of God's judgement any division between tribes and estates [...] there is no division between faiths and nationalities."²² Apparently, this patriotic appeal targeted not only the Jewish population of the city, but also the Gentiles, for it was a call to make peace and to unify. Donations were to be sent to Zaks, Dobryi, Margolin, and Brodskii, the wealthiest Jews of the city and the south-western region of the Russian Empire, who led the Kyiv community and defined its policies.²³ After autumn 1914, several relief committees functioned in the city.²⁴ They distributed provisions and hot food in Podil (the Contract House and the Talmud Torah building on Konstantynivska Street) and Ploskii district

²⁰ "Podarki armii ot evreiskogo komiteta," *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, 1407 (17 December 1914): 3.

²¹ "Kievskii evreiskii komitet," "Sbor veschei v podol'skom uchastke," "Sbor veschei v starokievskom uchastke," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 251 (12 September 1914): 5.

²² "Brat'ia-evrei!" *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 251 (12 September 1914): 1.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ "Kievskie pis'ma (Ot nashego korrespondenta)," *Rassvet* 37 (12 sentiabria 1914): 25-26.

(Iona Zaitsev's clinic on Kyrylivs'ka Street).²⁵ Aid facilities were also established at the railroad station to provide assistance to refugees in transit.²⁶

During the relief campaign "Kyiv to Poland," which started in Kyiv at the end of October 1914, the leaders of the local Jewish community appealed to the population to unite, because "the bad insults thrown at the Jews by some elements of Polish society should not cause Jewish self-isolation."²⁷ The war was seen as a social disaster, and Kyivan Jews had to help all those in need, regardless of their nationality. The author of the editorial article of the first issue of the empire-wide Jewish journal "Help" [*Pomoshch*'] described relief work as the "people's affair" [*narodnoe delo*] due to the extent of the refugee problem and thus of Jewish relief work.²⁸ In addition to immediate aid (medical help, accommodation, food, clothing), relief organizations had to organize resettlement, find work for refugees, and attend to the "communal and cultural life of refugees."²⁹

The economic devastation of Polish Jewry living in the war zone prompted the creation of a temporary relief committee, the goal of which was to collect money, warm clothes, and other necessities for Polish Jews. However, it quickly became clear that the committee had to extend its activity to include the whole Pale, Galicia, and Bukovyna. On January 12, 1915, the governor of Kyiv province approved the statute of the Kyiv Jewish Society to Aid the Victims of War [*Kievskoe obshchestvo dlia okazaniia pomoshchi evreiskomu naseleniiu postradavshemu ot voennykh deistvii*]; Russian acronym

²⁵ "Vyseleutsy-evrei," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 170 (21 June 1915): 3.

²⁶ "Vyseleutsy," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 141 (23 May 1915): 2.

²⁷ "K evreiskomu naseleniiu g. Kieva," *Poslednie Novosti* 2693 (4 November 1914): 1; "K ustroistvu sbora Kiev-Pol'she," *Kievlianin*, 297 (27 October 1914): 3; DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 2, ark. 2zv.

²⁸ "Ot redaktsii," *Pomosch*, no. 1 (24 December 1915): 1.

²⁹ Ibid

—KOPE], which in fact had started functioning at the beginning of December 1914.³⁰ The founders of the society were D. G. Levenshein (a Kyiv merchant of the first guild), the barrister M. S. Mazor, Efim Rubinchik (a Kyiv merchant of the first guild), Lev Ginzburg (the owner of a construction company in the city), Iosif Marshak (the owner of a renowned jewellery factory), and B. E. Vainshel’boim. Among the members of the Society were Rabbi Aronson and the Crown Rabbi Aleshkovskii.³¹ The head of KOPE was S. A. Grinberg.³² The Society consisted of 16 members and eight candidates, who were elected at an annual general meeting. The number of members and benefactors reached 10,000 in Kyiv by 1916.³³ According to the statute, the membership was open to both men and women regardless of their religious affiliation. The Society settled all issues by a general vote of its members.

KOPE was a local branch of the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims [*Evreiskii Komitet Pomoshchi Zhertvam Voiny*; Russian acronym—EKOPO], which was established in Petrograd as the central organ for coordinating Jewish relief work in the Russian Empire. Locally, EKOPO and KOPE were projects that aimed to raise communal solidarity and to develop national self-consciousness through public outreach. They represented an important example of cooperation between Jews of varying ideological dimensions. Apparently, Jewish intellectuals in Petrograd and Moscow who organized EKOPO aspired to lead the relief efforts of Russian Jewry. Petrograd, Moscow, Smolensk, and partially Tver’ and Viatka provinces were closed to Jewish refugees from the Vistula provinces, the south-western, and the north-western provinces of the Russian

³⁰ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 2, ark. 2zv; “Delo pomoschi v Kievskom raione,” *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 1 (1 June 1916): 9-12.

³¹ *Ibid.*, spr. 17a, ark. 1zv; spr. 2, ark. 5.

³² *Ibid.*, spr. 50, ark. 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, spr. 151, ark. 10.

Empire until August 1915.³⁴ Only individuals or small groups of refugees could trickle into these provinces. Additionally, the Jewish intelligentsia was aware that Petrograd was not the best place to build “a bridge between modern culture and the culture of the folk.”³⁵ The editors of *Di yiddisher velt* [Jewish World], the Jewish monthly published in Vilno, described the northern capital as “a loft in the new Yiddish house. Remote from every Jewish tradition, devoid of daily Jewish life, and only marginally aware of the noise of the true poetry that surrounds folk-life and folk-custom.”³⁶ In contrast, Kyiv was at the center of the Pale and it was a provincial capital city very close to the front line. Thus, Kyiv was the perfect place to build a bridge between Jewish intellectuals and the Jewish masses.

KOPE shared its responsibilities with the local committees. In Kyiv, responsibilities were shared with the Committee on Local Needs. KOPE was responsible for providing immediate financial assistance to poor Jews in regions directly affected by war. It organized several committees dealing with evacuating and registering refugees, supplying food and clothing, organizing idle workers [*trudovaia pomoshch*], medical aid, and other local needs (*mestnye nuzhdy*).³⁷ The Committee on Local Needs, headed by M. I. Tumarkin, cared for Kyiv’s destitute.³⁸ Another sub-committee, the Slobodka Branch of KOPE, was established in spring 1915 to assist Jewish refugees who stayed in this village.³⁹ The activities of the Slobodka Branch were, however, inadequate in part

³⁴ “O razselenii bezhentsev,” *Pomosch*, no. 1 (24 December 1915): 10-11.

³⁵ Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 153.

³⁶ Quoted by *ibid.*, 153.

³⁷ *Ustav Obschestva dlia okazaniia pomoschi evreiskomu naseleniiu, postradavshemu ot voennykh deistvii* (Kiev: Tipo-Lit. El’nika, 1915, 1915), 1–3; *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 20 (20 January 1915): 5.

³⁸ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 17a, ark. 1zv, 2zv, 5zv; spr. 2, ark. 6; spr. 50, ark. 1; TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 23, ark. 342.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, spr. 59, ark. 2–5, 11.

because local activists did not distinguish between refugees and the local destitute Jewish population.⁴⁰ Thus, KOPE was the leading Jewish institution caring for Jewish refugees, though it delegated some responsibilities to local smaller communities.

Initially, KOPE was established to care for refugees and expellees. It supplied food, warm clothing, foot wear, and fuel; it organized shelters, sanitary help, and aid to children.⁴¹ However, it became clear that other groups (the unemployed, families of reservists) also needed help.⁴² Thus, KOPE expanded its charitable activities in the face of diverse demand. The activity of the Demiiivka Committee shows that the nature of Jewish relief changed during the war. Initially, the committee was established to organize assistance for families of Jewish military reservists. Its funds consisted of monthly grants from the Committee to Aid Families of Reservists regardless of Religious Affiliation and private donations from the local Jewish population. The wave of refugees in 1915, however, changed the priorities of the Demiiivka committee. It organised a system of self-taxation, which “thanks to the tenderness and vigour of the collectors was very fruitful.”⁴³ Consequently, the committee allotted funds to the families of reservists from the sums collected for the refugees, though the latter received the lion’s share of financial support.⁴⁴

In April 1915, a group within KOPE proposed cancelling the property qualification (an annual payment of ₴25) to attend the general meeting of the members of the Society.⁴⁵ The radical wing of KOPE was represented by A. I. Slutskii, Il’ia Frumin

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., spr. 151, ark. 11.

⁴² Ibid., spr. 13a, ark. 1–2; spr. 151, ark. 10.

⁴³ Ibid., spr. 93, ark. 5; “Samooblozhenie,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 284 (12 October 1916): 2.

⁴⁴ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 93, ark. 5-5zv.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

(a well-known orthopedist, who later created the House for Disabled Children in Kyiv in 1919), S. S. Rybakov, Moyshe Litvakov (a Zionist Socialist activist and journalist), and Boris Gurevich, the son of Kyiv's Crown Rabbi and a member of the Russian Constitutional Democratic Party.⁴⁶ They stressed that the main purpose of the general meeting was not to collect more money for charity, but to establish "public control and involve the wide masses of the population in the cause of relief." The group argued that the future success of the Committee as well as the income from self-taxation depended on social trust. By preserving the property qualification, the Committee undermined its right to appeal to the wider society for help.⁴⁷ Thus, they called on the community to reevaluate how it had traditionally organized charity, which previously focused on the wealthy Jewish elite, and to make relief work the common cause of all members of society notwithstanding their income or social influence. The proposal was never realised due to opposition from the conservative wing of KOPE and general social instability. However, the very idea and initiative was very important; attempts to include refugees in relief work, which were made at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, represented the democratization of the Jewish community.

⁴⁶ Aleksei Gol'denveizer, "Aleksei Gol'denveizer: Dnevnik i Pis'ma Raznykh Let," *Ab Imperio* 3 (2005): 347–403, 356. Moyshe Litvakov (1875/80–1939) was born in Cherkasy (Kyiv province) to a family of *melamed* (a teacher of traditional Jewish elementary school). He received a traditional Jewish education, obtained an external gymnasium certificate, and attended the Sorbonne between 1902 and 1905. Litvakov helped found the territorialist Zionist Socialist Workers' Party. He worked as a journalist at *Kievskaiia Mysl'* under the pseudonym of M. Lirov. During the war, he headed the labour bureau of KOPE. In May 1917, he became a leader of the Jewish socialist party *Fareynikte*. He was a co-founder of the Culture League [*Kultur Lige*], a Jewish secular cultural organization, in 1918. From the 1920s-1930s, Litvakov was a leading figure of the Soviet Yiddish cultural world. On Litvakov and his career as a Soviet Jewish writer, see David Shneer, *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet Jewish Culture 1918-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), 27–28; Mikhail Krutikov, "Soviet Literary Theory in the Search for a Yiddish Canon: The Case of Moshe Litvakov," in *Studies In Yiddish*, vol. 3, *Yiddish and the Left: Papers of the Third Mendel Friedman International Conference on Yiddish*, eds. Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutikov (Routledge, 2001).

⁴⁷ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 17a, ark. 29.

Relief work involved all groups of urban Jewry. Young people were engaged to collect donations. Kyiv's Jewry was called on to serve "the tens of thousands of their brothers dislodged from their old shacks by the storm of war and doomed to wander aimlessly, separate from their dear ones and the graves of their ancestors."⁴⁸ According to KOPE service records, most volunteers were between the ages of 22 and 35.⁴⁹ Many active members of the Russian liberal or socialist parties, including the Constitutional Democratic Party (the Kadets), the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), and the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party were members of KOPE. Mikhail Balabanov, a member of the Labour Bureau of KOPE (employment agency), was a correspondent for *Kievskaiia Mysl'* and, according to police reports, had connections with the RSDLP.⁵⁰ Two other officers of the Labour Bureau, Grigorii and Ida Bykhovsky, were also under suspicion due to their connections with the RSDLP. Moyshe Litvakov, the head of the bureau, was a founder of the Zionist Socialist Workers Party.⁵¹ To be sure, not all young members of KOPE were politically active before or during the war. They joined the common cause of relief work due to the feeling of social responsibility, solidarity, and a desire to help their co-religionists. Even if they were not sympathizers of a particular ideology, the majority of KOPE's members supported the idea that democratic reforms in both the Jewish community and in Russia were necessary.⁵²

The Bund [the General Jewish Labour Bund (Union) in Lithuania, Poland and Russia] cautiously regarded the activity of national relief committees. Moyshe Rafes, a

⁴⁸ "Samoooblozhenie sredi evreev," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 49 (18 February 1917): 1.

⁴⁹ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 86, ark. 1-17.

⁵⁰ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 506, ark. 29, 31-33.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ark.34, 36-38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 53, 55, 57, 61, 63; op. 1, spr. 3302, ark. 111; op. 4, spr. 172, ark.3, 5, 67, 83, 86, 89.

⁵² TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 432, ark. 392, 394; spr. 530, ark. 388-389.

leading member of the Russian Bund, argued in 1916, “[...] there are national relief organizations in all cities and towns, with dozens of delegates, with central offices in the capitals. But they are apolitical, alien to internal Jewish problems.”⁵³ Mentioning these internal problems, Rafes cited the elimination of Jewish rightlessness and the protection of the interests of Jewish workers. During the war, members of the Bund were active in War Industry Committees, which were created in order to facilitate the mobilization of the Russian economy, because they provided Bundists with access to Jewish workers.⁵⁴ In principle, the Bund did not support the idea of ethnic or religious separatism, a position undermined though by its very nature as a national organization. Moreover, cooperation with this relief organization also meant cooperation with the Jewish bourgeoisie, which clearly contradicted social democratic ideology. Nevertheless, Rafes recognized that the Jewish relief committee had a very positive influence on Jews. He explained, “many changes have happened on the Jewish street during the war. New organizations have been created, which embrace the wide masses of people, especially the relief committees, which take care of the important questions of the Jewish street. There are those who are looking to the future and conclude that [new] Jewish communities will be created along with the relief committees. And therefore we should work for this.”⁵⁵ Rafes stated that the relief organizations united Jews, creating a critical mass of human capital that could be used in the future to create self-governing Jewish communities. Thus, Rafes referred to the idea of Jewish non-territorial national-cultural

⁵³ Ibid., spr. 580, ark. 26. I use here a manuscript of the article of Moyshe Rafes, which was seized by the Kyiv police during a search in the apartment of Liba Rafes, his wife. Originally the article was written in Yiddish, but was translated into Russian by the author.

⁵⁴ M. G. Rafes, *Dva goda revoliutsii na Ukraine (evoliutsiia i rasskol Bunda)* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1920), 23–24; Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Politics of Industrial Mobilization in Russia, 1914-1917: A Study of the War-Industries Committees* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

⁵⁵ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 580, ark. 34.

autonomy, which was a part of anti-nationalist Bundist ideology. The federal idea of autonomous nationalities in Russia did not contradict Bundism because the Bund was inclined to view Jews as a distinct nationality that had the right to control its national culture and education.⁵⁶

Along with KOPE, other Jewish organizations that existed in the Russian Empire before the war also took part in the general Jewish relief effort. The primary example was the Society for Preserving the Health of the Jewish Population (Russian acronym—OZE), which provided medical-sanitary aid and homes for refugee children. Beginning in fall 1915, the local branch of the ORT (Russian acronym for the Society for Handicraft and Agricultural Work among the Jews in Russia) took responsibility for organizing the labour market, credit associations, and vocational (re)training for refugees. Meanwhile, the OPE (Russian acronym for the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia) addressed the educational and cultural needs of refugees and people in need.⁵⁷

Caring for poor refugee children and orphans became one of the main concerns of the Jewish community and Jewish national organizations.⁵⁸ The Central Committee of the OPE decided that schools for the children of refugees should recreate the same environment in which the children had lived before the war. However, the OPE insisted that learning Russian would help refugees communicate with locals.⁵⁹ The general

⁵⁶ Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 64–65.

⁵⁷ *Reports Received by the Joint Distribution Committee of Funds for Jewish War Sufferers* (New York: Press of C. S. Nathan, Incorporated, 1916), 14; *Obzor deiatel'nosti "Obschestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdu evreiami v Rossii" za vremia voiny* (Petrograd, 1916).

⁵⁸ "Priiuty dlia detei bezhentsev-evreev," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 29 (29 January 1915): 2; DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 28, ark. 1-2, 6-7; spr. 28, ark. 19, 21.

⁵⁹ "Ot Komiteta Obshestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdu evreiami Rossii," *Vestnik evreiskogo prosveshcheniia* (1914): 2-4.

destruction of economic life, the disorganization of the old *kheder* system of schooling, and the necessity of caring for the children of refugees called to life a “refugee school” [*bezhenskaia shkola*], which used Yiddish as the teaching language. Yiddish was the Jewish *lingua franca*. A conflict between Yiddishists and Hebraists was inevitable, as they had different opinions about language use. Although the Hebraists did not mind using Yiddish in schools, they insisted that only a school which used Hebrew as a teaching language was “genuinely national” [*istinno-natsional’noi*].⁶⁰ The central committee of OPE made the decision that all schools had to use Yiddish for teaching (except for the subjects of Russian language, history, and geography); Hebrew and the Bible were to be taught in Hebrew or Yiddish, and Jewish history in Yiddish or Hebrew, as appropriate.⁶¹

As noted above, the OZE was another organization which opened orphanages and shelters for the children of refugees. The main goal of those shelters was to improve health and engage children with age-appropriate activities. The OZE used the same strategy as the OPE: the main language of education was Yiddish, but Russian language and culture was to be introduced.⁶² However, the society faced a problem of cadres. Young Jewish teachers who had just graduated from the Froebel⁶³ pedagogical courses for nursery school teachers, were inexperienced. This, however, was not the main problem. The OZE stated that youth first had “to become Jewish” [*ob’evreit’*], for

...being completely unprepared for independent work, [they have] limited knowledge of the Jewish language [Yiddish], Jewish literature and

⁶⁰ “Soveschanie Obschestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosvescheniia mezhdu evreiami v Rossii,” *Pomosch*, no. 5 (29 February 1916): 49-50.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶² “Ochagi Obschestva okhraneniia zdorov’ia evreiskogo naseleniia,” *Vestnik evreiskogo prosveshcheniia*, no. 36 (1915): 5-6.

⁶³ Friedrich Fröbel was a German pedagogue who laid the foundation for modern child education.

history, thus they cannot work in the shelters (*ochagi*), where [we] rear the children of the Jewish masses. These children are something strange and unfamiliar for the pedagogues, and they cannot find the right [teaching] approach. The children of the Jewish poor need enormous help; the shelters became an understandable and native form of aid for the children of the Jewish people [folk], but [we] cannot find teachers for them. It is not enough to have a desire to be useful to the children of the people. We have at least to understand each other.⁶⁴

This passage reflected the inherent tensions between Kyiv's Russified middle class Jewry and their rural co-religionists. Although male and female students involved in relief work often had a traditional Jewish upbringing and were positively inclined towards traditional Jewish culture, they represented a new generation: Russified, politically conscious, and dizzy with the ideas of socialism and Zionism. In order to build a bridge between themselves and the Jewish masses [*narod*], teachers often had to rediscover their roots. Therefore, the OZE decided to start one-month courses for teachers, intended to "familiarize [them] with the Jewish language, for they had lost the skill to use it."⁶⁵ However, the society implemented this idea only in May 1917.

The Representation for Jewish Welfare, the Kyiv Jewish communal institution that had existed before the war and coordinated and sponsored Jewish cultural, educational, religious, and charitable activity, declined to participate in wartime relief efforts. KOPE and its departments took over its functions. The "residues" [*ostatki*] of the traditional kosher meat tax ["box tax" or *korobochnyi sbor* in Russian], which covered the maintenance of charitable institutions, almshouses, synagogues, hospitals, and *kheders* before the war, dropped dramatically from 1914-1916 due to Jewish

⁶⁴ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 28, ark. 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid; "Uchitel'skii vopros," *Vestnik evreiskogo prosveshcheniia*, no. 38 (1916): 8-9.

impoverishment and the meat crisis.⁶⁶ The financial situation of the Jewish Hospital was dire. In 1917, its expenditures exceeded its income by 100%.⁶⁷ A correspondent of *Delo Pomoshchi* stated that the situation of the local poor was so desperate that “[they] were dreaming of becoming a refugee, who [receives] all of society’s attention.”⁶⁸ I have already mentioned that the activists of the Slobodka Branch of KOPE did not distinguish between refugees and the local destitute Jewish population. The central committee of KOPE described such activity as “inadequate” and it was one of the reasons why it was accused of mismanagement.⁶⁹

Kyiv’s Jewish religious leaders took part in the meetings of KOPE and the local branch of the OPE. The Jewish religious community, which received financial help from KOPE, was involved in organizing religious celebrations, such as Passover.⁷⁰ It distributed kosher food and matzo to Jews in need, especially to those who were ill and imprisoned (hostages and deportees). The community organized two dining halls for soldiers (in the Podil and Starokyivsky districts), which served dinner to roughly 700 soldiers a day during Passover. *Kievskaiia Mysl’* informed its readers that “the work drew all groups starting with upper-class women to youth, who eagerly helped in the dining-halls and in the hospitals with cooking and distributing food.”⁷¹

The Jewish refugees respected the moral authority of the rabbis. They entrusted rabbis with their most valuable belongings. In 1916, the military censorship [*voenno-*

⁶⁶ About the kosher meat tax in Russia, see Iulii Gessen, *Istoriia korobochnogo sbora v Rossii* (Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiia I, Lur’e, 1911); Isaac Levitats, *The Jewish community in Russia: 1844 - 1917* (Jerusalem: Posner, 1981), 24–30.

⁶⁷ “Tiazheloe finansovoe polozhenie evreiskoi bol’nitsy,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 201 (19 August 1917): 2.

⁶⁸ “Evreiskaia obshchina i bezhentsy,” *Delo pomoshchi*, no. 8 (20 September 1916): 6-10.

⁶⁹ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 59, ark. 2–5, 11.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, spr. 167, ark. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7.

⁷¹ “Kievskaiia evreiskaia obshchina,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 80 (21 March 1915): 2; “Otppravka vyselentsev-evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 77 (18 March 1915): 3.

tsenzurnaia komissiiia] of the Kazan Military District intercepted a letter written in Yiddish and sent from Kyiv. The commission determined that Rabbi Shlomo Aronson had taken gold and silver jewelry from refugees in 1914 and 1915 for safe keeping [*na khranenie*]. By 1916, the rabbi had returned the majority of the precious items. However, in February 1916, his youngest daughter Bliuma found, among the belongings of her brother, pawn receipts totalling between ₰150–175, a large amount of money at that time. She was sure that Borukh, her brother, had stolen jewelry from their father. Bliuma did not want to worry her father and asked her older sister Sonia, who lived in Perm, for money to repurchase the items.⁷² Apparently, the jewelry (three necklaces, a silver watch, and two pairs of earrings) were found. The story demonstrates the vulnerability of refugees who came from other provinces, often leaving small *shtels* for the uncertainty of the big city. The dangers of being robbed or deceived were everywhere; apparently even rabbis could not provide safety. At the same time, it is clear that not all refugees lacked financial means, though their dislocation soon drained their savings. Most refugees would eventually have to apply for aid.

The Society raised funds from modest membership fees, donations, income from concerts, charity-box collections [*kruzhechnyi sbor*], synagogue money collections, and the *sedaqah*, the voluntary donation of funds similar to Christian tithing and the Muslim *zakat*.⁷³ KOPE also received substantial funds from EKOPO, which was the central Jewish all-Russian relief organization. By April 1916, the expenses of KOPE had reached more than ₰1,500,000: 800,000 of this had been collected by Kyiv's Jews, 70,000 in the

⁷² TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 612, ark. 357, 360.

⁷³ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 2, ark. 2zv.

province, and the rest the Committee had received from EKOPO.⁷⁴ EKOPO was sponsored by Russian Jewish donors, by the state, and by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), established in November 27, 1914 in New York. From January 20, 1915 to August 1915, the JDC sent \$1,800,000 to Russia.⁷⁵ No less important was private overseas relief sent from abroad to relatives in the Russian Empire.⁷⁶ As Chiara Tessaris states, the JDC represented a massive humanitarian mission, which superseded all political and ideological differences among American and European Jews.⁷⁷

During the summer of 1915, Veniamin Franklin Braun, the representative of the American consulate in Kyiv, distributed financial help to the subjects of Austria-Hungary and Germany, regardless of nationality and religious affiliation, who were unemployed and did not have means to survive. These included deportees, hostages, and foreigners who had lived in Kyiv before the war. A police officer particularly stressed that “the refugees from Galicia” enjoyed special attention from the consulate.⁷⁸ The Chief of the Kyiv Police Department Colonel Shredel’ did not mind the consul’s activity, but asked Mr. Braun “for a list of foreigners who lived in Kyiv and the province” with the intention “to deport them from the front zone as an unwanted element.”⁷⁹ Thus, Shredel’ did not object to the consul’s activities, but he definitely objected to the fact that the refugees from Galicia received help.

⁷⁴ “V obshchestve pomoshchi evreiam,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 103 (13 April 1916): 2.

⁷⁵ *Reports Received by the Joint Distribution Committee of Funds for Jewish War Sufferers*, 9; TsDIAK, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 51, ark. 104, 104zv, 108; about the Joint and its cooperation with the relief organizations in the Russian Empire during the Great War, see M. Beizer, *Relief in Time of Need: Russian Jewry and the Joint, 1914-24* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2014), 11–51.

⁷⁶ Szajkowski, Zosa, 1911-1978, “Private and organized American Jewish overseas relief (1914-1938),” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 57 (1967) 52-106, 191-253 (1967): 52–253, 56; Chiara Tessaris, “The war relief work of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Poland and Lithuania, 1915–18,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 40, no. 2 (2010): 127–44.

⁷⁷ Tessaris, “The war relief work of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Poland and Lithuania, 1915–18,” 127.

⁷⁸ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 530, ark. 44, 46-47.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, ark. 47.

KOPE as well as EKOPO were constantly surveilled by the police department. They were suspected of conducting “explosive [*podryvnaia*] revolutionary activity.” Colonel Viktor Sizykh, the head of the Counterintelligence Department of the South-Western front, reported in November 1915 that,

The Petrograd Committee [EKOPO] is now the leader of the entire Jewish revolutionary cause in Russia, which aims to establish unfavourable conditions for further conducting of the war by the Russian forces and to provoke discontent with the war among the masses and to raise active protests against it. This committee gives directives to all Russian provincial parties and Jewish organizations, which define the attitude of the Jews and socialist parties to the war and measures designed to counteract the intentions of the government.⁸⁰

In December 1915, the Chief of the Kyiv Police Department received an order to search and detain the representatives of EKOPO. As a result, the police determined that although EKOPO was not “a leader of the Jewish revolutionary movement,” it “widely agitat[ed] for the defence of Jewish rights and national equality.”⁸¹ Police information shows that officers collected statistical information about Jewish communities, asked Jews about their prewar relations with Christians and state officials, recorded incidents of open violence against Jews, collected information about the economic situation of the Jewish population, and Jewish relief work throughout the region.⁸² At first glance, this intelligence gathering was innocuous, aiming to gather information about Jewish life during the war, to address injustices committed against Jews, and to use this information during future negotiations with the state about Jewish rights, to raise funds, and provide

⁸⁰ TsDIAK, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 506, ark. 3.

⁸¹ Ibid., ark. 146.

⁸² Ibid., ark. 14–15.

information about the Jewish war victims abroad.⁸³ In wartime, such social activity was suspicious, especially when conducted by a people deemed unreliable and hostile to Russian society. Needless to say, Jewish activists collected a lot of material about Jews in the Russian Empire during the Great War. Much of this collection was lost, but part of it was published. The most important is an anthology called *From "The Black Book of Imperial Russian Jewry." Materials for a History of the War, 1914–1915*. Dubnow edited this document and published it in 1918 in the journal *Evreiskaia starina* [Jewish Antiquity].⁸⁴

The principle of national representation in all-Russian public organizations was unknown in the Russian Empire before the Great War.⁸⁵ The national relief institutions functioned independently from the VZS or VGS, later known as *Zemgor*. Although in the front zone the VZS, “under the flag of the Red Cross,” provided help to locals, the sick and wounded soldiers, and to local Jews and Jewish refugees, behind the front zone, the VZS refused to aid Jews and directed them to their national organizations.⁸⁶ Therefore, these were the main institutions that provided Jews with aid in Kyiv.

The war brought not only educated professionals into Jewish communal institutions, it also engaged both local Jewish communities at large and the refugees themselves. Nevertheless, such cooperation was not always smooth. At the beginning of

⁸³ Polly Zavadviker, "Reconstructing a Lost Archive: Simon Dubnow and “The Black Book” of Imperial Russian Jewry. Materials for a History of the War, 1914–1915," in *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts / Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, 12 (2013):419.

⁸⁴ Zavadviker, "Reconstructing a Lost Archive", 420; "Iz 'chernoi knigi' rossiiskogo evreistva. Materialy dlia istorii voiny 1914-1915 g.," *Evreiskaia starina* 10 (1917-18): 195–296.

⁸⁵ “Delo pomoschi i natsional’nye organizatsii,” *Delo Pomoschi*, no. 4—5 (1 August 1916): 1—5.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*; William Gleason, "The All-Russian Union of Zemstvos and World War I," in *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government*, eds. Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 370; about the VZS, see Tikhon Polner, *Russian Local Government during the War and the Union of Zemstvos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930).

the war, KOPE recognized the problem of building a bridge between Jewish relief organizations, Jewish professionals and intellectuals, and the Jewish masses.⁸⁷ Jewish acculturated intellectuals were well aware of the differences between themselves and the Jewish population who lived in small market towns of the Pale. When in summer 1912 An-sky started the Jewish Ethnographic Expedition, the Pale of Jewish Settlement was a Jewish “dark continent” for Jewish intellectuals who were highly acculturated to Russian culture.⁸⁸ The members of KOPE recognized the need to include representatives from the refugees into the central committee, in order to generate a feeling of social responsibility and solidarity.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, this organizational change happened too late—in 1917—and it was accompanied by anarchical moods. According to the minutes of a February 1917 KOPE meeting, the refugee representative, for example, wanted “to rule without a clear understanding of the situation or experiences.”⁹⁰

Brothers-Jews

The influx of refugees and their encounter with the “native” urban community resulted in new forms of modern Jewish identities and the diversification of urban Jewish culture. Although Galician, Polish, Lithuanian, Podolian, or Volynian Jews were Ashkenazi, there were cultural differences between them. As Bernard Wasserstein described it, “the Litvak and Galisyaner were both types of Ostjude but each had its own

⁸⁷ “Kiev (Ot Nashego Korrespondenta),” *Evreiskaia Nedelia* 8 (19 fevralia 1914): 43.

⁸⁸ Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 7; Simon Dubnov, *Ob izuchenii istorii russkikh evreev i ob uchrezhdenii rusko-evreiskogo istoricheskogo obschestva* (Sankt-Peterburg: A. E. Landau, 1891), 36–37.

⁸⁹ “Kiev (Ot Nashego Korrespondenta),” *Evreiskaia Nedelia* 8 (19 fevralia 1914): 44.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

stereotype.”⁹¹ Whereas the Litvak was “dry, rational, and unemotional,” the Galicianer was “warmhearted, sly, witty, sharp, stingy, crafty, and something of a trickster.”⁹² There were minor culinary differences and they spoke different dialects of Yiddish (the Lithuanian version was regarded as more cultivated).⁹³ There was no religious difference. Hasidim also thrived in the Lithuanian, Polish, and Belorussian provinces of the Russian Empire. They were all *Ostjuden*. However, Galicianers were subjects of an enemy state, which sometimes caused conflict and misunderstandings. An-sky made an attempt to explain the difference between the Galician and the Russian Jews in his memoirs *Churban ha-Jehudim be-Polin, Galicia, u-Bukowina* [“The Tragedy of the Galician Jews during World War I”], published posthumously in Vilno, in 1923,

Although the Galician Jews, whether Orthodox or enlightened, drew spiritual support from their Russian brothers and shared many bonds with them, a large gap existed between the fraternal tribes before the war. They were alien to each other, even inimical, and always cool. The Galician Jews looked down on the Russians as disenfranchised Jews and were unable to grasp how anyone could live and breathe under arbitrary rule, deadly pogroms, and random persecution. The Orthodox among them saw Russian Jews as licentious and heretical. For their part, the Russians despised the Galicians as backward, fossilized — an ignorant mass without culture or aspirations.

For more than a century they had lived side by side in estrangement and misunderstanding. It took a terrible catastrophe, an ocean of blood and tears, to bring Russian Jews closer to their Galician brothers. At the very least, the war [led] to a rapprochement between these two parts of the population.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Bernard Wasserstein, *On the eve: The Jews of Europe before the Second World War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 25–26.

⁹² Wasserstein, *On the eve*, 26; Hirsz Abramowicz and Eva Zeitlin Dobkin, *Profiles of a lost world: Memoirs of a East European Jewish life before World War II*, Raphael Patai series in Jewish folklore and anthropology (Detroit: Wayne State University Press in cooperation with YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1999), 13; Evyatar Friesel, *The days and the seasons: Memoirs* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 21; Omer Bartov, *Erased: Vanishing traces of Jewish Galicia in present-day Ukraine* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 6.

⁹³ Wasserstein, *On the eve*, 26.

⁹⁴ Although Joachim Neugroschel translated An-ski’s book from Yiddish to English in 2002, the edition is not complete. At times, I used the book’s Polish translation. Here, I used the quotation that was translated into English, S. An-Ski, *The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey through the Jewish Pale of Settlement*

Polish, Galician, or Lithuanian Jews who were deported because of their supposed hostility towards the Russian army did not receive much sympathy from Kyivan Christians. Even local Jews were suspicious of Galicians. At the meeting of KOPE on December 26, 1915, Dr. Ginsburg, a representative of the Jewish Hospital, reported that the hospital had treated all Jews, including 22 Galician Jews. Though medical treatment was free, he requested compensation for the costs related to treating the Galicians because they were foreigners. The ensuing debate demonstrated that there was no consensus on Galicians Jews. Though they were clearly Jewish, they were citizens of an enemy state.⁹⁵

An-sky remembered that during the first months of the war some Jews argued about the danger of their “separation” [*obosoblenie*] from the rest of society and the general all-Russian war effort. This could be used against Jews as proof of their disloyalty to the state. When “one important Russian bureaucrat,” who came back from Galicia, asked “a Jewish millionaire, a well-known public figure in Kiev” (An-sky did not name names), to organize “help for [his] Jewish brothers in Galicia, who were starving,” the millionaire answered, “[We] do not see the Galician Jews as [our] brothers, because they are our enemies, against whom we struggle.”⁹⁶ However, such attitudes quickly changed. In January 1915, the Kyivan Jewish industrialists Gepner and Vladimir

during *World War I*, Translated by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), 65; An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*, 121.

⁹⁵ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 20, ark. 2.

⁹⁶ An-Ski, *Tragedia Żydów galicyjskich w czasie I wojny światowej*, 34.

Gintsburg donated ₰500 and ₰3,000 respectively to An-sky for Galician Jews.⁹⁷ The initial prejudice was broken.

Kyiv as a transit city became a contact zone, absorbing and shaping different classes, faiths, and ideologies. Refugees and hostages entered a new urban environment, which forced them to adapt, raising questions of self-identification sometimes differently defined in different situations. Membership in a particular group was determined by personal choice, but also by social constraints. As I previously mentioned, hostages from Lviv arrived in Kyiv on June 23, 1915 and were entrusted to the Chief of Kyiv Police, Lieutenant Colonel S. Gornostaiev. They were divided into two groups—Christian and Jewish—and then transported to privately sponsored holding facilities. Among the wealthy and notable Jewish hostages were Adolf Beck, physician and professor of physiology at the University of Lviv, and Jakub Diamant, a lawyer and one of Lviv’s Jewish notables. They were well educated and acculturated into Polish culture. An-sky described Diamant as a well-known “assimilator and Austrian patriot.”⁹⁸ The changing circumstances raised the question of their self-identification. For example, Beck insisted that he was a “Pole of the faith of Moses” and demanded to be left among Christians (Poles).⁹⁹ Beck did not see “Jewishness” as representing his true self and resented it being ascribed to him.

Hostages could leave the custody shelter and walk around the city for a fee of ₰3. Beck and Diamant were the first to visit the “Polish” shelter.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, Jewish intellectuals also had contacts with the local educated elite. Professors Vladimir

⁹⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 134.

⁹⁹ Chołodecki, *Zakładnicy miasta Lwowa w niewoli rosyjskiej 1915-1918*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 100.

Lindeman and Vasilii Chagovets from St. Vladimir's University visited Professor Beck.¹⁰¹ It is interesting that Lindeman was a member of the Kyiv Club of Russian Nationalists, a moderate right-wing organization, which fought against “Jewish dominance” in all spheres of life.¹⁰² Nevertheless, it is clear that in this situation their professional identities prevailed.

Jewish refugees and expellees lived a peripatetic existence. The relief workers of KOPE often accompanied transferred populations. The archives preserved a field report which highlights interactions between the members of the relief committee, refugees/expellees, and the local Jewish and non-Jewish population. On September 28, 1915, a delegation of two paramedics and one nurse, headed by KOPE activist I. M. Giterman, left Kyiv with a group of 679 Galician Jews for Nizhny Novgorod. The Galicians were deported by military fiat. They had spent several months in Kyiv, in the custody houses maintained by the local Jewish community. Among them were 120 children, many individuals who were old, weak, or recently released from the hospital, several paraplegics, and two mentally disabled people. Being in Kyiv, they hoped to return home “in spite of the very bad news we received from those who had already returned [to Galicia].”¹⁰³ With the help of KOPE, the Galicians filed several petitions to the commander of the KMD for permission to return home rather than be sent to Nizhni Novgorod. However, their efforts were fruitless. In order to highlight the emotional pressure of the order to leave the city, Giterman stated, “Kyiv has become their second homeland, where they have had a lot of attention and were free from any worries.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ “U galichan,” *Kievskaia Mysl'*, 176 (7 July 1915): 2.

¹⁰² *Sbornik Kluba Russkikh Natsionalistov* (Kiev: Tipografia S. Kul'zhenko, 1911), 145.

¹⁰³ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 154, ark. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Apparently, the expellees did not want to leave the city where they had found some stability and travel far beyond the Pale of Jewish Settlement. Here is how Giterman described their moods, “Everyone knew that Nizhny Novgorod no longer accepts deportees; and rumors were circulating among them that they would be sent to Siberia or the Turgai region—far from the Jews—where they would die of hunger and exposure.”¹⁰⁵

Giterman relayed these concerns to KOPE and to the relief workers. He stated that the Galicians treated them very well, “even courteously”; “They saw us as part of the Kyiv Committee and were grateful for our efforts. I heard no complaints, with rare exceptions.”¹⁰⁶ However, Giterman added that he had heard complaints from several commissioners about the rudeness of Galician Jews towards relief workers, and upon being forced to leave Kyiv, he expected similar problems “as an inevitable evil.”¹⁰⁷

Giterman described their long journey in detail. Jewish communities along the road to Novgorod were informed of the Kyivan deportees’ travels and met the group with food, “great sympathy, and touching fraternal care.” The Jewish community of Nizhyn was the only exception, for although they were informed about the group of the deportees, they did not meet them at the railway station and did not send provisions.¹⁰⁸ Giterman could not explain this frosty reception, but it probably had to do with the citizenship of the deportees. In general, the relief worker stated that in all cities and towns of the Pale, the Jewish population warmly met the Galicians and helped as much as they could. However, he emphasized that beyond the Pale, the Jewish population was not so welcoming. Giterman argued, “judging by the reception and attitude towards us of the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Jewish communities of the Pale and beyond it, it is clear to me that Jews from beyond the Pale, who are separated from the Jewish masses, very assimilated, and completely absorbed in their own personal and local interests, are utterly deaf to the suffering and grievances of their brothers.”¹⁰⁹ When the train with the Galicians had arrived in Novgorod, the city administration refused to accept the refugees because the city was already overpopulated with evacuees. The local Jewish community was not welcoming either. The Novgorodian Jews even asked the governor to remove the Jewish deportees from the city. The deportees had to go to Kazan. The Jewish communities of Kazan also met the Galicians with hostility. Kazan’s Rabbi Leikin worried about the appearance of the Galician Jews. He explained to the Chief of Police that the Galicians could not stay in the city, “because all of them are savages with such long *peyots* [sidecurls].”¹¹⁰ The conflict with the Jewish community in Kazan pushed Giterman to note, “it was very painful to observe the dashed hopes of our exhausted Galicians, how their expectations and faith in their brothers, which we had aroused among them, were broken. But our shame for our Russian Jews was the worst, and we thought that we were to blame for [their indifference].”¹¹¹ The Galician, Lithuanian, and Polish Jews felt that Kyiv and the Pale were much more welcoming than the small and nearly invisible Jewish community in Kazan.

According to Giterman’s observations, the attitude of Russians towards Galician Jews also depended on their distance from the Pale: “if we had to listen to mockeries and curses from Russian refugees, recruits, and others in the provinces of the Pale, the population of the eastern provinces was benevolent and polite towards us. At one of the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 13.

stations in Nizhny Novgorod province, for example, when the recruits from another train learned about the fate of our Galicians, they distributed bread, which they distributed [to the deportees], and tried to comfort the Galicians.”¹¹² Obviously, the Russian provinces of the Pale had a long history of anti-Jewish prejudice. Moreover, this region was the bastion of the vehemently anti-Semitic Black Hundreds. Finally, the Pale was under military rule, and the military command supported and actively participated in wartime anti-Jewish hysteria. Thus, it is logical that the farther a population was from the Pale, the less hostile it was towards Jews, even Jews from an enemy state.

“Refugee” and “expellee” were social and identity categories suddenly created by the war, when millions of people lost their prior statuses and identities. Although refugeedom and deportation were very negative events, they led to the mobilization of national communities, and transformed relations between different branches of the same nation, as it occurred between Russians and Galician Jews.¹¹³ Displaced Poles turned for help to the official Polish refugee aid committees; Ukrainians united to help their co-nationals, expelled from Galicia and Bukovyna together with other nations. Jews from across the empire and the newly occupied territories were forced to meet and rely upon each other and Jewish national aid committees. Welfare activists worked to mobilize national communities and to unite local Jews and Jewish refugees and deportees. Thanks to their efforts, Kyiv’s Jewish community overcame major differences among its members and emerged as a more unified ‘national’ community with leaders who could

¹¹² Ibid., 5, 7-9.

¹¹³ Eric Lohr et al., *The Empire and Nationalism at War*, 96; Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I*, Indiana-Michigan series in Russian and East European studies (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011b), 141-170.

represent its interests. Within a couple of years, those leaders would become active participants in Jewish revolutionary political life.

Calm before the Storm

In the second part of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, KOPE as well as the central office in Petrograd, faced organizational and financial problems. The reorganization and involvement of the masses and refugees into the work of relief organizations became the prime focus of KOPE and EKOPO. War weariness started to affect Jewish organizing efforts. The local committees had worked for almost three years without a renewal of their personnel; activists were physically and psychologically exhausted, and were disillusioned by “the indifference of the population to their relief efforts.”¹¹⁴ KOPE members’ attendance at meetings declined. Due to absenteeism, for example, the meeting of the bureau of the Committee was canceled on January 14, 1917.¹¹⁵ Involvement of the refugees in the activity of the relief organizations was seen as the best solution for the personnel problem.

There was a parallel between the organizational and financial crises. The population lost its enthusiasm for relief work and both donations and income from self-taxation substantially dropped. Financial subsidies from the government were also reduced.¹¹⁶ In February 1917, when KOPE provided aid to 30,000 Jewish refugees, the

¹¹⁴ “K ocherednym zadacham pomoshchi,” *Delo pomoshchi*, no. 8 (20 September 1916): 4; “Voprosy pomoshchi. Ocherednye zadachi,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, no. 2 (1917): 7-10.

¹¹⁵ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 260, ark. 3, 5.

¹¹⁶ “Soveshchanie Petrogradskogo Evreiskogo Komiteta pomoshchi s predstaviteliami mestnykh komitetov ot 29-31 avgusta,” *Delo pomoshchi*, no. 8 (20 September 1916): 9-14; “Nekotorye itogi,” *Delo pomoshchi*, no. 14 (20 December 1916): 8-10; “Pomoshch bezhentsam,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 286 (14 October 1916): 2; “V evreiskom obshchestve pomoshchi zhertvam voiny,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 342 (9 December 1916): 5.

balance sheet of the Committee (₴265,000) showed a deficit of ₴70,000.¹¹⁷ Thus, KOPE could aid only one-third of refugees. In May 1917, the committee for the care of children almost ceased to exist due to a lack of enthusiastic activists.¹¹⁸ The orphanage remained open until September 1917, when the children were moved to institutions of the OZE.¹¹⁹ In September 1917, KOPE liquidated its storage warehouse [*veshchevoi sklad*] because the Committee could no longer maintain it.¹²⁰ KOPE made the decision to concentrate its efforts on aid to disabled refugees and the maintenance of educational and medical institutions that already existed to help refugees. At the same time, KOPE decided to extend aid to the families of soldiers and the Jews of Kyiv, while having to cease operations in Galicia, Volynia, and Podolia. Efforts now focused on providing credit and labour help, which would make recipients less dependent on the relief organizations and thus would reduce the organization's long-term financial burden.¹²¹ The activists of KOPE envisioned only one solution—a self-governing community [*samoupravliaiushchaia obshchina*] and compulsory self-taxation.¹²²

In December 1916, KOPE published an appeal to the Jewish population of Kyiv, which asked for monthly self-taxation (it did not state clearly whether it had to be voluntary or compulsory) as an instrument of financial support. The appeal, published in *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, argued that “the first waves of enthusiasm, have declined. The relief committees have recognized the need to reorganize the relief work in such a way that enthusiasm and philanthropy are replaced with organized people's self-help

¹¹⁷ “V evreiskom komitete pomoshchi bezhentsam,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 59 (28 February 1917): 4.

¹¹⁸ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 260, ark. 23-25, 28-29.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., ark. 31.

¹²⁰ Ibid., ark. 30-31.

¹²¹ “Budni Kievskogo komiteta pomoshchi,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, no. 6 (1917): 30-31.

¹²² Ibid.

[*organizovannaia narodnaia samopomoshch*].”¹²³ The popularity of the idea of self-taxation among the activists of KOPE was evidence of a gradual politicization of the relief cause. KOPE clearly represented itself as an organ of Jewish self-government. As Rabinovich explained, the right to collect taxes not only provided the Jewish organ of self-government sustainable funding, but the right to tax formally defined “its members as part of the Jewish community, binding them to it, and [creating] a sphere of authority separate from that of the Russian government.”¹²⁴ At the general meetings of the KOPE in Kyiv, activists complained that the Jewish population of Kyiv and the Pale did not generally respond to requests for self-taxation with enthusiasm. There were only 1,800 taxpayers in Kyiv in February 1917.¹²⁵ The general pauperization of the population anaesthetized people to the suffering of others. Those strata of the Jewish population whose financial situation was not substantially altered by economic crises (bankers, industrialists, and merchants) did not sympathize with self-taxation because it meant the democratization of the Jewish community and their loss of power.¹²⁶

Jewish relief organizations and the spirit of *obshchestvennost'* created the basis for a new Jewish community [*obshchina*], which would be secular and democratic instead of religious and oligarchic.¹²⁷ Jewish nationalism emerged as a major force, for the Jewish activists involved in the welfare work constantly appealed to the “Jewish people [*narod*],” “Brother-Jews,” or the “Jewish nation.” Jews united around one

¹²³ “Prizyv k samooblozheniiu,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 334 (1 December 1916): 4; “Samooblozhenie sredi evreev,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 49 (18 February 1917): 1.

¹²⁴ Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 128.

¹²⁵ “V evreiskom komitete pomoshchi bezhentsam,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 59 (28 February 1917): 4.

¹²⁶ S. G. Gurevich, “Provintsial'nye zametki. Samooblozhenie i prinuditel'noe oblozhenie,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, no. 1 (1917): 31-34; “V evreiskom komitete pomoshchi bezhentsam,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 59 (28 February 1917): 4.

¹²⁷ Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 75.

common, popular cause [*narodnoe delo*]. Similar developments took place in partitioned Poland and Austria-Hungary. Ezra Mendelsohn and David Rechter have suggested that Zionist welfare work in Poland during the Great War contributed “to the transformation of Zionism into a movement of great popular appeal.”¹²⁸ However, it is unclear if the activists of relief committees were successful in their attempt to overcome the gap between them and ordinary Jews from the Pale, who became refugees or expellees during the war.

The war brought not only educated professionals into Jewish communal institutions, it also engaged local Jewish communities at large and the refugees themselves. Nevertheless, such cooperation was not always smooth. The “golden era” of relief work was 1915. At the beginning of 1917, KOPE recognized that it had failed to build a bridge between Jewish relief organizations and the Jewish masses, among whom the committee was not popular.¹²⁹ KOPE dealt mostly with unstable and rootless refugees. Definitely they sympathized with KOPE, but in terms of sheer numbers, refugees and expellees constituted a smaller group in comparison to locals. At the same time, refugees received the majority of aid, while destitute local Jews, who before the war could count on charity, had to find new ways to survive. When the enthusiasm of the local population dropped, committee members recognized the necessity to include refugee representatives on the central committee, to switch activity from individual to collective assistance, and to develop a network of institutions that would contribute to the “recovery of Jewish society and a national consolidation.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 84; Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The formative years, 1915-1926* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1981), 46.

¹²⁹ “Kiev (Ot Nashego Korrespondenta),” *Evreiskaia Nedelia* 8 (19 fevralia 1917): 43.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

In 1917, the problem of the refugees and their well-being no longer topped the social agenda. KOPE as well as EKOPO mostly dealt with refugee resettlement. Before the February Revolution, the Jewish right of residence and expellees' freedom of movement were very limited; Jewish deportees and hostages from Galicia and Bukovyna were in fact little more than convicts. After the full abolishment of the Pale of Jewish Settlement in March 1917, relief organizations expected that these three groups of people would finally be allowed to return home. However, the ongoing war complicated matters. The Polish provinces had been conquered by German and Austrian troops in 1915 and thus Polish Jews, as well as Galicians and Bukovynians, could not return. Moreover, many refugees had settled down, found jobs, or even started businesses, and they did not want to return to lands devastated by war. Thus, some refugees acquired a new status as “settled” [*osedlye*]. KOPE and EKOPO had to limit their operations due to financial hardship and a shrinking community that actually needed their help.¹³¹ It was expected that the relief organizations would delegate their responsibilities to the new, democratized Jewish communities.

By 1917, the pre-war governing body of the Kyiv's Jewish community—the Representation for Jewish Welfare—had atrophied. According to Moyshe Zilberfarb, the future Minister of Jewish Affairs in the government of the Ukrainian Central Rada (Council), the local branches of OPE, OZE, ORT, and KOPE “had retired to a corner somewhere and emitted no signs of life.” When EKOPO, as the central and coordinating organization of Jewish relief work after the February Revolution, became active in all-Russian politics, some members of KOPE returned to prominence in Kyiv's political life

¹³¹ “V tsentral'nom evreiskom komitete pomoshchi zhertvam voyny,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 17 (1917): 22—23.

(Litvakov, Frumin, Bykhovskii, Makhover, and Mazor).¹³² However, many Jewish activists, due to burnout, disappointment, or financial troubles, stepped aside from KOPE's daily operations.

The semi-independent activity of Jewish relief organizations, the democratization of communal life, the mass mobilization of the Jewish population and its mobility throughout the country had a positive impact on the formation of a Jewish public sphere and national identity based on common goals and values. During the revolutionary years, Jewish political groups and public organizations maintained the course of action established in 1914. Their tactics evolved according to circumstance, but their goal — Jewish national and cultural autonomy—did not change and persisted beyond the revolutionary period.

Conclusion

The totality of the Great War meant not only military mobilization; patriotic civilians were called to duty on the home front. Jews of all the belligerent powers actively participated in these home fronts. Their first intention was to demonstrate loyalty to the states in which they lived.¹³³ They hoped that organizing or sponsoring hospitals for wounded soldiers, preparing linens and warm clothing, or volunteering as nurses would

¹³² "K sozyvu vserossiiskogo evreiskogo s"ezda," *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 14—15 (15 April 1917): 47—51.

¹³³ On the home fronts in the Great war, see Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 59-81; John Williams, *The Other Battleground: The Home Fronts in Britain, France and Germany 1914-18* (Chicago: Regnery, 1972); J. M. Winter, *The Great War and the British People* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2003); Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, 67–101; Anastasia S. Tumanova, "The Public and the Organization of Aid to Refugees During World War I," *Russian Studies in History* 51, no. 3 (2012): 81–107; Ievgen Dzhumyga, "The Home Front in Odessa during the Great War (July 1914 - February 1917): the Gender Aspect of the Problem," *Danubius* 31 (2013): 223–42; Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*.

help them dispel anti-Semitism and perhaps would even give Jews equal civil rights after the war.

Young Jewish relief workers used the turmoil of war as an opportunity to rebuild Jewish life on a new democratic and nationalist basis.¹³⁴ Traditional charitable communal institutions, which dealt with the settled local poor population and were sponsored exclusively by local wealthy Jews, were not able to cope with the influx of refugees. Only modern relief societies such as EKOPO, KOPE, and other divisions of the Central Committee in Petrograd, as well as the OPE and OZE, were able to raise and distribute the necessary funds.¹³⁵ In turn, Jewish intellectuals constructed new institutions of Jewish public life (KOPE), which they used to reconnect themselves to “the people.”

Although the state created the refugee crisis, it also created the possibility for establishing Jewish public space represented by Jewish relief organizations. They had to provide immediate relief and organize the resettlement and occupational retraining of those newly arrived. Refugee crises forces the state to delegate its functions to public organizations (national and all-Russian). As Simon Rabinovitch notes “Jewish communal organization did in fact become a surrogate for the state and, in turn, created the edifice of Jewish communal and legal autonomy.”¹³⁶ Jewish *obshchestvennost'* had to establish new organizations and to involve professional Jewish relief workers in order to ensure that these organizations functioned effectively.¹³⁷ The traditional oligarchic Jewish elite did not lose its position. However, young Jewish professionals advanced ideas of Jewish

¹³⁴ Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 95; Zipperstein, "The politics of relief," 26.

¹³⁵ DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 13a, ark. 1–2; TsDIAK, f. 1010, op. 1, spr. 53, ark. 10; Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation*, 96.

¹³⁶ Rabinovich was discussing here Dubnov's theory of Jewish autonomism and how the war influences Jewish communal life. Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 168.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

communal democratic self-government developed between 1907 and 1914. Kyiv became a true laboratory for creating a Jewish public sphere, which laid the foundations for national-cultural autonomy proclaimed by the Ukrainian Central Rada, which came to power in Kyiv in 1917.

The development of the Jewish public sphere represented by the Jewish voluntary associations helped Jews fulfill their national aspirations. As Rabinovitch explains, it “enabled them to avoid having to choose between the competing nationalisms of the groups with whom they lived.”¹³⁸ After the February Revolution, the Jews, who lived in the southern (Ukrainian) provinces of the former Russian Empire, did not debate whether they had to join the Russian or Ukrainian national movement because they had their own. The prewar “organic work” of Jewish political activists took new forms during the war: they had to mobilize and organize Jewry around one cause (relief work); to establish and develop a school system, which would promote secular Jewish nationalism; and finally, to organize a system of self-taxation to increase the income of EKOPO and KOPE. In 1917, Jews started to talk very actively about autonomism, and that was no longer merely the theoretical idea that was popular among them at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jewish public life constructed in Kyiv during the war enabled Jewry to demand that the Ukrainian Central Rada recognize Jews as a nationality. The founding and further activity of Jewish relief committees led to the establishment of a Jewish governing bureaucracy and prepared Jewish activists for future political activity in the new political circumstances created by the revolutions of 1917.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 78.

CHAPTER SIX. REVOLUTION IN THE JEWISH STREET

Enduring overlapping war and revolution, Kyiv stood at the crossroads of important trends and themes in twentieth century history. Jan Gross has argued that war itself was revolutionary because it altered social relations, the balance of power between society and state, and the patterns of interaction between the two.¹ The war, without comparison until World War II, mobilized young people and women, changing their social roles and transforming them into soldiers and breadwinners. Revolution was a dramatic rupture, the end of the *ancien* regime, and the beginning of a new social order. Nevertheless, an explosion of ethnic and class conflict, and the extreme violence of civil, accompanied this utopian futurism. Although the war initiated social and economic changes, the revolution amplified them.

The years of revolution and the Civil War (1917-1921) were a period of unprecedented political activity in Kyiv—political power changed hands 16 times. Some ruling cliques lasted just a couple of days.² Kyiv became the capital city of the “Ukrainian lands” (until the Third Universal of the Central Rada, which proclaimed the Ukrainian National Republic on November 7 (20), 1917) and the Ukrainian State of Hetman Pavlo Skoropads’kyi (April 29, 1918 to December 14, 1918). This was an important change; before 1917, Kyiv may have been the capital of the Empire’s South-Western region, but it was still provincial. Kyiv was not only a capital for Ukrainians; it was a major city in the Jewish Pale of Jewish Settlement, which though officially ceased

¹ Jan Gross, "War as Revolution," in *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*, ed. Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997), 18.

² Iaroslav Tynchenko, *Belaia gvardiia Mikhaila Bulgakova* (Kiev, 1997).

to exist in 1917, did not disappear from the mental maps of the Jewish population of the Pale. However, Jews saw Kyiv through the prism of empire and Russian culture, while many Ukrainians understood the city as the capital of the newly created and highly desirable Ukrainian state (first, an autonomous republic of a democratic federal Russia, and later, an independent state). Thus, the city was a place of competing identities.

In comparison to 1919-1920, the period of 1917-1918 was a time of relative stability. On March 22, 1917, the Provisional Government declared the “abolishing of all class, religious, and national restrictions,” which meant the full abolishment of the Pale.³ The first two years of freedom were contemporaneous with the end of the war and military demobilization, the creation of the Ukrainian People's Republic in November 1917, the first Bolshevik seizure of Kyiv in January 1918, the proclamation of the independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic on January 25, 1918, and the German occupation of Ukraine that followed.

It was a time of multiple public spheres, that is communities of people “gathered together as a public, articulating the needs of society” (societies, committees, parties, Soviets, conventions, conferences etc.), and performing multiple and situational identities.⁴ Jews as well as Ukrainians were seeking to establish new national communities. Revolutionaries sought to reconstitute society and recreate social relations. In Kyiv, governing bodies tried to balance national differences. The all-Russian EKOPO (the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims in Petrograd) and the local KOPE (the Kyiv Jewish Society to Aid the Victims of War) developed a public sphere and

³ “Postanovlenie Vremennogo pravitel'stva ob otmene veroispovednykh i natsional'nykh ogranichenii,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, [ekstrennyi vypusk] (March 1917): 12-14.

⁴ Habermas and Burger, Thomas (trans.), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 176.

vigorously debated the place of Russia's Jewish communities. Their organizational networks, and secular educational and philanthropic institutions were transformed into the organs of Jewish self-government in 1917.

It is difficult to speak about a civic history of Kyiv, especially during the revolutionary period. Ukrainian history, both regionally and nationally, was intertwined with events in Kyiv, the newly created capital of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR). It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to separate them. However, I will avoid the well-trodden terrain of narrating these pivotal moments in Ukrainian and Kyivan history.⁵ Instead, I will focus on the "Jewish" revolutionary experience and the changing governments in Kyiv's urban space. In this chapter, I go beyond the concept of a city transformed by war. Rather, I will describe Kyiv as a city of liberated minorities organizing politically, using the local Jewish community as an example of change.

⁵ John-Paul Himka, "The National and the Social in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-20: the Historiographical Agenda," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 95–110; Dmytro Doroshenko, *History of Ukraine, 1917-1923*, Vol. II, The Ukrainian Hetman State of 1918 (Winnipeg, 1973); Dmytro Doroshenko, *IAk bulo proholosheno het'manstvo u Kyivi 29. kvitnia 1918 roku* (Winnipeg: Nakladom tsentrali "Sichei" 1927); Dmytro Doroshenko, *Istoriia Ukraïny, 1917-1923 rr.*, Tom. 1. Doba Tsentral'noi Rady, vol. 1 (Kyiv: "Tempora" 2002); Taras Hunczak and Von der Heide, John T., eds., *The Ukraine, 1917-1921: A study in Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 1977); Pavlo Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materialy do istorii ukrains'koi revoliutsii, 1917-1920 rr.* (New York: Vyd-vo Chartoriï's'kykh, 1969); John Stephen Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920: A Study in Nationalism* (N.Y.: Arno Press, 1972). A valuable reference work on the history of revolution in Ukraine and Russia, is Jonathan D. Smele, *The Russian Revolution and Civil War, 1917-1921: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Continuum, 2005); Edith Rogovin Frankel, Jonathan Frankel, and Baruch Knei-Paz, *Revolution in Russia: Reassessments of 1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). About the Jewish aspect of the Ukrainian revolution, see Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917-1920*, Harvard Judaic texts and studies (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1999); Henry Abramson, "Historiography of the Jews and the Ukrainian Revolution," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 15, no. 2 (1990): 33–45; M. Mintz, "The Secretariat of Internationality Affairs (Sekretariat mizhnatsional'nykh sprav) of the Ukrainian General Secretariat (1917-1918)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, no. 1 (1982): 25; Howard Aster and Peter J. Potichnyj, eds., *Ukrainian Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, 2. ed. (Edmonton: CIUS; University of Alberta, 1990); I. B. Shekhtman, "Evreiskaia obshchestvennost' na Ukraine (1917-1919 g.g)," in *Kniga o russkom evreistve 1917-1967*, ed. Frumkin, IA. G., Aronson, G. IA., Gol'denveizer, A. A. (N'iu Iork: Soiuz russkikh evreev, 1968).

Revolution in the City

The third year of the war unleashed calamity on the city's economic and social life. In February 1917, the tramway administration [*tramvainoe upravlenie*] requisitioned half of the city's trains to transport fuel, wounded soldiers, and military equipment, even though they were necessary for urban commuters.⁶ Meat and sugar rationing was introduced in June 1916. By February 1917, bread and flour scarcity warranted rationing, causing long lines and frayed nerves, as well.⁷ Kyiv, however, compared to Berlin, Vienna, or even Petrograd, was relatively better off. The city never starved, though there was a shortage of whole wheat bread, which was the cheapest food for the lower classes. White bread was plentiful, but the majority of the urban population could not afford it. The city's shortages were caused by an inadequate supply system, military requisitions, and the reluctance of producers waiting for higher prices to sell grain.⁸ Even Mother Nature seemed to conspire against Kyivans. The flooding Dnieper severely damaged Podil and Mykil's'ka Slobidka, on the river's left bank. The flood forced the mills, which were close to the river, to stop flour production, which only exacerbated the city's food crisis.⁹

The war brought civic militarization and revolution, instability and uncertainty, to Kyiv's streets. In general, one observer noticed,

⁶ "Sokrashchenie tramvainogo dvizheniia," "Perevozochnyi krizis," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 36 (5 February 1917): 2, 5.

⁷ TsDIAKU, f. 315, op. 2, spr. 734, ark. 64—65; "Vydacha kollektivnykh kartochek na muku i khleb," "K vvedeniuiu khlebnykh kartochek," *Kievlianin*, 62 (3 March 1917): 3.

⁸ "Khlebnyi vopros," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 24 (24 January 1917): 3; "Kartochki na muku i khleb," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 30 (5 February 1917):2; "Muchnoi vopros," "Na rynke," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 36 (5 February 1917): 5; "Kartochki na khleb i muku," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 38 (7 February 1917): 1.

⁹ "Prodovol'stvennyi krizis v Kieve," *Kievlianin*, 99 (22 April 1917): 2; "Sokrashchenie khlebnogo paika," *Kievlianin*, 103 (26 April 1917): 1.

In these unbelievable days, New Russia is climbing out of the womb of history [*novaiia Rossiia vypolzaet iz utroby istorii*], when everything is in tumult and blood, and accompanied by the roar of guns and the noise of crowds. It is frightening and interesting to look at this. Half past, half future, everything is formless and ugly, the crimson ray is hitting everything and almost everything has a mystic meaning.¹⁰

A correspondent of *Kievskaiia Mysl'* offered a very detailed description of changes to the urban space. Khreshchatyk Street “became grey, shabby, emaciated, and angry.” It was figuratively “ravaged and scorched” and its crowds were “a cluster of hungry and angry spiders.”¹¹ The article described a combustible atmosphere: “the passers-by, boys, venders, and janitors were cursing, jostling, snarling; everyone had glinting eyes; it looked like they needed just the smallest spark to sink their teeth into each other.”¹² It described the “exhausted and embittered faces” of people in the streets, whose clothes were “strange and purchased at the second-hand market [*tolkuchka*].”¹³ War and revolution destroyed all habitual ways of living and surviving. The common population had to develop new tactics of survival in unstable social conditions.

By 1918, the perception of Kyiv’s urban space among city-dwellers changed significantly. In January 1918, a short article about urban streets published in *Iuzhnaia Gazeta*, the successor to *Iuzhnaia Kopeika*, noted that the streets had another meaning in those days: “Earlier, we saw streets as a connecting space between houses, without any particular meaning, [...] now they are something special, with a life of their own [...] now they are a place hostile to our homes.”¹⁴ The city was described as “consisting of

¹⁰ G. Iablochkov, “Otrazheniia,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 215 (3 September 1917): 1.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Ulitsy,” *Poslednie Novosti*, 4357 (11 January 1918): 1.

two hostile camps—homes and streets.”¹⁵ The city became a “battleground,” for the streets were not a safe place for the urban dwellers due to high level of criminality and general social instability.

The Bolshevik Arsenal Uprising of October 26-31, 1917, and in particular the Bolsheviks’ bombardment of Kyiv in 1918, brought martial violence to the city for the first time. Aleksei Gol’denveizer, a Kyivan lawyer and sympathizer of the Constitutional-Democratic Party (Kadets), noted, “on the last day of October 1917, at the end of the day, something suddenly buzzed over our heads. At that time, we were not used to distinguishing artillery sounds, and we did not understand what was happening. But a minute later, we were showing one another a small and accurate hole made in the wall of the *Rossia* Insurance Company. There was no doubt that a missile had flown over the city.”¹⁶ Fear and uncertainty stalked Kyivans. The old rules of co-existence had been broken, but new ones had yet to be developed and learned by the urbanites.

First steps

Even though living conditions in Kyiv were harsh, there were no popular protests or mass uprisings. Gol’denveizer noted in his memoirs that “[n]othing foreshadowed the great events at the end of February 1917 [in Kyiv].”¹⁷ However, on the evening of February 28, a telegram signed by Aleksandr Bublikov, an engineer and a commissar of the Ministry of Transport, arrived in Kyiv from Petrograd. It brought the first information

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Gol’denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 194.

¹⁷ Ibid., 161; about Aleksei Gol’denveizer, see Oleg Budnitskii and Aleksandra Polian, *Russko-evreiskii Berlin, 1920-1941* (Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2013), 207–31; Gol’denveizer, "Aleksei Gol’denveizer: Dnevnik i Pis'ma Raznykh Let."

about the revolution in the capital. The local provincial and city administrations were incredulous, and Kyiv's mayor asked the government in Petrograd to confirm the information.

The next day, on March 1, 1917, representatives of the city and provincial administration and public organizations gathered to discuss the current political situation.¹⁸ They decided to establish a Council of United Public Organizations of Kyiv (CUPOK) [*Rada ob'iednanykh hromads'kykh orhanizatsii Kyieva*].¹⁹ The Council created an Executive, drawing from City Duma deputies, the Zemstvo Union, the Union of the Cities, the War Industry Committee, and Ukrainian (Oleksandr Nikovs'kyi) and Jewish (Il'ia Frumin) public organizations, to name a few. It was expected that the new institution, as a part of the city administration, and including representatives from all strata and groups of the urban population, would maintain control over their constituents, and would thus help maintain overall peace and order in Kyiv.²⁰

Although, the "old regime" was destroyed, the old bureaucratic structures remained. The city administration continued to be responsible for urban everyday life. The City Duma represented the Provisional Government in Kyiv. Democratization of the Duma was a logical step given the new political circumstances. All members of the Executive Committee of CUPOK became Duma councillors [*glasnye*] and members of the city administration [*uprava*], and took part in all meetings and decisions about city

¹⁸ The Chief of the KMD, General Nikolai Khodorovich, the provincial Marshal of the Nobility Fedor Bezak, and the mayor, the head of the Committee of the All-Russian Zemstvo Union, Serhy Shlykevych, and the head of the Committee of the All-Russian Union of the Cities of the South-Western front, Fedir Shteinhel'.

¹⁹ Gol'denzeizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 165; Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moi spomyny pro nedavniemyu (1914-1920)* (Miunkhen: Ukraïns'ke vydavnytstvo, 1969), 80–81; Smolii, V.A., Boriak, H.V., Verstiuk, V.F., ed., *Narysy istorii Ukraïns'koï revoliutsii 1917-1921 rokiv*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 2011), 90–91.

²⁰ "Sovet obshchestvennykh organizatsii," *Kievlianin*, 64 (5 March 1917): 1-2.

administration issues and urban everyday life.²¹ Fedor Burchak continued as mayor of the city until August 1917.²²

Democratization meant that representatives from all strata of the urban population, especially those that had been restricted under the old regime were included in the system of urban management. On March 9, 1917, S. L. Frankfurt, Grigorii Bykhovskii, Semen Fleishman, Moisei Mazor, and Il'ia Frumin, representatives of Kyiv's Jewish population became City Duma councillors.²³ These new councillors were activists in Jewish relief organizations during the war. Semen Isaakovich Fleishman, one of the leading members of the Kyiv Branch of the OPE and OZE, was a well-known neurologist. During the Great War, he was a co-founder and the vice-president of KOPE.²⁴ Similarly, Moisei Savel'evich Mazor, an attorney [*prisiazhnyi poverennyi*] and husband of the niece of Sholem Aleichem, was born in Vasyl'kiv in 1858 to a very poor Jewish religious family. He was an autodidact of Russian, German, and secular subjects. In 1878, he passed the exams and entered secondary school [*real'noe uchilische*] in Bila Tserkva; later he studied at the First Kyiv gymnasium and finally at Kyiv University.²⁵ In 1914, he co-founded KOPE.

Jewish professionals and political activists for the first time in Kyiv's history were given status as equal members of the urban community. On April 26, 1917, the city administration [*uprava*] took the decision to incorporate into its body the representatives

²¹ "Demokratizatsiia gorodskoi dumy," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 96 (12 April 1917): 2; "Gorodskaiia дума," *Kievlianin*, 63 (4 March 1917): 2; K. M. Oberuchev, *Vospominaniia* (N'iu Iork: Izdanie Gruppy Pamiati Pochitatelei Pamiati K. M. Oberucheva, 1930), 397.

²² "V Komitete Ob"edinennykh obshchestvennykh organizatsii g. Kieva," *Kievlianin*, 65 (6 March 1917): 3.

²³ "Glasnye-evrei v sostave Kievskoi gorodskoi dumy," *Kievlianin*, 68 (9 March 1917): 2; "Zaiavlenie chinov Kievskoi gorodskoi politsii," *Kievlianin*, 70 (11 March 1917): 2.

²⁴ MDVLUK, f. X, 6473, ark. 1.

²⁵ MDVLUK, f. X, 5737, ark. 1—3; see also Mishel' Mazor, *Znykle misto: svidchenniiia v'iaznia Varshavs'koho hetto* (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2010).

of national communities and public organizations. As a result, Abram M. Ginzburg, Iakov N. Tsederbaum, Il'ia Frumin, Grigorii B. Bykhovskii, S. S. Zelinskii, Andrii Nikovs'kyi, Konstantin Oberuchev, K. S. Palamarchuk, Aleksei V. Dorotov, A. K. Vasil'chuk, I. I. Shchitkovskii, and T. S. Busalo became members of the *uprava* (city administration).²⁶ Four of them were Jews (Ginzburg, Tsederbaum, Frumin, and Bykhovskii); the latter two represented Kyiv's Jewish organizations. Specifically, Abram Ginzburg (1878-1937) was a member of the RSDLP, which was later affiliated with the Mensheviks. He had lived in Kyiv since 1912 and worked as a correspondent for *Kievskaia Mysl'* writing under the pseudonym "G. Naumov."²⁷ Iakov Tsederbaum (1886-1937) was also a member of the RSDLP and a cousin of Iulii Tsederbaum (Martov), a leader of the Mensheviks.

The city awaited new City Duma elections, planned for July. Political posters and banners adorned fences, posts, tram pavilions, and open spaces in the markets and city squares. The advertisements reflected the multi-national character of the city. They were written in different languages (Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew) for different populations. The blue and white Zionist poster with the Star of David shared space on the wall with the poster of the Jewish socialist party.²⁸ The Jews, on an equal basis with other nationalities, claimed their right to the city as citizens and their right to participate in democracy. At the same time, they showed the fragmentation of Kyiv's political culture.

²⁶ "Duma," *Kievskaia Mysl'*, 107 (27 April 1917): 3; See also *Spiski kandidatov v glasnye na vyborakh v kievskuiu gorodskuiu dumu 23 iuulia 1917 goda publikuemye kievskoi gorodskoi upravoi*, Spisok pervyi (Kiev: Tip. T-va I. N. Kushnereva i K^o, 1917); "Gorodskaia дума," *Kievljanin*, 104 (27 April 1917): 4.

²⁷ Naum Iasnyi, *Sovietskie ekonomisty 1920-kh godov: Dolg pamiaty* (Moskva: Izdatel'skii dom "Delo" 2012), 207–08.

²⁸ "Vybory v gorodskuiu dumu," *Iuzhnaia Gazeta*, 2359 (20 July 1917): 3.

The election to the City Duma in the summer of 1917 showed the urban populations's political preferences. Jewish, Polish, and Russian socialists (Mensheviks, the Bund, and Polish Socialist Party (Left) won broad support: they received 44 of the Duma's 120 seats; the Jewish Democratic Bloc received 5, the Jewish Socialist Bloc had 3, Ukrainian parties 25, the Kadets 10, the Russian monarchists won 18 seats, the Bolsheviks 7, the Polish parties 7, and the Union of Land Owners 1.²⁹ The first democratically elected City Duma assembled in August 1917, and the Executive Committee of CUPOK ceased to exist.³⁰ The socialist parties formed a governing coalition in the Duma; even though they held only a plurality of seats, the other parties were too ideologically divided to find common ground.³¹ On August 9, 1917, the City Duma appointed the lawyer Evgenii Riabtsov, a member of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary party (the SRs), as mayor of the city [*gorodskoi golova*]; the Menshevik Ginsburg became his assistant.³²

The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, meanwhile, continued to function, shaping local political life. On March 16, 1917, representatives of Kyiv's factories established the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, which consisted mostly of Mensheviks and Ukrainian and Russian Socialist Revolutionaries. The soldiers and officers of the KMD (Kyiv Military District) created the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies.³³

²⁹ DAK, f. 163, op. 31, spr. 319, ark. 52; f. 292, op. 1, spr. 53, ark. 1; "Vybory," *Kievskie gorodskie izvestiia*, 8 (1917):3; IU. I. Tereshchenko, *Politychna borot'ba na vyborakh do mis'kykh dum Ukraïny v period pidhotovky Zhovtnevoi revoliutsii* (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1974), 95–97; Doroshenko, *Istoriia Ukraïny, 1917-1923 rr.*, 117; Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 50–51.

³⁰ Oberuchev, *Vospominaniia*, 272.

³¹ "Itogi vyborov," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 180 (25 July 1917): 1; "Vybory v gorodskuiu dumu," 184 (29 July 1917): 1–2.

³² "Novaia gorodskaia дума. Izbranie gorodskogo golovy," *Posliedniia Novosti* (Utrennii vypusk), 4627 (10 August 1917): 4; "E.P.Riabtsov," *Posliedniia Novosti* (Utrennii vypusk), 4629 (11 August 1917): 4; "Novye gorodskoi golova i ego tovarishch," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 195 (11 August 1917): 2.

³³ A. Ivanov, "Tsentral'naia Rada i Kievskii Sovet v 1917-18 godu," *Letopis revoliutsii*, no. 1 (1922), 9.

Together with CUPOK and the recently established Ukrainian Central Rada, the Soviets represented the main political force shaping political life civically and regionally. Israel Getzler has described the Soviets as “quasi-parliamentary bodies,” and “agents of democratization,” which “intensively engaged in educating the masses in the practices of democratic elections.”³⁴ The Soviets, as representative bodies of the “toiling masses,” agitated for democratization of the City Duma by way of elections based on the ‘four-tailed’ franchise [*chetyrekhkhvostka*—universal, direct, equal, and secret] and for speedy elections to the all-Russian Constituent Assembly.³⁵ The Soviets represented the popular and radical wing of the revolution. In Ukraine, and in Kyiv as the main regional city, the key political actors were the Ukrainian Central Rada and the Provisional Government in Petrograd. Obviously, Jews who were members of the local organization of the RSDLP were also members of the Kyiv Soviet. The Soviets, however, neither represented the interests of the local Jewish community, the Jewish nation in general, nor any other national group, in particular. As such, Jewish socialist political activists rarely mentioned the Soviets in their descriptions of the revolutionary events in Ukraine in 1917–1918. The Bund and the Poale Zion supported the Central Rada.³⁶ In October 1917, Bolshevik members of the Kyiv Soviet unsurprisingly supported the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd.³⁷ However, the Central Rada prevailed in the struggle for power in Ukraine during October 1917 and proclaimed the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR) within a federated Russia of equal and free peoples in its Third Universal (November 7 (20), 1917). According to the Universal, the UNR would be governed by the Central Rada and the General

³⁴ Israel Getzler, "Soviets as agents of democratization," in *Revolution in Russia: Reassessments of 1917*, eds. Edith Rogovin Frankel et al. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17.

³⁵ Engelstein, *Russia in Flames*, 117–20.

³⁶ Rafes, *Dva goda revoliutsii na Ukraine (evoliutsiia i rasskol Bunda)*, 43–44.

³⁷ I. Kulik, "Oktiabr'skie dni v Kieve," *Letopis revoliutsii* 1 (1922).

Secretariat of the Central Rada until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly of Ukraine.

Almost immediately, CUPOK abolished the Gendarme Department as it represented “the old order and old violence.” It also resubordinated the Police Department to civic authorities before establishing a militia [*militsiia*].³⁸ Vladimir Kalachevskii, a captain and former military solicitor, headed the new militia; later, on March 13, 1917, he was replaced by Lieutenant Aleksandr Leparskii.³⁹ Konstantin Oberuchev, a retired Colonel and the Military Commissar of the KMD, remembered that police officers had been disarmed, and the disarmament was initiated “not so much by the Kyivans as by the demand from those who arrived from Moscow and Petrograd, where those steps had already been taken.”⁴⁰ Consequently, those police officers who were allowed to continue to perform their duties were without weapons, but “with the red arm-bands.”⁴¹ The unarmed police officers were often at the mercy of the mob. Male and female students and workers, who were armed but very inexperienced, assumed the responsibilities of the former police.⁴² Predictably, disorder and mass criminality ensued.

³⁸ Oberuchev, *Vospominaniia*, 386.

³⁹ “V Komitete Ob”edinennykh obshchestvennykh organizatsii g. Kieva,” *Kievlianin*, 65 (6 March 1917): 2; “Novyi nachal’nik militsii,” *Kievlianin*, 72 (13 March 1917): 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ “Prikaz nachal’nika kievskoi politsii,” *Kievlianin*, 66 (7 March 1917): 2; “V Iсполnitel’nom komitete,” *Kievlianin*, 68 (9 March 1917): 1.

⁴² “V Komitete Ob”edinennykh obshchestvennykh organizatsii g. Kieva,” *Kievlianin*, 65 (6 March 1917): 2, 3; Oberuchev, *Vospominaniia*, 386.

The Urban Population and the Revolution.

Spring 1917 witnessed popular demonstrations and public meetings, whose spontaneity stood in contrast to the stage-managed affairs of summer 1914.⁴³ As Oberuchev noted, “it was a universal celebration. The crowds rushed into the streets. People greeted each other, as if it were the bright day of the resurrection of Christ [Easter]. The red bows and badges—symbols of freedom and revolution that had been prohibited not long ago—gleamed on coats and jackets. Red ribbons disappeared from shops and were unobtainable.”⁴⁴ As Boris Kolonitskii noted, these popular demonstrations showed that “the revolutionary traditions and culture of political protest were well developed and widely spread” in Russian society.⁴⁵ The methods of political mobilization, rituals, and symbols were known and understandable to the majority of the population.⁴⁶

Unionization, the establishment of different public organizations, national conferences, and political assemblies signalled social politicization. Increasing political participation and popular mobilization developed new “political languages, rituals, and organizations.”⁴⁷ New (or now more widely and openly used) symbolic practices (wearing a red bow on one’s chest), language and rhetoric (“comrade,” “citizens,” “citizen-Jews” [*grazhdane-evrei*], “revolutionary,” “bourgeois”), and imagery (yellow and blue, or red banners) became a part of everyday urban life. The City Duma was the epicenter of political life during the first days of the revolution in Kyiv. The square in

⁴³ Boris Kolonitskii, *Simvoly vlasti i bor'ba za vlast': K izucheniiu politicheskoi kul'tury rossiiskoi revoliutsii 1917 goda* (Sankt-Peterburg: Liki Rossii, 2012), 36.

⁴⁴ Oberuchev, *Vospominaniia*, 126; Kolonitskii, *Simvoly vlasti i bor'ba za vlast'*, 36–57.

⁴⁵ Kolonitskii, *Simvoly vlasti i bor'ba za vlast'*, 36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Lynn Avery Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2.

front of the Duma and Khreshchatyk Street bore witness to Kyiv's active, though sometimes chaotic, political life. New and old officials were sworn in and arrested in this public space.⁴⁸

After a long break, Yiddish signs appeared again in store windows, while Yiddish proclamations and announcements marked billboards and newspapers.⁴⁹ On March 29, 1917, a group of Jewish socialist literati organized a meeting to commemorate Itzak Leibush Peretz (1852–1915), a prominent Yiddish-language writer. The event attracted around 2,000 people to the Merchants' Club. They came "to listen to free speech, in their native language." *Kievskaiia Mysl'* enthusiastically noted that, "all those faces had a happy glow of revolution [*radostnoe siianie revolutsii*]; everyone felt festive. You can hear the native language [Yiddish] everywhere; and this is one of the main achievements of the revolution—the establishment of equality and brotherhood all among peoples of Russia." After speeches by Moisei Litvakov, David Bergelson, and Yekhezkl Dobrushin, famous Jewish writers, the assembly resolved that, "We, the Jews—the citizens of Kiev—who arranged this meeting to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Peretz, have made the decision to establish a Jewish school with Yiddish as the language of instruction. [This will be] the most important base of a new Jewish secular culture."⁵⁰ Revolutionary rhetoric, which emphasized Jews as free and equal Kyivan citizens, expressed the need for national solidarity and stressed common interests, needs, and values.

⁴⁸ "Grandioznaia manifestatsiia," *Kievlianin*, 66 (7 September 1917): 2; Oberuchev, *Vospominaniia*, 128.

⁴⁹ In mid-1915, the Ministry of the Interior banned Yiddish and Hebrew periodicals, in part to facilitate censorship. Correspondence in Jewish languages was also prohibited and not delivered.

⁵⁰ "Miting pamiati I. L. Peretsa," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 89 (2 April 1917): 3.

All state and public organizations, unions, and political parties felt obliged to declare publically their attitude towards the revolution. On March 12, the Kyivan merchants and industrialists assembled at the City Duma. Sh. Kalmanovskii, a merchant, gave a particularly memorable speech in which he analyzed recent events from a Jewish perspective. Kalmanovskii stressed that the financial elite of Kyiv had to support “not only freedom, but also Mother Russia, which [is no longer] a stepmother to us Jews.”⁵¹ The merchant saw the recent political upheavals as an opportunity for Jews to convince broader society that they were not “blood suckers,” “wreckers,” or “speculators.” Kalmanovskii pragmatically declared that “we, the merchants, have to help the state, otherwise the time will come, when people will take everything from us.” Kalmanovskii stated that “the German” [*nemets*] was responsible for Jewish miseries. He referred to the Romanovs’ links to the Hohenzollerns, and alleged anti-Russian plots involving Empress Aleksandra Fedorovna, née Alix of Hesse. Kalmanovskii argued that “he [the German] established the Pale, supported its existence, and instead of building plants and factories in Saratov, Syzran, Nizhny [Novgorod], and other cities, we were building them in the periphery, in Poland, in the Pale. We were keeping our treasures in the hall. It is not surprising that the thief came and took them.”⁵² Kalmanovskii proposed that merchants and industrialists pay a 5% tax and “reduce their income from trade.” In fact, he called on them to make a small sacrifice now in order to avoid a greater one in the future. It is clear from his speech that Kalmanovskii identified not just as a Jew. He stressed his professional and imperial identities, also.

⁵¹ “Sobranie kutsov i torgovopromyshlennikov,” *Kievlianin*, 74 (15 March 1917): 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Kyivan Jews reacted not only to local political changes, but also to relevant international political decisions. As Zionism was the most popular political ideology among Kyiv's politically conscious Jews, the Balfour Declaration of October 21, 1917, was greeted with noted enthusiasm. The Balfour Declaration was issued by the British government and announced support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. On November 21 in Kyiv, local Zionists organized popular celebrations near synagogues.⁵³ Many diasporic nationalists also welcomed the declaration, as it did not contradict the idea of Jewish national autonomy and equal rights for diasporic Jews. Some Jewish socialists, however, refused to support the Declaration, condemning it as crafted by British imperialists and running contrary to the interests of Russian Jewry.⁵⁴ In general, the ideas of Jewish autonomy in the diaspora or "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, as the Declaration described it, reflected the ideals of national self-determination and self-government.

Jewish Political Life

Jews articulated their national claims in the national discourse created by the revolution and the dissolution of the Russian Empire. Abraham Revutsky, who served as Minister of Jewish Affairs in the cabinet of the Ukrainian People's Republic from December 1918 to April 1919, recalled that in summer 1917 the "upper ten thousand" (Jewish urban bourgeoisie) in Kyiv "faced an unimaginably powerful and forceful phenomenon: the sudden revival of a large people, whose national aspirations had

⁵³ "Evreiskaia vsenarodnaia manifestatsiia," *Poslednie Novosti*, 4791 (19 November 1917): 4.

⁵⁴ "Protokol zasidannia Maloi Rady," *Nova Rada* (16 November 1917): 1-2.

hitherto been suppressed.”⁵⁵ Though the Pale was abolished and Kyiv became open for all Jews, old prejudices changed more slowly. The February 1917 Revolution gave Jews *de-facto* rights; they still had to organize to ensure their *de jure* freedoms.⁵⁶

The city soon became the epicenter of the region’s political life. Bigger and smaller circles, groups, parties, and societies produced and reproduced new and old ideas, mixing ideologies in the endless search for a better future. Gol’denveiser, who, during the war, worked in the Jewish Department of the Society for the Defense of Women in Kyiv [*Evreiskii otdel Obshchestva zashchity zhenshchin*], was secretary of the Committee of Common Needs [*Komissiiia obshchikh del*] during the winter of 1916-17. He described the Committee as a “political Committee” of Kyiv’s Jewish community. The Committee of Common Needs met with KOPE (Kyiv’s Jewish Society for Aid to Victims of War) at the start of March 1917.⁵⁷ The main question on the agenda was participation in and cooperation with new representatives of the local administration, the Council of the United Public Organizations of Kyiv (CUPOK), and its Executive Committee. Gol’denveiser noted that the “vigorous and ambitious Dr. Frumin [was] already a member of the Council, although nobody approved this. Moreover, some members of the Committee of Common Needs did not want to cooperate [with the Council]; the question of how to elect Jewish representatives provoked controversy.”⁵⁸

At the beginning of March, representatives of Kyiv’s Jewish organizations gathered at the Merchants’ Club. Gol’denveiser described this gathering as an exceptional event for local Jews. S. L. Frankfurt, who chaired the meeting, termed it “the

⁵⁵ Abraham Revusky, *Wrenching Times in Ukraine: Memoir of a Jewish Minister* (St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada: Yksuver Publ, 1998), 11.

⁵⁶ Goldelman, *Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine 1917-1920*, 26–27.

⁵⁷ “1st, 2nd, or 3rd of March”. Gol’denveiser did not remember the exact date.

⁵⁸ Gol'denveizer, "Aleksi Gol'denveizer: Dnevnik i Pis'ma Raznykh Let," 356.

first free gathering of the Jews as free citizens.”⁵⁹ On March 16, 1917, the Jewish community of Kyiv elected the Council of United Jewish Organizations of Kyiv [*Sovet ob"edinennykh evreiskikh organizatsii Kieva*: hereafter, the Jewish Council], which was supposed to cooperate with CUPOK. The Council united 80 members, who represented 65 public Jewish organizations.⁶⁰ It was imagined as a temporary organization, a forerunner of the future democratically elected Jewish community of Kyiv. Gol'denveizer and I. M. Billik became the secretaries, Simon Grinberg, the head of KOPE, was treasurer, and Grigorii Bykhovskii, who at that time was also a councillor of the City Duma, was elected head of the Jewish Council. Il'ia Frumin became a member and secretary of its Executive Committee.⁶¹ The leadership of KOPE and other Jewish public organizations active in Kyiv during the war, thus, switched their activity from welfare work and help for refugees to political work and the reorganization of the local Jewish community.

At the first meeting of the representatives of the Jewish public organizations of Kyiv in March 1917, Frumin explained why he had appointed himself without debate to CUPOK's Executive. According to him, “the Jewish organizations took a very strange stand during the first days after the coup. They were obviously confused. Considering the moment to be extremely important, when it was a crime to leave such a crucial organ as the Executive Committee without Jewish representatives, I decided to become a member

⁵⁹ Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 165–166.

⁶⁰ "Pis'mo iz Kieva (Ot nashogo korrespondenta)," *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 17 (1917): 33.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 166–167; Frumin (1876-1945) was a doctor and an active member of Kyiv's Jewish community. He studied in Kyiv University, but was expelled for participating in student riots at the end of the 1890s and early 1900s. However, he was readmitted in 1905 and successfully finished his education. Frumin was a member of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party (esery). During the war, he worked with Jewish refugees and deportees as a member of KOPE. TsDIAKU, f. 274, op. 4, spr. 506, ark. 28, 63; DAKO, f. 445, op. 1, spr. 17, ark. 1zv.

of the Council and later the Executive Committee.”⁶² Frumin called on Jewish public organizations to unite; discord could “compromise Jewish *obshchestvennost*’.” Fleishman stressed that previously Jews could not participate as equals in urban and public life due to their lack of rights in Russian imperial society. Thus, members of CUPOK and the re-elected City Duma had to prove their professionalism. Therefore, Jewish activists had to be both experienced and well-positioned socially and politically.⁶³ Mazor, another colleague of Frumin and Fleishman, who had worked with them in KOPE from 1914-1916, warned meeting participants against “electing fanatics, regardless to which political group they belonged.” Perhaps, he was referring to both the anti-Zionist Orthodox *Agudat Yisrael* [Union of Israel] movement and the Bundists, who joined the Jewish Council after heavily criticizing its activity as “clerical” and “bourgeois.”⁶⁴ Mazor defended the moderate wing of the Jewish political movement because in his opinion “the representative committee [CUPOK] had to maintain peace and order in the city.” Therefore, the Jewish community had “to elect people with a hot Jewish heart and a cold rational mind.”⁶⁵ In fact, Mazor, Frumin, and Fleishman were referring to themselves, since they had considerable social and political organizing experience due to their pre-war activity and subsequent service in KOPE.

The newly created organization aimed to unite Jewry in “interparty national organizations” created at the local level for the purpose of “Jewish national revival in the

⁶² “Sobranie predstavitelei evreiskikh organizatsii (Pis’mo iz Kiev),” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 12-13 (24 March 1917): 57.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Agudat Yisrael or Akhdus (from Hebrew “Unity of Israel” or “Unity”; found. 1912) was an international organization, which joined political movements in order to protect traditional Judaism and the interests of Orthodox Jewry. Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites*, 229; Zvi Y. Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics: The Jewish Sections of the CPSU, 1917-30* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 74.

⁶⁵ “Sobranie predstavitelei evreiskikh organizatsii (Pis’mo iz Kiev),” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 12-13 (24 March 1917): 57.

new Russia.”⁶⁶ However, Gol'denveizer wrote, “the questions of a monarchy or republic, socialism or democracy, autonomy or federation were much more important for the Jews. When it comes to basic general political issues, Jews cannot unite as one front: they are naturally divided by class and political sympathies.”⁶⁷ Thus, there were doubts that the Jewish Council could claim the right to represent the whole Jewish nation or even the whole Jewish population of Kyiv.

The Jewish socialist parties (the Bund and Fareynikte) refused to send representatives to the Jewish Council, as they saw it as a “bourgeois institution,” consisting of Zionists and Jews who were members of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets).⁶⁸ At the end of April 1917, political division inside the local Jewry led to the creation of a Jewish Democratic Collective [*Evreiskii demokraticeskii kollektiv*] in opposition to the Jewish Council.⁶⁹ The Democratic Collective united members of the Jewish socialist parties (two from each). Around 30 members were present at the first meeting of the Collective on April 27. The Collective had the following objectives: 1) implementing revolutionary-democratic ideas in the state and Jewish life; 2) establishing a secular Jewish community and its recognition as a juridical body; 3) defending Yiddish language rights. The final point was to compete with the “bourgeois collective” [*burzhuaznyi kollektiv*], the Jewish Council, for control over the Jewish nation’s political struggle.⁷⁰ According to Jewish leftists, the Jewish liberals and Zionists did not have “a

⁶⁶ Gol'denveizer, "Aleksi Gol'denveizer: Dnevnik i Pis'ma Raznykh Let," 357–58.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁶⁸ “Otkrytoe pis'mo M.I.Lirovu,” “Otvét I.O.Fruminu,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 98 (16 April 1917): 4. The *Fareynikte Yidishe Sotsyalistishe Arbeter Partey* (United Jewish Socialist Workers Party) was established in May 1917 in Kyiv, when Zionist Socialist Workers Party (Russian acronym — SSRP) merged with Jewish Socialist Workers Party (Russian acronym — SERP).

⁶⁹ TsDAHOU, f. 41, op.1, spr. 50, ark. 8.

⁷⁰ “Demokraticeskii evreiskii kollektiv,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 112 (3 May 1917): 2.

political platform except the recognition of their belonging to the Jewish nation.”

Litvakov, a Jewish social democrat, responding to a letter from Frumin, argued:

Jewish democracy, especially Jewish social democracy, has a [political] platform: in terms of the all-Russian orientation—the platform of Russian democracy in terms of autonomous Jewish life—separation from the religious community and the creation of a [Jewish] secular school with native language teaching (jargon) [Yiddish], destruction of the old order of Jewish life, the enormous influence of the Jewish plutocracy on the backward synagogue masses, which is further strengthened by the reactionary romanticism of Zionist-Hebraists.⁷¹

Thus, the rhetoric about “revolutionary-democratic ideas,” which called for establishing a new social order based on social equality, welfare, and justice, reflected both the revolutionary culture’s emotional appeal, and to some extent its utopian basis. The Jewish intelligentsia sought to remake Jewish life in order to transform the Jewish community into a self-governing body. However, Jewish leftists also had to represent the entire Jewish nation, including those who toiled as part of an all-Russian proletariat.

According to Litvakov, democratization and secularization were important conditions for rebuilding Jewish life in the twentieth century. Specifically, he wanted to dismantle those Jewish religious and legal traditions that separated Jews from Gentiles. Traditional Jewish religious communities, however, which were organized around the spiritual and de facto authority of rabbis and the Jewish financial elite, opposed Litvakov and other modernizers. The creation of a secular Jewish identity, wed to science and progress, and divorced from “traditionalism,” was the goal of secular Jewish political groups.⁷²

⁷¹ “Otvét I.O.Fruminu,” *Kievskaja Mysl*, 98 (16 April 1917): 4.

⁷² David Ohana, *Modernism and Zionism* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 9–12.

From May 8-12, 1917, the Merchants' Club of Kyiv hosted the Regional Jewish Conference, which was attended by deputies from Jewish communities and public organizations in Kyiv, Chernihiv, Podolia, Kharkiv, and Poltava. The Regional Jewish Conference was a precursor to the All-Russian Jewish Conference, which aimed to crystalize Jewish national demands.⁷³ The only participating socialist party, however, was the Bund. During the first assembly, Moisei Rafes claimed, “[Bundists] came here not in order to create a united Jewry, but in order to divide the nation into political parties [*raskolot' natsiiu na politicheskie partii*].”⁷⁴ Litvakov, who represented the Zionist Socialist Workers' Party (SSRP) and the Jewish Socialist Workers' Party (SERP), again stressed that the Conference assembled by the Jewish Council represented only the Jewish bourgeoisie and that its only goal was “to disorganize and to muddle the class consciousness of Jewish proletariat.”⁷⁵ Rafes also expressed his indignation that all speeches at the Conference were delivered in Russian, which was taken as a sign both of chauvinism and of the alienation of Jewish working class interests from Zionists and Liberals.⁷⁶

On May 12, the Conference culminated in a quarrel between Jewish ideological wings. When Rabbi Berman “started to talk excitedly [...] about the value of Judaism” and called for all present “to honour the Torah by standing up,” Bundists and some

⁷³The presidium of the Conference consisted of Bykhovskii as Chair of the Jewish Council, Moisei Aleksandrov, a representative of the Representation of Jewish Welfare in Kyiv, Iona Makhover, a Kyivan Zionist and a member of KOPE, Moisei Mazor, Mendel'son (first name is unknown); Leib V. Vilenskii, a Zionist, a former rabbi of Mykolaiv (1903-1906), who from 1917 headed the Jewish community of Kharkiv; Turin, a lawyer from Chernihiv (first name is unknown); Iakov Berman, a rabbi of Berdychiv. A son of Iakov Berman, Yitzhak Berman (1913-2013), became an Israeli politician, who served as Minister of Energy and Infrastructure (1981-1982) and Speaker of the Knesset (1980-1981). TsDAIKU, f. 274, op. 5, spr. 23, ark. 431.

⁷⁴ “Oblastnoi evreiskii s"ezd,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 118 (9 May 1917): 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid; TsDAHOU, f. 41, op.1, spr. 50, ark. 8, 9zv, 11, 12; M. Lirov, “Itogi evreiskogo soveshchaniiaa,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 121 (14 May 1917): 1-2.

⁷⁶ “Oblastnoi evreiskii s"ezd,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 119 (11 May 1917): 2.

democrats remained seated. The fight was stopped by An-sky, who stood up to defend the Bundists on the grounds of their active role in helping “to defend the Torah” and combat pogromists in 1905-1906. At the same time, An-sky emphasised that the Torah was “a great cultural treasure not only of Jews but of the world,” and thus he occupied the middle ground, promoting a secular vision of Jewish culture while stressing the importance of religious heritage.⁷⁷

Although, the Jewish population of Kyiv split according to ideology and class, the idea of Jewish autonomy at a national and local level represented by local self-governing bodies [*kehila*], was a common aspiration for all political groups. The Conference generally recognized the divisions that existed among Jewry and sought to unify Jewry as the *sine qua non* to secure equal rights for Jews. The attendees of the Conference stated that every nation that populated the former Russian Empire was an autonomous national union, which was responsible for its own national development. The national union of Jewish people, however, consisted of those who had not rejected their Jewish identity regardless of where they lived. The state and local administration were expected to allocate money to the needs of the national union. The union, as a juridical identity, could collect taxes [*nalogi*] from its members. Antisemitism was also discussed at the conference; Bykhovskii delivered a speech titled “Strengthening the New Order and the Struggle against Counterrevolution and Antisemitism.” He argued that military defeat and internal anarchy were the main dangers for the new order and thus for Jews. Bykhovskii called on delegates to support the Provisional Government and local municipal administrations, and to enlighten the population.⁷⁸ The Jewish activists at the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid; “Evreiskoe oblastnie soveshchanie v Kieve,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 23 (1917): 34—35.

Conference also argued that all languages of the former Russian Empire, including Yiddish and Hebrew, were equal and should be used in schools, courts, administrative and cultural institutions, and the press. Although the rise of Yiddish as the official language of the Jewish nation was a monumental change, it was perhaps naïve to expect that Yiddish could equal the broad utility of Russian or Ukrainian. In fact, future events would demonstrate the practical difficulties associated with linguistic equality.⁷⁹ The Central Rada decided to publish all laws and print money in Ukrainian, Russian, Yiddish, and Polish. In practice, however, multilingual publishing was technically difficult and expensive, delaying the implementation of this law.⁸⁰

The Kyiv regional conference of the SSRP took place simultaneously with the Regional Jewish Conference. Litvakov opened the conference and was elected Chair alongside Deputy Chair Iakov Leshchinskii, who represented Kyiv's branch of the party.⁸¹ Describing the activity of the SSRP in Kyiv, Leshchinskii stressed the competition between the Bund, the Jewish Council, and the SSRP, which at that moment had limited influence among Jewish workers and the city's working classes.⁸² Leshchinskii stressed that although all political parties accepted the idea of autonomy, it was not very popular among the Jewish population, which preferred Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁸³

Litvakov, discussing the possible paths of development for multinational territories, described the nation as “a union of people, who are conscious that they are a

⁷⁹ “Oblastnoi evreiskii s"ezd,” *Kievskaia Mysl'*, 121 (14 May 1917): 2.

⁸⁰ Zilberfarb thought Ukrainian chauvinism and not technical problems were why the Rada refused to print the assignats in four languages. Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 45.

⁸¹ TsDAHOU, f. 41, op.1, spr. 50, ark. 3—4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, ark. 5, 12zv.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 50, ark. 14.

nation [...] The nation is not a territorial but a cultural community [*kul'turnaia obshchnost'*].”⁸⁴ Litvakov was developing the idea of Jewish national-cultural autonomy. He stated that, “citizens of the state, notwithstanding the district where they live, have a right to proclaim their individual belonging to a certain nation. All citizens who claim their belonging to a certain nation constitute a national union that the state should recognize as a legal entity, a public-juridical entity.”⁸⁵ The state was expected to delegate some of its rights to the national union, which would elect a national council [*seim*]. In turn, the council would create a national ministry, which would be responsible for Jewish cultural and educational affairs. Litvakov thus presented a program of national regeneration based upon secular national foundations.

Jewish Ministry

According to a July 1917 agreement between the Petrograd Provisional Government and the Central Rada, the latter was recognized as the parliament of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, and the General Secretariat became its government [Second Universal of July 3 (16)]. Hereafter, all nationalities living in Ukraine were to sit in parliament and government as members with equal rights. The Central Rada consisted of 822 seats, of which 35 were held by the Jewish Socialist Parties.⁸⁶ The Jews received 50 of 199 seats in the Little Rada [*Mala Rada*], the executive committee of the Central Rada that convened regularly between its sessions. These 50 seats belonged to five

⁸⁴ Lirov, M. “Natsional’no-personal’naia avtonomiia,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 88 (1 April 1917): 3; Shchukin V.V., Pavliuk A.N., *Ocherki istorii evreiskoi obshchiny goroda Nikolaeva (konets XVIII – nachalo XX vv)* (Nikolaev: Izdatel'stvo Iriny Gudym, 2009), 145–46.

⁸⁵ Lirov, M. “Natsional’no-personal’naia avtonomiia,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 88 (1 April 1917): 3.

⁸⁶ Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materialy do istorii ukrains'koi revoliutsii, 1917-1920 rr.*, 137.

representative Jewish parties: the Zionists (13 seats), the Bund (13 seats), the United Jewish Socialist Workers Party [Fareynikte; 13 seats], the *Poale Zion* [the Labor Zionist; Workers of Zion; 9 seats], and the *Folkspartei* [Folks Party; 2 seats].⁸⁷ However, during the elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly that took place in November 1917, the Zionists received the majority of Jewish votes in Ukrainian provinces. According to Joseph Schechtman, a Zionist representative in the Little Rada, “the Jewish representation in the Ukrainian Rada was a clear-cut contradiction with the real correlation of forces in Jewry.” The socialist parties, even together with the *Folkspartei*, whose ideology was based on the concept of national and cultural autonomy, represented less than one-third of Jewish voters, though they occupied 74 % of the seats in the Little Rada (the Rada itself was dominated by socialists).⁸⁸ Moisei Rafes, who headed the Bund in Kyiv, became a member of the General Secretariat as a “general controller.” It should be said that the Bund was not an influential Jewish political party in Kyiv because the city did not have a large Jewish working-class population. The Bund’s support came largely from cities of the Belorussian, Polish, and Lithuanian provinces.

Revolution put issues of nationality and class at the forefront of public discussion in Kyiv. National autonomy was recognized by the Central Rada as the best solution for the Ukrainian People’s Republic. The Ukrainian Central Rada recognized three national minorities: Polish, Jewish, and Russian. However, the minority Russians were “suspicious” of the Rada. As Gol’denveizer explained, “it was very difficult to demarcate

⁸⁷ Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 48.

⁸⁸ Joseph Schechtman, "Jewish Community Life in the Ukraine (1917-1919)," in *Russian Jewry: 1917-1967*, eds. Gregor Aronson et al. (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1969), 42–43; Mark W. Kiel, "The ideology of the Folkspartei," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 5, no. 2 (1975): 75–89; Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 46.

the Russian and Ukrainian population of Ukraine.”⁸⁹ On July 1 (13), 1917, the Rada decided to establish within the Secretariat for Inter-Nationality Affairs three vice-secretariats, one for each of Russian, Jewish, and Polish affairs.⁹⁰ Moisei Zilberfarb (1876-1934) was appointed Vice Secretary for Jewish Affairs, Mechyslav Mickiewicz for Polish Affairs, and Dmitrii Odinet for Russian Affairs.⁹¹

On August 4, 1917, the Provisional Government issued a “Temporary Instruction,” which delegated responsibilities to the National Secretariat of the Ukrainian General Secretariat and its vice-secretariats to its structural departments.⁹² The main task of the Jewish vice-secretariat was “to organize the internal life of the national minority.”⁹³ It also had to defend and promote equal Yiddish-language rights. Finally, the vice-secretariat, according to Zilberfarb, was expected “to take advantage of its entire influence and power to preserve the dignity and honor of the Jewish people and not allow the criminal deeds of Tsarist-era anti-Semitism to repeat themselves in a free Ukraine.”⁹⁴ Zilberfarb recalled that the popular masses in Kyiv and the former Pale in general “did

⁸⁹ Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 198.

⁹⁰ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 9; Goldelman, *Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine 1917-1920*, 53–57.

⁹¹ Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 54–55. Moisei Zilberfarb was born in Rivne, to a wealthy Hassidic family. He received a traditional Jewish education. In order to receive a secular education, the young Zilberfarb moved to Zhytomyr, where he studied at a gymnasium. Later, he took courses at the Kyiv Polytechnical Institute (Chemistry), studied medicine at Berlin University and law in Kyiv and Bern (Switzerland), where he received his doctorate. In the autumn of 1902, in Berlin, he met Nakhman Syrkin, a founder of Labour Zionism, and joined the Berlin group “Herut” (Freedom). In April 1906, Zilberfarb took part in the creation of the Jewish Socialist Labor Party in Kyiv (SERP; its members are also known as Seimists), which sought Jewish national autonomy in Russia. Zilberfarb returned to Russia in 1911 and lived in St. Petersburg. After the February Revolution, he moved to Kyiv. Elias Tcherikover thought that Zilberfarb received the post of Vice-Secretary because he “was close to the Ukrainian government.” Zalman Rejzen, *Leksikon fun der yidisher literatur, prese un filologie* (Vilne: B. Kletskin, 1926), 1074–78; Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.: K istorii ukrainsko-evreiskikh otnoshenii* (Berlin, 1923), 67.

⁹² "Tymchasova instrukttsiia General'nomu Sekretariatovi Tymchasovoho uriadu na Ukraini," V. F. Verstiuk, ed., *Ukrains'ka Tsentral'na Rada: Dokumenty i materialy*, Tom 1. 4 bereznia - 9 grudnia 1917 r., 2 vols. (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka), 213–14.

⁹³ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 15.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

not clearly understand the purpose of the Jewish vice-secretariat.” However, he continued, “[the Jewish population] clearly sensed that it was a kind of Jewish institution, moreover a democratic one, to which one could come to ‘pour out one’s heart’ in ‘simple Yiddish’ and even to submit a ‘request in their mother-tongue’.”⁹⁵ After the Third Universal, the vice-secretary became an equal member of the General Secretariat, and the vice-secretariat was elevated to the level of the Secretariat in December 1917.⁹⁶

On January 9 (22), 1918, the Central Rada, trying to build a political alliance with non-Russian minorities, adopted the Law on National-Personal Autonomy, which was described by Elias Tcherikower as “the dream of the new national Jewry.”⁹⁷ The Jewish Secretariat was transformed into the Ministry of Jewish Affairs and Yiddish was declared an official state language. The new Minister, Moisei Zil’berfarb, stated, “the Law that we have approved can be compared only with the acts of the Great French Revolution. At that time, the rights of men were promulgated, today the rights of nations have been proclaimed.”⁹⁸

However, just one week later, “Bolshevik artillery guns began to sound from the hills around Kiev.”⁹⁹ On January 26 (February 8), 1918, the Bolsheviks stormed Kyiv and held the city until March 1, when the Germans expelled them. In mid-January, Zilberfarb resigned from the post of Minister of Jewish Affairs, and the Ministry functioned under the leadership of his deputy, Isai Khurgin. When the Bolsheviks, led by Mikhail

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 55–57.

⁹⁷ “Zakon Tsentral’noi Rady pro natsional’no-personal’nu avtonomiiu,” *Visnyk Rady narodnykh ministriv Ukrainy i Narodnoi Respubliky*, Verstiuk, *Ukrains’ka Tsentral’na Rada*, 99–101; Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 13; George Liber, “Ukrainian Nationalism and the 1918 law on national-personal autonomy,” *Nationalities Papers* 15, no. 1 (2007): 22–42.

⁹⁸ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, x; Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 61–64.

⁹⁹ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 81.

Murav'ev, seized Kyiv, the work of the Jewish Ministry as well as of all other Ministries ceased. The only organ of the Jewish Ministry still able to function was the Jewish National Council, though it was neither sanctioned nor effective.¹⁰⁰

The Central Rada returned to Kyiv at the beginning of March. On April 10, 1918, it ratified Vol'f Lats'kyi-Bertol'di (1881-1940) as Minister of Jewish Affairs.¹⁰¹ In the same month, the Jewish National Council was recognized as the Ministry's supreme organ and "the Rada's consultative organ for all matters relevant to Jewish national life." The Ministry thus became the executive organ of the National Council.¹⁰² As Henry Abramson has described, the allotment of seats in the National Council was hotly debated among Jewish parties. This Council "was convened according to 'revolutionary democracy.'"¹⁰³ This meant that each party was represented equally. Thus, the Council consisted mostly of socialist party members; but Zionists also were invited because Jewish socialists could not ignore the influence of the Zionists among the Jewish population.¹⁰⁴

The law on national-personal autonomy was a product of the Ukrainian socialist government, which hoped to form an alliance with the Jews, first against the Provisional Government in Petrograd and later the Bolsheviks.¹⁰⁵ However, the power of the national ministries existed only in the minds of national ministers; they lacked influence both in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 85–86.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 73.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 72–74.

¹⁰⁵ The principle of national-personal autonomy (also known as national-cultural autonomy) was a product of "Austromarxism". Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, and Vladimir Medem (Bundist) were the main ideologues of this principle. According to Bauer and Renner, each citizen would become a member of an autonomous association of his co-nationals irrespective of their place of residence, see Liber, "Ukrainian Nationalism and the 1918 law on national-personal autonomy," 22; Samuel Gringauz, "Jewish National Autonomy in Lithuania (1918-1925)," *Jewish Social Studies* 14, no. 3 (1952): 225–46, 226–27.

Kyiv and the Pale. The law was important only for Jews, who did not feel secure in the revolutionary nationalist atmosphere of Kyiv specifically and the region generally. The experience of Poles and Russians, however, was different, as these nationalities were not threatened by pogroms. Moreover, the establishment of the Second Polish Republic (November 11, 1918) encouraged Kyivan Poles to emigrate. Although, the socialist-created Ministry of Jewish Affairs was abolished during the Hetmanate in July 1918 and the law on national autonomy was repealed, the Jewish National Council, as the executive body of the future Jewish parliament, which still had to be elected, continued to exist.¹⁰⁶ The Hetmanate allowed elections to a Jewish pre-Parliament (the legislative organ of Jewish national-personal autonomy), though limited its functions to the internal life of the Jewish community.¹⁰⁷ Turnout, however, was very low in Kyiv, roughly 25%.¹⁰⁸ The pre-Parliament was finally convened in November 1918 and the Zionists had a majority. The Ministry of Jewish Affairs was re-established in December 1918, under the Directory, and Abraham Revutsky, a representative of the Poale Zion Party in the Jewish Ministry of the Central Rada, took the lead.¹⁰⁹ The interests of the national community, which needed to defend itself against violence (pogroms), which accompanied changes of power in the city, encouraged institutional inertia.

¹⁰⁶ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 98–99.

¹⁰⁷ Abramson, "Historiography of the Jews and the Ukrainian Revolution," 93.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁰⁹ Abram Revutsky, *Wrenching Times in Ukraine: Memoir of a Jewish Minister* (St. John's, Newfoundland: Yksuver Publishing, 1998), 31–32.

The Jewish Communal Council in Kyiv

The revolution, which refashioned, redesigned, and reorganized Jewish life, opened the door for the democratization of Jewish political and social affairs. This issue topped the agenda of the Jewish Council and the Jewish Democratic Collective.¹¹⁰ The democratization of the Representation for Jewish Welfare as a Jewish communal board, however, was not a new idea. On the eve of war, the Representation as well as the Jewish Hospital Governing Board, which represented Kyiv's Jewish community, experienced a crisis when Jewish intellectuals attempted to modernize and liberalize the Jewish community (see Chapter One). The Revolution, finally, opened the way for such a reorganization on a new democratic basis.

As Zilberfarb pointed out, national autonomy had to be built from above, “while the local national organizations of autonomy [were] still completely lacking.”¹¹¹ Although the law of March 22, 1917, abolished the special restrictions on Jewish rights and a Jewish vice-secretary was appointed later, the local Jewish communal structure [*kehila*] retained its earlier form.¹¹² In other words, most Jews did not qualify to take part in community management. Moreover, the Provisional Government stated that the *kehillas* “should be conducted as previously,” which aroused “a deep astonishment and embitterment in Jewish political, democratic circles.”¹¹³ This dissatisfaction was

¹¹⁰ Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

¹¹¹ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 16–17.

¹¹² Before the war, most Jews could not qualify to vote in the *kehillah* elections, which usually were controlled by local notables. In Kyiv, the functions of the *kehillah* administration (charity, religious schools, management of donations and Jewish communal institutions, ritual baths and cemeteries, elections of the Crown rabbi, and organization of the collection of the kosher meat tax) were performed by the Representation for Jewish Welfare.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

tempered by the fact that the Jewish vice-secretary controlled the *kehila*, “from the ‘*korobka monies*’ [kosher meat tax] to the government [crown] rabbi.”¹¹⁴

On October 1, 1917, the Jewish National Council, a consultative organ of the vice-secretariat at that time, declared that the *kehila* councils were to be chosen from the entire Jewish population, “which should take into its own hands the administration of all communal institutions and communal matters.”¹¹⁵ A “democratic tax policy” was to replace the tax on kosher meat. In terms of education, the vice-secretariat envisioned secular and universally accessible schools, “in agreement with the demands of pedagogy, and modern Jewish and universal culture.”¹¹⁶ The new communal council was to be responsible for the cultural life of the Jewish population of Kyiv and “it [would] decide who [would] be responsible for the further development of the national culture of the Jewish people and the upbringing of Jewish youth.”¹¹⁷ Jewish socialists insisted that responsibility for religious matters should fall to the council. However, *Agudat Yisrael*, which opposed creeping secularization, and some Zionists opposed the proposal. Finally, at the November 3-11, 1918 meeting of the Jewish National Assembly, the community’s religious life was placed under the control of the secular communal council. This meant that, for example, Jewish religious law lost its standing in matters of marriage and divorce.¹¹⁸

On December 2, 1917, the Central Rada approved the creation of Jewish *kehila* councils and the election of their members. The law on *kehila* councils established their

¹¹⁴ Ibid; TsDAVOU, f. 1854, op. 1, spr. 20, ark. 202—203, 205; spr. 54, ark. 7.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 35.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁷ “Vybory v evreiskuiu obshchinu,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 302 (21 December 1917): 2.

¹¹⁸ TsDAVOU, f. 1071, op. 1, spr. 500, ark. 3—3zv.

responsibility for “all Jewish national affairs and institutions.”¹¹⁹ The Jewish community received jurisdiction over Jewish educational, religious, charitable, and medical institutions and their public property, Jewish cemeteries, and residuals from “kosher” and “candle” taxes. The rabbis had to transfer archives, and birth and death registers to the new communal council.¹²⁰ Thus, the Jewish *kehila* councils and the Jewish secretariat at the higher level became the main authorities for the Jewish community in Kyiv and the provinces. The elections to the Jewish Communal Board of Kyiv were set for December 17, 1917, but later they were postponed to January 1918.¹²¹

Iona Makhover, a Zionist, headed the “technical” committee responsible for the whole election procedure.¹²² The General Secretariat of Jewish Affairs controlled the election process. In January 1918, the Secretary proposed to the Commissar of Kyiv province that the residuals from the kosher tax (₰15,000) should be given to the representatives of the “technical” committee—Meir-Leib Tsepeniuk, Iosyf Pokras, and Mordukh Beker—to organize elections to Kyiv’s Jewish *kehila* council.¹²³ Members of KOPE helped plan the vote, which mobilized Kyivan Jews. Agitators from different Jewish political parties were especially active and visible in Podil near the Contract House.¹²⁴ KOPE even shared its office space at 20 Mala Zhytomyrs’ka Street with Zionists.¹²⁵ The elections to Kyiv’s Jewish *kehila* council yielded the following results: the Zionists received 25 seats, the Socialists won 18, while the rest of the seats went to *Agudat*, the Kadets, and independent representatives. The elected *kehila* council consisted

¹¹⁹ Goldelman, *Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine 1917-1920*, 65–66.

¹²⁰ TsDAVOU, f. 1748, op. 1, spr. 32, ark. 2—3, 4, 7, 9—10, 21—24; Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 44.

¹²¹ “K vyboram v evreiskuiu obshchinu,” *Poslednie Novosti*, 4797 (24 November 1917): 4.

¹²² TsDAVOU, f. 1854, op. 1, spr. 54, ark. 7; spr. 23, ark. 5, 101.

¹²³ TsDAVOU, f. 1854, op. 1, spr. 54, ark. 7.

¹²⁴ “Di ershte idishe valn in Kiev,” *Naye tsayt*, 1 (89) (3 (16) January 1918), 4.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

of 60 councillors.¹²⁶ The elections also demonstrated that the Jewish masses were not really interested in the elections— turnout was roughly 27%.¹²⁷ Although my sources do not explain this apathy, it could be explained by general Jewish unfamiliarity with elections and democratic processes writ large. Perhaps many Jews abdicated their political rights to the Yiddish *pney* [elite] because they did not trust these new institutions and their leadership.

The first meeting of the newly elected *kehila* council occurred in early-February 1918. The Socialists refused to take part in the first convention.¹²⁸ The internal political division of the Jewish community raised doubts about the future of the council. The members of the council elected a temporary committee, which consisted of seven members: Mirkin, the merchants Efim Rubinchik, Gepner and D. G. Levenshtein, Crown Rabbi Iakov Aleshkovskii, Rabinovich, and Rozenman.¹²⁹ Grinberg, the head of KOPE and a member of the Peoples' Socialist Party [Labour Group; *trudovaia grupp*a], refused to participate in the temporary committee because, according to him, it represented the Zionists but not the Kyivan community.¹³⁰ The institution was important for the city's Jewish life and for the state in general. This was underlined by the presence at the meeting of the several ministers of the Central Rada, the Jewish Minister, representatives from the City Duma, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, Jewish parties, and

¹²⁶ "Arum der nayer kiever kehile," *Naye tsayt*, 6 (94) (January 1918), 4.

¹²⁷ TsDAVOU, f. 1854, op. 1, spr. 2, ark. 6; "Di demokratie in der kehile," *Naye tsayt* 1 (89) (3 (16) January 1918), 2; "Di ershte idishe valn in Kiev," *Naye tsayt*, 1 (89) (3 (16) January 1918), 4; "Arum der nayer kiever kehile," *Naye tsayt* 4 (92) (6 (19) January 1918), 4; Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 200.

¹²⁸ "Di ershte "zitsung" fun der idisher kehile," *Naye tsayt*, 19 (107) (19 (6) February 1918), 4.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*; Margolin, *Ukraine and policy of the Entente*, 18.

public organizations.¹³¹ However, Kyiv's Jewish *kehila* council had little influence on the Jewish life in Kyiv under the Central Rada, and even less under the Hetmanate.

Jewish Cultural Life

In 1917-1918, the city, which only two years earlier was closed to most Jews, became the epicentre of Jewish political and cultural life in the region. Jewish intellectuals, writers, and artists streamed into Kyiv. National demonstrations, talks, and speeches about national regeneration helped to establish the new political elite and gave participants a sense of unity and purpose. In April 1917, the Kyivan Jewish community, represented by the Jewish Council, made the decision “to immortalize [*uvekovechit*] the newly obtained rights of citizens and national freedom.” They proposed to establish a new university in Kyiv named the “People’s University, founded by the Jews of the South-Western Region in Commemoration of the Liberation of Nations.” The idea of creating an educational institution was meant to stress the progressive character of the Jewish nation and reflected a secular vision of the future of the Jewish nation. The proclamation of the Council stated, “the best instrument for the strengthening of freedoms and the implementation of national equality is science and knowledge disseminated among the population. This monument [university] should be the common cause of the nation [*vsenarodnyi*]. We call on all Jews to take part in its creation.”¹³² On June 9, 1918, the Jewish *Kultur Lige* [Culture League] opened the Jewish People’s

¹³¹ “K pervomu zasedaniiu evreiskoi obshchiny,” *Poslednie Novosti*, 4873 (15 January 1918): 3.

¹³² “Vozzvanie,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 91 (6 April 1917): 2.

University (*Evreiskii narodnyi universitet*).¹³³ Bergelson initiated and organized the university at which Yiddish and Hebrew were the languages of instruction. Solomon Goldelman (1885–1974), who as a representative of the Poale Zion Party was a member of the Central Rada and the Little Rada, became a lecturer at the university in 1918.¹³⁴ It was the first Jewish university in the former Russian Empire. It grew quickly: it had 62 students in June and 183 by December 1918.

The Jewish Pedagogical Institute, another educational institution, opened in Kyiv in fall 1917. The main goal was to create a cohort of Jewish teachers, who could teach Jewish literature, history, and Jewish languages in Jewish primary and secondary schools. A. B. Rivlin, the former head of a Jewish public school in Luhans’k, founded this institution. From 1906 to 1908, he had been the editor of *Donetskie Novosti* [The Donetsk News], which was quickly closed due to its radicalism. Immediately before the war, he taught in the Talmud Torah primary school in Stavyshe and later headed the Talmud Torah in Fastiv (Kyiv province).¹³⁵ The Pedagogical Institute prepared cadres for the Jewish secular school system, which flourished in the 1920s and aimed to end illiteracy among Jews.¹³⁶

Also in 1917, Mendel’ N. Mitlin, a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Basel and a rabbi, established in Kyiv a Jewish Private Institute of Theology and Social Studies, which also included a Jewish gymnasium.¹³⁷ Before the Great War, he had

¹³³ “Otkrytie evreiskogo narodnogo universiteta,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 99 (11 June 1918): 2; DAK, f. 163, op. 52, spr. 868, ark. 4, 7—15.

¹³⁴ Goldelman, *Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine 1917-1920*, 9.

¹³⁵ “Uchebnyia dela,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 40 (1917): 24.

¹³⁶ Zinger, L. G., *Evreiskoe naselenie v Sovetskom Soiuze: Statisticheskoe-ekonomicheskii obzor* (Moskva: Gos. sotsialno-ekonomicheskoe izd-vo, 1932); Mark Iudel', "Evreiskaia shkola v Sovetskom Soiuze," in *Kniga o russkom evreistve 1917-1967*, ed. Frumkin, IA. G., Aronson, G. IA., Gol'denveizer, A. A. (N'iu Iork: Soiuz russkikh evreev, 1968), 234–235.

¹³⁷ TsDAVOU, f. 2201, op. 1, spr. 344, ark. 1, 3, 5.

taught Judaism [*zakon evreiskoi very*] at the Jewish Women's Private School [*zhenskoe evreiskoe uchilishche*] of Khana Etinger in Gomel (now a city in southeastern Belarus), but he had moved to Kyiv during the war. The Institute was subordinated to the Ministry of Popular Education of the Ukrainian People's Republic. The Institute taught Jewish theology, law, history, languages (Hebrew and Yiddish, but the former was prioritized), European languages (Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, French, German, and English), economics, and geography.¹³⁸ The Institute aimed to prepare a new Jewish elite, which would develop a modern Jewish culture that would unite Jewish tradition and secular European culture. Both of these examples show how Jewish activists were moving to Kyiv, transforming it into a new capital for the Jewish people.

In January 1918, the national policy of the Central Rada enabled the creation of the Jewish cultural organization *Kultur Lige*.¹³⁹ The well-known Yiddish writer David Bergelson, literary critic Nakhman Maisel, playwright and former correspondent of *Kievskaiia Mysl'* Moisei Litvakov, and writer Yekhezkl Dobrushin became the leading members of the new organization. Moisei Zilberfarb was elected to head the executive bureau. The *Kultur Lige* had several sections: literature, theatre, painting and sculpture, pre-school, and higher education. The Central Committee consisted of 21 members and officially stayed out of politics.¹⁴⁰ However, among the participants of the *Lige* were nine members of Fareynikte, seven Bundists, two Poale Zionists, and three members of the *Folkspartei*.¹⁴¹ Initially, in spring 1918, the main task of the *Lige* was to aid Jews, especially children, who were victims of pogroms. Interest in Jewish education was the

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ DAK, f. 163, op. 21, spr. 1425, ark. 3zv, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., ark. 2-4.

¹⁴¹ Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics*, 274.

result of their work with children. Later, the *Lige* worked to develop and disseminate Jewish culture. The activity of the *Kultur Lige* peaked in 1919-1920, when it organized and supported 30 Jewish cultural and educational institutions in Kyiv alone.¹⁴²

Whereas the Yiddishists of the *Kultur Lige* wanted to replace religion with modern culture, the Hebraists wanted to unite traditionalism with modernism.¹⁴³ The Zionists established their own cultural organization, *Tarbut* [“culture” in Hebrew], which opposed the Yiddishism of the *Kultur Lige*. *Tarbut* aimed to reintroduce Hebrew culture and language to Jews. The main task of the society was to provide a national-religious education to youth, using the latest pedagogical developments. For this purpose, it organized Hebrew-language elementary and secondary schools. *Tarbut* supported pedagogical schools, courses, and the Jewish Pedagogical Institute in Kyiv for all ages.¹⁴⁴

Pogroms

The unprecedented rise of Jewish political and cultural life in Kyiv during the revolutionary years paradoxically occurred simultaneously with unprecedented anti-Jewish violence, which stemmed from rising national movements, the painful establishment of the region’s nation-states, and also of the dislocation of war.

Jews were in a difficult position during the revolutionary period in Ukraine. Simon Dubnow has described the wave of pogroms that swept the region from 1917-

¹⁴² Mykhailo O. Rybakov, ed., *Pravda istorii: Diial'nist' evreis'koi kul'turno-prosvitnyts'koi organizatsii "Kul'turna Liha" u Kyevi (1918-1925)*, Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv (Kyiv: "Kyiv" 2001), 6–7; Gennady Estraikh, "The Yiddish Kultur Lige," in *Modernism in Kyiv/Kyiv/Kiev/Kijów/Кiev: Jubilant experimentation*, ed. Makaryk, Irena R. and Tkacz, Virlana (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 199; Moss, *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution*, 52–57.

¹⁴³ Estraikh, "The Yiddish Kultur Lige," 199.

¹⁴⁴ TsDIAKU, f. 707, op. 86, spr. 148, ark. 1—5, 8—8zv.

1921 as the “Third Gaidamak Uprising” [*Tret’ia Gaidamatchina*].¹⁴⁵ The war created the prerequisites for a wave of anti-Jewish violence that unfolded during the revolution. During the war, the local civil and military administration controlled and manipulated levels of anti-Semitism. However, the collapse of the Russian Empire created a power vacuum that favoured violence. Economic dislocation, anti-Semitic propaganda, and the collapse of civil order during the war made the mass destruction of regional Jewish life possible. Military defeats and food shortages piqued anti-Jewish sentiment.¹⁴⁶ Though the first two years of the revolutionary era did not witness mass violence and anti-Semitism, they would become common features during the Civil War. Kyiv is a case study for understanding the logic of pogroms.

Zygmund Bauman has argued that “the intensity of antisemitism is most likely to remain proportional to the urgency and ferocity of the boundary-drawing and boundary-defining drive.”¹⁴⁷ Although Jews had lived in the Pale for centuries, they were considered “foreigners” by non-Jews. The situation in Kyiv was even worse because the city was closed to most Jews. The collapse of the Russian Empire and the rise of nation-states from its ashes led to the demarcation of national territory. Traditional social boundaries collapsed, while new ones had yet to be established. Fear and tension caused by the disintegration of the old regime and the emergence of a new order, which was neither known nor universally welcomed, pushed people to transgress old boundaries of social behaviour.

¹⁴⁵ Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 9–10; Haidamaka uprisings (“Haidamachchyna” in Ukrainian; “Gaidamatchina” in Russian) were popular uprisings in Right-Bank Ukraine in the 18th century; they are known by its anti-Jewish violence.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁴⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2000), 34.

According to statistics presented at the April-May 1917 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the Soviet of the Soldiers' Deputies of the Kyiv military district in June 1917, there were more than 1,000 thefts and 30 armed robberies in Kyiv.¹⁴⁸ By September 1917, *Kievskaiia Mysl'* was reporting that armed robberies in Kyiv and its environs were so frequent, even in the city centre, that peasants were increasingly reluctant to sell their products in the city.¹⁴⁹ Feliks Songailo, an owner of pharmacies, was robbed and murdered on Kruhlo-Universytets'ka Street in Lyvky. A well-known sugar family, the Libermans, was robbed and killed in their mansion on Bankova Street.¹⁵⁰ According to the order of the Provisional Government, 80 "political" prisoners were released from Luk'ianivka Prison. On March 21, 1917, when criminals, detained in the same prison learned of this amnesty, they rioted. They demanded their release in the name of freedom and the revolution. During the riot, many criminals escaped and even organized a demonstration under red banners on Bibikov Boulevard. Kyivans, however, confused the marching prisoners with newly conscripted soldiers. The prisoners agreed to go back to prison only when Mayor Burchak and Lieutenant Leparskii, the head of the city Police, promised them a general amnesty.¹⁵¹ As a result, 2,855 criminals were freed (or escaped) from the city prison. In all likelihood, this explains the city's high crime rate following the revolution.¹⁵² However, soldiers returning from the front also committed crimes and engaged in debauchery. On August 2,

¹⁴⁸ "Bor'ba s prestupnost'iu," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 145 (13 June 1917): 2.

¹⁴⁹ "Bor'ba s banditami," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 223 (14 September 1917): 2.

¹⁵⁰ "Ubiistvo gr. F. Songailo," "Ubiistvo suprugov Liberman," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 225 (17 September 1917): 2; "Zverskoe ubiistvo na Bankovoi," *Iuzhnaia Gazeta*, 2408 (17 September 1917): 3.

¹⁵¹ V. Manilov, *1917 god na Kievshchine: Khronika sobytii* (Kiev: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Ukrainy, 1928), 20–21; Ia. Faizulin and V. Hinda, *Ukrayina u vohni mynuloho stolittia: postati, fakty, versii* (Kyiv: Klub Simeinoho Dozvillia, 2015), 101–02.

¹⁵² "Bor'ba s prestupnost'iu," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 145 (13 June 1917): 2; "Grabitel'skii terror i militsiia," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 188 (3 August 1917): 2; "Oblava na Kreshchatike," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 190 (5 August 1917): 2.

a group of officers who started a drunken brawl on Khreshchatyk exhorted passers-by to attack Jews and Ukrainians. However, passing soldiers and militia members stopped the officers.¹⁵³ Kyiv did not differ from other major cities in terms of rising crime after the February Revolution. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa has stated that food theft increased by 190 percent from 1915 to 1917 in Petrograd.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Kyiv was no longer as safe as it had been during the war.

The first months after the February Revolution coincided with the season of Orthodox Easter. This period was “traditionally” used by anti-Semites for pogroms and intense violent propaganda against the Jews as “punishment” for their alleged exploitation of Orthodox Christians and the crucifixion of Christ. At the end of March 1917, the Executive Committee of CUPOK discussed the issue of anti-Semitic propaganda promoted by rightists. The Black Hundreds spread leaflets advocating for a pogrom of the Jews during Easter. Rightists gathered on St. Sophia Square but were dispersed by the city militia.¹⁵⁵ The Committee recognized that the military was the only force that could stop the pogromists and defend Jews. The Committee asked the Soviet of Soldiers’ and Officers’ Deputies, as well as the Commander of the KMD, General Nikolai Khodorovich, to develop a defence plan that could be used in the event of violence. Another decision was to ask the clergy to tell their flocks that anti-Semitic violence was unacceptable.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ “P’iani debosh,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 188 (3 August 1917): 2.

¹⁵⁴ Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Crime and punishment in the Russian revolution: Mob justice and police in Petrograd* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 33–34.

¹⁵⁵ “Pogromnyiia popytki,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 14—15 (15 April 1917): 58—59.

¹⁵⁶ “K predotvrashcheniiu evreiskikh pogromov,” *Kievlianin*, 84 (29 March 1917): 1.

The Executive Committee of Clergy and Laity followed the example of CUPOK and immediately declared that pogroms should not be incited.¹⁵⁷ The proclamation stated that the Church had never called for violence against Jews, for “the Orthodox Church calls for love and peace and strictly condemns violence and hatred of mankind.”¹⁵⁸ In order to stop anti-Semitic agitation and to locate the Rightists’ printing press, the Executive Committee of CUPOK permitted a search of St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery, causing outrage among certain elements of Kyiv’s Christian population.¹⁵⁹ However, thanks to the efforts of CUPOK, public organizations, and the military command, the religious celebrations passed with little violence.¹⁶⁰

Queues, caused by unprecedented food shortages, emerged as a special social space. Lining-up became part of the daily routine and developed special codes of behaviour. The imperial legal norms were broken and the balance between buyers and sellers shifted. The Kyiv correspondent of *Evreiskaia Nedelia* described the precarious situation: “in those long, endless bread lines, often in the rain, among people who are tormented and nervous because of standing for a long time [...] a dull resentment could be felt, the anxious mood of the people engendered extreme nervousness. Often they left without bread, after tedious hours of queueing.”¹⁶¹ As long as Jews were widely engaged in trade, they were the main target of people’s anger. Thus, the queues had enormous potential to cause conflict and open violence against the Jewish population.

¹⁵⁷ The Kyivan clergy recognized the Provisional Government on March 6, 1917. In order, to be represented on an equal basis with other groups of urban population, the local clergy organize its Executive Committee, which sent its representatives to CUPOK. Manilov, *1917 god na Kievshchine*, 8.

¹⁵⁸ “Vozzvanie kievskogo dukhovenstva,” *Kievlianin*, 84 (29 March 1917): 1; “Grazhdane!” *Kievlianin*, 86 (31 March 1917): 2; “Vozzvanie [Komiteta deputatov voisk Kievskogo garnizona,” *Kievlianin*, 87 (1 April 1917): 1.

¹⁵⁹ “Pis’mo k russkomu dukhovenstvu,” *Kievlianin*, 87 (1 April 1917): 1.

¹⁶⁰ “Offitsial’noe zaiavlenie o prazdnichnykh dniakh v Kieve,” *Kievlianin*, 89 (6 April 1917): 2.

¹⁶¹ “Kievskie pis’ma,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia* 27 (11 July 1917): 24.

The riots of summer 1917 marked the start of revolutionary violence against Kyivan Jews. The Jewish newspaper *Evreiskaia Nedelia* stated, “the phenomenon that in other places is called ‘anarchy’, ‘riot’, or by other ‘fashionable’ revolutionary nicknames, in our blessed and God-preserved Kyiv-city, the mother of Russian cities and the foremother of the Russian Black Hundreds, can exist without fashionable names and nicknames. In our specific circumstances of Kyivan life we simply call it the ‘pogrom mood,’ which has steeped into the city of the Rozmital’skiis, the Postnyis, the Iozefoviches, and their followers—from bourgeois Lypky to the arch-democrats Kurenivka and Shuliavka.”¹⁶² The first “revolutionary” pogrom occurred in Kyiv in June 1917, when “a rumor about the complete disappearance of food in the city and hunger spread among the unconscious popular masses of workers and soldiers.”¹⁶³ The pogrom was accompanied by agitation against the government, which allegedly “indulged speculators and gave permission to move goods out of the city, though there was an acute shortage of food products and textiles.”¹⁶⁴ The crowds, which consisted mostly of women and deserters, attacked Jewish houses and shops, trying to find the “hidden provisions.”¹⁶⁵ The newspapers compared these riots to those in Petrograd that started the February Revolution and stressed the participation of women and deserters. The rallies of women against merchants happened throughout the Empire during the war, but police

¹⁶² “Kievskie pis’ma,” *Evreskaia Nedelia*, 41 (10 October 1917): 23. Viktor Rozmital’skii (1850-1919) was a Kyivan businessman and monarchist, Deputy Chair of the Kyiv Branch of the Union of Russian People, and a Chair of the Russian People’s Union of Archangel Michael. Fedor Postnyi (1869-after 1915), a Kyivan merchant, chaired the Kyiv-Podil Branch of the Union of Russian People. *Chernaia sotnia. Istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, edited by O. A. (Moskva: Institut russkoi tsivilizatsii, 2008), 446, 409. Platonov (Vladimir Iozefi (1873?-1920), was a councillor [*glasnyi*] of Kyiv City Duma, worked for the conservative newspaper *Kievlianin*, and supported the local Russian nationalist movement. A. V. Lavrov, ed., *Litsa. Biograficheskii al’manakh* (Moskva: Feniks, 1994), 314–15.

¹⁶³ “Kievskie pis’ma,” *Evreskaia Nedelia* 41 (10 October 1917): 24.

¹⁶⁴ “Kievskie pis’ma,” *Evreskaia Nedelia* 41 (10 October 1917): 24; 27 (11 July 1917): 24; “Bezchinstva v gorode,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 156 (26 June 1917): 2; “Bezchinstva v gorode,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 155 (24 June 1917): 2; Tcherikover I., *Antisemitizm i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 30.

¹⁶⁵ “Bezchinstva v gorode,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 155 (24 June 1917): 2; 156 (25 June 1917): 2.

quickly dispersed them.¹⁶⁶ As Barbara Alpern Engel has noted, these demonstrations were in response to shortages, declining living standards, general hostility towards traders, and resistance to the authorities.¹⁶⁷ But in Kyiv, where most traders were Jews, these riots were clearly anti-Semitic. Thus, old prejudices dovetailed with new urban realities.

On June 24, the crowd attacked Jewish traders in Podil, who were transporting their goods with special permission from the Provisions Committee [*prodovol'stvennoi upravly*] from Kyiv. The Jewish militia tried unsuccessfully to stop the crowd. Though the pogrom was carried out under the slogan "Beat the Jews!", nobody was killed. The city administration attempted to stop the riots and re-impose order, especially in Podil. It officially announced that the city had enough food and prohibited any public gatherings for several days.¹⁶⁸ The guards patrolled the streets and panic among the Jewish population subsided. The city returned to normal, but with "some nervousness and with frequent interruptions of [the city's] normal rhythms."¹⁶⁹

The weakness of central and local powers and their inability to control the situation created space for explosive revolutionary violence, which stimulated the creation of Jewish militarized self-defence units. It was crucial for Jews as an oppressed minority to form communities, which could ensure safety. In July 1917, the Jewish soldiers of the Kyiv garrison established the Union of Jewish Soldiers of the Kyiv military district [*Soiuz Evreev-Voinov Kievskogo Voennogo Okruga*]. The goal of the organization was "to unite Jewish soldiers of the Kyiv military district under the banner

¹⁶⁶ Barbara Alpern Engel, "Not by Bread Alone: Subsistence Riots in Russia during World War I," *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 4 (1997): 696–721, 696–97.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 697.

¹⁶⁸ "K naseleniiu goroda Kiev!" *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 155 (24 June 1917): 1.

¹⁶⁹ "Kievskie pis'ma," *Evreskaia Nedelia* 41 (10 October 1917): 24.

of ‘free development of the Jewish nation in a free Russia.’”¹⁷⁰ However, anti-Semitism in the city forced the Union to form military units to protect the Jewish population from violence.

The mass desertion and demobilization of soldiers, who had been the principal audience of the Russian army’s anti-Semitism, brought armed and violent hordes to the city. Waves of deserters caused significant disorder in Kyiv. As long as Kyiv was a transit city for the south-western front, the worries of city leaders about demobilized soldiers were reasonable. The city was simply not able to feed such numbers. Moreover, soldiers who had recently arrived in Kyiv were expelled for public health reasons; by September 1917 typhus was rampant in the city.¹⁷¹ In order to stop the misdeeds of the soldiers, the soldiers of the Kyiv garrison corralled deserters. On May 15, soldiers expelled more than 5,000 extremely violent deserters. One group even started a fight with the members of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets). The deserters disarmed them and with stolen weapons moved to Khreshchatyk, where they engaged in debauchery and attacked police and by-standers. According to *Kievlianin*, “the population went into a panic.” It took two days to disarm the hordes and send them back to the front.¹⁷²

During summer and fall 1917, pogroms and mass robberies were caused by the food crisis and the weakness of local governing bodies. Urbanites witnessed daily fights between de-mobilized soldiers and deserters, and the militia, especially in Podil, Plos’k, and Solomianka districts (the latter was also close to the railway station and the Jewish

¹⁷⁰ Vladyslav Hrynevych and Liudmyla Hrynevych, *Natsionalne viiskove pytannia v diial'nosti Soiuzu evreiv-voiniv KVO (lypen' 1917 - sichen' 1919 rr.* (Kyiv, 2001), 6–7.

¹⁷¹ “O razgruzke goroda,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 234 (28 September 1917): 2.

¹⁷² “Deboshi dezertirov,” *Kievlianin*, 118 (16 May 1917): 3; A. B. Astashov, “Dezertirstvo i bor'ba s nim v tsarskoi armii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny,” *Rossiiskaia istoriia*, no. 4 (2011): 44–52.

[or Galician] Market), the poorest, most populated, and most Jewish areas of the city. By September 1917, the looting of freight cars at the Kyiv Railway Station became a regular occurrence. Though soldiers were the main perpetrators, civilians joined them. Although the cars were guarded, the few soldiers, even with their weapons, were powerless before the mob.¹⁷³ From the railway station, the disorder often spread to the Volodymyr Market, where the riots became anti-Semitic. A boy struck a woman with a weight [*giria*] because she had jumped the grocery queue. Somebody shouted, “The yids [*zhidy*] are beating the Russians.” The queuing crowd, joined by soldiers, destroyed the store. Epelbaum, the storeowner, was killed. Finally, the Cossacks and additional militia succeeded in stopping the pogrom.¹⁷⁴

The local authorities could not control the situation, and nobody was punished for the mayhem. The local Jewish newspaper *Naie Zeit* admitted that the economic situation had exacerbated anti-Semitism and violence in Kyiv. It stated, “such excesses will happen more often and become more violent if the economic situation and food supply worsen.”¹⁷⁵ The city administration tried to solve the problem of queues, which was expected to worsen during the winter. The first decision to address the problems associated with queues was the introduction of ration cards, whose distribution was delegated to House Committees, the lowest level of self-government in the urban centre.¹⁷⁶ In September, Riabtsov, the head of the city, sent a letter to the owners of

¹⁷³ “Pogrom Kievskogo tovarnogo vokzala,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 223 (14 September 1917): 2; “Stolknovenie na tovarnoi stantsii,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 223 (14 September 1917): 2.

¹⁷⁴ “Pogromy i anarkhiia,” *Evreiskaia Nedelia*, 36-37 (12 September 1917): 47; “Bezporiadki na Vladimirskom bazare,” *Iuzhnaia Gazeta*, 2405 (13 September 1917): 3.

¹⁷⁵ Tcherikover, *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine*, 54.

¹⁷⁶ The house committees were introduced in 1917 by the decision of the Provisional Government in urban apartment buildings. The committees were responsible for housekeeping, distribution of resources, and assigning duties. They communicated with the city administration and different organizations. The creation of house committees as a form of self-government aimed to counter the social and economic crisis. “K

theatres and cinemas, in which he asked them to allow bread sales in theater halls, which were big enough to accommodate large numbers.¹⁷⁷ The city administration next decided to “relieve” Kyiv of its undesirables: evacuees from Petrograd and other cities, “idlers,” deserters, and POWs who were doing unskilled work.¹⁷⁸ Apparently, this “relief” involved widespread document checks and the expulsion of these people from the city. Institutions evacuated from provinces near the front were also expelled. Thanks to the efforts of the city administration, by the end of September 1917 the situation had improved and pogrom agitation was reduced although not eliminated.¹⁷⁹

On October 25, 1917, the Central Rada and the City Duma received the first telegrams about the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks in Kyiv attempted an uprising with little success; the SRs and Mensheviks supported the Provisional Government. The City Duma of Kyiv created the Commission for the Protection of the City [*Komissiiia po okhrane goroda*], which was tasked with maintaining order. Meanwhile, the Central Rada established the Committee for the Defense of the [February] Revolution for the purpose of “struggling with the enemies of the revolution, preserving order, and defending the revolution’s achievements.”¹⁸⁰

On October 26 (November 8), 1917, the Commission for the Protection of the Revolution proclaimed that pogroms, riots, and disorder would be suppressed by military

naseleniu Kieva,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 223 (14 September 1917): 2; “Domovye komitety,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 231 (24 September 1917): 2.

¹⁷⁷ “Pros’ba E. P. Riabtsova,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 223 (14 September 1917): 2; “Ocheredi,” *Iuzhnaia Gazeta*, 2406 (14 September 1917): 3.

¹⁷⁸ “Soveshchanie o razgruzke Kieva,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 225 (17 September 1917): 2.

¹⁷⁹ “Khlebnyia ocheredi,” *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 231 (24 September 1917): 2.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted by: Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917-1920*, 82; Manilov, *1917 god na Kievshchine*, 319.

force.¹⁸¹ The City Duma of Kyiv and the Commission for the Protection of the City made the decision to send between 50 and 150 soldiers and Cossacks to help the city militia in Podil, Lybid', Demiivka, and Starokyiv maintain peace and order. However, Abram Ginzburg stated at a Duma meeting that city authorities had not implemented this decision.¹⁸² Nevertheless, from the October Days in Kyiv (from October 25 (November 7) to the proclamation of the Third Universal of the Central Rada on November 7 (20), there were no pogroms against Jews. The troops of the KMD and the Commission for the Protection of the Revolution, however, soon lost control in the city. The Bolsheviks staged a workers' uprising in Pechers'k, near the Arsenal Factory, on October 29. The struggle between the troops of the KMD and the Bolsheviks lasted several days (from October 29-31, when the headquarters of the KMD signed a cease-fire with the Kyiv Revolutionary Committee of Bolsheviks [*RevKom*]). On November 11, the Central Rada assumed power in Kyiv because the Provisional Government had ceased to exist and the local Bolshevik revolutionary opposition had disintegrated.

The Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), the Bolshevik government in Petrograd, issued the Rada an ultimatum on December 1 (14), 1917, in which the former demanded the latter's recognition of Sovnarkom authority and its participation in the struggle against counterrevolutionaries.¹⁸³ The Central Rada, however, refused to accept the ultimatum, and on January 4 (17), 1918, the People's Commissariat of the Soviets in Ukraine declared war on the General Secretariat of the UNR.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Serhii Iekel'chuk, "Trahichna storinka Ukrain's'koi revoliutsii: Symon Petliura ta evreis'ki pogromy v Ukraini (1917-1920)," in *Symon Petliura ta ukrains'ka natsional'na revoliutsiia*, ed. Vasyl' Mykhal'chuk (Kyiv: Rada, 1995), 165-217; "Komitet okhorony revoliutsii," "Obov'iazkova postanova," *Nova Rada*, 173 (27 October 1917): 1, 2.

¹⁸² DAK, f. 163, op. 8, spr. 83, ark. 12.

¹⁸³ Manilov, *1917 god na Kievshchine*, 540-41.

¹⁸⁴ "Otvēt na ul'timatum," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 288 (5 December 1917): 2.

On December 5 (17), 1917, the General Secretariat together with KMD headquarters issued a decree expelling all those Kyiv inhabitants who had settled there after January 1, 1915, and who could not produce documents detailing their right to reside in the city.¹⁸⁵ The primary motive of the decree was to expel from Kyiv hostile “criminal elements that could potentially start a civil war [the Bolsheviks].”¹⁸⁶ However, this decision also meant that almost three quarters of Jews had to leave the city, because they did not have the documents, which could prove that they were permanent residents in the city. The Jewish population was panicked, especially when street patrols started to check documents. *Naye Tsayt*, [New Times], the organ of Fareinikte in Kyiv, reacted positively to this decision because it would combat counterrevolutionaries while expelling criminals.¹⁸⁷ In fact, this explanation mirrored the official position of the General Secretariat, which in essence was logical, for the Central Rada was on the verge of war. Zilberfarb, the Minister of Jewish Affairs, made efforts to prevent panic among Kyivan Jewry. He stated in a January 13, 1918, decree that “the Commandant meant neither the whole peaceful population of Kyiv, nor the Jewish population. The order only targeted the elements [Bolsheviks] that recently stood against the Ukrainian Republic and wanted to destroy the existing revolutionary power.”¹⁸⁸ Fortunately, the Ministry for Jewish Affairs prevented this “clumsy, barbaric decree” from coming into force;

¹⁸⁵ “Zapreshchenie v’ezda v Kiev,” *Kievskaia Mysl’*, 288 (5 December 1917): 2.

¹⁸⁶ “Komisiia shchodo vykonannia pryказu,” *Nova Rada*, 9 (13 January 1918): 3.

¹⁸⁷ “Vonrekht in Kiev,” *Naye tsayt*, 7 (95) (January 1918), 4; 6 (94) (January 1918), 4.

¹⁸⁸ “Fun General Sekretar far idishe eninim. Vegn aroysshikn fun Kiev.” *Naye tsayt*, 9 (97) (January 1918), 4.

however, the following events show that this did not improve the situation for Kyivan Jews who faced massive pogroms over the next few months.¹⁸⁹

The second conference of the Union of Jewish Soldiers in December 1917, adopted principles for self-defence units. Their purpose was “to guard the honour, life, and property of the Jewish population and defend it from anarchic riots.”¹⁹⁰ The Jewish Secretariat, which consisted mostly of Jewish socialists, did not support this initiative because the soldiers were influenced by Zionists. Instead, it promoted the creation of units of the *Vil'noho Kozatstva* [Free Cossacks] that would work alongside Jewish instructors (advisors). The Jewish socialists claimed that militarized self-defence units could further entrench anti-Semitism.

As the Bolshevik force approached Kyiv, the military command started to pursue all suspicious non-Ukrainian elements in general and Jews in particular as agents hostile to the national aspirations of the Ukrainian people. Thus, anti-Semitic rhetoric changed. From January 1918, the main accusation against the Jewish population was its anti-Ukrainian stance and not economic profiteering. On January 14, 1918, the General Secretariat declared that Kyiv was under siege and appointed Mykhailo Kovenko as the city's military commander. On January 15, 1918, the Soviet forces neared Kyiv while the local Bolsheviks instigated an uprising at the Arsenal Factory.¹⁹¹ Mass disorder and pogroms ensued.¹⁹² Interruptions to the city's power and water supply further aggravated a dire situation.¹⁹³ Anti-Semitic agitation in Kyiv was so strong that on January 6, 1918,

¹⁸⁹ Silberfarb and Lincoln, *The Jewish Ministry and Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine*, 77; “Voynrekht in Kiev,” *Naye tsayt*, 6 (94) (January 1918), 4; “Komisie vegn di velkhe men shikt aroys fun Kiev,” *Naye tsayt*, 7 (95) (January 1918).

¹⁹⁰ Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 88–89.

¹⁹¹ Vsevolod Petriv, *Spomyny z chasiv Ukrain's'koi revoliutsii* (L'viv: Chervona Kalyna, 1927), 102–41.

¹⁹² “Podii v Kyievi 16–23 sichnia,” *Nova Rada*, 13 (24 January 1918): 1.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

the Zionists introduced a motion in the Central Rada to issue a proclamation to the population that would prohibit national hostilities.¹⁹⁴ The Jewish Minister (the Fourth Universal determined that General Secretaries should be renamed Ministers) could not stop anti-Jewish violence, and on January 16, 1918, Zilberfarb resigned.¹⁹⁵ Isai Khurgin, the Jewish Minister who replaced Zilberfarb, recognized that “if previously [we] could rely on the army, which was instructed to combat pogroms, [now] it is maybe time to create Jewish units for self-defence.”¹⁹⁶ Thus, Jewish self-defence units were officially recognized and approved only when the danger posed by pogroms was combined with the understanding that the Ukrainian government was not able to defend the population of Ukraine from violence.

From the middle of January 1918 onwards, Kyiv became a battlefield. The population had to accept constant shooting and bombardment as a normal part of everyday life. S. Sumskaa, a correspondent for *Kievskaa Mysl'*, describing these days in his memoirs, noted, “People gathered in groups near the gates. Battles in the peaceful city were still unusual for them. Almost nobody was walking along the streets; from time to time individual people would pick their way between the buildings [*odinokie liudi probiralis' po domam*]. The grey coats with the rifles [soldiers] were getting across. Sometimes they were shouting. It was not clear what they were shouting. I was staying close to the walls, thinking how to get home quickly.”¹⁹⁷ People were developing strategies for surviving in the new circumstances.

¹⁹⁴ Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 77.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92; Vladyslav Hrynevych and Liudmyla Hrynevych, *Natsional'ne viis'kove pytannia v diial'nosti Soiuzu evreiv-voiniv (lypen' 1917 - sichen' 1918)* (Kyiv, 2001), 30–31.

¹⁹⁷ S. Sumskaa, “Odinnadtsat' perevorotov (Grazhdanskaia voina v Kieve),” in *Revoliutsiia na Ukraine: Po memuaram belykh*, eds. S. A. Alekseev and N. N. Popov (Moskva-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1930), 100–101.

The Central Rada had very few troops to defend against the Russian Bolshevik invasion. According to Serhii Plohy, “Ukrainian politicians continued to think in terms of autonomy within Russia and spent little time or effort on building state institutions and an army of their own.”¹⁹⁸ However, they now had to declare Ukraine’s complete independence from Russia; on February 9, 1918, the Ukrainian People’s Republic signed the *Brotfrieden* with the Central Powers, in which, in exchange for grain, Germany and Austria-Hungary provided Ukraine with military protection.

The Jewish Ministry, however, refused to support the Forth Universal of the Central Rada, which proclaimed the Ukrainian National Republic, as an “independent, subject to no one, free, sovereign state of the Ukrainian people,” because it ran contrary to the interests of the Jewish nation, which saw Ukraine as an autonomous part of the Russian Federation.¹⁹⁹ The majority of Jews supported the Russian imperial project in the form of a democratic Russian federation. As Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern puts it, “the more imperial the culture, the better for the Jews.”²⁰⁰ The choice of Ukrainian identity and culture was rather odd for Jews who lived in the towns and cities of the Pale, for all things Ukrainian weres “considered par excellence peasant,” and thus backward.²⁰¹ Indeed, Ukrainian independence came as a surprise both to Jews and Ukrainians. In 1917, even leaders of the Ukrainian national movement, such as Mykhailo Hrushevs’kyi, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, or Symon Petliura, did not think that the creation of an independent Ukrainian state was possible. Ukrainian national autonomy was the most for

¹⁹⁸ Serhii Ploky, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 208–09.

¹⁹⁹ Verstiuk, *Ukrains'ka Tsentral'na Rada*, 102–04; Mikhail Frenkin, *Zakhvat vlasti bolshevikami v Rossii i rol' tylovykh garnizonov v armii: Podgotovka i provedenie Oktiabr'skogo miatezha 1917-1918 gg.* (Ierusalim: Stav, 1982), 154–55.

²⁰⁰ Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Anti-Imperial Choice: The Making of the Ukrainian Jew* (New Haven, 2009), 2.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

which they could reasonably hope. However, the war with Bolshevik Russia and a quest for possible allies forced the Central Rada to proclaim an independent Ukrainian People's Republic. It was logical that Jewish political parties refused to support the Fourth Universal, because it clearly contradicted their pro-imperial vision for the future of the region. Naum S. Syrkin, an activist of the Kyiv Zionist movement, claimed in 1917, "all these questions (like the Ukrainian struggle) which are a source of concern and fear, stir up the Jewish population and force it to question seriously its own fate; to this is added a bitter awareness that the nation is facing a (new) 'split of Judaism' and until such time as 'self-determination of the nations' is implemented and logically concluded, united Russian Jewry will split into Ukrainian Jewry, Latvian Jewry, Lithuanian Jewry, etc... if steps are not taken in time to prevent this process."²⁰² The Jewish political activists tried to avoid splitting Russian Jewry. At the same time, Ukrainians were striving for the existence of their nation-state, in which they were the masters and Jews were a national minority that refused to support independence. The Ukrainian government could win the support of the Jewish parties only if it promised better conditions for their national development, civil rights, and freedoms. However, this was hardly possible in the circumstances, when the very existence of the Ukrainian state was under threat.

The attitude to Jews further deteriorated when the Jewish Ministry did not flee to Zhytomyr with the rest of the government on January 25, 1918 (they were not informed that the government was leaving). Thus, the anti-Semites used this to accuse the Jews of being, at best, "neutral" in the anti-Bolshevik struggle.²⁰³ Moreover, the stereotype which

²⁰² N. S. Syrkin, *K ukrainskomu voprosu* (Kiev, 1917), 10. Quoted in Mattityahu Minc, "Kiev Zionists and the Ukrainian National Movement," in *Ukrainian Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, edited by Howard Aster and Peter J. Potichnyj (Edmonton: CIUS; University of Alberta, 1990), 253.

²⁰³ Abramson, "Historiography of the Jews and the Ukrainian Revolution," 87.

equated the Jews with Bolshevism was already circulating among the population. In fact, this was a new, updated edition of an older idea, according to which, Jews were overrepresented in the revolutionary movement. However, as Henry Abramson states, the Jewish population as a whole had little sympathy for the Bolshevik occupation, although indeed “individual Jews were prominent among the Soviet leadership in Ukraine, particularly in the cities.”²⁰⁴ Old prejudices, rampant anti-Semitism during the war, and an intense struggle for national determination in 1917-18 created very “fruitful” grounds for violence against the Jews.

In response to the Central Rada’s signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers, Mikhail Muraviev, the Commander of the Bolshevik troops that seized Kyiv on January 26 (February 8), 1918, stated that “Soviet rule would be brought from the far north on the blades of their bayonets.”²⁰⁵ The period of Bolshevik rule in Kyiv was apocalyptic. Ukrainian nationalists, imperial officers, and all those who did not welcome Bolshevik rule were executed. Even those who had earlier sympathized with the Bolsheviks, now avoided them.

Kyivians offered a muted reaction to the arrival of German and Austrian troops on March 1, 1918. They understood that although the Germans were more civilized than the Bolsheviks and entered Kyiv “well-dressed and solemn,” the Central Powers were the occupiers.²⁰⁶ One of the first orders issued by the German in Kyiv was a symbolic one:

²⁰⁴ Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 87; Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 105-112.

²⁰⁵ Goldelman, *Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine 1917-1920*, 15; Serhii Iefremov, *Za rik 1912-i; Pid Obukhovom. Bil'shovyky v Kyievi* (Kyiv: Orii, 1991), 85-88,95-99.

²⁰⁶ Sumskii, "Odinnadtsat' perevorotov (Grazhdanskaia voina v Kieve)," 106; N. M. Mogilianskii, "Tragediia Ukrainy (Iz perezhitogo v Kieve v 1918 g)," in *Revoliutsiia na Ukraine: Po memuarom belykh*, eds. S. A. Alekseev and N. N. Popov (Moskva-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1930), 116.

the rehabilitation and cleaning of Kyiv's main railway station.²⁰⁷ Gol'denveizer noted that it was "the first and the last time [he] remembered when somebody decided to wash our terminal."²⁰⁸ The change of power was visible in the urban space: "signs with German street names were installed at each intersection. Special arrows indicated the direction and time you needed to reach the destination. Telegraph and telephone wires enveloped the city like a spider web."²⁰⁹ The German occupation brought relative stability and order, which were appreciated by the city's Jews.

The return of the Central Rada to Kyiv in March 1918 was accompanied by violent anti-Jewish pogroms committed by Ukrainian troops, mostly in the neighbourhoods of Podil and Demiiivka.²¹⁰ Accused Bolshevik collaborators were lynched and the city administration was unable to stop these crimes.²¹¹ Nevertheless, the head of the city, Riabtsov, tried to petition Otaman Oleksander Danchenko to stop the persecution of the Jews. The appeal was published in *Kievskaiia Mysl'*:

"I beg you for the future of the Ukrainian People's Republic to stop the extra-judicial killings and the unauthorized arrests of innocent citizens. Stop the persecutions of the Jews by the Cossacks. They are persecuted only because the Jews were among the Bolsheviks, just as there were Ukrainians among them. However, many Jews struggled and struggle now against the Bolsheviks. Please stop this bloody vengeance."²¹²

Similar appeals were received by the War Minister, Oleksandr Zhukovski, and the Commandant of Kyiv, the Major General of the Army of the Ukrainian State Konstantyn Prisovs'kyi. On March 5 (New Style), 1918, Prisovs'kyi, the hero who liberated Kyiv from the Bolsheviks, appointed Colonel Serhii Snihurows'kyi as the Chief of the Guards

²⁰⁷ Mogilianskii, "Tragediia Ukrainy (Iz perezhitogo v Kieve v 1918 g)," 115; Sumskii, "Odinnadtsat' perevorotov (Grazhdanskaia voina v Kieve)," 106; Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 209.

²⁰⁸ Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 209.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 121–22.

²¹¹ Ibid., 210.

²¹² "Obrashchenie Riabtsova," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 62 (3 March 1918): 2.

of Kyiv and ordered him to form a regiment to maintain peace in the city.²¹³ The Cossacks received the order, but the authorities were too weak to control the situation—that is, they were unable to control the mob and the soldiers who returned the Central Rada to Kyiv. The Cossacks were the city’s saviours and they were not to be punished.

Jewish representatives from the city suburbs even appealed to the German military authorities for help. Yet, others in the Jewish community saw such measures as disrespectful toward Ukrainians.²¹⁴ In an attempt to preserve relations with the CR, the Jewish councillors in the City Duma issued an appeal to the population of Kyiv on March 5, 1918,

[...] We [the Jews of Kyiv] are liberated now from the horrors of the civil war, which flooded the city with robberies and murders. [We] have just taken a long breath after the Bolshevik robberies, when rumors about a new danger for the Jewish population started to circulate around the city. When the country is going through a transitional period, in the political twilight, when the sword and fire are changing the state’s political regime, and power transfers from hand to hand, sad excesses committed by individuals or by groups with vile instincts, who use darkness for their banditry and rapacious [*grabitel’skii*] purposes, are possible. At such a time, Jews are the first victims. At this moment, we, the Jewish councillors, who have your vote of confidence, are pleading with you and declaring, “all leaders of the main Ukrainian parties are struggling with the anti-Semitic agitation by dark forces. All representatives of the Ukrainian Republic, the only authority in the state, have confirmed that pogroms will not be tolerated, and they will take all possible measures to stop anti-Semitic moods and propaganda [...] In cases of arrests or attacks, the Jewish population must come to us and trust us.”²¹⁵

The “excesses” mentioned in the declaration were committed by soldiers who called themselves “the Cossacks of the Black *Kurin*’ [batallion],” the Special

²¹³ “Prikazy osobogo komendanta,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 17 (5 March (20 February) 1918): 2; TsDAVOU, f. 1075, op. 2, spr. 37, ark. 231—232; P. P. Hai-Nyzhnyk, “Kostiantyn Prisovs’kyi – viis’kovyi i derzhavnyi diiach Rosii, UNR ta Ukrain’s’koi Derzhavy: biohrafichnyi narys,” *Hileia: Istorychni nauky* 45, no. 3 (2011): 20–24.

²¹⁴ Tcherikover I., *Antisemitism i pogromy na Ukraine, 1917-1918 gg.*, 124.

²¹⁵ “Vozzvanie evreev-glasnykh kievskoi gorodskoi dumy,” *Kievskaiia Mysl’*, 17 (5 March (20 February) 1917): 2.

Zaporozhian Detachment formed in February 1918 to defend Kyiv from the Bolsheviks.²¹⁶ They arbitrarily arrested, searched, beat, and openly robbed Jews in retribution for the alleged Jewish support of the Bolsheviks during the occupation.²¹⁷ The Jewish councillors acted as the legal representatives of the city's Jewry. However, the declaration cited above reflects some level of mistrust that existed between the population and its representatives. Local Jews saw the councillors as weak and helpless in the face of real danger. Moreover, the "old" fear of being too "defensive" against all Gentiles, which could escalate the cycle of exclusion and violence, forced Jews to stress their shared humanity.

The period of the Hetmanate (April 29-December 14, 1918) was relatively calm for Kyiv's Jewish community. The German military, with the help of the Ukrainian army, maintained order. The Jewish Ministry was abolished and the Law on National-Personal Autonomy was officially repudiated in July 1918. The Jewish National Council still existed; however, it was largely ignored by the Jewish public. The Hetmanate's days were numbered when the authoritarian regime lost the support of its German ally. Skoropadsky was trying to find support from the Entente and the opposition-led socialist Ukrainian National Union, headed by Volodymyr Vynnychenko. However, their alliance lasted only a couple of weeks due to ideological differences. On November 14, 1918, three days after the armistice that ended the Great War, Skoropads'kyi carried out a coup, receiving aid from anti-Bolshevik White Russian forces. He finally proclaimed the federative union of Ukraine with a future non-Bolshevik Russia. The Ukrainian National

²¹⁶ "Bor'ba s samochinnymi arestami i nasilliami v gorode," *Kievskaiia Mysl'*, 17 (5 March (20 February) 1917): 2.

²¹⁷ "Der antisemitisher teror in Kiev," *Naye tsayt*, 32 (120) (7 (22) March 1918), 4; see also, Sumskii, "Odinnadtsat' perevorotov (Grazhdanskaia voina v Kieve)," 107–108.

Union formed its own government, the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic, which started an uprising. The Directory seized Kyiv on December 19, 1918, and all of Ukraine descended into chaos.

Anti-Semitism during the war and revolution was an important factor in shaping identities. Hatred and violence were challenges resolved only by changing the political system and rejecting the ideas that made such stigmatization possible.²¹⁸ Anti-Jewish violence and sentiment certainly generated narratives of Semitic collective solidarity. Nevertheless, Gol'denveizer pointed out that national interests could not override the political diversity of Russian Jewry. He argued that Jews "worried much more about [the questions of] monarchy or republic, democracy or socialism, than about secular or religious community, about the jargon or Hebrew, and even about national-personal autonomy."²¹⁹ It was much easier for Jews to reach a compromise over national questions than general political ones.

Conclusion

During the revolutionary period, Kyiv became a true Jewish metropolis, the center of regional Jewish political and cultural life. It was here where the flowering of Jewish culture in the 1920s had its roots. As a centre of relief work for refugees during the war, Kyiv had the necessary cadres who were ready to switch from welfare to politics, and to the building of a new democratic Jewish community. Thus, the city became a laboratory

²¹⁸ Dawne Moon, "Who Am I and Who Are We?: Conflicting Narratives of Collective Selfhood in Stigmatized Groups," *American Journal of Sociology* 117, no. 5 (2012): 1336–79, 1340.

²¹⁹ Gol'denveizer, "Iz Kievskikh Vospominanii," 190.

for building Jewish secular *kehila* councils and implementing the idea of national-personal autonomy.

The city was a place of competing identities: Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, and Polish. The “boundary-defining drive” of Ukrainians, which was clearly visible in Kyiv in 1917, compelled the Jews to stick to Jewish national organizations, such as the Jewish Council and later the Jewish Secretariat (Ministry). Experienced social and political organizers staffed these organizations. The new Jewish political institutions, born of the revolution, enabled the representation and defense of Jewish national interests at the local and state levels. If in 1917 under the socialist Central Rada, relations between Ukrainians and Jews were relatively peaceful, in 1918, after the proclamation of the independent Ukrainian National Republic, deep disagreements about the future of Ukraine turned into open violence against Jews. The right-wing government of the State of Ukraine, led by Skoropads’kyi was less friendly to the Jews than the Rada and did not support the idea of Jewish national autonomy. Nonetheless, due to the presence of German troops, he was able to control anti-Jewish violence.

Though the new national freedoms ushered in by the revolution created openings for civic initiatives, it also accentuated the differences between national social groups. The rapidly evolving civil society opened the way for the multiple imagined communities, which were developing their own public spheres. The intensive demarcation of national borders heightened tensions between Jews and Gentiles. The example of Kyiv demonstrates that anti-Semitic propaganda, which accompanied Imperial Russia’s wartime nationalizing campaign, harsh economic conditions, military demoralization, the general weakness of the central government, and its inability to

control the situation and maintain order, even in the capital, led to open violence against Jews.

As a multiethnic city, Kyiv was the epicentre of Ukrainian and Jewish political and cultural life. The events in the city amplified the revolution in the former Jewish Pale of Settlement, which although bureaucratically ceased to exist in March 1917, continued to shape the Jewish vision of the political situation. The Jews perceived the revolutionary changes—social, political but also geographical—through the prism of an “undivided Russia.” Many Jews were culturally Russian and regarded themselves *as* Russian. They were certainly not Ukrainian. Moreover, Kyivan Jews did not want to separate from the Jews of the former Russian Empire. Finally, they did not believe that the new Ukrainian state could defend them and their interests; it could hardly defend itself. Gol’denveizer directly noted in his memoirs: “the Central Rada was nominally the highest authority in Ukraine. When the Germans arrived, it ceased having power or authority.”²²⁰

²²⁰ Ibid., 212.

CONCLUSION

When Joseph Shchur, the protagonist in Bergelson's story, discussed in the first chapter, arrived in Kyiv, the city was a new world that starkly contrasted the traditionalism of *shtetl* life. At the same time, Kyiv was a place where Jews were estranged from urban society by very limited residence rights, as well the *numerus clausus* at schools and universities. As Murray Baumgarten argues, the city was "the bridge from tradition to modernity."²²¹ Jews who came to Kyiv looking for a better life inevitably came into contact with a more secular way of life, new ideas (such as nationalism, liberalism, and socialism), and a latent anti-Semitism never before experienced in rural settings. Moreover, the Jewish population of Kyiv was not homogenous. It was differentiated according to class, political affiliation, and profession. These categories shaped Jewish self-identification and defined their interactions with Gentile society.

The first months of the war were marked by mass patriotic demonstrations, which aimed to unite the population around the idea of a "nation at war." The patriotic campaign orchestrated by central and local authorities spoke for all people, proclaiming loyalty to the regime, dynasty, and the state's cultural and spiritual values. At first, Kyivan Jews joined Gentiles rallying around a common cause. However, already during the first months of the war, the Russian military command started to expel Jews from the front zone as they were allegedly unreliable and treacherous. Thus, Jews as a marginalized ethnoreligious community were excluded from the political concept of the "nation at war."

²²¹ Murray Baumgarten, *City Scriptures: Modern Jewish Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 1.

Anti-Semitism and xenophobia accompanied the Russian Empire's wartime nationalizing campaign. An economic crisis and food shortages, caused mostly by the poor management of supplies, raised social tensions in Russian imperial society. The Jews were accused of speculation, price gauging, conscription dodging, and espionage. Anti-Jewish attitudes shaped the everyday life of Jews as an ethnoreligious group and strengthened their sense of solidarity. Kyiv as a large city offered the necessary network and resources to communicate common values, thoughts, and feelings. The realities of urban social space were used by both the political Right, who inculcated anti-Semitism, and by Jews, who had to unite to support their co-religionists. Instead of promoting mass solidarity, the nationalizing campaign led to the further polarization of society and sharpened pre-existing ethnic tensions. The unification of the younger Jewish generation around the ideas of Jewish nationalism and socialism, as well as the rising politicization of the Jewish population in general, stemmed from state-sponsored anti-Semitic propaganda.

The Great War as a mobilizing event significantly changed the life of the Jewish community in Kyiv. The "home front," as a support system of the army, mobilized the city's Jewish civilians in order to harness their contribution to the war effort, to demonstrate their loyalty to the state, and to reduce anti-Semitic attitudes among Gentiles. Early efforts of the Jewish urban community focused on providing aid to wounded soldiers regardless of their religious affiliation, and the collection and delivery of warm clothing and shoes to soldiers at the front. The arrival of Jewish refugees and expellees from the Polish and Lithuanian provinces, Galicia, and Bukovyna, forced the

Jewish community to change the nature of its philanthropic activity. It now concentrated on relief work for the destitute masses of Jews coming through the city.

Kyiv was a transit city for refugees, expellees, and deportees who usually did not spend more than a few months there. Kyiv's special status in the Pale shaped the attitudes that made the relocated Jews "unwanted." The Committee of Common Needs and KOPE assisted in-transit Jews. Such "mobility" wrought instability, which complicated the work of local Jewish activists. At the same time, activists in Kyiv and Kyiv province who worked with refugees, expellees, deportees, and hostages were presented with a valuable opportunity to get closer to the Jewish masses from different provinces of the Russian Empire and beyond.

The activity of the Kyivan Jewish community during the war was typically philanthropy. The Jewish activists focused on providing immediate help to Jewish refugees; ideas about reorganizing communal life and political activity remained in the background. The Representation for Jewish Welfare, which had aided the poor local Jewish population before the war, could not manage the relief work necessitated by these mass migrations. This new philanthropic activity went far beyond the limits of financial support for the Jewish Hospital, almshouses, orphanages, and schools. The activists of KOPE, as a local branch of the Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims (located in Petrograd), had to conduct an impressive operation: supplying clothing, shoes, and linen, preparing financial reports, collecting statistical information about the refugees, organizing their professional training or retraining, and collecting voluntary donations from urban Jews. These tasks required a large staff of skilled professionals. Although Jewish notables who represented the local financial elite still had the power of the purse,

they were relegated to the role of donor and not manager of the relief efforts. The new institutions relied on specialists who previously had had very little or no influence in local communal affairs.

The relief work was apolitical and united Jews of all political stripes (although the Bundists refused to support the KOPE and EKOPO as bourgeois organizations). Nonetheless, all relief institutions promoted the ideas of Yiddishism and secular Jewish nationalism. The very existence of the Jewish national relief organizations, which represented Russian Jewry not only as an ethnoreligious community but as a Jewish nation that encompassed Jews from the Polish provinces, the Pale, Galicia, and Bukovyna, was an event of great importance. Although the operations of this supposedly pan-Jewish entity were not always smooth, it ostensibly represented the interests of all Jewish classes

The establishment of a Jewish public sphere was a positive result of the refugee crisis. The social cohesion of the Jewish community was coordinated through the public sphere, represented by relief organizations, and sustained by public discourse, which necessitated uniting around common goal—to help their Jewish “brothers” regardless of class, political, or cultural identity. The state delegated its responsibility to care for its non-Russian subjects (and refugees who were the subjects of enemy states) to ethnically-based relief organizations. The public activity of KOPE was not independent of the state, however. The central government provided financial support and supervised the activity of Jewish relief organizations. However, the relief work helped Jews fulfill their national aspirations, inadvertently creating a Jewish governing bureaucracy and preparing Jewish activists for future political activity.

The nationalizing campaign in Russia during the war, anti-Semitism, and forced deportations further cleaved Jews and Gentiles. However, due to this separateness, the Russian Jews did not need to choose between the Ukrainian and Russian competing nationalisms in 1917. By that time, due to the broad social activity of relief organizations, the Jews had a group of professionals ready to formulate and act on Jewish aspirations of national-cultural/personal autonomy.

In 1917, Kyiv became a centre of both the Ukrainian and Jewish national movements. Before the war, St. Petersburg's wealthy Jewish community played the leading role for the Jews of the empire. Petrine Jewish notables had access to Russian statesmen and central governmental institutions, and thus played the role of Russian Jewish intercessors (*stadlanim*), who advanced the interests of their community. However, in 1917-18, Petrograd lost its importance to the Jewish borderland populations. Old certainties and structures of power collapsed together with the empire. Kyiv, as a place of relative stability in 1917-18, and the capital of the newly created Ukrainian state, also became the capital for Jews in the Pale and a place where they could realize national ideas and form national governing bodies. The Vice-Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs became a new 'intercessor' that represented the interests of the Jewish nation regionally.

Jews articulated their national claims in the national discourse created by revolutionary events and by the dissolution of the Russian Empire. The Jewish Renaissance of 1917-18, though owing much to the revolutionary vacuum, stemmed from the networks of Kyiv's Jewish wartime philanthropy. Jewish activists developed a well-structured systems that successfully managed relief work. KOPE members created the

Council of United Jewish Organizations of Kyiv, the forerunner of the Vice-Secretary/Ministry of Jewish Affairs. By establishing Jewish relief organizations and working with the Jewish refugees from the western and north-western provinces of the Russian Empire and newly occupied territories (such as Galicia and Bukovyna), Jewish activists could test new notions of modern Jewish politics and society, notions that were secular and national-minded in contrast to earlier ethnoreligious communal bonds.

In this period, Jewish political identity was always multilayered. Building on the ideas of Ronald Grigor Suny, the Jews of the period can be described as a modern nation that had been successfully organized and mobilized by the work of educated professionals, intellectuals and politicians, and could articulate cultural and political aspirations.²²² However, Jewish nationalism as it emerged in 1917 was not fully developed or exclusive of other allegiances. It coexisted with contested loyalties and identities, constantly adapting to local discourses and remaining advantageously fluid and often necessarily ambiguous.²²³

²²² Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, 13.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 18.

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