

JEWS AND THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

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Abstract: *The article examines the relationship between Ukrainian and Jewish elites in the Ukrainian lands during the 19th and early 20th centuries from a theoretical standpoint. It explains why Ukrainian and Jewish national movements did not reach a beneficial compromise in the Ukrainian territories. The article includes the viewpoints of important Ukrainian political philosophers such as Panteleimon Kulish, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Mykola Mikhnovskyi, and others on the Jewish issue and chances for Ukrainian-Jewish collaboration on the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires' Ukrainian territories. The authors analyse the assimilation that Jewish intellectuals faced after exposure to the Russian and Ukrainian cultures and accession to political organisations. They also draw parallels between Zionism and the Ukrainian national movement. In conclusion, the article emphasizes the importance of a mutually beneficial and transparent Ukrainian-Jewish dialogue, considering the prior positive cooperation.*

Keywords: Jewish, Ukrainian, Movement, Cooperation, Conflicts, Assimilation.

Rezumat: *Evreii și mișcarea națională de eliberare ucraineană din secolul al XIX-lea și începutul secolului XX. Articolul sintetizează la nivel conceptual problema relațiilor dintre elitele ucrainene și cele evreiești din regiunile ucrainene, în secolul al XIX-*

lea și începutul secolului XX. Autorii încearcă să explice de ce în teritoriile ucrainene nu s-a găsit un compromis reciproc avantajos între mișcarea națională ucraineană și cea evreiască. Sunt expuse opiniile unor reprezentanți de marcă ai gândirii politice ucrainene, precum Panteleimon Kulish, Mihail Hrușevski, Mykola Mikhnovsky și alții, cu privire la problema evreiască și perspectivele cooperării ucraineano-evreiești în teritoriile ucrainene din cadrul Austro-Ungariei și Imperiului Rus. Studiul analizează problema asimilării intelectualilor de origine evreiască sub impactul culturilor rusă și ucraineană și aderarea lor la organizațiile politice. Autorii schițează, de asemenea, paralele între sionism și mișcarea națională ucraineană. În final, este subliniată necesitatea stabilirii unui dialog sincer ucraineano-evreiesc, ținând cont de experiența pozitivă a cooperării din trecut.

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish population of every great nation of Europe and North America played a significant role in the rise of modern national and state ideas in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Karl Marx, a German Jew, formulated the teachings of scientific socialism. His teachings became the basis of German Social Democracy – which supported centralization and promoted the greatness of the Imperial German state in the mid-19th century. The Jewish presence was very significant in the social-democratic movement of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Many prominent activists of the largest workers' unions in Central Europe were of Jewish descent. During this time, the socialist movements in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Russia followed a similar pattern. The presence of another ethnic element did not harm these movements but, on the contrary, positively affected them. Assimilated Jews joined these movements primarily to master the essential aspects of national self-awareness attributed to the majority of the population. Its mandatory element was the adoption of the values of a large, centralised state and attitude to global values beyond the „national prejudices” of „small nations”. As for Eastern Europe (Ukraine in particular), the participation of local Jewish minorities in establishing new political communities was minimal. The majority of Ukrainian Jews in the Russian-ruled part of Ukrainian lands followed the values of the Russian state and the dominant all-Russian Imperial culture. While involved in conflicts with other state nations, Jews have often become an element in the Ukrainian ethnic context prone to persecution. During WWI, for example, the Russian occupation authorities in Lviv accused Galician Jews of conspiracy.¹

¹ Alexander Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland. War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914–1920*, Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2016, 198 p.

In the southwestern part of the Russian Empire, the social order has mostly stayed the same for over 300 years. The traditional patriarchal community, based on a non-market economy and socio-class demarcation that extended to ethnolinguistic groups, was a breeding ground for intercultural antagonism. Because the peasantry was assumed to be Ukrainian, merchants and creditors to be Jewish, artisans to be German, and landowners to be Polish, a violent conflict was bound to erupt, inevitably damaging ethnic groups. Ethnic-national relations have barely changed from the 14th and 17th centuries by the mid-nineteenth century.

During this period, ethnic groups lived in closed communities, having little contact. They co-existed according to the laws developed in the Middle Ages. Jewish communities in cities and towns operated using their legal systems and were isolated from the Ukrainian and Polish communities in public life. These groups kept their distance from opposing national communities to avoid assimilation. For a Jew, their Jewish community – a ghetto in a Ukrainian city – was extraterritorial, a “miniature Israel”. The worlds of Jews and non-Jews existed separately. The deep-rooted “outsiders”/ “brethren” mental trope in times of economic hardship during revolutions and wars culminated in massive Jewish pogroms committed not only by representatives of the ruling class but also by the Ukrainian masses.

The topic of Jewish-Ukrainian relations was considered taboo during the Soviet era in communist historiography. Everything changed in 1991 after Ukraine gained independence. However, people occasionally come face to face with derogatory stereotypes. For instance, diasporic Ukrainian historians tried to justify their actions by accusing Ukrainian People's Republic troops and leadership of anti-Semitism. In the 2000s, frontal studies of Jewish-Ukrainian relations during the Bolshevik revolution and the 1920s were initiated in Ukraine and worldwide. Several studies by Ukrainian Centre of Judaic Studies historian Serhiy Hirik² stand out. Dozens of publications of the “Dukh i litera” publishing house led by Leonid Finberg are dedicated to the times of Jewish cultural revival. During the last quar-

² Serhiy Hirik (red.), *Evrey Ukrainy: Revoliutsiia i pisliarevoliutsiina modernizatsiia. Polityka. Kultura. Suspilstvo: zbirka statei* [Jews of Ukraine: Revolution and post-revolutionary modernization. Policy. Culture. Society: a collection of articles], Kyiv, Laurus, 2018. 198 s.; Serhiy Hirik, *Indigenization before Indigenization. The Integration of “National Cadres” into the Party and State Apparatus of the UkrSSR and BSSR (1919–1923)*, in “Russian Studies in History”, vol. 56, 2017, no. 4, p. 294–304; Serhiy Hirik, *Evreyskyi natsional-komunizm i fenomen radianskoi bahatopartiinosti (1918–1928)* [Jewish National Communism and the Phenomenon of Soviet Multipartyism (1918–1928)], in *Evrey v etnichnyi mozaitsi ukrainskykh zemel*, Kharkiv, KhNU im. V. N. Karazina, 2015, S. 99–106.

ter of the 20th century, many North American researchers conducted several social and cultural studies of the Jewish-Ukrainian problem³.

This article addresses the problem of establishing a dialogue between Jewish and Ukrainian intellectuals in the 19th and early 20th centuries, in the era of the Ukrainian national revival within Russian-governed territory.

THE JEWISH QUESTION AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE UKRAINIAN MOVEMENT IN THE DAYS OF THE CYRIL AND METHODIUS BROTHERHOOD

The rise of the intellectual elite and the Ukrainian movement through the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood increased Ukrainians' interest in developing relationships with other ethnic groups. The Jewish community was the third largest group after the Russians and the Poles. The first Ukrainian socio-political journal, "Osnova", has published numerous editions on Ukrainian-Jewish relations. The journal's editorial staff was embroiled in a constant debate with the Jewish Russian-language "Zion" journal. On the Ukrainian side, the leaders of the Ukrainian national cause were Panteleimon Kulish and Mykola Kostomarov. They defended Ukrainians' right as a national group to play a leading role in the development of Ukrainian territories. They sought Jewish community recognition as well as support for Ukrainians' aspirations for reform. However, no constructive dialogue at the elite level was achieved. The dispute was conducted from a position of power and the respective national truths, demanding historical accuracy from each other's arguments rather than attempting to find a future compromise. Those who pleaded for the Jewish side recalled the Jewish pogroms of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi and the horrific losses of the Jewish population during the Cossack and Haydamak rampages in the 17th and 18th centuries. Ukrainians claimed financial extortion and leaving communities in debt. Each side insisted on their arguments. Both were unwilling to consider the present and future, choosing to focus solely on the tragic facets of the two nations' relations. Regrettably, despite the suggestion of Canadian-Ukrainian historian Roman Serbyn twenty

³ Ivan-Pavlo Himka, *Ukrainsko-evreyski vzaïemyny: vid istorii do pamiaty* [Ukrainian-Jewish Relations: from History to Memory], Kyiv, Dukh i Litera, 2019, 384 s.; I. M. Pohrebynska, M. M. Hon, *Evrey v Zakhidnoukrainskiiy Narodniy Respublitsi (do problemy ukrainsko-evreyskykh vidnosyn)* [Jews in the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (on the Problem of Ukrainian-Jewish Relations)], Kyiv, 1997, 84 s.; Henry Abramson, *Prayer for the Government. Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999, 255 p.

years ago, the contents of this constructive discussion were not fully released.⁴

The Ukrainian revival's leaders were unable to set the right tone, nor were they able to stimulate the interest of the local Jewish population in the benefits given to their people by the Ukrainian revival. Mykola Kostomarov, same as Ivan Sikorskyi later, seriously considered the possibility of Jewish ritual murder of Ukrainian Christians during the Beilis trial⁵. He contributed many pieces to the „Kievskaya starina” journal in the late 18th century on anti-Jewish pogroms in Ukraine's Left Bank, citing materials from the Hetmanate's court books, the territory of modern-day Poltava, Chernihiv, and Sumy on the Left Bank of Ukraine, which a Cossack Hetman governed in the 17th – 18th centuries⁶. In his private life, Kostomarov also displayed some degree of antisemitism, using hateful rhetoric in several of his memoirs.

The Jewish population exhibited almost no interest in the Ukrainian movement whereas one can see the influence of the Ukrainian school in contemporary Polish literature, tendencies to romanticise the Cossack movement in literature, and the emergence of the myth of the Union of Lublin as the pinnacle of Polish–Ukrainian political relations. Religious and mystical Judaism excluded activists like Micha Czajkowski, Tomasz Padura, and Juliusz Sowacki from the Jewish intellectual environment. They were the forerunners of humanist Ukrainophilism, making the ideological transition to full-fledged support of the Ukrainian movement. This included people of Polish origin, such as Paulin Świącicki, Volodymyr Antonovych, and Tadeusz Rylski. During the uprisings of 1830 and 1863, the Poles sought an ally to oppose the Russian tsar and chose Ukrainians.

In our opinion, the search for union, mutual understanding, and a compromise was eventually possible in the process of Jewish assimilation in the Russian and Austro–Hungarian empires. From the mid-19th century onwards, such processes were happening at increasing rates, but the outflow of Jews was directed at stronger national groups – Russian, Polish, and German/Austrian. The Ukrainians, who aimed to become a similar reservoir of cadre replenishment for imperial nations, could not expect a large influx of assimilated Jews. At the same time, the Ukrainian linguistic and cultural element was not alien to the Jews. An average

⁴ Roman Serbyn, *The “Sion” – “Osnova” Controversy of 1861–1862*, in Howard Aster, Peter J. Potichnyj (Eds.), *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1990, pp. 85–110.

⁵ The notorious 1913 trial of Kyivan Jew Menahem Mendel Beilis, who was accused of ritual murder of an Orthodox Christian boy by the Tsarist authorities.

⁶ N. Kostomarov, *Zhydotrepanye v nachale XVIII veka* [Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Early 18th century], in „Kievskaya starina”, Vol. V, 1883, № 1, s. 1-26; № 3, s. 477-492.

Jewish citizen understood, knew, and used the Ukrainian language very well, as mentioned by Yevhen Chykalenko in his memoirs. He wrote that back in the 1870s, the Ukrainian language was heard from local Jews at the Ananiev bazaar, a county town in the Kherson province, nearly as often as Yiddish⁷. However, ten years later, after the urban centres had undergone the process of Russification, Jews spoke primarily Russian. Moreover, Jews became Ukrainian assimilators, establishing themselves amongst the Russian intelligentsia and using every opportunity to influence public opinion.

FOCUS ON THE STRONGER SIDE: JEWS AND UKRAINIANS DURING THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT'S POLITICAL PERIOD

From the beginning of modern times, the community inevitably began to dissolve in the age of intensified industrialization. The Jews readily adapted to the cultural environment. The most active and progressive members left their traditional habitat, adjusting to the dominant culture and nationality as soon as possible. Initially, they mimicked the dominant imperial nations: the Germans, the French, the British, the Austrian Germans, and the Russians. With the national question on the agenda of Eastern Europe, Jews, feeling the power of new forces rising, quickly reoriented themselves, becoming Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Croats, etc. Volodymyr Zhabotynskyi, one of the ideologists of Zionism, picked up this tendency⁸. The Ukrainian movement could have done more to impress Jewish intellectuals. However, it lacked political and social power, stability, discipline and a vital cultural component. The people of the Bible did not see these virtues in farmers who served others, the upper strata of society, who were representatives of other nations.

However, this was not always the case. As soon as Ukrainians started transitioning from farming to becoming a political factor, representatives of other ethnic-national groups in Ukrainian regions (including Jews) began to take notice. In this regard, it is interesting to recall the events of the mid-17th century, when the Cossacks became a powerful force, culminating in the creation of a quasi-state, the Cossack Hetmanate. Some Jews, despite mass pogroms by the Cossacks, also joined the war with Poland on their side. About 10 per cent of Cossack officers were of Jewish descent (the Hertsyk, Markevych, Novytskyi families, etc.). The diversity did

⁷ Yevhen Chykalenko, *Spohady (1861-1907)* [Memoirs (1861-1907)], New York, Vydavnytstvo UVAN, 1955, 504 s.

⁸ For details, see: V. Zhabotynskyi, *Vybrani statyi z natsionalnoho pyttannia* [Selected Papers on the National Question], Kyiv, 1991, 136 s.

not end there. Pylyp Orlyk, for example, had Czech roots, Myloradovych was of Serbian descent, and Kapnist had Hellenic heritage. According to Ernest Renan, nationality is an everyday plebiscite, and identity is determined not by blood or ancestry but by one's preference and conscious choice.⁹ The Hertsyk family, formerly of Jewish descent, experienced an upward spiralling ascent in the Cossack army, becoming general officers and distinguishing themselves even further as patrons of Ukrainian Orthodox culture. Poltava's Colonel Pavlo Hertsyk built the All-Saints Church in the Near Caves of the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra – one of the most significant monuments of the Mazepa Baroque. Members of his family were Cossack generals in the Mazepa period and were uncommonly loyal, sporting staunch autonomist views, unlike the vast majority of officers of Ukrainian origin. They were among the first ones to go into Ukrainian political emigration, losing their opportunity to pursue a career in the Russian state, as did the Ukrainian Skoropadskyi, Apostol, Halahan families, etc.¹⁰ Although, ultimately, this is an example of typical assimilation, loss of one's identity, and adoption of borrowed cultural values. When Jewish individuals integrated into Ukrainian society, they automatically abandoned all traces of their previous cultural identity.

However, most of the time, and especially after the decline of the Hetmanate in the late 18th – early 20th centuries, the Ukrainian population was deprived of a political factor, becoming a nation of peasant communities. That is why the Jews in the modern period preferred to negotiate with the Poles and the Russians as the dominant authoritative forces in Ukrainian territories. They fully recognized the right of the Russian state to rule Ukrainian governorates and even encouraged Ukrainians to abandon their traditional name for the Jewish population – “Yids”. Mykhailo Hrushevsky¹¹ and Ahatanhel Krymskyi noted the novelty of the term “Jews”, among others. They agreed to use the word “Jews” instead of “Yids” when referring to the Jewish people to help establish a consensus between the two nations. After all, “Ukrainians” as a national term was also relatively new. Jewish intellectuals saw the word “Yid” as an insult because it was frequently used with negative connotations among Russians. Although Ukrainians, as residents of the old

⁹ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?”, text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne on March 11th, 1882, in Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*, Paris, Presses-Pocket, 1992.

¹⁰ V. V. Tomazov, *Hertsyky* [The Hertsyk Family], in *Entsyklopediya istoriy Ukrainy*, T. 2, Kyiv, Naukova dumka, 2005, s. 96.

¹¹ Vitalii Telvak, *Iudaika v tvorcheskom nasledii Mikhaila Hrushevskogo (istoriograficheskaia i politicheskaia praktiki)* [Judaica in the Creative Heritage of Mykhailo Hrushevsky (Historiographic and Political Practices)], in *Materyaly Odynnadtsatoi Ezhehodnoi Mezhdunarodnoi Mezhdystsyplynarnoi konferentsyy po yudayke. Akademycheskaia seriya*, Moskva, 2004, vypusk 16, chast 2, s. 113-124.

Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, have become accustomed to it as a neutral term. Interestingly, representatives of the Jewish movement did not demand the same from the Poles.

Yevhen Chykalenko and the “Rada” members tried to overcome these prejudices by using the word “Yid” only in a positive context and instead resorting to the word “Jews” only when referring to assimilated pro-Russian Jews. The spreading of the new name “Jews” in the Russian Empire testified to the beginning of the assimilation processes among Jews, who were transforming from a nation of artisans and rural “Yids” into an urban community using Russian for communication and education, but with sentimental ties to the Jewish community of the past. Usage of the word “Yid” by the Ukrainian population began to be associated with antisemitism due to Russian Jews’ perception of Ukrainian territory not as a separate entity but as an integral part of the Russian Empire. Although, the cultural elite among Russian Jews may have been unaware of this.

As the Ukrainian movement strengthened, Ukrainian-Jewish relations improved radically. The difference in the attitude of Jews towards Ukrainians was especially noticeable in Galicia, where they supported the creation of the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic. More noticeably, 2,000 people from the Jewish community joined a regiment in the Ukrainian Galician Army¹². In general, however, in the 19th century and later in the 20th, the Jewish elite did not seriously consider the idea of a Ukrainian state. Representatives of the Ukrainian movement were also to blame, as they made little effort to spark Jewish interest in the Ukrainian cause.

Discriminatory laws of the Russian Empire against Jews (eviction, restrictions on the right to education, holding administrative positions, etc.) made this national group most prone to revolutionary resistance of the tsar. All radical Russian parties (Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries) consisted mainly of Jewish people. On the other hand, a significant percentage of Jews attained membership in liberal parties. Through voluntary Russification, they also contributed to the Russification of Ukrainians. In general, “non-natives” became one of the greatest detractors of various “nationalisms”. Let us consider, for example, Peter Struve, who was German, or Joseph Stalin, the Georgian. Jews who abandoned their nationality and identified themselves as Russians were also at the forefront of this movement and often exhibited traits of Ukrainophobia.

¹² For details, see: P. Hutsal, *Zhydivskiyi (evreiskiyi) kurin* [The Jewish Regiment], in *Ternopil'skyi entsyklopedychnyi slovnyk*, Ternopil, “Zbruch”, 2004, tom 1; Marten Feller, *Evrei v Ukrainskii Halytskii Armii (UHA). Zhydivskiyi kurin* [Jews in the Ukrainian Galician Army (UGA). The Jewish Regiment], <http://www.ji.lviv.ua/n48texts/feller.html> (Accessed on 27.03.2021).

Many Jews who became great authors made substantial contributions to Russian culture (e.g., Osip Mandelstam, Boris Pasternak, Joseph Brodsky). Russians also adopted many negative stereotypes about Ukrainians from the Russified Jews. It can be said that the cultural achievements of Russian Jews were much more significant than those of Ukrainians. For example, at the beginning of the previous century, a heavily illustrated multivolume *Jewish Encyclopaedia* was published in the Russian Empire¹³. Instead, Ukrainian activists only managed to publish two volumes of the famous “Ukrainian people of the past and present” encyclopaedia on the eve of the revolution¹⁴.

SEARCH FOR A UKRAINIAN-JEWISH CONSENSUS ON THE EVE OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

Some members of the Jewish intelligentsia, which has already become part of the Russian cultural project, have partially supported the Ukrainian movement. Among the members of the Kyiv community of the 1860s and 1870s, were many Jews who were selflessly supportive of the Ukrainian cultural identity and, in fact, alongside Volodymyr Antonovych and Oleksandr Konyskyi, were the first ideologically independent activists in the political sense. Wilhelm Berenstam was an ardent Ukrainian by political choice. He had to leave Kiev because of his Ukrainianophilia but he continued to teach for two decades in Pskov and St. Peterburg. At the end of his life, he returned to Kiev, rejoined the “Old Community”¹⁵ and was the most dedicated visitor to its meetings since then. Banker Vsevolod Rubinstein provided significant financial support to the “Community”.

The gendarmerie reports demonstrate that the Ukrainian movement was spearheaded not so much by “ethnic Little Russians” but by Jews instead (the “Old Community” also included members that were of German, Swedish, Polish and Russian descent: Illia Shrah, Sofiia Lindfors (Rusova), Tadeusz Rylski, Borys

¹³ The Encyclopaedia was published in 1908–1913 in 16 volumes in St. Petersburg by the Society for Jewish Scientific Publications and the Brockhaus–Efron Publishing House. The basis and model for it was the 12-volume *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (London; New York, 1901–1906), published a few years earlier. The authors of the *Jewish Encyclopedia of Brockhaus and Efron* considerably supplemented and improved on the information in it.

¹⁴ F. K. Volkov et al. (Eds.), *Ukraynskyi narod v eho proshlom y nastoiashchem* [Ukrainian people in his past and present], T. 1-2, Sankt-Peterburg, 1914-1916.

¹⁵ N. M. Sydorenko, *Berenstam Vil'iam Lyudvygovych*, in *Entsyklopediya Suchasnoyi Ukrayiny*, T. 2, Kyiv, Polihrafknyha, 2003, s. 514.

Poznanskyi, Kost Mykhalchuk, Oleksandr Rusov). The gendarmes did not try too hard to comprehend these issues. To them, the word "Jew" did not hold any ethnic distinction and was used to classify all those who threatened the "one and indivisible" Russian Empire. Viacheslav Lypynskyi, who was of Polish descent, created the concept of a political nation – patriotic devotion to the land. This concept also worked for Ukrainian Jews. Notably, the "not quite Ukrainians" were often the most politically conscious supporters of the Ukrainian cause. Could this be considered a coincidence? Perhaps not. The Ukrainian movement was established through cultural awareness, which was only achievable for people of good education who were constantly engaged in intellectual discourse. Contrary to the dominant cultural groups, the Ukrainian masses did not often have access to these tools.

A new generation of those who already identified politically as Ukrainians rather than Ukrainophiles began to seek opportunities for political cooperation with the Ukrainian Jews. Mykhailo Hrushevsky's first socio-political article in the Lviv "Pravda" journal in the late 1880s was devoted to "Ukrainian Yids"¹⁶. He was one of the first to use this definition, which paved the way for including the Jewish component in the Ukrainian movement. Serhiy Yefremov's first Ukrainian-language article in Russia's "Kievskie otkliki" journal dealt with the Jewish pogroms perpetrated in Kyiv by the Russian Black Hundred on October 17, 1905.¹⁷ Progressive National Democrats sought to persuade Jewish activists to join the Ukrainian movement and to renounce their pro-Russian orientation.

There was also the opposing conviction, which incited anti-Ukrainian attitude among Jews, preserving the historical status quo and permitting both nations to exist in separate, unrelated cultural environments. Mykola Mikhnovskyi, the author of the first Ukrainian independent program in the Upper Dnipro region, saw Jews as a lightning rod for the Ukrainian political and cultural troubles at the time. After the First Russian Revolution, Mykola Mikhnovskyi advised Ukrainians to maintain a joint anti-Jewish front with Pyotr Stolypin's Black Hundreds¹⁸. Olena

¹⁶ Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *Ukrainski zhydy* [Ukrainian Jews], in M. S. Hrushevsky, *Tvory u 50-y tomakh*, Lviv, Svit, 2003, T. 5, s. 339 – 350.

¹⁷ Later, Serhiy Yefremov repeatedly addressed the Jewish question again: S. Yefremov, *Drahomanov i evreiska sprava* [Drahomanov and the Jewish Question], in "Rada", 1908, 6 noiab., 7 noiab., 8 noiab., 12 noiab.; S. Yefremov, *Ekspertyza* [Examination], in "Rada", 1913, 24 okt.; S. Yefremov, *Yeretychna knyha: Vl. Zhabotynskyi. Felyetony. Stor. 286. SPb. 1913* [The Heretic Book: Vl. Zhabotynskyi. Feuilletons. 286 p., St. Petersburg. 1913], in "Rada", 1913, 31 maia.; S. Yefremov, *Z nashoho zhyttia* [Of Our Life], in "Rada", 1913, 20 okt.

¹⁸ Yevhen Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk (1907-1917)* [Diary (1907–1917)], Kyiv, Tempora,

Pchilka pursued a similar belief in her "Ridnyi krai" journal, polemising with the "assimilated" literature professor Volodymyr Peretz, who tried to prove the usefulness of involving Jews in the Ukrainian national cause¹⁹. Volodymyr Peretz, who was of Jewish descent, was the first professor of philology at the Saint Volodymyr Imperial University of Kyiv to focus his work on the old Ukrainian literature of the 16th – 18th centuries. He founded a literary seminar that became the basis of the school of historians of literature. The scholars later worked fruitfully within the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Among his students were Mykola Zerov, Viktor Petrov, Pavlo Fylypovych and Mykhailo Drai-Khmara. Peretz was also the founder of the philological section of the Ukrainian Scientific Society in Kyiv. While in Leningrad, he founded and became chairman of the Leningrad branch of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Some Ukrainian intellectuals shared the belief that the Jewish question could be resolved by force by putting pressure on the Jewish minority, alienating it, pushing it within the narrow ghetto instead of seeking compromises and understanding, and making Ukrainian public life and state rule more appealing to the Jews.

Yevhen Chykalenko sought to reject the negative prejudice. He was not biased against Poles, Russians, or Jews, as was typical for some Ukrainian political activists from the Upper Dnipro region. He did not mind their participation in the Ukrainian movement. Critical of the assimilative policy of Jewish journalists and activists of Russian parties of Jewish origin, he expressed a positive attitude to the "Ukrainians and Jews" collaboration, criticised the xenophobic views of Olena Pchilka, Mykola Mikhnovskyi, Oleksandr Borodai and others, earning his "Yiddish father" nickname. Interestingly, Yevhen Chykalenko, like most activists of the Ukrainian movement at the time, considered it necessary to preserve the word "Yids" to describe Ukrainian Jews and disagreed that the usage of this term was derogatory or symptomatic of Ukrainian Judeophobia. He even went as far as introducing the following practice in the "Rada": Jews-nationalists with whom they sympathized were to be referred to as „Yids,” while assimilated Jews were to be referred to as "Jews."²⁰

Yevhen Chykalenko tried to pursue pro-Jewish rhetoric in the "Rada". However, the atmosphere of traditional distrust on the part of Jews and Ukrainians persevered. The short-sightedness of some Russified Jewish intellectuals facilitated this prejudice. People of Jewish descent, who often disapproved of the idea

2004, T. 1, s. 31. For comparison, see: *Lyst Mykoly Mikhnovskoho - advokata prysiazhnoho* [Letter by Juryman's Attorney Mykola Mikhnovskyi], in "Rada", 1908, 18 okt.

¹⁹ Yevhen Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk (1907-1917)* [Diary (1907–1917)], s. 31.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, s. 46-47.

of Ukrainian literary revival and ridiculed the "Rada" newspaper and the Ukrainian language, edited many of Kyiv's liberal newspapers "Kievskie mysli", "Kievskie vesti", etc. This situation, in which assimilated members of one ethnic group supported the assimilation of another, can be explained by the purely pragmatic intentions of Russian-speaking journalists of Jewish descent. If they recognized the ability of the Ukrainian language to serve the broad needs of the Ukrainian public, many of them would have been forced to switch to the Ukrainian language in their line of work.

ZIONISM AND THE JEWISH LEFT PARTY MOVEMENT AND UKRAINIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Zionism – a movement to build a Jewish state in its historical homeland was a natural ally of the Ukrainian Social Democracy, which shared a similar ultimate goal. Zionism originated in Austria-Hungary and Germany and was perhaps most prevalent in Russia, where it was difficult for Jews to pursue careers in politics and liberal professions. There is proof that it was the Zionist movement in Austria-Hungary and Russia to spark the idea of establishing a Ukrainian state amongst the Ukrainian elite. Vasyl Shchurat mentioned in his memoirs the personal acquaintance of Ivan Franko and Theodor Herzl in Vienna in the early 1890s.²¹ According to him, both allegedly were mutually sympathetic to the national movements of the Jewish and Ukrainian peoples.

Interestingly, Lev Yurkevich, leader of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labour Party (USDLP), who supported Ukrainian independence, was hindering his own beliefs with his orthodox Marxism, which led him to prioritise class over nationality and classify the idea of an independent Ukraine as Ukrainian Zionist propaganda²². It is no coincidence that during communist totalitarianism, accusations of Zionism became the most damning along with those of "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism".

The USDLP established close cooperation with the Jewish socialist parties, which were more widespread in Ukrainian cities than the Ukrainian socialist

²¹ For details, see: Vasyl Shchurat, *Dr. Ivan Franko* [Dr. Ivan Franko], in "Frankoznavchi studii", 2001, Vypusk Pershyi, s. 252-270; Vasyl Shchurat, *Ivan Franko u moikh spomy-nakh* [My Memories of Ivan Franko], in *Ivan Franko u spohadakh suchasnykiv*, Lviv, Knyzhkovo-zhurnalne vydavnytstvo, 1956, 596 s.

²² For details, see: L. Rybalka [alias Lev Yurkevich], *Russkye sotsyal-demokraty i natsionalnyi vopros* [Russian Social Democrats and the National Question], Geneva, Izdanie redaktsii ukrainskoy sotsial-demokraticeskoy gazety "Borotba", 1917.

movement itself. In Kyiv and other places, there were more diversified Jewish socialist groups than Ukrainian ones (mainly the „Bund” and the „Poale Zion”), and they were naturally more interested in the Russian Social Democrats. The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) was more established than the smaller USDLP. Ukrainian cities were under the dominant influence of Russian culture, which resulted in workers often moving to Ukraine from ethnic Russian regions. Instead, the Polish Socialist Party (PSP), on the other hand, sought to cooperate with the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party (RUP) and the Ukrainian Socialist Party (USP). The former was born out of the PSP and mainly consisted of descendants of the Ukrainianised Polish nobility.

Ukrainian socialists have also transcended their national prejudices. There were many Ukrainians of Jewish descent in the ranks of the USDLP. Maksym Gechter was a prolific publicist of the “Rada”. Osyp Hermaise was a member of the Central Council, a prominent researcher of the Ukrainian revolutionary movement in general and RUP in particular, Mykhailo Hrushevsky’s right hand in the Historical Section of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. At that time, the Jewish intelligentsia also focused on Ukrainian culture. For example, Lev Idzon became one of the first researchers of Volodymyr Vynnychenko’s works. Rozaliia Lifshitz, V. Vynnychenko’s wife, who was of Jewish descent, knowingly married a Ukrainian writer, studied the Ukrainian language (despite hailing from ethnic Russian territory), and selflessly preserved her husband’s legacy after his death²³.

USDLP also initiated the nomination of Jewish party representatives to the Central Council and enlisted Jewish politicians into the General Secretariat. People of Jewish descent often held positions of finance ministers in numerous of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UPR) governments.

Many Jewish community members joined the Ukrainian Socialist-Federalist Party (USFP). USFP member Solomon Goldelman, a prominent attorney from Kyiv with some pre-revolutionary experience, was a member of diplomatic missions during the revolution and author of many UPR laws, including those related to interethnic relations. After the defeat of the liberation movement, Goldelman promoted the idea of Ukraine’s independence to the Western world. He wrote one of the first scientific works on the UPR’s policy of enforcing the civil rights of Ukraine’s Jewish population²⁴.

²³ For details, see: Nadiia Myronets, *Epistoliarnyi dialoh Volodymyra Vynnychenka z Rozaliieiu Lifshyts (1911–1918)* [Volodymyr Vynnychenko’s Epistolary Dialogue with Rozaliia Lifshitz (1911–1918)], in “Slovo i chas”, 2007, № 9, s. 48–56.

²⁴ For details, see: Solomon Goldelman, *Lysty zhydivskoho sotsial-demokrata pro Ukrainu*.

JEWES AND BOLSHEVIKS DURING THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

Even in the resulting historical circumstances, a strong Ukrainian-Jewish political union could not happen in terms of recognizing Ukrainian statehood and ensuring Jewish autonomy to the greatest extent possible. The bet on the strongest prevailed again. The appeal of Bolshevism's presumed cosmopolitan orientation towards internationalism and the world revolution was too strong. Leadership positions in the new political elite tempted people of Jewish ancestry. They were the most mobile stratum of the unattached population (only assimilated Jews are considered here), partook in revolutionary activism, and brought new values to society in the political and cultural spheres. This idea required renouncing one's identity – Jewish religion, language, and even national self-identification. For example, Jewish communists changed their surnames to Russian pseudonyms. The leaders of the RSDLP by place of birth were mostly Ukrainian: Leon Trotsky (Lev Bronstein) was from the outskirts of Bobrynets (located in the Kirovohrad region today). A famous philosopher Semen Semkovskiy, his cousin, became a member of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. He was committed to developing Ukrainian culture and used the Ukrainian language extensively in his writings. Hryhorii Zinoviev (Apfelbaum–Radomyslskyi), born in Yelisavetgrad (modern Kropyvnytskyi), Semen Urytskyi was the son of a Cherkasy merchant of the Second Guild. Jews applied a pendulum principle (we were oppressed, so now it is our turn to oppress others), establishing punitive squads to oppress the Ukrainian peasantry, and doing so only fuelled domestic antisemitism, which has mostly subsided by then.

The Ukrainian People's Republic granted civil rights to Jews not previously provided in the constitutions of other states. These included personal autonomy and establishing an autonomous Jewish ministry under the joint Ministry of National Relations (which only existed for Ukrainian society's three most prominent communities: the Russians, the Poles and the Jews). It was a tribute to the times of the Kahal when their community, not the city officials or Polish/Ukrainian authorities, judged the Jews. Yiddish was recognized as one of the official languages of Ukraine, and all Jewish cultural initiatives – theatre, school, literature, etc. were supported. However, the promises of the losing party in a war meant little. Under Symon Petliura, Pinhas Krasnyi was in public service, and under the Bolsheviks, he

Materialy do istorii ukrainsko-zhydivskykh vidnosyn za chasiv revoliutsii [A Jewish Social Democrat's Letters about Ukraine. Materials on the History of Ukrainian-Jewish Relations During the Revolution], Viden, Hamoin, 1921, 81 s.; S. I. Goldelman, *Zhydivska natsionalna avtonomiia na Ukraini (1917-1920)* [Jewish National Autonomy in Ukraine (1917-1920)], München, 1963, 109 s.

began to criticize the government he had previously served²⁵. Andrii Nikovskyi described in the "Nova Rada" how Jewish youth would shoot Ukrainian soldiers in the back from the windows of Kyiv houses. Influenced by Bolshevik propaganda, the predominantly Jewish Podil²⁶ attempted to storm the Central Council. The Red Guard forces that led the charge had a significant percentage of the local and foreign Jewish population. These events caused new tension between the two peoples, which were "symmetrical" in nature. Therefore, the infamous Proskuriv Jewish pogrom performed by the UPR army has to be considered in the context of mutual ethnic cleansing that took place during the time of war.

However, the bet of some Jews on the "stronger" turned out to be a great tragedy for the Jewish people. During the period of Ukrainianisation, Jewish culture experienced a significant boost. A Jewish culture section, a Yiddish archival commission (the first word later replaced with "Jewish"), a Jewish theatre, and even a circus in Kyiv was opened at the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences²⁷. Il'ya Galant, an employee of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, was an outstanding historian who collected and published plenty of documentary materials on the history of Jewish pogroms in Ukraine from ancient times to the early 20th century²⁸ and studied the origin and spread of Hasidism in Ukraine. There were six Jewish schools in Kyiv, more than Polish institutions, and almost as many as Russian ones. Yiddish literature gained popularity at that time. People of Jewish descent actively pursued employment in Ukrainian culture, becoming respected Ukrainian writers. Some Jewish women became wives of classics of Ukrainian literature. Raisa Troyanker was a remarkable poet of the Executed Renaissance who wrote great Ukrainian poetry.²⁹

²⁵ Serhiy Yefremov, *Shchodennyky, 1923-1929* [Diaries, 1923-1929], Kyiv, ZAT Hazeta "RADA", 1997, s. 496.

²⁶ A district of downtown Kyiv, next to the Dnipro River.

²⁷ Ahatanhel Krymskyi was formally the Chairman, Il'ya Galant was the de facto leader, other members included – D. Brodskyi, D. Vainshtein, V. Ivanytskyi, V. Rybinskyi. The Commission published a digest, for reference see: I. V. Galant (Ed.), *Zbirnyk prats zhydivskoi istorychno-arkheohrafichnoi komisii* [Collection of Works of the Jewish Historical and Archaeographic Commission], Kn. I, Kyiv, Drukarnia Vseukrainskoi Akademii Nauk, 1928.

²⁸ For details, see his following works: Il'ya Galant, *K istoriy Umanskoy rezni* [The History of the Uman Massacre] (1895); Il'ya Galant, *Molitva v pamiat Umanskoi rezni i pismo, kasaiushcheesia toho zhe sobytiya* [A Prayer in the Memory of the Uman Massacre and a Letter Concerning the Same Event] (1895); Il'ya Galant, *K istorii poseleniya evreev v Polshe i Rusi voobshche i v Podolii v chastnosti* [The History of Jewish Settlement in Poland and the Rus' in General and in Podillia in Particular] (1897) and many others.

²⁹ For details, see: Ivan Turchak, *Poetessa yz Umany* [A Poetess from Uman], in "Raduha",

All these achievements started fading immediately after the government began eradicating the “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism” and ended in the post-war period with the mass extermination of everything Jewish-related under the pretences of “rootless cosmopolitanism”.

For any totalitarian force, the survival policy is to incite national enmity, setting one ethnic group against another – Armenians against Azerbaijanis, Poles against Ukrainians, Jews against Ukrainians, etc. One takes only negative facts, as there are always plenty of them, and inserts them into a particular system, which seems to irrefutably prove the “zoological antisemitism” of Petliura’s followers – i.e., all Ukrainians.

The Russian–Bolshevik red state machine did not spare any financial expenses to achieve this end and, unsurprisingly, prevailed in its goal. Symon Petliura became just an ordinary anti-Semite in the opinion of the world public, despite not being directly involved in orchestrating any of the Jewish pogroms and punishing his subordinates for perpetrating them. In contrast, Scholem Schwarzbard, an agent of the Russian State Political Directorate (SPD), was not punished and was even acquitted by a French court.

Later, the Soviet ideological apparatus accused the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) of collaborating with the Nazis and participating in Jewish extermination to defame the Ukrainian state idea. The truth was, however, that there were no cases of Judeophobia among the soldiers involved in the liberation movement of WWII. It is unnecessary to attribute horrific acts of ethnic violence to the whole of the Ukrainian national movement or to portray them as its essential element. However, some agencies of the USSR exploited these misconceptions to achieve their agenda.

The fate of the Ukrainian peasantry was painfully similar to the fate of the Jewish people in Ukraine. Both have been devastated by famines, deportations, persecutions by The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, and mass repression. Today, visiting the Jewish cemeteries of Sataniv, Pidhaitsi, Sambir, and Bohuslav, examining epitaphs and artistic carvings in Hebrew on thousands of tombstones, seeing overgrown and abandoned enormous Renaissance synagogues in Zhovkva, Dubno, Lutsk, Pidhaitsi and Sataniv, one can comprehend the

1988, № 11, s. 172; O. O. Manuykin, V. T. Polishchuk, *Z litopysu dukhovnoho yednannia (Cherkashchyna u doli i tvorchosti rosiiskykh, evreiskykh i polskykh pysmennykh)* [The Chronicle of Spiritual Unity (Cherkasy Region Reflected in the Work and Fate of Russian, Jewish and Polish Writers)], Cherkasy, 1993, s. 22-24; Vladymyr Semenov, *Surovaia lirika Raisy Troianker* [The Harsh Lyrics of Raisa Troyanker], in “Vecherniy Murmansk”, 2005, № 10, 22 ianvaria.

magnitude of cultural tradition that the Ukrainian land has lost, most likely irrevocably³⁰. Ukraine was home to Sholem Aleichem, Golda Meir, and multiple Nobel laureates in physics. Back in the 1960s, the Jewish population of Kyiv ranged from 200,000 to 400,000. Helii Sniehirov describes Jewish culture and folklore as part of the urban landscape³¹.

Who benefited from the simplification of the national landscape? Only those seeking further depersonalization on their way to the heights of human progress. However, the absorption of seemingly less successful cultures never enriched human civilization. On the contrary, it impoverished and degraded "great" nations through a purely technical, cold and calculated outlook.

CONCLUSIONS

Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the historical perspective of the 18th-20th century took place in the paradigm of relations between an ethnic group with financial economic levers in its hands and a non-state ethnic group that was exposed to economic exploitation by the dominating nations: Russians, Poles, Hungarians, and Austrians. The Jewish population faced the challenge of mediating between the rulers and the oppressed nation, which inevitably led to tension and prejudice. During the national liberation movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both sides tried to find an understanding based on the recognition of Ukrainians as a titular nation in the space from Transcarpathia to the Don and the Kuban. The idea that Ukraine was independent of the Jewish population could not, however, be adequately substantiated. Partly since the Ukrainians, in a cultural sense, could not dislodge the cultural influence of the ruling nations of Ukraine in 1914-1917. The low mobilisation capacity of Ukrainian society, the lack of sufficient development of Ukrainian culture and the absence of a powerful political stratum obstructed further collaboration between the two peoples. The armed defeat of the Ukrainian People's Republic in the war with for-

³⁰ For details, see: Rachel Wischnizer, *Mutual Influences Between Eastern and Western Europe in Synagogue Architecture from the 12th to the 18th Century*, in Joseph Gutmann (comp.) *The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archaeology and Architecture*, New York, Ktav Publishing House, 1975, pp. 265-308; George Loukomski, *Jewish Art in the European synagogues (From the Middle Ages to the 18th Century)*, London-New York, 1947; David Dawidowicz, *The synagogues of Poland and their destruction*, Jerusalem, 1960; Thomas C. Hubka, *Wooden synagogues of Poland and Ukraine. Lecture delivered on the Third Seminar of Jewish Art*, Jerusalem, 1991.

³¹ G. I. Snegirev, *Roman-donos* [A Denunciatory Novel], Kyiv, Dukh i litera, 2000, 504 s.

eign forces reinforced negative stereotypes in Jewish-Ukrainian relations. However, there were considerable tendencies toward cultural reconciliation on both sides. Unfortunately, establishing a communist totalitarian society in Russia/USSR in the 1920s hindered any positive development.

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