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Al doilea război mondial: memorie și istorie în estul și Vestul Europei [*The Second World War: Memory and History in the East and West of Europe*], eds. Diana Dumitru, Igor Cași, Andrei Cușco, Petru Negură (Chișinău: Cartier, 2013)

THE SOVIET STATE AND ITS JEWRY: THE ORIGINS OF POPULAR AND OFFICIAL ANTISEMITISM DURING AND AFTER WWII

The Soviet State's relationship with its Jewry makes for an intricate story. It opened with the energetic fight against any antisemitic words and deeds on the territory under Bolshevik control. It further included continuous state efforts to emancipate and integrate a population that had hitherto been discriminated against by the Tsarist regime. An energetic fight against antisemitism was organized on various fronts: religious, political, economic, and social. Special agencies were set up within the Soviet state and party in order to deal with the complex Jewish question and to bring the Bolshevik message to the Jewish masses. Yet, in another well-known chapter, sometimes referred to by scholars as "Stalin's pogrom" (1948-1952), the state attacked Jewish groups and individuals with a degree of ferocity.[1] How this volte-face became possible constitutes the main question of the present study.

The researcher Gennady Kostyrchenko places the birth of state antisemitism in the 1930s, and he sees the "cradle" of this antisemitism in the Party's Department of Party Agency Heads (Otdel rukovodeashih partiinykh organov), led by Gheorghy Malenkov.[2] Other scholars resume Soviet state-sponsored antisemitism to postwar period, simultaneously underlining Stalin's personal initiative in anti-Jewish attacks and linking it to the broader setting of postwar Soviet policies of fighting against "foreign influences."[3] Some Russian researchers consider that there are sufficient reasons to view the public and intense antisemitic media campaign, launched in Moscow in the period of January-March 1949, as an obvious case of open manifestation of state antisemitism under the Stalin's careful orchestration.[4] The so-called Doctors' Plot was the last conspiracy used by the ailing dictator in order to persecute a group of prominent Kremlin Jewish doctors accused of plotting to murder Soviet leaders.[5]

This paper argues that a cautious anti-Jewish sentiment developed contours among the Soviet state's bureaucracy during the German-Soviet

war and gradually solidified after the end of the war. Popular antisemitism among the various lower strata was the first to appear on the Soviet territory during this period, and it was primarily nourished by Nazi propaganda and the difficulties caused by the prolonged war. The same cannot be said about Soviet state officials. The latter's anti-Jewish sentiment was primarily a reaction to the "hardening" of Jewish identity among Soviet Jewry and the mobilization of Jewish elites for promoting the rights and interests of their co-ethnics.

Popular Antisemitism on Soviet Territories during the Second World War

Recent studies point to variations in the degree of antisemitism on Soviet occupied territories during the Second World War. In particular, the gentile collusion in anti-Jewish violence in the aftermath of the 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union across a swath of territory stretching from roughly the Baltic to the Black Seas is well documented.[6] Jan Gross detailed fierce, voluntary antisemitic actions undertaken by Polish gentiles, who organized a pogrom that destroyed Jewish life in the village of Jedwabne.[7] Gross identifies a strong tradition of antisemitism in Polish society as the main driver of this violence. The implication of his study is that, given the history of antisemitism in Eastern Europe, gentiles elsewhere should also violently attack Jewish life if given the opportunity. Indeed, vicious attacks against Jews took place in eastern Poland, Lithuania, western Ukraine, Bessarabia, and other regions that became part of the Soviet Union after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939.[8] In the infamous pogrom occurred in the Ukrainian city of Lviv between 7,000 and 10,000 Jews were murdered by locals upon the arrival of the German army.[9] According to a source of information, a Ukrainian youth confessed to single-handedly having slain seventy-five Jews in Lviv in one night.[10] Nevertheless, several studies pointed to puzzling variations in the degree of antisemitic violence in Eastern Europe during the Second World War. The territories that had experienced decades of Soviet power are notably absent from these accounts of civilians' violence against their Jewish neighbors.

Yitzhak Arad was among the first scholars who identified regional variations of the attitude of non-Jewish populations towards the Jews on the territories within the Soviet Union under Nazi rule.[11] His analysis, based on German Einsatzgruppen reports, suggests that regions that had been

exposed to Soviet rule demonstrated lower-levels of support for anti-Jewish activities when compared with neighboring territories of Eastern Europe that had not experienced such rule. Barbara Epstein's work on the Minsk ghetto (Belarus), partially builds on Arad's observation by stressing the substantial, organized solidarity of gentiles with Jewish victims.[12] Epstein explains this wartime solidarity through a number of factors, including "Soviet internationalism" constructed among the population prior to the war. However, Epstein assumes that the Soviet regime did not have the same impact in Ukraine, since "there was neither joint organized resistance … nor any record of individual assistance there at the level that took place in Minsk." She reiterates her opinion that "for several centuries Ukraine had been the main center of anti-Semitic violence in Eastern Europe, and two decades of Soviet rule did not eradicate the effects of this history."[13]

New scholarship on the Holocaust in Ukraine noticed the fact that the population in central and southern Ukraine [part of the USSR during the interwar period], with few exceptions, refrained from anti-Jewish violence even when the Einsatzkommandos tried to incite exactly that type of violence, while in the Ukrainian regions of western Volhynia and eastern Galicia [part of Poland in the interwar years], by contrast, dozens of pogroms occurred in the summer of 1941 following the German invasion.[14] Similar to Epstein, Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower share the conviction that antisemitism had not been eradicated by Soviet rule, but that the readiness to resort to anti-Jewish violence had clearly receded among this population.[15]

Comparably, Amir Weiner, who studied the Ukrainian region of Vinnitsa during the occupation, confirms that there was no mass-led antisemitic violence when the Nazis arrived, but points simultaneously to the survival of antisemitism among the local population. Although he admits that the evolution of ethnic Soviet policies in the decade before the German invasion left "an intriguing legacy," in his interpretation, more than anything else, it was the unprecedented scale and endurance of the genocide that shaped people's responses to the Jewish destruction by Nazis in former Soviet Ukraine.[16]

Yet, perplexingly, several sources indicate an increase in anti-Jewish sentiments among Soviet citizens already at the end of the war.[17] Thus, Mordechai Altshuler highlights that Ukrainian security services reported a number of antisemitic manifestations at the end of war, one of prominent proportions taking place in Kiev. On a similar line of though, Karel Berkhoff affirms:

> once the Red Army returned, however, and with it many Jews, the level of anti-Semitism, seems to have surpassed the prewar level and even the level of anti-Semitism that existed under German rule.[18]

Gennady Kostyrchenko found evidence to the fact that in Western Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia, thousands of kilometers away from the frontline anti-Jewish feelings arose among people from the "lethargic" condition they had taken under the dictatorship of Stalin, being resuscitated by the conditions of disorder, hardship, and the devastation of war.[19] In those remote places locals had to meet and interact with waves of European evacuees, including numerous Soviet Jews who evacuated with their factories or institutions, or Jewish refugees from Poland, who stood out from the rest of population by their special outfit, as well as numerous injured Soviet soldiers or invalids, who already has been exposed to Nazi propaganda. As Kostyrchenko noticed, in these conditions an everyday antisemitism erupted, provoked by the "exoticism" and "otherness" of Polish Jews, a perceived prosperity of the Soviet Jewish evacuees, and the influx of racist ideas propagated by Nazis.[20]

Indeed, in 1942 two reports submitted to the upper echelon of power—to the head of the NKVD, Lavrenty Beria, and Soviet deputy prime-minister, Andrey Vyshinsky—stressed the rapid increase of antisemitism in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan after the arrival of numerous internal refugees, which included Jews. Frequently, the spirits were inflamed by the resulting shortages and growth of prices of foodstuff, as well as the inconveniences appeared from the placement of the evacuated employees in locals' houses. For example, in Uzbekistan three cases of beating of Jews were reported, accompanied by anti-Jewish slurs. One of these cases attracted a crowd of about two hundreds onlookers.[21] Some of the antisemites mentioned in the report were accused of looking forward to the arrival of Hitler and anticipating the slaughter of all Jews; a factory worker even publicly announced her intention to personally hang all Jews that were placed into her apartment.[22]

In the same year of 1942 the general prosecutor of the USSR sent a worried note to the Soviet deputy prime-minister Andrey Vyshinsky concerning the increasing manifestations of antisemitism in Kazakhstan. According to this report, if during the first half of the year twenty people were sent to court for related offenses, then between August 1 and September 4, for similar reasons thirty-five defendants just in the region of Alma-Ata were sent to court. The latter were arrested for various misdeeds: public offense towards Jews, beatings Jews in the streets, open

approval of Hitler's anti-Jewish policy, refusal to offer work or foodstuff to Jews, spreading slurs about Jews killing gentiles' children.[23] The prosecutor of Kazakhstan came to the conclusion that, in general, the arrested antisemites proved to be "déclassé elements," people who were previously kulaks, or with a history of illegal behavior; three candidates to the Communist Party and two members of Komsomol were also among the arrested.[24] As visible from these cases, along the old antisemitic rhetoric and economical tensions, a new ideological (Nazi) basis for anti-Jewish sentiments was craving space among Soviet society.

Despite existent indications of a number of separate incidents of antisemitic character, the lack of a comprehensive study is making it quite difficult to fully assess the breadth and persistence of this surge of antisemitism on Soviet territory. At present, Mordechai Altshuler's article appears to be the only systematic study of popular (mass-based) antisemitism on the Soviet territory.[25] Hence, we can only summarize the points made by other scholars in reference to Jewish-gentile relations over the course of German-Soviet war.

First and foremost, some factors indicate that the anti-Jewish policies implemented by the Nazis and their allies had at least some negative effect on the population within Soviet territories. After Soviet officials returned to areas the USSR had occupied before the war, they promptly noted that the population exhibited a noticeable "rise in nationalist consolidation and exclusivity and a rejuvenation of chauvinist attitude."[26] A number of authors appear to agree that the experience of the occupation led to the escalation of ethnic conflict after the war. Timothy Snyder argues that this was the case in Soviet Ukraine, where racist ideology and practice set "precedents for (and offered training in) attacks on civilians for reasons on national identity."[27] Kate Brown suggests that Soviet society "began to polarize in a new way around racial designations," as a result of repetitions of the message of hatred coupled with the visible starvation, humiliation, and destruction of Jews and members of other groups.[28] In her interpretation, "as people were ranked and made to live in Nationalist Socialist racial categories, the categories—dreamt up by racial theorists—became real and acquired a terrifying agency in people's lives. As result racial tensions mounted."[29] Doris Bergen claims that "Nazi policies regarding the Volksdeutsche exacerbated anti-Semitism by stirring up greed for possessions seized from Jewish victims."[30]

Indeed, if we accept the argument put forth by Barbara Epstein, that prewar Soviet policies and propaganda left an enduring imprint on the Soviet population, it is equally logical to assume that Nazi propaganda,

disseminated over a three-year period, claimed a certain space in the mentality of locals. The Nazi apparatus continuously used its expertise, skills, and resources to indoctrinate the population in the spirit of racist ideology. During the occupation, numerous local newspapers reiterated the idea of Nazi allies liberating Ukrainians from the tyranny of "Judeo-Communism."[31] An extraordinary effort was deployed for the indoctrination of the ethnic Germans. For example, even in Transnistria which was under the control of Romanian authorities, Volksdeutsche teachers were sent to Odessa's teachers training institute, where *Sonderkommando R* (Special Command Russia), subordinated directly to the Office of Reichsführer SS Himmler, set up a special curriculum, with readings from Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg for their ideological preparation.[32] Weekly screenings of the "Deutsche Wochenschau," Nazi Germany's official newsreel, were implemented in order to keep Volksdeutsche in Odessa up to date on the Reich's latest propaganda.[33] Some letters of Soviet citizens collected by Ilya Ehrenburg during and after WWII contain indications of antisemitic attitudes in liberated areas of the USSR, including Odessa.[34] For example, a Jew who survived one of the deadliest camps of Transnistria (Domanevka) and returned home after liberation, claimed to feel "suffocated by the atmosphere poisoned by fascist propaganda" in his native city. As this correspondent wrote, he was not alone in his feeling: other Jewish survivors, who came back to Odessa, reached similar conclusions, that Nazi ideological "infection" penetrated even the local Soviet institutions, and that antisemitism caught in its grip the entire city — despite a small number of Jewish Odessans who managed to remain alive after the Holocaust.[35]

Mordechai Altshuler makes a convincing argument when he connects economic issues with the hostility gentiles exhibited toward returning Jews. Housing shortages became one point of contention in the previously occupied territories, as military activity or deliberate demolition by the German army had, in some cities, destroyed from one-third to a half of all residential buildings.[36] Individuals who had remained in the occupied territories moved to the apartments of the Soviet citizens who had evacuated east, including Jews. The apartments of all murdered Jews were similarly occupied. Since the returned Soviet authorities forced every illegal tenant to return flats and belongings to their previous holders, individuals returning from the evacuation encountered numerous conflicts. Disagreements over the property of Jews murdered by Nazis and plundered by collaborators proved to be especially sensitive. As Altshuler

underlines, both fear of punishment and a lack of desire to part with acquired property made population in Kiev react to the return of Jewish survivors or their heirs with complaints that "these Jews are here again."[37] According to Jewish survivors' testimonies, the mass antisemitism attested in postwar Odessa was of a similarly "material" character. Thus, as one of local Jew explained in 1944, in a letter to the famous journalist and writer Ilya Ehrenburg, this anti-Jewish sentiment should have been exclusively understood as a special form of "love towards Jewish property." Moreover, the author of the letter anticipated that the hard feelings against Jews will not last too long, since most of the Jewish property was already stolen and the "lovers of such property" would have to "soon understand that there were no more reasons for hostile feelings towards Jewish people."[38]

In sum, two reciprocally stimulating factors intertwined during the war period and helped to reanimate attitudes that were considered almost eradicated under the previous Soviet regime. Jewish evacuation to the east (and their left property) together with the Nazi regime's systematic destruction of remaining Jewry, opened new possibilities for material enrichment by local gentiles. In addition, the intense hatred message towards Jews spread systematically in the territories under Nazi occupation managed to be absorbed at least my some individuals. If Nazi allies' control of the Soviet territories had persisted for much longer, being continuously accompanied with a strong antisemitic discourse and the state's anti-Jewish policies, it is entirely possible that the population in that area would eventually develop even deeper animosity towards the Jewish population, which would have matched, or even surpassed the antisemitism of the pre-Soviet era.

The Birth of Official Antisemitism in the USSR

Profoundly shaken by the Jewish genocide unleashed by the Nazis and its allies, and clearly disturbed by a new wave of antisemitism among the Soviet population, a number of Soviet Jewish intellectuals and party activists took the latter issue to the Soviet leadership. For example, an old member of the Communist party, Yakob Grinberg, wrote a personal letter to Iosif Stalin on May 13, 1943, demanding an explanation to the fact that in the Soviet Union, during those "severe times" a muddy wave of "disgusting antisemitism revived and penetrated separate Soviet institutions and even party organizations."[39] In a similar manner, the director of the Central

Oncological Institute, B. Shimelovich, in a letter sent to Gheorghy Malenkov, demanded an inquiry on the activity of the representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the healthcare system. Allegedly, this representative (named Petrov) stressed the Jewish origins of many of the Institute's employees and spoke in an inadmissible manner about what he perceived to be a "Jewish party organization" at the Institute.[40] Lina Shtern, a famous Soviet biochemist and the director of Institute of Physiology wrote a personal letter to Stalin when the director of the Tropical Institute of the Academy of Science of the USSR, somebody named Serghiev, asked her to fire two Jewish editors of the "Bulletin of Experimental Biology and Medicine" she was leading, under the explanation that Hitler is spreading leaflets, which claimed that Jews are everywhere in the USSR, and this "diminishes the culture of the Russian people." Several days after submitting her letter Shtern was met, on behalf of Stalin, by Gheorghy Malenkov and Nikolai Shatalin. During this meeting Malenkov tried to assure Shtern that all circulating rumors about official antisemitism in Soviet Union are nothing but lies spread by spies and diversionists who reached Soviet rear. He also instructed Shtern to reinstate in their previous positions the Jewish editors she was forced to fire.[41]

Nobody was more repelled by manifestations of antisemitism than former Jewish soldiers. These frequently returned to empty homes, where they learned that their entire families were slaughtered by Nazis. In these circumstance any anti-Jewish expression could spark a thunderstorm. A furious letter of four Jewish war veterans from Kiev was sent in September 1945 to Stalin, Beria, and Pyotr Pospelov (chief editor of "Pravda" newspaper). Clearly disturbed by a series of antisemitic manifestations in the city these war veterans sharply attacked the Ukrainian Republic's leadership: the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and its Council of Ministers. According to the opinion of the authors, this leadership was nothing else but a group of "politically blind people," which made Kiev into "a mob of pogromists, blackhundreds, and hard-core nationalists," and which was promoting a "political course regarding Jews … which has a lot in common with the course issued earlier from Goebbels' office."[42] When referring to the impact of this policy on the morale of the Jewish population in Ukraine, the authors shifted dangerously from bitterness and disappointment to visibly menacing warnings. Thus, they affirmed that while many Jews wrote letters to the country's leadership inquiring about this "new course," others committed suicide, or tore apart their Communist Party membership cards "because they considered

unworthy being a member of a party which is pursuing a policy analogical to the fascist party," and there were still other Jews who tried to get outside the borders of the Soviet Union. Here the letter became increasingly daring and warned its readers: "Evidently, while abroad these Jews would tell such things about Kiev and Ukraine that this Republic will become very popular on the pages of the international press."[43] The foreign policy card is played again at the end of the letter, when its authors demand a rapid resolution of the situation being described, or "otherwise this will turn into a political scandal of international importance." Stalin, Beria, and Pospelov were reminded that at the press-conference in San-Francisco (April-June 1945), a Soviet representative was already asked about the situation of the Jewish population in Ukraine, a question which "was diplomatically avoided." The authors stressed that Jewish people were very united and when pressed by need they could defend their rights with all forces available to them, and if necessary they could even demand the involvement of an "international tribunal."[44]

One important Jewish institution that became prominent during WWII was the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Created by the Soviet leadership in order to build international support for the Soviet Union's war effort, the Committee became increasingly active in defending Jewish rights and promoting interests of the Jewish population in the USSR. In 1943, for example, leaders of the committee sent a letter to Alexandr Sherbakov, the head of the Main Political Administration of the Red Army, expressing concern over an article discussing the subject of people decorated for their military service in the Red Army. The authors of the letter, Solomon Mikhoels and Shakhno Epstein, criticized the nondisclosure (*umolchanie*) of the exact number of Jewish soldiers and officers decorated for war merit and warned that this silence "plays into the hands of hostile elements both inside the USSR and outside its borders."[45]

With another occasion Mikhoels and Epstein wrote a letter to the prime-minister of the Soviet Union Vyacheslav Molotov. They brought to Molotov's attention "the extraordinarily difficult material and moral situation of the Jews who remained alive after the fascist destruction" and underlined the indifference of local authorities towards the victims of the catastrophe, the reluctance to help former victims to recover their houses and property.[46] Curiously, this letter prompted Molotov's inquiry on this subject and two weeks later Lavrenty Beria submitted a report with his recommendations on how to resolve the problem:

i) to instruct Nikita Khrushchev (first secretary of Ukraine) to take all necessary measures in order to organize the employment and living conditions of the Jews who suffered under occupation;

ii) to send a representative of the government in the region of Chernovitsy and Mogilev-Podolsk in order to check the reasons of conglomeration of the Jewish population in this area and to help them to return to their houses, or offer temporary housing for those whose native places were not yet liberated;

iii) to instruct the prosecutor of the USSR to investigate the cases of two Jews that were beaten (one pupil from Gorky and one man from Buzuluk);

iv) to recommend to Mikhoels and Epstein in the future to send all complaints and requests received from Jewish citizens to corresponding institutions.[47]

Certainly, this episode demonstrates the hight authority of Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the confidence of its leaders in dealing with the central officials. Yet, Beria's final recommendation, advising the Committee to use regular channels of appeal, discloses a faint note of annoyance over the methods deployed by Mikhoels and Epstein. Over the time, some bureaucrats would come to the conclusion that this institution was becoming a "certain kind of ministry of Jewish affairs," a body which felt entitled to involve in many more issues than those assigned by the Party during WWII.[48]

Clearly, Mikhoels and Epstein's petition questioned the efficiency of a number of Soviet bureaucrats and forced them to justify their actions. The Ministry of State Control (Narkomat Goskontrolya) was one of the institutions brought under investigation from the message received by Molotov, since one of the accusations blamed local administrations of ignoring the Jewish population when distributing donations received from abroad. The Ministry's report submitted to Molotov announced that an analysis of a number of organizations from the Ukrainian SSR, Belorussian SSR, and RSFSR, established that the Jewish population, in fact, had received more donations than the rest of population (about 72 percent of Jewish employees of the organizations examined were among the direct recipients).[49] This report concluded that Mikhoels and Epstein presented an "unfounded reclamation," which was "the fruit of light generalizations of separate facts, which cannot characterize the general situation."[50]

The attempts to appeal directly to leading organs, while simultaneously circumventing local authorities, were not novel in the USSR, nor was it used exclusively by the Jewish population to file its complaints. Personal

letters/denunciations/petitions were continuously sent both by Soviet elites and masses to various organs and leaders, but a variety of factors, including a new political context, new sensitivities related to population's wartime experiences, and new challenges faced by the Soviet state, had altered the paradigm through which Stalin's bureaucracy responded to these efforts during WWII. Besides, a permanent background of this "war on paper" was the competition of individuals and institutions for predominant influence and favors (which usually quickly changed under the Stalinist regime). Correspondingly, each message of complaint could become an instant weapon used against bureaucrats in charge for that area of activity. Those bureaucrats tried to protect themselves with all available means, carefully maneuvering in the shifting ideological space delineated by Stalin's leadership.

About one year later after Mikhoels and Epstein's message to Sherbakov, another message was sent to Alexandr Sherbakov by the secretary of the Soviet Information Bureau—a leading Soviet news agency. This note bluntly accused the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee of nationalism and argued that by its focus on a "narrow nationalistic, bourgeois-Jewish character" harms the position of the Soviet Union. Its author masterfully manipulated a central piece of Nazi rhetoric that probably disquieted many Soviet leaders (even if carefully avoiding to be mentioned in public): the allegation that in the Soviet Union "the Jews are ruling, that everything is taken in the hands of Jews." This is connected to a daring argument:

> But, if the hitlerites would collect all materials submitted by the Jewish committee, they could use them for demonstrating their mendacious theses. Because the materials of the committee sustained the idea that on the Soviet front the most active, the most advanced, and those leading everybody else, generals, officers, and soldiers, are the Jews. Because it is in the materials of the committees that one can sustain the idea that in the Soviet rear, the most distinguished, prominent scholars, engineers, writers, architects who are leading the rest — are Jews.[51]

The war brought a change in the state's perspective towards Soviet Jews. Previously, for over two decades Bolsheviks saw in this group a historically underprivileged and marginalized group, with strong revolutionary credentials, eager to build socialist society and to amalgamate into a *Soviet citizen*. Hence, the regime promoted Jews in increasing numbers to various central and local governmental posts and sought to welcome

and empower its Jews, taking a constructivist and interventionist approach toward Jewish agricultural resettlement and education as means of furthering modernization.[52] In part, the interwar policy convinced many young Jews from the Soviet Union to leave behind their Jewish roots, usually represented by their families' traditional life and religion. When the Second World War broke out and the slaughter of the Jewish population by the Nazis took place, Soviet Jewry took a reversed path: it began to develop a more acute sense of national identity and became more sensitive to Jewish interests and anti-Jewish feelings.

In part, due to the activity of Anti-Fascist Jewish Committee and the public presence of other influential individuals of Jewish origins (such as Ilya Ehrenburg), Soviet Jewry was emerging as a strong and cohesive community, with high-profile, outspoken representatives. Confident in their domestic and international political support, the Committee had the extreme imprudence to submit to Molotov a proposal regarding the creation of a *Jewish Soviet Socialist Republic*. According to the authors of this project, this should have helped "to make fully equal the situation of Jewish masses among brotherly nations (*s tsel'iu polnogo uravnenia polozhenia evreiskikh mass sredi bratskikh narodov)*" of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the committee openly qualified as a failure the Birobidzhan project, which created a Jewish Autonomous Region in the Far East in 1934: "the experience of Birobidzhan because of various causes, primarily because of insufficient mobilization of all possibilities, as well as its extreme distance from the location of the majority of Jewish working masses, did not produced the necessary effect."[53] Instead, Jewish leaders proposed to create a new Jewish republic on the territory of Crimea, which was deemed more suitable for this purpose. The idea turned to be a dangerous political initiative — later the members of the Committee will be put under the accusation of attempting to promote "the plan of American imperialists" to create "a Jewish state in Crimea."[54]

In time, this new type of visibility of the Soviet Jews, their intense political and national activism, their meaningful ties with the capitalist world, attracted inevitable suspicions of the group's loyalty to the Stalinist regime. In the eyes of Stalin and his circle, the Jewish elites acquired a menacing profile of a distinctly powerful group, which claimed a special place and special treatment for Soviet Jewry, by invoking the tragedy of an unparalleled loss during the war. The Soviet leadership proceeded as it knew best through a well-established approach to potentially dangerous internal actors: it erased the category "Jews" from the rubric of the "trustworthy nation" and penciled in " potential enemies of the [Soviet] state."

NOTES

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12 Barbara Epstein, *The Minsk Ghetto, 1941-1943. Jewish Resistance and Soviet Internationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

13 Ibid., 42-43.

14 Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower, eds., *Introduction, The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2008), 14.

15 *Ibid.*

16 Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: the Second World War and the Fate of Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 271-275. As Weiner concludes, the majority of individuals on this territory were forced by the circumstances "to weight their greed and resentment [against Jews] against the trauma of living in the midst of an ongoing genocide."

17 Mordechai Altshuler, "Antisemitism in Ukraine towards the End of the Second World War," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 3, no. 22 (Winter 1993): 40-81.

18 Karel Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 431. Berkhoff also reproduced a fragment of the assessment of the situation in 1945 Kiev by a Western visitor: "I found them [Jews] in large numbers in Government offices and junior civil servants, as clerks in municipality-owned businesses or State factories. In fact they seemed to be the backbone of many of the institutions. But I don't think this was making them any more popular."

19 Gennady Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlasti i antisemitism* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia, 2003), p. 242.

20 Gennady Kostyrchenko, *Stalin protiv "kosmopolitov." Vlast' i evreiskaia intelligenciia v SSSR* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2010), p. 93.

21 *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism v SSSR, 1938-1953*, editor Gennady Kostyrchenko (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Materik, 2005), document No. 2-4, p. 32-33.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*, p. 34

24 *Ibid.*

25 Altshuler, "Antisemitism in Ukraine," 40-81.

[26] Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 224, She cites material from TsDAHO Ukrainy, 1/20/892 (5/1/45).

[27] Timothy Snyder, "'To Resolve the Ukrainian Problem Once and for All': The Ethnic Cleansing of Ukrainians in Poland, 1943-1947," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1, no. 2 (1999): 91-92.

[28] Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 218.

[29] *Ibid.*, 218.

[30] Doris Bergen, "The Nazi Concept of 'Volksdeutsche' and the Exacerbation of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945," *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, no. 4 (October 1994): 572.

[31] Oleksandr Melnyk, *Behind the Frontlines: War, Genocide and Identity in the Kherson Region of Ukraine, 1941-1944*, (MA thesis) University of Alberta, p. 48, note 114. Melnyk states that every issue of the Kherson newspaper Holos Dnipra contained vitriolic attacks against "Judeo-Communists."

[32] Eric Steinhart, "Policing the Boundaries of 'Germandom' in the East: SS Ethnic German Policy and Odessa's 'Volksdeutsche,' 1941-1944," *Central European History* 43 (2010): 96.

[33] *Ibid.*, 61.

[34] Mordechai Altshuler, Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, eds., *Soviet Jews Write to Ilya Ehrenburg, 1943-1966* (Jerusalem: The Centre for Research and Documentation of East-European Jewry, The Hebrew University, Yad Vashem, 1993).

[35] *Ibid.*, Letter no. 9, p. 140-142.

[36] Altshuler, "Antisemitism in Ukraine towards the End of the Second World War," 47.

[37] Berkhoff, *Harvest of Sorrow*, 431.

[38] Mordechai Altshuler, Yitzhak Arad, Shmuel Krakowski, eds., *Soviet Jews Write to Ilya Ehrenburg, 1943-1966*, p. 140.

[39] *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism v SSSR, 1938-1953*, Letter of Y. Grinberg to I.V. Stalin, document No. 2-8, p. 36.

[40] *Gossudarstvennyi antisemitism*, Letter of B.A. Shimelovich to G.M. Malenkov, 19 June, 1944, document No. 2-12, p. 39-40.

[41] *Stalin protiv "kosmopolitov,"* p. 109-110.

[42] *Gossudarstvennyi antisemitism*, p. 69, 71.

[43] *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism*, p.70.

[44] *Ibid.*, 71.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 35

[46] *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism*, p. 50

[47] *Ibid.*, p.52

[48] *Stalin protiv "kosmopolitov,"* p. 145.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 59-61.

50 *Ibid.*

51 *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism*, p. 48-49.

52 For more about Soviet resettlement project of Jews in Crimea and Southern Ukraine, see: Jonathan Dekel-Chen, Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power, 1924-1941 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

53 Gosudarstvennyi antisemitism, p. 47.

54 D. Nadjafov, Z. Belousova, eds., Stalin i kosmopolitism, 1945-1953. Dokumenty Agitpropa TsK (Moscow: MFD: Materik, 2005), p.15.

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