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THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES

Abstract

In 1859 the Russian Empire's new policy for answering the "Jewish Question" makes an important development. The "merger" policy was supported by Jewish intellectuals and became a window of opportunity for tens of thousands of migrants. Migrant Jews had only one chance—personal integration into a society beyond the Strip of Settlement. However, migrants actually "brought" with them all social institutions typical of the traditional Jewish community. Between the Jewish population of Kharkiv and the local authorities there had been a certain model of relations which may be considered typical of the southern regions of the Russian Empire. The authorities and Jews mostly tried to avoid clashes. However, this in no way meant equal dialogue, and force was applied at will.

Keywords: Authorities, Jewish Community, Kharkiv, New imperial history, Russian Empire

Introduction

The article highlights the problem of the relationship between the Jewish population and the authorities in the latter years of the Russian Empire. Kharkiv, a city beyond the Pale of Settlement, is the focus of our attention. We will make an attempt to answer the important questions: How was the "Jewish question" formed and formulated, in particular, regarding the presence of the Jewish population according to the internal borders established by the authorities – the Pale of Settlement? What were the patterns of behavior among the Jewish population in its interactions with the authorities? How might the model of the relations between the Empire and its Jewish subjects in the city/region beyond the boundaries of the Pale of Settlement be described? Answering these questions demonstrates the ways in which the features and characteristics of Imperial politics in solving the "Jewish issue" reflect the contradictory nature of the implementation

of this policy and the diversity of reactions from the Jewish population in relation to any particular decision and its implementation.

We believe that the Imperial elite from the last third of the 19th century to the first decade of the 20th took at least two positions which would determine the policy towards the Jewish population in the Empire. The first of these was based on socio-economic considerations and was rooted in the ideology of Imperial mercantilism dating back to the time of Catherine II. The Jews had to become "good" and "useful" subjects of the Empire. This pragmatic approach was advanced by the long-standing economic contacts in the southern Empire—in particular in Sloboda Ukraine, Kharkiv at its center—with the Jewish merchants of the Hetmanate and other territories that once belonged to the Polish Commonwealth. The second position was built on the nationalist project of the "Russian people" which, in its conception, would see Jews as an obstacle, even a threat. In the 1860s-1870s pragmatic considerations prevailed, which was reflected in new attempts to answer the "Jewish question" with a new assimilation project. Since the beginning of the 1880s those who proposed the exclusion of Jewish imperial subjects from the "Russian project" were becoming more dug in; the Judeophobia with which Jews were perceived was already compounded by the modern phenomenon of anti-Semitism. That being said, Jews were not an exceptional case as Polish or Ukrainian national projects also earned the aggression of Russian nationalism. And this ambiguity between the authorities and the Jews remained valid through to the Empire's fall. Still, it would be a mistake to chalk up all the upheavals to the plans and actions of the authorities. Neither position would ever remain within the limits of political discourse but ran over into the public space, leading to contentious debate which mobilized many intellectuals.

We will try to demonstrate that the Jewish population should be considered an active agent whose reactions to certain events could force the authorities to retreat or change course. Against the wishes of imperial bureaucrats, communities appeared at the outskirts of the Pale, and the community elites were engaged in the further development of the area, and, in fact, they succeeded in doing so. "Hidden community" institutions existed all throughout the researched period. Given the authorities' position on individual integration, other attempts by the authorities at exclusion were often foiled.

Theoretical framework and "New imperial history"

From the end of the 19th until the middle of 20th century the general explanation according to which Imperial power was seen as an active oppressor and the Jewish population as a passive victim reigned supreme in the historiography. It should be noted that representatives of the Jewish "intelligentsia", historians and socially active thought leaders—Ilya Orshansky, Simon Dubnov, Yulij Hessen—have also joined the ranks in formulating this descriptive model. Undoubtedly, their position grew out of the disillusionment among Jewish intellectuals in the assimilation project that the Empire offered to its Jewish communities from the late 1850s to the early 1880s. In the final decades of the 19th century they would experience the collision with modern anti-Semitism, whose ideas came from Western Europe, but roared onto the Russian scene. The new Russian anti-Semitic discourse was formed by intellectuals and was actively used in political circles and in the public space. The widespread anti-Jewish violence, so-called pogroms, piled on top of hate speech exhausted the frustration already held by many Jewish intellectuals with their own state. Their first reactions to the wave of violence in 1881 and 1882 proved to be somehow symbolic of these events—the seed of the Zionist ideology and thoughts of creating a Jewish state outside the Russian Empire. The long history of Jewish life in the Russian Empire was retroactively presented as a history of oppression and humiliation. In the decades that followed, it was through this lens that the relationship between imperial power and the Jewish population was viewed. Only in the last third of the 20th century was this concept called into question.

We view the critical approach as a rigid dichotomy—imperial power versus the Jews—however, this text is based on the direction which has appeared outside the framework of Jewish studies, "new imperial history". From this angle, "Empire" serves only as a research subject which makes it possible to describe individual cases and models, creating a general narrative. Such phenomena as "Authority" or "Jewish population" act as categories of analysis in which variability is assumed. The Empire's adherence to ideas of centralized policy and cohesive administrative control remains one of a certain conditionality. The full range of Imperial policy, in particular, regarding the "Jewish question" can be addressed according to the regional situation or individual preference as we discuss the capitals St. Petersburg, Moscow, northern Riga or southern Kharkiv, Yekaterinoslav, Odessa. In these local situations, there was cohesion

between the Empire's policy and the interests of local elites. Depending on this cohesion, or lack thereof, one can trace the various patterns of behavior among the actors.

Jewish populations in the Empire can be characterized by regional particularities, various social groups and religious movements. Kharkiv, one of the main centers of Jewish migration outside the Pale of Settlement, denied the settlers the opportunity of creating an official community, thus reinforcing its "hidden" existence in the city. Throughout the period, certain developments of the city's Jewish community can be traced by following the ways in which its members organized their lives internally and in their interactions with officials. At the same time, the existing legal conflict between allowing Jewish individuals to live in Kharkiv and prohibiting them from representing themselves as a community made the individual approaches to dealing with the authorities more prominent.

Another important theoretical aspect for us is to acknowledge the imperial policy of Jewish integration as a prolonged colonial project, dating back to the end of the 18th century and continuing through to the fall of the Empire. We imagine it within the framework of "internal colonization". According to the researcher, the rulers of the Empire observed various subjects from whom they did not feel protected with a rather neurotic gaze.[1] Imperial ideology treated ethnic groups living within its borders differently. Thus, Ukrainians and Belarusians were considered part of the Russian people; other Slavic subjects, the Poles, for some time had their own quasi-state, and were seen as a separate nationality. Eastern subjects of the Empire, the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, mainly inhabitants of Central Asia, were proclaimed allogeneous ("inorodtsy"). Undoubtedly, all these policies did not remain constant and, during the 19th century, underwent some changes. The overriding principle, however, was to give form to what Imperial politicians considered to be chaotic, to place ethnic groups into order, to create categories and manage hierarchies, to impose distances and educate elites.

The policy towards the Jews did change, but it always remained colonial. From the reign of Catherine II to that of Nicolas I—from the end of the 17th to the first third of the 19th century—Imperial power administered spaces to create the so-called the Pale of Jewish Settlement and to endow the Jewish population with the usual categorizations of the Empire. The external agents of assimilation were Russian officials and soldiers who represented the Empire in the provincial Pales of Settlement. From the point of view of the officials, Jews had a single flaw which was

responsible for all the others – belonging to Judaism—the "Jewish sect", which became a focal point for the "othering". The Empire proclaimed Orthodox Christianity its official religion and understood a "good Jew" to mean a Jew who converted to Christianity. Since 1835 Jews were legally classified as "inorodtsy", the category which included the nomads of the east of the Empire, the peoples of the North Caucasus and Siberia, giving this city official's description of Jewish women an Orientalist color: "frail in their kind [...] not trained in any needlework [...] hot in their temperament [...] they, in the shortest time, give themselves to the most repulsive shameless apostasy as the only subsistence."[2]

The merger policy ("sliyanie"), as a new stage of Jewish integration in the Imperial society, set forth the principle of personal assimilation, pulling out of the Pale those who seemed "useful" in the eyes of the imperial leaders. In little time, tens of thousands of people made this choice. In 1897 the "internal provinces" reported official figures of 314,000 Jews.[3] This would create a certain problem for the Romanov Empire which had officially proclaimed itself to be a state and a confessional state through to end of its existence. The Jews were essentially offered a rather modern practice of individual emancipation. Nevertheless, we find that, for migrant Jews, the use of advantageous individual behavior paradoxically serves the strategy of "transferring" the usual community and its institutions beyond the Pale of the Settlement.

Finally, we must also be attentive to the issue of nationalisms which grew in importance during the period under investigation. From the middle of the 19th century, the "merger" policy was accompanied by the formation of a Russian national project which can be considered as an imperial national project. Only during the 19th century did Siberia, Volga and Kuban acquire the status of being "Russian."[4] Like any other national project constructing its own historical narrative, describing its own cultural and political boundaries, it was based on difference and othering. As we noted above, this project included Ukrainians or Belarusians, but excluded Poles and Jews. Of course, it's about inclusion/exclusion at the level of ethnic group. Personal assimilation/Russification was also possible for a Pole or a Jew as well as for a German or a Frenchman. Although towards the end of the 19th century, due to the spread of anti-Semitism, this option became less viable even for assimilated Jews.

Historiographic tradition and the pool of Sources

The foundation of the literary tradition covering the relationship between imperial power and the Jewish population in the Russian Empire was laid between the 19th and 20th centuries. For the proceeding half century the narrative of S. Dubnov would provide a rubric for understanding these relations while pressure grew from the Empire which initiated anti-Jewish violence complemented by "legislative pogroms" against the relatively passive Jewish population which had no way to escape but through emigration.[5] The works of I. Orshansky, Y. Gessen and others only expanded upon and supplemented this paradigm.[6]

In the 1970s and 1980s, a period which John Klier called the "golden period" in his studies of the Jews of the Russian Empire, there was a reconsideration of the issues. The concept described by Salo Baron as "the lachrymose conception of Jewish History" was seriously revised. The true archival revolution which followed the collapse of the USSR in 1991, as well as the discovery of sources previously inaccessible to Western researchers, confirmed the theses of new interpreters. In recent decades, Michael Stanislawski, Jonathan Frankel, John Klier, Eli Lederhendler, Israel Bartal and Eugene Avrutin have all written about the variation in the imperial policies and strategies addressing the Jewish population.[7] Conceptual approaches to this problem have been proposed by Benjamin Nathans and Scott Uri.[8]

However, most of these works discussed the Jewish population within the Pale of Settlement. Exceptions were only the works devoted to the capital cities St. Petersburg and Moscow. B. Natans proposed in his study the original concept of "selective integration" which rejected the idea of the empire-oppressor as, contrariwise, inside imperial circles of power there were adherents of a certain emancipation, "social designers", removing from the Pale the categories of Jews that were seen as "useful" for their integration in the "internal provinces". In fact, this is the same principle that Nathan Meyer follows in his research.[9] On the one hand, such a perspective is clearly validated by sources. The state authorized wealthy merchants, university students, and intellectuals to cross the Pale of Settlement. Their names remained in the documents pertaining to their corporations, official requests and permits to settle in certain cities remained in the chancelleries. On the other hand, this approach has flaws, first and foremost, it covers only a small part of the Jewish population. The fact that a significant part of the Jewish population were illegal migrants

was no mystery to the officials of the Empire, publicists, and certainly not to researchers at the time. It should be noted that this situation was typical for the non-Jewish population. The fact that a fairly large part of the Jewish population was thus beyond the control of the bureaucratic apparatus contradicts the idea of the Empire as a successful breeder. Moreover, even after the introduction of the 1882 May Laws, there was an obvious tendency to inflate the number of the Jewish population outside the Pale of Settlement. We see that the other actor—the Jewish population—was rather successful in dealing with legislative barriers, and with the officials' periodic attempts to curb Jewish internal migration.

The sources used allow us to trace the political decisions of the authorities, from the imperial orders and legislative provisions at the center of the Empire to the offices of the Governors and local authorities—the municipal advisory council ("duma") and later to the city council ("uprava"). In the policy of the Empire, the "Jewish question" remained relevant throughout the period of 1859-1914. Appropriate legislative initiatives were developed and adopted by specialized committees created for this purpose. From 1840 to 1863, such committees searched for and identified measures to better place Jews in society. In 1881 there was a central committee for the consideration of the Jewish issue and, in 1883, the High Commission reviewed the laws in force pertaining to the Jews in the Empire, mainly operating to elaborate on the 1882 May Laws. Subsequently, their roles convened during a special meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Archive holdings from these committees contain not only relevant orders, but also long correspondence between the central and regional authorities working to arrive at a decision. The decisions of the Committee in 1840, then, were made on the basis of projects submitted by the governors regarding the "transformation of the Jews" (Russian State Historical Archive, RGIA), while the May Laws were adopted out of the study of notes by such authors as historian Simon Dubnov and writer Nikolai Leskov (The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, CAHJP). In 1840, the aforementioned Committee was developing and adopting proposals to authorize certain Jews to live beyond the Pale of Settlement. Similarly, committees considered household issues which, to the officials, seemed to impose significant barriers to the social assimilation of Jews and the fight against the "malicious heresy" which was Judaism—wearing traditional clothing, Jewish education, burial, etc. (RGIA, CAHJP).

At the chancellery of the Governor of Kharkiv, a special department for Jewish affairs was created containing a whole range of documents with a wide range of information (Kharkiv Region State Archive, DAKhO; State Archive of Kyiv, DAMK; Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine, TsDIAU). Executives of Kharkiv province were discouraged from discussing legal norms or special projects related to the Jewish population more strongly than were the governors within the boundaries of the Pale of Settlement. However, the central ministries of internal affairs and finance and the Treasury Chamber all required routine reports on Jews in the city and region. Other materials stored in the archives are the correspondence between the governor's office and the city authorities. The city authorities actually occupied a lower tier than the provincial administration in the imperial hierarchy, especially since they were deprived of agency in political decisions. Nevertheless, the holdings of these institutions contain the main body of information for the Jewish population of Kharkiv, from the magazines of the city duma (uprava), which detailed the discussion and decisions made the Jewish population, the correspondence between city authorities and the police, courts and gendarmes, on certain issues concerning the Jews of the city.

The official correspondence of government officials gives us little opportunity to hear the voices of Jewish imperial subjects. In discussing certain issues, governors took into account the opinions of "erudite Jews" and experts on the Jewish question appointed by the authorities, but such an institution acted only within the Pale. The lack of legal recognition of the community's existence in Kharkiv made it problematic to report the Jewish population's position in relation to power. The only permissible option was metric reporting to the Department of Religious Affairs of Foreign Confessions, which was reduced to reporting birth, death and marriage registration. Similarly, there was no Jewish press in Kharkiv, whereas the role of such an institution in Odessa, in particular, cannot be overstated.

Nevertheless, we have a sufficiently wide range of sources which allow us to directly or indirectly speak of the presence of the Jewish community in the city, to analyze its approach to the relationship with authorities, and to follow personal stories of interactions between Jews and the authorities. Information is provided by the police and judicial authorities. In certain litigations the truly "hidden community" of Kharkiv comes to the light, its institutions opened, whereby a certain internal competition and various reactions to the threats are revealed. Due to the obvious overwhelming attention, a lot of cases affect members of illegal

organizations, in particular Kharkiv's Zionist group BILU (an acronym in Hebrew for "House of Jacob Get Up and Go") which was active in the mobilization of leftist parties. Even more personalized focus is on personal income, such as that of the Zionist activist Joseph Trumpeldor (of The Central Zionist Archives), which contains the correspondence of a former soldier for the Empire to residents of various cities, including Kharkiv. The personal income of Kharkiv public figures should also be noted, those whose activities were routinely directed at the "Jewish issue" and included dedicated performances and texts—in particular, the personal income of historian Dmitry Bagalii (DAKhO). The local press published debates on the Jewish issue in their pages and they reported various relevant pieces of information (Kharkiv Korolenko State Scientific Library, National Library of Ukraine Vernadsky). Important information undoubtedly appears in sources of individual origin; representatives of the Jewish intelligentsia, cultural figures, activists of revolutionary or nationalist movements, but also non-Jews who, in their memoirs, touched on subject of Jewishness or had correspondences or various other contacts with representatives of the Jewish community.

Jewish people and Russian Authorities

The background of relations between the Jews and the Russian Empire takes us back to the divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that took place in the last quarter of the 18th century. Undoubtedly, from the Grand Duchy of Moscow as the center of the future state of the Romanovs, and later to the Empire itself, there had been contacts between power and the Jewish community before, but they were rather personal stories, such as one or another Jewish merchant or specialist being given permission to stay within the country. For the majority of the population in the Russian state, "the Jew" remained a biblical character, a folk person, a puppet in a show.[10] The image of Jews was not positive, and their description was determined by the rigorous tradition of the Orthodox Church. It is easy to detect this tradition's influence in the famous words of Empress Elizabeth about the impossibility of anything good coming from the "enemies of Christ". It is more interesting to follow the relationship between the Empire and the Jews, half a million of whom became its subjects following new affiliations. Documents show that as early as the first half of the 19th century the officials' knowledge of the Jewish population could not have

been reduced to simple Judeophobia and Medieval prejudices. On the contrary, the administrators in the capital demanded and received rather detailed information.

In the middle of the 19th century dignitaries from St. Petersburg maintained correspondence about the spread of Hasidism in the southwest of the Empire.[11] One of the religious movements within Judaism, Hasidism initially appeared to challenge the traditional elite of Jewish communities and the authority of rabbis but would gradually acquire the features of Orthodoxy. Since the 1860s, due to internal Jewish migration, Hasidism grew beyond the boundaries of the Pale of Settlement. In Kharkiv, one of the movements in Hasidism, the Habad, flourished among the Jewish community. Official correspondence discloses their awareness of the case, about its history, main features, terms. The informants are not only local officials, but also rabbis from different regions in the south of the Empire, the Yekaterinoslav and Kyiv provinces.

Once again, we can talk about the variability and unsteadiness of alliances in relations between the authorities and the Jews. The Minister of the Interior had no intention of taking a stand, convinced that any action against the Hasidim would then be in support of the "beliefs of other Jews", and the persecution of the Hasidim would "create for them a halo of martyrdom for faith".[12] At the local level, Pavel Ignatiev, Governor General of Vitebsk, Mogilev and Smolensk, was concerned that a lack of control and accountability would lead to the spread of Hasidism and was ready for action[13]. The rabbis mentioned above who were aligned with the authorities were also concerned about the loss of their own status and income, which was being intercepted by the Hasidic leaders, the tsadik. However, when it came to mounting real action, the Rabbi Commission, assembled in 1852, decided that "the Hasidim [...] make up only a theological school; their meetings at tsadik are of a religious and moral character, harmless to [...] public order".[14] Consequently, there is no constant confrontation to speak of between the Empire and its Jewish subjects; rather, there is a constant search for compromises wherein neither position is monolithic.

When we talk about the south of the Empire, the Jews here were longtime neighbors. During the 18th century, the prohibition of Jews' residence in the capital faced passive resistance of the local elite, who tried to prove economic benefits from the presence of Jews through appeals to governors, the Senate. The Jews were also present on the territory of the Crimean Khanate, which existed until 1783, initially in its seaside cities.

After the state of the Crimean Tatars was disbanded and the colonization of the steppe zone began, the authorities actually turned a blind eye to the fact that there were many Jews among the invited colonizing foreigners.

Between 1859 and 1914, we identified two main periods of policies addressing the "Jewish issue" which were determined by signals from the center of the Empire and we traced their interaction with practical policy at the regional level of the region—Kharkiv province and Kharkiv itself. The main center of power in the region was the Governor, who had influence not only over the administrative area, but also over the military, judiciary, and law enforcement. This also involved the local duma were also affected which then provides for three centers of decision-making and implementation: metropolitan ministries or the Senate; the provincial office or government; and the city duma or uprava. The first period from 1859 to the early 1880s is one we consider as representing a policy of integration and gradual emancipation. Such a policy was a change for the better. From the end of the first third of the 19th century, the main instrument of Jewish assimilation was the army. This was not an original approach from the Russian Empire but was imported from Western European states, particularly France. However, military service in the Russian Empire was an unattractive opportunity. Russian or Ukrainian folklore is full of regret for those enlisted. The same imprint of the royal army remained in the Jewish collective memory. From now on, the authorities offered a Jew a way into "internal provinces" with the prospect of permanent residency there, while also allowing him to maintain his civilian profession or acquire a new one.

The allies of the authorities who brought this policy to bear became the supporters of Haskalah (Enlightenment): the Jewish intelligentsia, graduates of Imperial universities. Their main goal was to find mutually agreeable terms with the authorities. The Jews were supposed to be "good subjects" in exchange for emancipation. As early as the first half of the 19th century, a generation of Jewish intellectuals organized to write, debate and offer the authorities the path to "assimilate" the Jewish population of the Empire. It should be noted that the authorities were informed about the Berlin Jewish community and Moses Mendelssohn, considering them as viable models for Russian Jews.[15] In Kharkiv, the intellectual backdrop containing similar ideas was set in place by the first half of the 19th century, and the university was clearly at the center of its formation. Since the 1820s, Kharkiv University had Jewish students including the likes of Osip

Rabinovich, a publicist and public figure, and other such proponents of the Russian maskilim (the supporters of Haskalah).[16]

The entire period, defined by us as the time of the official "merger policy", the Jewish population of Kharkiv gradually increased. This was supported by the legislative initiatives in place since 1858, and which concerned various groups of Jews, including merchants of the first guild, university students, artisans in a number of domains.[17] The individual request of a Jew to stay in the city could have been handled by several institutions—the state chamber, the police, the Governor. In the case of a positive response the matter was not settled, but rather sparked the "effect of friends and relatives". A father relocated his family, a merchant invited the Jewish clerk, an artisan and his apprentices, a pharmacist and his assistant, a student tried to relocate her sick father.[18] In case of refusal, the claimant had a chance to appeal to the provincial office. Interestingly, the provincial authorities in many instances overturned the decision of the city administration. Between 1859 and 1880, out of 123 appeals to the Governor for permission to stay in Kharkiv, 78 people were granted the request.[19] Finally, there was always a chance to stay in the city illegally, and dozens of people assumed this risk.[20] Undoubtedly, they did not go unnoticed, but the authorities were forced to react in line with the official policy of the center which demanded they carefully monitor the "usefulness" of Jews outside the Pale of Settlement. Such reactions often earned the scorn of local residents. In particular, local residents would complain that police representatives were allegedly receiving bribes from Jews.[21] Quite often, such plots fell to the local press.[22] One such complaint was written in the late 1870s and relays and interesting combination of old-fashioned Judeophobia and modern anti-Semitism.[23] With the help of the document, we can follow the authorities' response to the illusive topic which would wind up being the subject of investigation.

On January 19, 1879, a member of the Kharkiv City Council, Fedor Ivanov, received an order. Ivanov was asked to pay special attention to the Jews during the allotment of trading sites. This would determine the legality of their stay in Kharkiv and their right to trade in the city, and these actions were explained by the city council as necessary if they were to respond to the numerous complaints from locals regarding violations in the issuance of documents for the right to trade.

The author of one of such complaints was town resident Vasilii Bystrovskii. To support his complaint Bystrovskii used an anti-Semitic book by Frederick Millingen, written under the pseudonym Osman Bey,

"The Conquest of the World by the Jews" (1874). In particular, he wrote: "Osman Bey, in his historic [...] research predicted the conquest of the world by Jews ... By law, undoubtedly, Jews should not live in Kharkiv".[24] He accused Jews of using false credentials for the right to reside in the city and speculated on damage inflicted on the state and society. The Jews "hardly in parties, not welcomed at all, boldly enter other people's homes with a proposal to sell and buy, the latter on the cheap".[25]

Bystrovskii's complaint most likely reflects Judeophobia rather than anti-Semitism. The author of the complaint says that Jews on the Blahovishchenskyi market sell "holy icons". Here we see the classic Judeophobic conspiracy that the Jews aim to denigrate the Christian faith and its practice. A personal grudge is even more prominent, as the bourgeois buyer complained that a Jewish ragpicker did not agree to give him a discount.[26]

The city council made the decision to check all the Jews of Kharkiv in order to identify persons who had not obtained the right to reside in the city. In an official decision they noted: "The residents have repeatedly reported that the number of Jews living in the city increases every year, and now no less than ten thousand live here. They live posing as artisans, engaging in speculation and forcing their own hands into all the small trade to the detriment of the native Russian population".[27]

Under the usual procedure, cases concerning Jews were transferred to the Kharkiv provincial government—the highest level of power in the region. The case was to be led by Deev, a senior official for special assignments. The decision was made to set up a commission that would check all Jews in the city to "help reduce the number of Jews living in the city and prevent any further increase".[28]

The idea of verification was supported by the city's Health Council which was paying close attention to the danger of trade in old clothes and linen in Kharkiv due to the threats posed to the city by the plague and by the "Jewish homes being extremely sluggish and overcrowded".[29] The members of the council did not explain that these circumstances were a product of unskilled labor with low profits, or that the housing of non-Jews who worked in this area did not differ from those of the Jews.

The case proceedings demonstrate to us not the exercise of decisive action, but rather its undoing. A month after the commission was set up, Ivanov informed his superior that its work had never begun. He took responsibility for this to Senior Officer Deev. Ivanov directly addressed him but received a reply telling him that the order had been withdrawn, and

that the case had been returned to the provincial government for additional consideration. Ivanov then sent a request to the Governor's office and discovered that the board had decided to hold a one-day census of Jews in Kharkiv in the near future. The date for this action was not indicated, as Ivanov reported to the city administration.

What can be taken away from such a finish to this affair? We see that in the "merger" era the rights of the Jewish population of Kharkiv were in a suspended state: "the legislator approaches the Jews as if they were a particular group of people for whom everything is forbidden, a group which is not allowed".[30] Once again, to the complaints against the Jews the authorities were supposed to react at the level of the highest authority in the region—the provincial government. However, all power is exercised by one zealous official. We do not know his motivation, perhaps the desire to show one's worth, perhaps the fear of punishment for losing the case. But both the provincial government and the city duma remained immovable, all their actions to decisions being carried out on paper alone.

The second period, from the beginning of the 1880s to 1914, may be regarded as a period of inhibited emancipation, an attempt to preserve the solution of the "Jewish issue". In ideological terms, the 1881-1882 wave of anti-Jewish violence made a decisive impact on the situation. In Kharkiv province, which was the center of the military district, it was possible to prevent open violence. The actions of Governor Dmitry Svyatopolk-Mirsky, who openly threatened the participants of the pogroms with the military court proceedings and banned the sale of alcohol, reassured the population.[31]

Open discussions on the "Jewish issue" were held at the municipal level, appearing both in meetings of the city duma and in the press. The Kharkiv Duma of this period could be divided into two camps – a conservative "merchant" camp and liberal camp. One of the leaders of the conservatives was Egor Gordienko, a public figure and mayor from 1871 to 1873. He often used anti-Semitic rhetoric, presented Jews as violators of the law and a threat to the well-being of the city.[32] One of the liberals' voices is Dmytro Bahalii, a well-known historian, public figure and head of the city from 1914 to 1917. He did not distinguish Jews among other citizens of the city and advocated the general emancipation and empowerment of city self-government.[33]

Many Jewish intellectuals were disappointed with the draw-back of the integration policy, and the position of the authorities was perceived as a justification for violence. Many of them were on the path of confrontation,

growing the ranks of the illegal left-wing organizations.[34] Others chose the path of a Jewish national project—Zionism, whose birth is associated with the creation of the BILU group, particularly took hold in Kharkiv.[35] Then, there were those who continued to believe in dialogue and gradual changes. However, all three options involved active public, political positions which were not typical of the majority.

General trends remained valid. The Jewish population of the city continued to grow. The flux of individual appeals from Jews did not wain, which was facilitated by the economic rise of the city and its rapid transformation into a metropolis, giving migrants new opportunities. During this period a significant number of the appeals was also approved. The Jewish share among the merchants of the first guild reached 80%, occupying certain economic niches, such as printing, clothing and footwear manufacturing.[36] Representatives of the Jewish bourgeoisie deployed active philanthropic activities in the interests of the community.

Is the "hidden community" showing strength?

Do we have a reason to talk about the Jewish population of Kharkiv as a community? If so, then when does it appear and how long has it existed? From the beginning or at some point along the way, ought we discuss only personal stories of people who arrived in the city and became merchants, students, craftsmen? Official statements from the authorities clearly stated that the Jewish community was not recognized as a legal entity. A protracted trial, or rather a series of trials that took place between 1900 and 1902 which were merged into a single case, may give some answers to these questions. In the litigation files, we see the "hidden" Jewish community in Kharkiv at the turn of the 20th century, the ambiguity of the actions from the authorities, as well as the conflicts within the community which would actually wind up in the Jewish community's favor. The litigation epic began with a complaint of town resident Illia Rabynovych concerning the obstruction of his meat trade by the Kharkiv Crown Rabbi and the economic board of the houses of worship.[37]

It should be noted that it refers to the ritual slaughter (shechita) and special butchers (shochtim). Traditionally, control over ritual slaughter was passed down to community leadership, requiring appropriate legalization of the rabbi's actions.[38] There was also a purely economic interest. Fees from the Jewish population for the ritual slaughter constituted

the lion's share of the community income. In the regions of the Pale of Settlement these earnings were the highest in the special tax category, the so-called "korobochnyi sbor". Officially, it was from this tax, in particular and with the permission of the authorities, that certain public institutions were subsidized—the Chevra kadisha burial fraternity, the Cheder elementary schools for boys, and the Crown Rabbi's pay. The controversies surrounding shechita were typical of Jewish communities throughout the 19th century. Conflicts were resolved through continuous religious disputes, with responses in the form of explanations from spiritual authorities, using herem, or a religious ban, with the purpose of stopping the sale of meat that was declared non-kosher, or unsuitable for consumption by believers. The reason for the conflicts could be quite detailed technically, including the material from which the special knife was made, or the thickness of a knife blade.

Similar conflicts were also present in Jewish communities outside the Pale of Settlement, in particular, in Kharkiv. In many similar controversies researchers have found the struggle for influence in communities rather than a struggle for religious concerns.[39] Thus, the conflicts around shechita in Kharkiv divided the Jewish community into two opposing camps: one group was represented by former soldiers, cantonists, traders whose families had been living in Kharkiv for several generations;[40] and the other group was represented by first-generation migrants who'd been actively arriving in Kharkiv since the early 1870s. Newcomers accused the existing community of departing from traditions, insisting on the primacy of their own interpretation of religious texts.

Consequently, the plaintiff, Ilya Rabinovich, son of Solomon who lived on 1 Voznesenska Street, a house which belonged a bourgeois Glagolev, in a district of the city which, since the end of the 18th century had been settled by Jews, on June 16, 1900, made his first appeal to The Honourable Governor of Kharkiv. A short time later he would appeal to the governor with two additional requests, on July 26 and 28, 1900. Rabinovich asserted that several people in the city had conspired to prevent others from trading in meat. Apparently, for the right to slaughter cattle, one would be forced to contribute a certain sum of money to these conspirators—from 1.5 rubles up to 30 kopecks. Similarly, during the year, this group had accumulated up to 30 thousand rubles. Several names, wealthy and influential representatives of the Kharkiv Jewish community, were mentioned in the complaint. The first among them was Kharkiv merchant of the first guild Peisah Buras, who lived in his own house in

Skobelevska Square, one of the central squares of the city and a site for festive gatherings and military parades. Buras belonged to one of the richest and most famous Jewish families of the city, and the basis of his business activity was tobacco and his various properties in the city. Buras's influence among the Jewish population of Kharkiv also stemmed from his powerful philanthropic activity.[41] The second was David Kabak who lived on Mykolaiv Street, one of the most respectable and attractive streets in the city. As a member of the group of cantonists, he was directly involved in the meat trade. Kabak was a quite famous person, an active participant in the internal conflicts of the Jewish community, repeatedly conflicted with the Kharkiv Rabbi Ekhezkiel Arlazorov.[42] The issues of shechita also became the subject of the conflict. The last name mentioned was Bekker German who lived in his own house in Trade Lane, the location of many restaurants and inns which had a bad reputation as the "den".[43] It can be assumed that his commercial interests were indeed associated with these institutions, but this has not been confirmed.

Rabinovich argued that "among Jews in trade there are even those without a right of residence in Kharkiv".[44] In addition, Rabinovich pointed out the violation of the Senate Circular, dated December 2, 1899, which explained that "meat skill cannot be recognized as a craft that would give the right to reside outside the Pale of Settlement".[45] The complaint was backed up by several requests from other individuals. Obviously, the plaintiffs were not afraid to enter into conflict with the wealthy merchants of the community, and relied on the support of the authorities, appealing to discriminatory norms regarding the presence of Jews outside the Pale of Settlement.

The authorities had to respond to the appeal, and the case of the conspiracy of the Jewish butchers was handed over to the Kharkiv Chief of Police. The following complaints from Rabinovich were directly addressed to this imperial official. In one such complaint, the plaintiff blamed the butchers in the slaughterhouse who refused to kill the calf for him "in the Jewish way", because he did not have special permission from the rabbi. At the same time, he argued that all meat trade in Kharkiv was monopolized by 17 butchers. He listed them by name, in particular mentioning: Aron Kogan, Haim Luhovickii, Simon Ginzburg. Obviously, the plaintiff was not going to stop and the case grew as Rabinovich's list of conspirators expanded.

On June 28, 1900, Rabinovich sent another complaint which added another name to the list of the accused, Rabbi Sahnin. It should be

reminded that in the middle of the 19th century, the Russian authorities decided to restrict the Jewish community's choice of rabbis. Under the new procedure, the rabbi was elected by the community, but only with the consent of the provincial authorities. Officials insisted on the election of the rabbis by those who had a certificate from special religious institutions, such as the Jewish state school ("kazennoe evreiskoe uchilishche") or the Rabbi Teachers Institute which were organized according to the model of similar Orthodox Christian institutions. Studying in these institutions combined "ordinary" and "Jewish" subjects, with a tendency towards the Russification of the educational process.[46] Clearly, in the eyes of traditionalists, such training, as well as those who received it, had nothing to do with Judaism or its recognized religious institutions, or yeshiva.[47] A solution to this deadlock was found quite quickly, though there was no lack of conflict. The community was forced to maintain Crown rabbis—they performed their role of metrical bookkeeping, or solemn statements with the praise of the official authorities—but they were not actually allowed to resolve spiritual matters of importance to the community. This power remained with those who were called spiritual rabbis. In our case, we see that the Crown Rabbi Sahnin can be seen favoring the interests of the Jewish elite, as accused by the plaintiff.

In addition to Ilya Rabinovich, two Kharkiv bourgeois, Simon Rabinovich and Kel'man, appeared in a June 28 plaintiff's complaint which, due to their illiteracy, was signed by Ilya Rabinovich, himself. Separately, another complaint was added to the case by a bourgeois David Bronshtejn, who lived in Okhtyrka, a town in Kharkiv province. Bronshtejn accused butchers of refusing to slaughter cattle intended for sale, citing the fact that "Buras did not order them".[48]

The responsibility of determining the credibility of the accusations raised in the complaints was entrusted to a member of the City Duma, Professor Ostapenko, in charge of urban butchers. Following the inspection of these establishments, the person in charge verified that the butchers in the market refused to slaughter the livestock of the plaintiffs, even in the presence of a representative of the government and despite his insistence. The next step in the case was a conversation-inquiry between the suspects referred to in complaints and representatives of the Jewish elite. During these procedures, Buras and Sahnin reported that "the rabbi's authorization to cut poultry, slaughter cattle and sell meat is based on the religious grounds and the morality of those engaged in this trade".[49]

Despite the speed of the first procedural steps, the trial was delayed. Quite unexpectedly, on November 4, 1900, Rabinovich appealed to the Chief of Police to "stop all proceedings in the case concerning my complaints".[50] The plaintiff wrote that he was convinced that all the rumors and stories about the illegal sale of kosher meat were fictional and were in no way based on fact. We do not know what caused this reversal, and we are left to assume either intimidation, or an attempt to find a compromise between the plaintiff and the interested parties.

Nevertheless, the case was not put to rest. Rabinovich was invited to talk with Senior Official for Special Assignments Gulak-Artemovsky and actually confirmed his accusations, stating that the previous reversal was demanded from him under pressure from a member of the economic board of the second Kharkiv house of worship: Peisah Buras. Presumably, the bourgeois Rabinovich felt caught between the authorities and influential Jewish representatives.

The case returned to the Governor's office and, on March 20, 1901, from under the purview of the Governor of Kharkiv, it was handed over to the officiary for Special Assignments, the titular counselor Efimovich. Given that by that time the case had been examined for ten months, one can assume that the authorities did not rush into taking a decision. Perhaps this is evidenced by the person chosen to oversee the case. The title of 'titular counselor' implies a junior civil servant. However, Mr. Efimovich turned out to be extremely careful, and soon provided his superior with a rather detailed report. In a report to the Kharkiv governor, he outlined his main theses: firstly, there are illegal dues from the Jews selling meat in Kharkiv; secondly, the dues are established by a joint agreement between two dozen merchants and representatives of the Jewish population; thirdly, the dues are concealed, and the amount is from 12 to 30 thousand rubles.

The official also held new interviews with the suspects, from whom he learned that "the dues have existed for so long that nobody remembers when it was introduced".[51] The direct executor of the dues was named as Shlomo Gurovich, a resident of Vitebsk. All the money was transferred to Peisah Buras. According to Buras's statement, all these financial transactions were not organized and were recorded on "separate papers". In his testimony, Buras provided a full picture of the dues for slaughter and the options on which the money was spent. His evidence showed that in 1900 11,800 rubles were collected. 1,800 were spent on the Spiritual Rabbi, 1,200 were given to the Crown Rabbi who was also given 100 rubles for the stationery, a pension of 600 rubles was given to the widow

of the Spiritual Rabbi Arlazorov, 1,200 went to the cheders and the Talmud Torah. The money was not entirely spent and the balance was 3,237 rubles.

The Crown Rabbi Sahnin actually advocated for Buras in his statement, saying that he had repeatedly tried to get rid of this mission, as a result of "quarrels and gossip". In addition, Sahnin disclosed, although this was not connected to the case, that many illegal private Jewish houses of worship had been opened in Kharkiv in recent years. This nuance did not interest the official but it does add new information about the Jewish population of the city. Active Jewish migration to Kharkiv continued throughout the last third of the 19th century, and the legal migration of "useful" Jews approved by the authorities was only part of this movement. Even official statistics showed an increase in the number of Jews in the city from 1,000 in the 1860s to almost 10,000 in the census of 1897. The population was growing rapidly and required new buildings for religious practices. The bureaucracy moved too slowly to react to these inquiries and, as a result, they appeared illegally, mainly in private houses. The Crown Rabbi Sahnin had obviously not expected to intervene in the conflict with the butchers, but he was concerned about the situation with the houses of worship, and he hastened to share this information with the official.

In another eight months, on November 24, 1901, the Kharkiv Governor would personally inform the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the results of the inquiry. We have outlined the main theses of his letter: firstly, for forty years in Kharkiv there had been a tax to slaughter cattle, so it began around the end of the 1850s or the beginning of the 1860s, that is, from the decision to authorize official residence for Jewish merchants of the first guild; secondly, the tax was collected by a specially appointed person who was paid 40 rubles; thirdly, all funds were transferred to a member of the Jewish economic board, that is, Peisah Buras, and reporting and control of the tax did not exist; in the fourth, permission from the Spiritual Rabbi was required for every butcher to carry out his work, as well as to perform additional services at his request. In particular, one butcher was forced to take a clerk who was ill and unfit for work, but who had the reputation of a faithful Jew. Probably, this elderly man who was unable to work had no right to permanent residence in the city and was faced with returning to the Pale of Settlement. So, the Rabbi rescued him as a respectable man from the point of view of the community; at the same time, it points to a traditional form of care in the Jewish community for those who do not possess full rights. The fifth of the main theses was that any attempt to open a new meat trade encountered significant obstacles, including

the calls of the rabbis in official houses of worship to not buy meat from certain "treif" ("non-kosher") traders, that is, with a kosher discrepancy. In fact, this meant that no believing Jew would dare to buy such meat, even at a lower price. The Governor noted that the cost of overcoming such obstacles is uncertain, but it is likely to be 30,000 rubles which was confirmed by the statement of "one Jew", who promised without a thought to donate 20,000 rubles if "korobochnyi sbor" in Kharkiv was farmed out. It should be reminded that formally "korobochnyi sbor" could not exist in Kharkiv, a city beyond the Pale of Settlement. We do not know if the Jew referred to by the Governor who remained anonymous was right about the amount of the charge, but obviously all the typical terms for traditional Jewish communities were relayed in the words of Kharkiv Jews. Based on his assumption, the Governor concluded that the figure of 12,000 rubles, reported by Buras, was false, and there had to have been additional hidden expenses. Perhaps these funds were used to donate to hospitals for the poor and other charitable associations which Buras requested be opened. At the end of his letter, the Governor proposes a rather pragmatic solution to the problem, so to speak: the "withdrawal of the funds out of the shadows", the legalization of meat charges with the tax collection.[52]

The final point in the case was the letter from January 17, 1902, the response from the Assistant Minister of the Interior, Senator Durnovo. A high-ranking official insisted that no Jewish community "does not exist as a legal entity in Kharkiv".[53] Accordingly, ordered to eliminate all obstacles in the meat trade, the rabbi and other individuals mentioned in the complaints were called to no longer interfere in trade. At that time, Rabinovich repeatedly withdrew his complaint, refuting the previous accusations. The investigation had no impact on the people we have mentioned.

This seemingly inconclusive case does, however, provide grounds for conclusions and assumptions. Obviously, we can state that despite the official position of the authorities regarding Jewish communities outside the Pale of Settlement, such a "hidden community" did exist in Kharkiv, and it had all the characteristic social institutions: rabbis, professional associations, haverot—in our case, the organization of butchers—shochtim, cheders, "korobochnyi sbor". The community's elite—wealthy merchants and spiritual authorities—is no less traditional. The evidence that this community appears only in the 1860s is likely an attempt to link its appearance to a legal permit for the settlement of Jews

in Kharkiv. Earlier papers show that the pre-reform community of soldiers had a house of worship, Khevra-Kadisha, cheders, and Jewish merchants in Kharkiv could already have kosher food in the city. That is, as far as the 1860s is concerned, it is more likely illustrative of a certain heredity in the existence of community institutions, not of their first appearance. A new migrant, bourgeois Rabinovich may well have considered himself a mere butcher or meat trader who came to a big city with prospects. Perhaps he was offended or he strongly believed in the power of imperial officials, perhaps he just did not immediately understand the rules of the game. The community, slowly and calmly, showed its power to him. To arrive at a happy ending, every personal story was supposed to conclude with the integration of the migrant into the existing community in the city which controlled the Jewish life of the city.

For the authorities such cases obviously had two sides. On the one hand, they demanded a response until they were submitted for consideration by the Governor and ministers. We see the first steps made quickly in the investigation, carried out by the responsible persons, and we see a constant correspondence between the departments on the results. The actual community leaders involved in the case did not so much as try to conceal anything; on the contrary, they clearly delivered the requested information to the officials. Moreover, they used this moment—as shown by the Crown Rabbi Sahnin—to inform the authorities about their problems. The city administration interfered only minimally in the case, confining its actions to one raid on a slaughterhouse, and at the provincial office level the case gradually began to grind to a halt, either due to the appointment of a chief official of a rather low rank or to the strange proposal of the Governor himself to legalize the "korobochnyi sbor". The proposal is considered strange because of the official position of the Empire, of which the governor was quickly reminded by the deputy minister. Still, the imperial power or the power of the province or city were never brought to bear on the case. Apparently, even if new requests from the capital could have been obtained, officials from the provincial office would have referred to the plaintiff's own letter in which he declared all his complaints to be false. We see a pragmatic strategy of imperial power in relation with the Jewish community of the city. The Empire could have officially punished the community leaders on the immediate cessation of the violations—such as collecting money for slaughter—but rather at the ministerial level tried to promote the ideas relevant for the functioning of the community. Undoubtedly, such an effort benefitted the administration,

which could then receive supplementary funds in the city or regional budget. As such, the discussion of bribes isn't relevant to this particular case, but we can hypothetically assume their actions in similar cases.

Conclusions

The "Jewish issue" arose before the Empire at the end of the 18th century and would provoke discussions and practical solutions until the revolution and the fall of the Empire in 1917. The essentially colonial project, with certain transformations, remained unchanged until the end of the Empire. In the first half of the 19th century, officials used orientalist rhetoric to mark Jews and other "oriental" backgrounds as "inorodtsy". In fact, army was the only option for integration available to all Jews and it was not at all attractive. A more attractive option was to study at the university and, though it was inaccessible to the vast majority of Jews, it nevertheless gave birth to a whole generation of supporters for "assimilation".

Changes in state policy regarding the "Jewish question" supported the Russian maskilim. "Selective integration" started in 1859 and continued without interruption until the beginning of the 1880s. Moving along the Pale of Settlement at this time became more and more attractive. In the south of the empire there were structural shifts: industrialization, urbanization, construction of railways, and others. Kharkiv was one of those urban spaces that opened windows of opportunities for migrants, including artisans, students, merchants, lawyers, doctors. Though Jews were only part of a large migration, they became one of the main actors in the creation of a new urban space. In the southern regions of the empire, the Jews were neighbors and frequent guests. So, in 1863 more than 20,000 Jews visited Kharkiv fairs.

The beginning of the 1880s brought about an abrupt change in the situation. So, the effect of the first wave of pogroms in the history of the Empire was somewhat exaggerated by contemporaries, setting the tone for a certain tradition of interpretation. Nevertheless, the murder of Alexander II and certain political changes led to the adoption of the 1882 May Laws, the mass exodus of Jews from Moscow in 1891, the introduction of quotas for institutions of higher education. At the same time, in Kharkiv, the impact of the new policy was reduced. Documents do not show an increase in the number of inspections, or an increase in the number of

Jews refusing to live in the city. The number of Jews in the city had, in fact, steadily increased.

We emphasize two important points in describing the relationship between Jews and authorities in the region: firstly, the city was outside the Smuha; and, secondly, this constantly drew the attention of the authorities to the rights of the migrant Jews to stay in the city. Official politics also constantly demanded the persecution of those who broke the rules of resettlement. The model proposed by B. Natans demonstrates the power-maker who selectively brings "useful" Jews into the existing society. The problem is that this relationship focuses only on the most "prominent" members of the groups—merchants, students, specialists in "free occupations"—while the majority of the Jewish population enjoyed far less prestigious occupations as tailors, clothiers, and so on. In addition, any study can take into account only those who had legal grounds to stay, which is to say it misses many undocumented residents.

Here we outline a model we consider typical in the big cities of the south of the empire which, during the last third of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, turned into real metropolises, such as Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Yekaterinoslav. These cities became the main vectors for the movement of migrant Jews. It was precisely between these cities that the migration actually took place. The urban and regional elites were driven by material considerations in their relationship with Jews. In situations that demanded that the local authorities act decisively against the Jewish population, one can observe if not inaction, then the lack of direction. There were certain confrontations between the departments—the state chamber, the city duma, the provincial office—which, again, were material or financial in nature. At the same time, this did not mean that the police raids, litigation on individual Jews, the refusal of the father to carry the children, and the husband's wife were not persistent phenomena. In the public discourse, the "Jewish question" was discussed in the press, but also in discussions at the city duma. The Jewish community itself, in as far as we could see, chose a line of cooperation with the authorities, of avoiding any conflicts. In the absence of official access to power, personal strategies remained the key to every Jew who wanted to live in the city.

The prospect of research remains the study of individual histories of Jews and officials, as well as the creation of a collective portrait of groups. This perspective will allow a deeper understanding of motivations and behavioral strategies.

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