A Journey Through the Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter

FROM ANTIQUITY TO 1914

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Cover photo:
Fair in Ukraine. Painting by Vasily Sternberg (1818–45).
Annual fairs, bazaars, and especially the common weekly or daily marketplace were key sites of Ukrainian-Jewish interaction.

Marketplace in Drohobych, eastern Galicia. Postcard, early 1900s.

Contents

The first part of this publication highlights the experience of Jews on Ukrainian lands and their interaction with ethnic Ukrainians and others up to the partitions of Poland (1772–95). Two parallel eras follow, which treat the cultural and political transformations experienced by these two stateless peoples and their interactions with each other and others in the course of the "long nineteenth century" (1772–1914) — in the Russian Empire and under Austrian Habsburg rule.

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Maps used in this publication have been reproduced
from various sources and may not reflect current spelling
of city or location names.

Fair in Ukraine. Painting by Vasily Sternberg (1818–45). Annual fairs, bazaars, and especially the common weekly or daily marketplace were key sites of Ukrainian-Jewish interaction.

Introduction

Our stories are incomplete without each other

The territory of modern-day Ukraine has been for many centuries the home of diverse peoples, including one of the oldest and most populous Jewish communities in the world. The Jewish presence on Ukrainian lands dates back to antiquity. By the fifteenth century, Yiddish-speaking Jews from Central European lands began to migrate eastward in significant numbers and formed communities alongside the local Christian Ukrainian and other populations.

This publication explores the encounter and the side-by-side evolution of Jews and Ukrainians—also known in earlier periods as Rus' or Ruthenians—from antiquity to the beginning of the First World War. At the same time, it highlights aspects of the rich Jewish culture, both religious and secular, that flourished on lands that are today Ukraine—lands described as the cradle of Hasidism, Yiddish and modern Hebrew literature, and Zionism.

Our aim is to present an integrated narrative that looks at the experience of these two peoples together, in all its complexity —through periods of crisis and episodic violence, as well as long stretches of normal co-existence and multifaceted cross-cultural fertilization/cultural interaction.

Types galiciens: paysans et juifs (Galician types: Peasants and Jews). Drawing by Charles Edouard Delort, based on a photograph by M. Krieger, ca. 1875. (Moldovan Family Collection, YIVO Archives)

Greek colonies (8th to 3rd century BCE) in Crimea (Tauris) on the Black Sea (Euxine Sea).

Pre-World War I map of Transcarpathia and Transcarpathian Ruthenian settlement (highlighted in yellow).

Jews on Ukrainian lands up to the thirteenth century

Black Sea colonies

Jews first came to Ukrainian lands as merchants more than two thousand years ago. Some settled in the coastal towns of the Black Sea in the southwestern Crimea, which they coinhabited with Greek colonists. Caravans of traders, including Jews, passed through these lands with goods from China, Persia, northern Africa, northern Europe, and, later, the Byzantine Empire. The Jews who settled in the Crimea came to be known as Krymchaks. They were later joined by Karaites, a Jewish sect that preserved its ancient Biblical faith while rejecting the Talmud and embracing the practices and the Turkic language of the local population.

Hungarian Kingdom

During the early medieval period, Jewish traders also passed through, and at times settled in, the territory that later became Transcarpathia, which was part of the Hungarian Kingdom from the ninth century until World War I (and is today part of Ukraine).

Detail from the General Map of Ukraine created in 1648 by Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan, a French military engineer and cartographer in the service of the Polish king.

Khazar Khaganate, ca. 820. The area of direct Khazar control is encircled in blue, its sphere of influence in purple.

Khazaria (late seventh to tenth centuries)

Jews fleeing persecution in the Byzantine Empire found safe haven in the Khazar Khaganate (territory that in part is today Ukraine), where they were accepted as citizens. Jews resided in fourteen Khazar strongholds, as well as in Kyiv and Chernihiv. The presence of Jews is reflected in the names of Kyiv's residential areas preserved in ancient scripts–"Kozary" in Podil and "Zhidove" in the upper city. A significant number of Khazars converted to Judaism in the eighth century. While scholars continue to debate the extent and influence of the Khazar conversion, they generally dismiss the claim that Eastern European Jewry descends from the Khazars.

Kyivan Rus' (960–1240)

Kyivan Rus' was a conglomerate of principalities based in central Ukraine, which united a number of Slavic and other groups in eastern Europe after the Rus' grand prince Sviatoslav destroyed the Khazar Khaganate in the 960s. In 988 Prince Volodymyr adopted Christianity according to the Byzantine Greek rite as the official religion of Kyivan Rus'. Since then Eastern Orthodoxy has remained the dominant religion in Ukrainian lands regardless of the regime in power. As in other Christian lands, the theological works of Kyivan Rus' churchmen included anti-Judaic themes. At the same time, Kyivan princes welcomed the role Jews played in trade and finance. During this period, the steppe was an unstable zone, dominated by warring nomadic Turkic tribal groups in almost constant military conflict with Kyivan Rus'. The city of Kyiv itself fell to the Mongols in 1240.

Above left: Kyivan Rus' in the 9th to 13th centuries.

Left: Prince Volodymyr discussing Christianity with a Greek philosopher (15th-century copy of the Radziwill Chronicle of the 11th to 13th centuries). Accounts of debates that led to Volodymyr's adoption of Christianity are remarkably similar to medieval Jewish legends about the earlier conversion of the Khazar king to Judaism.

The "Kyivan letter," dated ca. 930, written in Hebrew and signed by representatives of the Jewish community of Kyiv, is perhaps the first written record of Kyiv. The letter describes the plight of a Kyivan Jew who borrowed money but then was robbed and was looking for ways to repay his debt. (Cairo Geniza, Cambridge University Library)
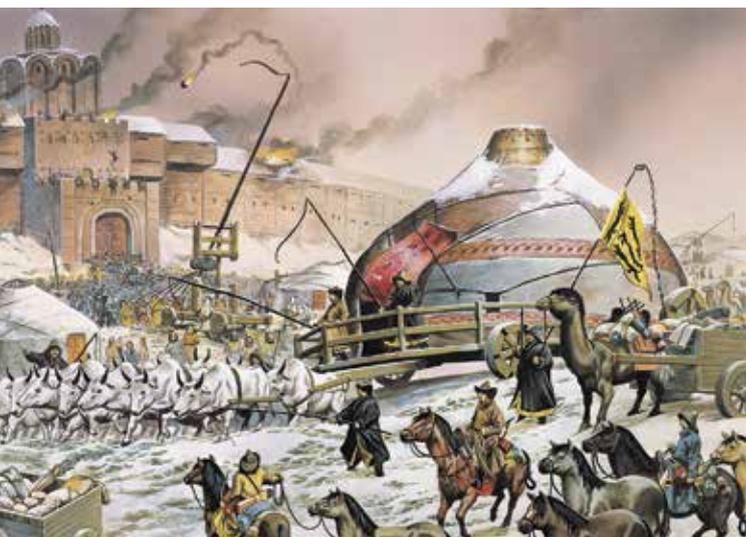
The Mongol siege of Kyiv in 1240.

What do we know about Jews in Kyivan Rus'?

We know that Kyiv had a Jewish quarter, called Zhidove; that a Kyivan Rus' Jew who spoke only the Slavonic language arrived in Byzantine-ruled Salonika; and that a letter signed by Kyiv Jews, dated around 930, was included in the historic Cairo Geniza (a *geniza* is a temporary repository for worn-out or damaged sacred Hebrew-language books and manuscripts prior to their burial). We know also that Kyivan princes generally welcomed the participation of Jews in trade and finance, and that from the late eleventh century Kyivan Rus' became a refuge for Western European Jews fleeing persecution by the Crusaders. However, in 1113 a mob attacked and looted Jews in the Zhidove quarter, as well as boyars, the highest-ranking members of the aristocracy. It is reasonable to conclude that this attack was motivated primarily by economic resentment rather than religious intolerance. By the fifteenth century there were small Jewish communities in northern Ukrainian towns, consisting of Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews (the branch of Jewry that coalesced in Germanic lands in the tenth century), in contrast to the earlier Jewish inhabitants there, whose primary language was probably Slavic.

Lviv's coat of arms features a lion, the symbol of the city since the times of the Rus' principality of Galicia-Volhynia.

Statue of King Danylo of Galicia in Lviv. (Sculptors Vasyl Yarych and Roman Romanovych, architect Yarema Churylyk, 2001)

Right: Rus' principalities of Galicia-Volhynia, 13th to 14th centuries.

Three regimes: from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century

Galicia-Volhynia (1199–1349)

After unifying the southwestern Rus' lands, Prince Danylo of Galicia-Volhynia (later crowned king) invited Armenians, Germans, Jews, and Poles to apply their artisanal and commercial skills in the towns and cities of his realm. Small Jewish communities were formed under the Rus' princes of Galicia-Volhynia, and Jews helped establish Lviv as a centre for international trade between central Europe and lands to the east.
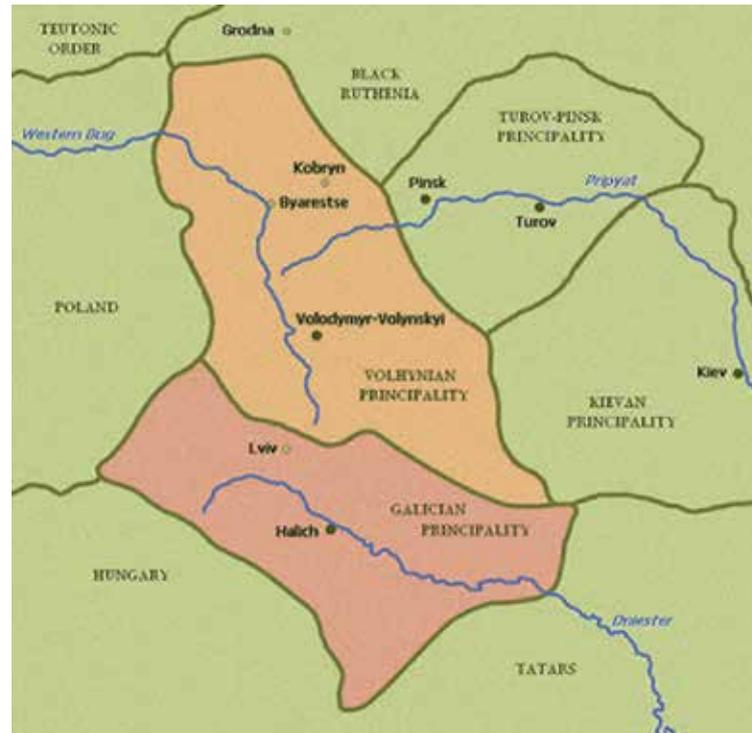
Above: While the vast majority of those captured by the Nogay and sold into slavery were subjected to extremely harsh treatment, there were exceptions to this rule. One captured Galician Ukrainian girl from Rohatyn, Roxelana, became the favourite and later the highly influential wife of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. She was one of the most powerful women in Ottoman history.

Right: Map showing the territorial evolution of the Crimean Khanate from the 15th to 18th centuries. As everywhere else in the medieval Muslim world, Jews in the Crimean Khanate had the status of *dhimmi* — a tolerated monotheistic minority whose members were allowed to engage in commerce and freely practise their religion, as long as they accepted a subordinate status and kept a low profile.

The Crimean Khanate (1449–1783)

In the 1440s, successors of the Mongol Golden Horde formed their own khanate along the northern coast of the Black Sea, in the Crimean Peninsula and the southern Ukrainian steppes. The steppes were controlled by Tatar nomadic tribes known as Nogay, who engaged in regular raids on the East Slav populations, capturing hundreds of thousands to sell as slaves in the port of Kefe/Caffa (Feodosiya) for the Crimean Khanate's massive slave trade with the Ottoman Empire. Alongside Crimean Tatars, Turks, Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, and others, Jews (both Karaite and Rabbanite) also played a role in the slave trade, whether as slaveholders, mediators, moneylenders, or themselves unfortunate victims of Tatar raids.

In 1507 the Lithuanian Grand Duke and Polish King Zygmunt I granted the Jews a charter of protection that provided exemption from the jurisdiction of municipal authorities, security measures against physical attacks, and the right to practise their religion. The charter was backdated to 1388 and attributed to Grand Duke Vytautus/Vitold (pictured above) in order to give the document an aura of antiquity.

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania (thirteenth century to 1569)

Polish kings Bolesław V "the Pious" in 1264 and Casimir (Kazimierz) III the Great in 1334 accorded privileges and protection to Jews and welcomed them to settle in Poland in significant numbers. This encouraged Jews fleeing persecution in Western Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to migrate to Poland. Between 1340 and 1495 the Grand Duchy of Lithuania assumed control over several principalities of former Kyivan Rus', including Volhynia, Galicia, and Podolia. Jews received royal protection and often acted as agents of urbanization in these regions. A number of towns (such as Lutsk) became important centres of Jewish life. However, though they had permission to reside in these towns, Jews did not have the status of citizens (*mishchany*) and were subjected to economic restrictions that channeled them to such areas as currency exchange and moneylending.

Grand Duke of Lithuania Alexander (later also Alexander I of Poland) expelled Jews from his realm in 1495 but invited them back eight years later in recognition of their economic utility.

Lutsk castle, built mostly in the 1340s for Lubartas (Lubart), the last ruler of united Galicia-Volhynia. The walls of the castle formerly enclosed a cathedral, the residence of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and an episcopal palace. German reports indicate that on 2 July 1941, 1,160 Jews were murdered at Lubart's castle.

By 1500 Jews resided in 18 towns of the Ruthenian *voivodeship* (administrative area akin to a duchy) of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland.

The expansion of Lithuania in the 13th to 15th centuries.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at its largest territorial extent (1616–57), superimposed on modern European state boundaries. (Courtesy of Augustinas Zemaitis)

The white eagle, emblem of the Kingdom of Poland, and the knight on horseback, emblem of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, under one crown.

Polish magnates, 1576–86.

Jews and Ukrainians in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795)

The largest migration of Jews eastward into Ukrainian lands was directly related to Poland's territorial expansion and colonizing efforts following the Union of Lublin in 1569, which united the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and created the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Key agents of the colonization efforts were the magnates, the richest stratum of the Polish nobility.

An immediate consequence of the colonization was the intensification of the burdens on the peasantry. A 1573 decree rendered the vast majority of Ukraine's rural population proprietary serfs – the property of the Polish and Ukrainian landlords. At the same time, the magnates established around 200 private towns in which they settled considerable numbers of Jews who often administered the magnates' estates, collected taxes, and provided credit to both nobles and peasants. Jewish merchants and artisans, driven out from several Polish cities by their economic competitors, also settled in these towns.

Ukrainian peasant. Painting by Serhii Vasylkivsky.

How did Jews become economic intermediaries between the noble estate owners and the peasant serfs on Ukrainian lands?

Under the Polish kings, Jews and other migrants were invited to manage the magnates' far-flung estates and to establish regular markets and fairs in their private towns. Thus developed the *arenda* (leasing) system, in which Polish magnates and Rus' noblemen leased key economic functions to *arendars* (agents), often Jews. In addition to acting as tax collectors, the *arendars* would manage the fields, mills, taverns, distilleries, and wine-making operations of the estates, at times coming into conflict with local entrepreneurial groups. The scale and range of responsibilities often led a Jewish *arendar* to sublease designated economic functions to other Jews, who would then come to reside in the region and form Jewish communities. As a result, Jews were often caught between the nobility, who expected them to maximize profit, and the peasants, who resented the economic burdens imposed on them by the system. Religious divisions further exacerbated tensions between Roman Catholic Polish nobles, Ukrainian peasant serfs, and a new religious group among the Ukrainians — the Uniates, whom the Orthodox regarded as traitors for accepting the authority of the Pope in Rome.

The Uniate Church (later renamed the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church), which came into being following the Union of Brest in 1596, broke relations with the Patriarch of Constantinople and accepted the authority of the Pope in Rome while maintaining the eastern liturgy, rites, and practices. This development was viewed by some Orthodox as a Polish ploy to impose Catholicism on the Eastern Christian Ukrainian populace.

Polish landlord. Sketch by Jean-Pierre Norblin de La Gourdaine. (Warsaw University Library)

Pages from the minute book of the Council of Four Lands (*Va'ad Arba Aratsot*).
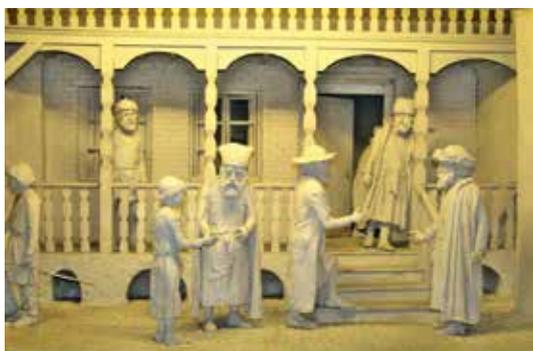
A meeting of the Council of Four Lands as depicted in an exhibit at Beit Hatfutsot Museum in Tel Aviv.

How were Jewish communities governed?

Between 1569 and 1648 the number of Jews in the provinces of Volhynia, Podolia, Kyiv, and Bratslav increased from 4,000 to 52,000, encompassing 115 localities. Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were given a high degree of communal autonomy, exercised through Jewish regional councils and a central body of Jewish self-government, the Council of Four Lands (*Va'ad Arba Aratsot*), which functioned from 1580 to 1764. The "Four Lands" included Greater Poland, Little Poland, and two lands that today are part of Ukraine: Rus'/Galicia and Volhynia. Each Jewish community (*kehilah*) had its own *kahal,* a communal institution run by the more prosperous elements in the community and the rabbinic elite. Each *kahal* sent representatives to meetings of the *Va'ad*, often held in conjunction with important annual fairs. The *Va'ad* represented the Commonwealth's Jewry before the king and the Polish parliament; debated and legislated major religious and sociocultural issues affecting Jewish society; organized responses to attacks on Jews; and served as a high court of appeal for Jewish community courts. Most important from the government's perspective was the role of the *Va'ad* in negotiating the apportionment across communities of the collective tax on Jews—often a source of intense contestation among the delegates.

Jewish councils in Ukrainian lands in the 18th century.

Scale 1 : 6 180 000

Legend:
- Kingdom of Poland
- International boundaries, ca. 1570
- Boundaries of Jewish Councils
- Present-day boundary of Ukraine

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Panoramic view of Lviv in the 18th century. Painting by Zygmunt Rozwadowski and Stanisław Janowski. (Lviv Historical Museum)
(Courtesy of the Lviv National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library of Ukraine)

Golden Rose Synagogue interior. Sketch by Rudolf Bernt, 1898. (Private collection of Ihor Kotlobulatov, Lviv. Alamy)

Lviv from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

By the end of the sixteenth century, Lviv had become a major centre of Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, and Armenian cultures. Its influence spread across Eastern and Central Europe through books printed in the town. At the end of the eighteenth century there were about 7,000 Jews (32 percent of the total population) and between 2,800 and 3,000 Ukrainians (13–15 percent of the total population).

Interethnic economic and religious tensions had increased during this period. Ukrainians suffered discrimination after the banning of the Orthodox faith in 1596, and several anti-Jewish riots occurred. In 1609 the Ukrainian burghers of Lviv issued a protest saying that their position was worse than that of Jews and Armenians, who were allowed to practise their faith and had wider judicial and administrative autonomy.

Although Jews lived mostly in Jewish quarters, they had daily contacts with the broader urban population in the marketplace and elsewhere. Jews and Ukrainians inhabited adjacent spaces and were familiar with each other's customs and religious ceremonies.

The Golden Rose Synagogue, exterior, with the Dormition (also known as the Assumption) Orthodox church in the background. Photograph by Józef Kościesza Jaworski, 1912. (Private collection of Ihor Kotlobulatov, Lviv)

The Space of Synagogues in the heart of Lviv's historical Jewish Quarter, on the site of the sixteenth-century Golden Rose Synagogue, the adjacent Beth Hamidrash (House of Study), and the Great Synagogue built in 1801. The site of these buildings destroyed during the Holocaust became for decades a symbol of neglect and of history ignored. After seven years of discussion and consultations with academics, experts, representatives of the Jewish community, and city officials, the Space of Synagogues was dedicated on 4 September 2016 as a place for reflection and commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust in Lviv — a place to inspire dialogue between the past and the present.

Central to the life of the Jewish community during this period was a synagogue commissioned by a wealthy merchant, Isaac son of Nachman. The Nachmanowicz synagogue, built in 1582–1595 in the Renaissance style, served the community for over 350 years. The history of this synagogue is shrouded in legend. It was renamed "Di Goldene Royz" (the Golden Rose) in honour of Nachmanowicz's daughter-in-law Rosa, an educated woman actively engaged in community charity work and in her husband's business after his death. According to legend, she ransomed the synagogue in 1609 from the Jesuits who had laid claim to it. It was also known as the *Turei Zahav* [Golden Rows/Columns] synagogue in honour of the famous work by a seventeenth-century Jewish scholar who prayed there. In 1941 the German occupiers plundered its religious objects and in 1943 they destroyed the building, leaving only remnants of the north wall, along with Hebrew inscriptions and other faint traces. Neglected for decades, the remains of the synagogue were designated a World Heritage Site in 1998 and integrated into a new Jewish memorial complex, the Space of Synagogues, in September 2016.

The Space of Synagogues, Lviv. (Alamy)

The Zaporozhian Cossacks

A camp of the Zaporozhian Cossacks.
Painting by Józef Brandt, 1841–1915.

The Zaporozhian Cossacks write a letter to
the Sultan of Turkey. Painting by Ilya Repin,
late 19th century.

Peasant farmers and adventurers went on expeditions to hunt,
fish, and explore the steppe's natural wealth. Some opted to
settle there and created the Cossack way of life. Fugitive peas-
ants seeking to escape serfdom often would join the Cossacks in
their *sich* (military stronghold) in Zaporozhia. Some Cossacks
were "registered" and paid by the Polish government to defend
the borders against Tatar raids. In time, the Cossacks acquired
military strength and prestige as they battled against the Turks
and rescued captives held by Tatars—themes that entered
Ukrainian folklore. In the context of socioeconomic disparity
and religious tensions, several Cossack hetmans (leaders) in the
seventeenth century mounted revolts against the landowners
and became heroes for defying Polish rule and defending the
Orthodox faith. Nikolai Gogol later immortalized the image
of the freedom-loving patriotic Zaporozhian Cossack in his
novel *Taras Bulba*, while portraying Roman Catholic Poles and
Jews (seen as allied with the oppressive Polish regime) as the
contemptible Others who may be killed with impunity.

The term Cossack (Ukrainian *kozak*, derived from
the Turkic *kazak* `free man, horseman, warrior')
came to mean anyone who ventured into the
steppes, where he acknowledged no authority.

Zaporozhian Cossack from the Crimea (unknown painter). The Cossack Mamai — an idealized figure in Ukrainian folklore and a common character in Ukrainian folk painting, generally depicted as playing the kobza (Ukrainian lute-like folk music instrument) — with his faithful horse nearby.

The Cossack Mamai and *haidamakas* (participants in the 18th-century uprisings against the Polish regime) hang an *arendar* (leaseholder) by his heels, as another is apprehended. The two leaseholders are depicted bearded and in Jewish dress. (Folk art from the mid–19th century. The original is at the National Art Museum of Ukraine in Kyiv.)

Portrait of Bohdan Khmelnytsky by Willem Hondius, 1651 (National Museum in Warsaw). Khmelnytsky is both a heroic and controversial figure in Ukrainian national history. Celebrated as a nation builder and a liberator of Ukraine, Khmelnytsky is also held responsible for the 1648 massacres of Polish Roman Catholics and Jews, and for the 1654 Pereiaslav Agreement with Muscovy, which opened the door for the Russian expansion in the region.

The Khmelnytsky Cossack uprising

Social and religious tensions in the eastern borderlands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth culminated in a major Cossack uprising in 1648, which developed into a movement to break away from Poland. Led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the revolt succeeded in overthrowing the Polish political, social, and religious order and created a Cossack state, the Hetmanate, that shaped Ukrainian identity and culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The main targets of the uprising were the Polish noble landowners, the Roman Catholic and Uniate clergy, and Jews, the latter regarded as agents of the Polish nobility. According to Jewish accounts, Polish forces generally protected Jews, but in some cases betrayed them. In the course of the fighting, dozens of Jewish communities were destroyed (notably in Nemyriv, Tulchyn, Polonne, and Bar). An estimated 18,000–20,000 Jews, comprising almost half of the total Jewish population in the region, were massacred. Many of the Jewish casualties were at the hands of Tatar allies of the Cossacks. Around one thousand were taken captive by Tatars and sold in the slave markets of the Ottoman Empire. Another thousand were forcibly converted to Eastern Orthodoxy. Several thousand Jews fled north to other parts of Poland, Lithuania, and as far as Italy and Holland, abandoning their possessions and enduring great hardship. The trauma was deeply felt. By the mid-1650s, however, many of the Jewish refugees began to return and rebuild their communities.

The Cossack state was established following the 1649 agreement with the Poles in Zboriv. The agreement accepted the Cossacks' demand that Jewish leaseholders be expelled from Cossack villages but allowed Jewish merchants to carry on trade if they converted to Orthodoxy.

How is the Khmelnytsky Cossack uprising perceived in the historical memory of Ukrainians?

The equestrian statue of Khmelnytsky, erected in 1888 in the centre of Kyiv, was commissioned by the Russian nationalist Mikhail Yuzefovich to highlight Khmelnytsky's role in integrating Dnieper Ukraine (the territory on either side of the middle course of the Dnieper River) into the Russian Empire. The original version of the monument, which was to depict three vanquished figures — a Polish landlord, a Jewish leaseholder, and a Jesuit priest — under the hooves of the horse, was rejected after Jews and some members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia objected.

The uprising and the birth of the Cossack state mark a turning point in Eastern European history. Khmelnytsky became a controversial figure because the accords he signed with the Muscovite tsar in 1654 led to increasing Russian control of Ukraine. Nonetheless, in Ukrainian historical memory Khmelnytsky is regarded as a hero who led a war of national liberation and founded the Cossack hetmanate. A rich Ukrainian literary and oral bardic tradition celebrates the Cossack age and associates it with freedom from oppression.

A Ukrainian five-hryvnia banknote depicting Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky.

Bohdan Khmelnytsky entering Kyiv on Christmas Day (according to the Julian calendar) in January 1649, when he was greeted by the Orthodox hierarchy as a modern-day Moses who had succeeded in leading his people out of Polish bondage. Painting by Mykola Ivasiuk, late 19th century.

Gzeyres takh vetat, Jewish communities affected, 1648–49. (YIVO Encyclopedia Online)

How is the Khmelnytsky Cossack uprising perceived in the historical memory of Jews?
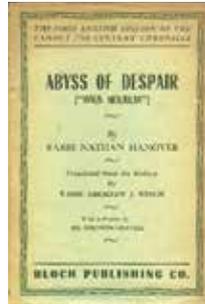
Sefer Yeven Metsulah, written by Ostroh native Nathan Hannover, provides a graphic account of anti-Jewish violence during the 1648–49 Cossack uprising. First published in Venice in 1653 and since then in numerous editions and in many languages, this chronicle has shaped Jewish historical memory with regard to Khmelnytsky and his Cossack armies.

The large-scale massacres, destruction of Jewish communities, and forced conversions loom large in Jewish historical memory to this day as the *gzeyres takh vetat* ("the [Evil] Decrees of 1648–49"). The events were marked by an annual day of fasting (20th of the month of Sivan) during which liturgical dirges were recited to commemorate the martyrs. The narrative of these events, as expressed by generations of Jewish historians, was largely shaped by Nathan Hannover's *Sefer Yeven Metsulah* (lit. "The Book of the Deep Mire"–Eng. title: *Abyss of Despair*), first published in Venice in 1653, as well as other chronicles written shortly after the events. These chronicles, which contain graphic descriptions of brutality, confirmed perceptions of the Cossacks as savage perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence. Noteworthy at the same time is Hannover's remarkably sophisticated and sympathetic treatment of the plight of the Ukrainians as context for the horrific violence. According to recent scholarship, the early chronicles significantly overstated the number of Jewish victims and the extent of devastation of communities. Some have observed also that Hannover adopted tropes and stories drawn from earlier literature on Jewish martyrology and that his primary purpose was not only to chronicle the tragic events but also to inspire prayers for the martyrs and to gather aid for the refugees and for the restoration of communities. Ultimately, the impact of the events (and the chronicles) on Jewish memory has been deep and enduring.

Jewish messianic pretenders on Ukrainian lands

Shabbetai Zvi

Enthusiasm for the Smyrna-born messianic pretender Shabbetai Zvi, "King of the Jews," spread across Europe in 1665–66.

The turbulent seventeenth century produced a number of popular messianic and revivalist movements. In the Jewish world, Shabbetai Zvi, a Jewish messianic pretender from the Ottoman Empire, promoted by his "prophet" Nathan of Gaza, generated wide enthusiasm in 1665–66 in what has become known as Sabbatianism. He argued that the 1648–49 massacres were the "birth pangs of the Messiah" prophesied to precede the era of redemption, which he would usher in. Later in 1666, Shabbetai Zvi was arrested by the Ottoman authorities and forced to choose between death and conversion to Islam. His choice to convert put an end to Sabbatianism as a mass movement and persistent believers were excommunicated by Jewish communal authorities. In Podolia, however, which was under Ottoman rule since 1672, several prominent individuals and even communal rabbis continued to openly profess Sabbatian beliefs. Christian theologians noted the disruptive effects of Sabbatianism in the Jewish world, including in the polemical tract entitled *Mesiya pravdyvyi* (The True Messiah), published in Kyiv by the Ukrainian Orthodox church leader Ioanykii Galiatovskyi.

Notorious messianic pretender Jacob Frank.

The Frankists

In the mid-eighteenth century, Jacob Frank (1726?–91), a Jewish messianic pretender and proponent of scandalously heretical practices, attracted adherents in Galicia. He participated in a public disputation with Talmudists, staged by the Catholic bishop, which culminated in the burning of the Talmud, as well as in a second disputation in Lviv involving a blood libel accusation. In 1759–60, he and approximately 3,000 followers converted to Roman Catholicism, eventually marrying into the Polish gentry and middle class.

Were there also Jewish Cossacks?
Jews were generally barred from Cossack-controlled lands unless they converted to Christianity. However, there are recorded cases of individual Jews joining the Cossacks. There were several prominent Cossack families of Jewish ancestry in Left-Bank Ukraine (east of the Dnieper River), including the descendants of the converted Jews Mark Avramovych, Mykhailo Borukhovych, Pavlo Hertsyk, and Anton Kryzhanivskyi.

Above: Colonel Yakiv A. Markovych, descendant of a family of Cossack *starshyna* (elite Cossack officers) with Jewish roots.

Tumultuous decades for Ukrainians and Jews in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Rise and decline of Mazepa's Cossack state

For several decades following the death of Khmelnytsky, Ukraine was ravaged by wars and foreign invasions. Neighbouring states (Poland, Russia, the Ottoman Empire) sought to exploit the resulting instability. The wars contributed to severe economic decline, leading to further deterioration of the position of the peasantry. In addition, this period was marked by cultural decline and religious intolerance as the Orthodox Church in Ukraine was subordinated to the Moscow patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. These dynamics resulted in increased tensions and revolts.

With the backing of Tsar Peter I ("the Great"), the Cossack leader Ivan Mazepa transformed the Cossack Hetmanate into a stable self-governing entity within the framework of the Tsardom of Muscovy. However, when Peter I began to undermine Cossack autonomy, Mazepa defected to the Swedes. A resounding Muscovite victory over Sweden at the Battle of Poltava in 1709 ended Mazepa's aspirations for a unified Cossack state. He was thereafter vilified as a traitor by the Russian Orthodox Church and in imperial Russian and Soviet narratives.

Under Hetman Mazepa, a number of
Jewish families were able to join the
Cossack register, including the Leibenkos,
Zhydchenkos, Usherenkos, and
Perekhrysts. Through conversion and
intermarriage, these families became an
integral part of the Ukrainian Cossack elite
and eventually played a prominent role
in Ukraine's history and culture.

Charles XII of Sweden and Ivan Mazepa after the
Battle of Poltava, where Russia decisively defeated
Sweden. Painting by Gustaf Cederström, 1879.

Ivan Mazepa (1639–1709), depicted on today's
ten-hryvnia banknote, was the most influential of
Ukraine's Cossack leaders after Khmelnytsky.

A century of mixed experience for Jews on Ukrainian lands under different regimes (1660s to mid-1760s)

In the Polish-controlled territories, forcibly converted Jews were allowed to return to Judaism and had a number of economic and other privileges confirmed. As in Podolia under Ottoman rule, Jewish communal life gradually stabilized, and the Jewish population grew to some 150,000 in 1765. However, there were instances of Jews being accused of ritual murder, for example in Zhytomyr in 1753. Popes Benedict XIV and Clement XIII officially condemned ritual murder trials and intervened with the Polish king on behalf of the accused Jews. In Russian-ruled lands in the 1720s, Empress Catherine I expelled Jews from all territories of the Empire. In 1743, Elizabeth I rejected petitions to allow Jews residence and economic activity in the Russian-controlled area of Ukraine.

The Koliivshchyna revolts and the 1768 massacre in Uman

The difficult conditions of serfdom in Right-Bank Ukraine (west of the Dnieper River) and religious oppression by the Polish Roman Catholic Church and nobles caused fugitive Orthodox serfs, dissatisfied peasants, impoverished Cossacks, and disgruntled petty burghers and artisans to form rebel (*haidamaka*) bands. Zaporozhian Cossacks played leading roles as organizers of the rebel bands. In a series of revolts known as the *Koliivshchyna*, the *haidamakas* plundered and burned towns and the manorial estates of Polish landlords, and killed Roman Catholic and Uniate clerics, Polish nobles, and also Jews, though they were not regarded as the primary enemy.

The most notorious attack occurred in Uman under the leadership of the Zaporozhian Cossack Maksym Zalizniak. The local Cossack commander Ivan Gonta, entrusted with defending the town, suddenly joined forces with the *haidamakas*, and in a further betrayal, the Polish governor negotiated a separate peace with the attackers, leaving the Jews to fend for themselves. Several thousand fled to the synagogue, where they were killed by cannon fire. In the span of three days, an estimated 3,000 Poles and Jews were slain. The *Koliivshchyna* rebellion was eventually suppressed mercilessly by both the Polish and Russian authorities.

Above: Ivan Gonta, a leader of the Koliivshchyna rebellion and captain of the Cossack militia at Uman.

Right: Maksym Zalizniak, the Zaporozhian Cossack and *haidamaka* leader of the *Koliivshchyna* rebellion.

Both became the subject of Ukrainian historical songs and epic literary works.

Uman massacre. Unknown Polish artist, 1842.

How is the 1768 Uman massacre perceived in Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish memory?

Many Ukrainians view the 1768 events in Uman through the prism of the epic poem *Haidamaky* (1841) by the great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko. This poem shows empathy for the struggle of the Ukrainian rebels against social and national oppression, but also profound dismay at the bloodshed and cruelty—graphically described as a "descent into madness."

Some Poles saw the Uman massacre as one of the worst examples of Cossack barbarism against Polish civilization. Others saw it as a lesson, pointing to the need for Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation and for a common front against tsarist oppression of both peoples, while also perceiving it as an opportunity for Polish regeneration.

From the Jewish perspective, the Uman massacre is treated as another major instance of Jewish martyrdom, commemorated by a special fast and prayer on 5 Tammuz in the Jewish calendar. Simon Dubnow, the eminent early twentieth-century historian of East European Jewry, referred to it as "the second Ukrainian catastrophe" (after the Khmelnytsky era massacres). Uman would later become a major pilgrimage site because the Hasidic leader Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav is buried there. He settled in Uman in order to be close to the burial grounds of the Jewish martyrs of 1768.

The burning of Uman. Illustration by Opanas (Afanasii) Slastion for Taras Shevchenko's epic poem, *Haidamaky*.
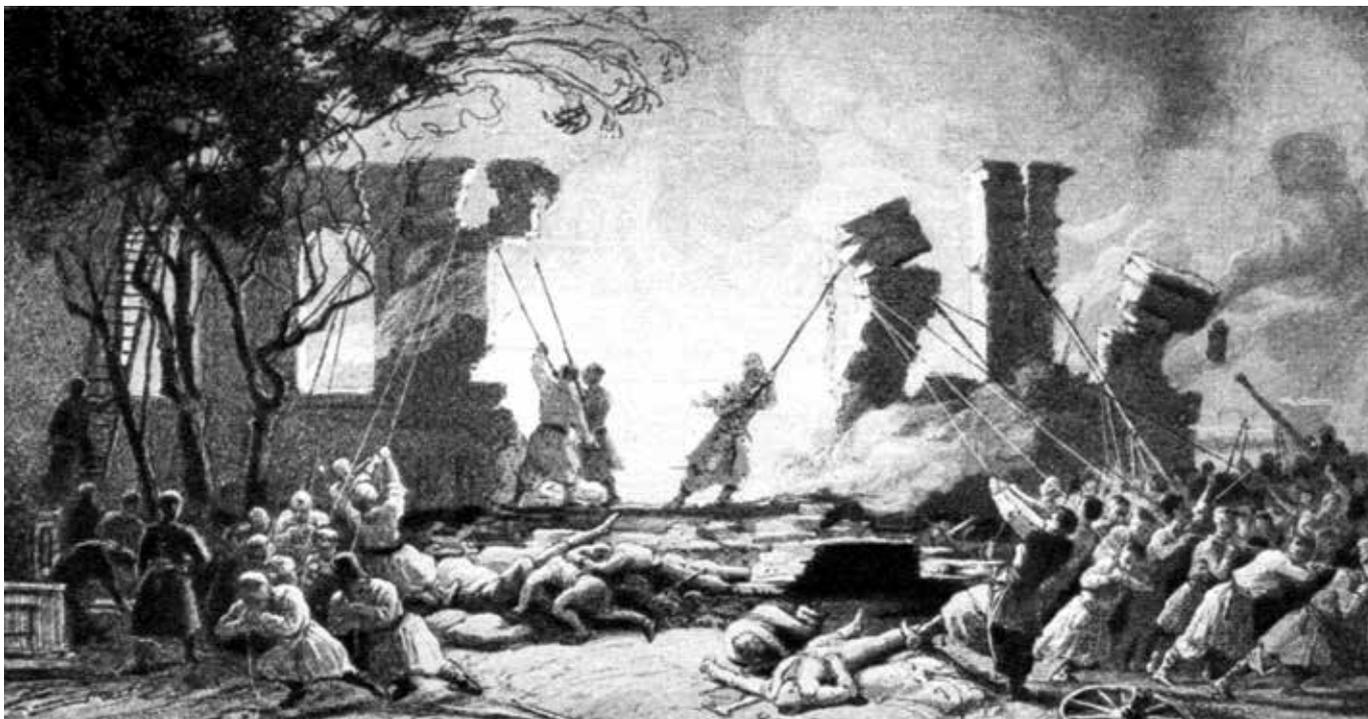
Right: Maksym Zalizniak initiating Yarema Halaida as a *haidamaka*. Illustration by Vasyl Kasian for Shevchenko's *Haidamaky*.

Far right: The *haidamaka* rebels. Illustration by Vasyl Kasian for Shevchenko's *Haidamaky*.

Religion, politics, and houses of worship

Cathedral Church of St. Volodymyr (built 1862–82) in Kyiv, historic seat of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church — Kyiv Patriarchate. (Dreamstime)

Religion among Christians on Ukrainian lands

Clandestine Christian communities existed in pagan Rus' long before its official Christianization by Volodymyr the Great in 988. That year, the Kyiv Metropoly (ecclesiastical jurisdiction) was established as part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Following the Union of Lublin in 1569, which created the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – an officially Roman Catholic state – pressure to disseminate Catholicism among Orthodox subjects of the realm increased. At the Union of Brest of 1596, part of the Orthodox Rus' church entered into union and accepted the authority of the Pope in Rome, while maintaining the eastern-rite liturgy and practices (including the use of Church Slavonic instead of Latin, and the possibility of married men being ordained as priests). It became known as the Uniate Church (later renamed the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church).

Cathedral Church of St. George (built 1744–59) in Lviv, historic seat of the Ukrainian Uniate/Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. (Dreamstime)
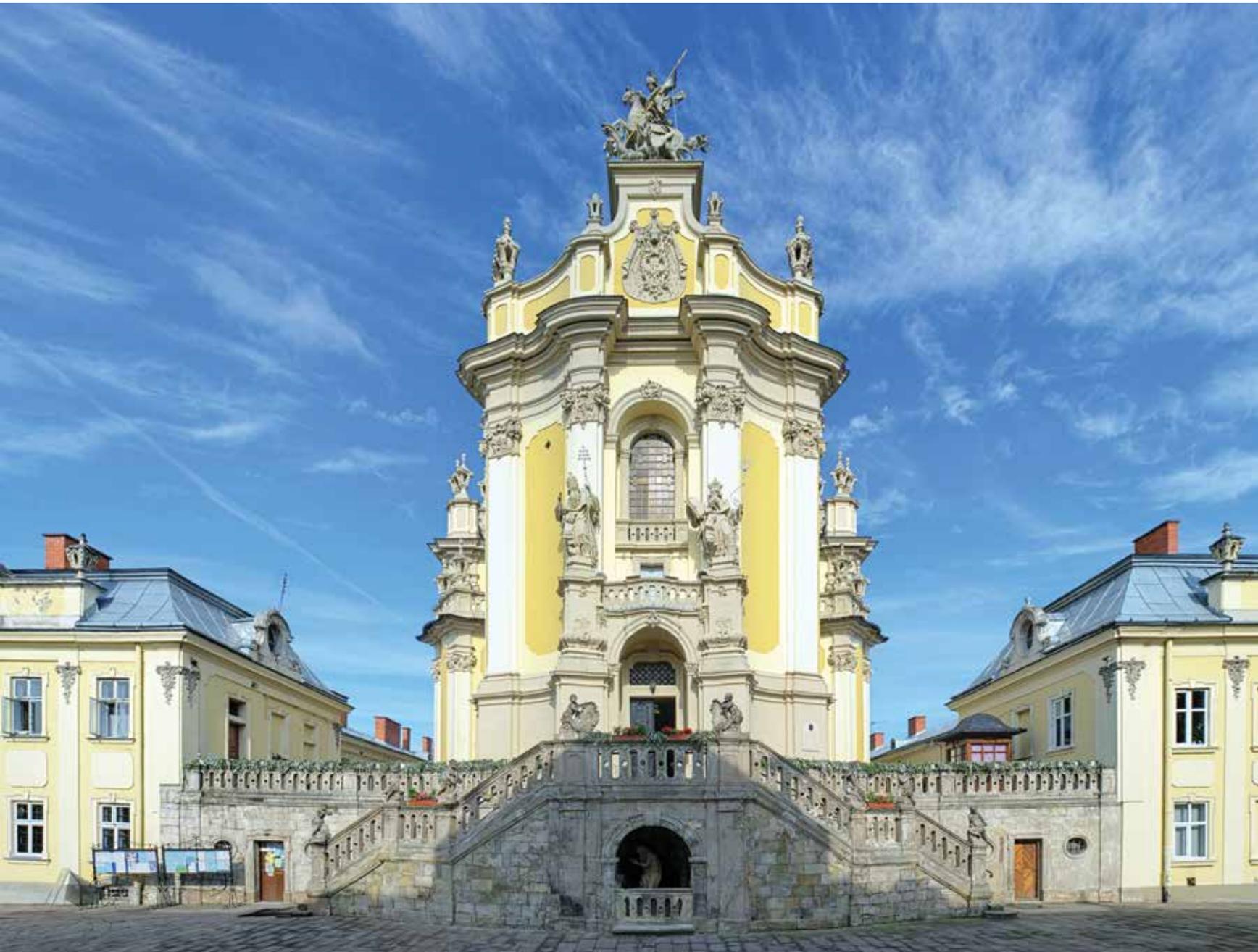
After its return to Orthodoxy in 1831, the Pochaiv Lavra (monastery), located near the Russian Empire's border with Austria-Hungary, became a major bastion against the Catholic-ruled Galicia.

As part of the expansion of the Tsardom of Muscovy and the Russian Empire into Ukrainian lands, the local Orthodox Church in Ukraine was forced after 1686 to switch its jurisdiction from the ecumenical patriarchate in Constantinople to the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. After the partitions of Poland, Russia gained most of the ethnically Belarusian and Ukrainian lands in which Uniate influence had been strong. With the failed 1831 Polish revolt, Polish influence in the Ukrainian lands was significantly reduced and the Uniate Church was soon abolished in tsarist Russia.

The Polish-ruled Rus' land of Galicia, however, fell under Austro-Hungarian rule, which granted equal legal privileges to the Uniate Church. The Austrians also mandated that Uniate seminarians receive a formal higher education, which led to the appearance, for the first time, of an influential educated Eastern-rite clergy. A far-reaching result was the assertion of the Uniate Church as a primary cultural force that imbued a strong sense of national identity, as well as loyalty to the Austrian Habsburgs, among the Ukrainian population of Galicia.

Aerial view of Pochaiv Lavra (monastery), Ukraine. (Alamy)

The synagogue in Lutsk, built in 1629 in the Renaissance style, was a fortified building. King Sigismund III gave the Jews permission to build this stone synagogue on condition that they provide for the placement of guns on top of the synagogue on all four sides and procure, at their own expense, a reliable cannon for the defence of the city. Partially destroyed in 1942, the synagogue was restored in the 1970s. It is now used as a sports club.

Fortress synagogues, wooden synagogues, and wooden churches

Between 1569 and the 1640s, the number of Jews in the Russian-ruled provinces of Volhynia, Podolia, Kyiv, and Bratslav grew thirteenfold, from 4,000 to 52,000, encompassing 115 localities. Jewish communities were also established in Galicia, including a colony of Sephardi Jews (descendants of exiles from Spain and Portugal) in Lviv—soon to be overtaken by Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews (from Poland and Central Europe) as the dominant group.

The eastern and southern borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were constantly exposed to attack by Tatars and Turks. Therefore, many border towns were built as walled fortresses. Jews in these towns often fortified their communal buildings, including synagogues, where they took refuge at times of attacks. It was expected also that they participate in the defense of the towns.

Left: The fortress synagogue in Sharhorod, built in 1589, was part of the town's defensive system. The Ottoman Turks transformed it into a mosque when they occupied Podolia during the second half of the 17th century. After their withdrawal, Jews restored the building to its original function. Under Soviet rule after World War II, the building was used as a juice factory.

In addition to fortress synagogues, many wooden synagogues were built in the mid-seventeenth century in the rising townships. These were inspired by both Polish wooden building traditions and the architecture of local Orthodox churches for the exteriors, while developing a unique Jewish style for the painted interiors added in the mid-eighteenth century, which drew from medieval decorative traditions.

Top right: The synagogue in Zhovkva (Polish: Żółkiew; Yiddish: Zholkeva), Lviv oblast in western Ukraine. This outstanding example of a fortress synagogue was built in the 1690s for a rapidly growing Jewish community. During the 18th century, it became an important centre of Jewish study and worship. Much of the interior was destroyed during World War II, but the outer walls with the baroque ornamental details survived. With help from the World Monument Fund, a restoration campaign began in 2001. Photograph by Charles Burns, 2006.

Bottom right: Synagogue and church in Pohrebyshche. Sketch by Napoleon Orda (1807–83). In many towns, a main church and a main synagogue would be facing each other or be seen in close proximity, as evidenced in this sketch.

Top: Two views of the wooden synagogue in Hvizdets` (Polish: Gwoździec), Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, built in the late 17th century, showing marked similarity with the exterior architecture of Orthodox wooden churches. (Courtesy of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art)

Bottom left: Wooden church in Pyrohiv, Kyiv oblast.

Bottom right: Wooden church of St. Michael in Uzhok, Transcarpathia.

The *bimah* and cupola (or "celestial canopy") of the synagogue in Hvizdets' (Gwoździec), along with the decorative early 18th-century mural paintings, were destroyed during World War II; they were painstakingly recreated for the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews which opened in Warsaw in 2014.

Emergence of the *shtetl* and its culture

Shtetl is a Yiddish word of Germanic origin meaning "small town"—akin to the Ukrainian word *mistechko*, from the Slavic *misto* (city). *Shtetl* commonly refers to a small market town with a large Yiddish-speaking Jewish population, which existed in Central and Eastern Europe before the Holocaust, mainly in the areas that constituted the Russian Empire's Pale of Settlement (roughly coinciding territorially with present day Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus), as well as in the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Galicia, and Bukovina. It is distinct from a *dorf* (village), as well as from a *shtot* (large town, city). In an attempt to quantify the phenomenon, scholars have suggested that a *shtetl* would have between 1,000 and 15,000 Jewish inhabitants, comprising at least 40 percent of the town's overall population.

The Yiddish language arose about a millennium ago among Jews who settled in the Germanic Rhineland region and was the vernacular language of those Jews who migrated to Central and Eastern Europe. The resulting Yiddish (in its diverse dialects) spoken in Ukrainian lands was a synthesis of medieval German dialects, with an admixture of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Slavic words.

It was in the small market towns owned by the nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that Jews created the *shtetl* culture mythologized in Jewish folklore. In fact, the *shtetl*, as it evolved by the late nineteenth century, was neither the harmonious community nostalgically portrayed by some, nor the setting of a decaying culture riven by hypocrisy, obscurantism, stultifying tradition, and bitter class conflict, as depicted by its critics. The *shtetl* was characterized by economic diversity, ranging from wealthy entrepreneurs to petty shopkeepers, innkeepers, shoemakers, tailors, water carriers, and beggars. The cultural life of the *shtetl* was generally regulated by the Jewish religious calendar and traditional customs. It was characterized by attitudes, habits of thought, and a unique rhetorical style of speech, replete with allusions rooted in Talmudic lore. The traditional concept of *tzedaka* (charity) was fundamental to the creation of interlocking communal support networks and socioeconomic relationships, including between Jews and non-Jews. Despite widespread poverty and episodic violence, the *shtetl* produced a vibrant folk culture and a remarkably expressive language, Yiddish.

Opposite: Woodcut by Solomon Yudovin. *Okraina Vitebska* (Outskirts of Vitebsk, 1927), depicting an archetypal *shtetl*, with views of the local church in the background, the wooden synagogue in the centre, and the Jewish cemetery in the foreground. (YIVO Archives)

Market next to the synagogue in Sudylkiv (in the historic region of Volhynia, now Khmelnytsky oblast). Photograph by S. Yudovin, 1913, taken during the An-sky expeditions. According to the 1897 census, 2,712 Jews lived in Sudylkiv, out of a total population of 5,551.

Agricultural fair in Kosiv, Stanyslaviv province (now Ivano-Frankivsk oblast) in western Ukraine. Postcard, early 20th century.

Ukrainians and Jews in the marketplace

Annual fairs, bazaars, and the common weekly or daily marketplaces were key spaces for Ukrainian-Jewish interaction in towns and cities on Ukrainian lands. On market day, local farmers would stream into town early in the morning in hundreds of wagons. They would be greeted by the town's Jews, ready to buy the fresh produce that the farmers were offering. With money in their pockets, the farmers would then go into the local Jewish shops and taverns. Market day was a noisy cacophony of wagons and horses, merchants hawking their wares, hollering and bargaining, and all manner of exchange.

Market in Berdychiv (Yid. Bardichev) in central Ukraine (now Zhytomyr oblast), early 20th century. Between 1847 and 1861, Berdychiv's Jewish population doubled to almost 47,000, constituting the largest Jewish community in the Russian Empire. From the late 18th century to 1897, Jews comprised between 75 to 80 percent of the town's overall population.

Semion An-sky (pen name of Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport, 1863-1920), Jewish author, playwright, and researcher of Jewish folklore, led a series of ethnographic expeditions in 1912-14 to record Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement (see p. 82). An-sky's collections of written, oral, and visual materials, as well as physical objects, were locked away in Soviet vaults before being brought to light by researchers in St. Petersburg and else-where since the 1990s. They are now found at the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg and the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine.

Top: En route to (or from) the market in Kolomyia, Stanyslaviv province (now Ivano-Frankivsk oblast) in western Ukraine. By 1882 Kolomyia had almost 24,000 inhabitants, including roughly 12,000 Jews, 6,000 Ukrainians, and 4,000 Poles. By 1901 the number of inhabitants grew to 34,188, approximately half of them Jews.

Bottom: Market square in Buchach/Buczacz (now Ternopil oblast in western Ukraine), 1910. Under Austrian rule, which began in 1772, the Jewish population grew rapidly from 1,464 in 1812 to 6,077 in 1870 (almost 70 percent of the total population). In the 1920s, Buchach's inhabitants included around 60 percent Jews, 25 percent Poles, and 15 percent Ukrainians.

People and faces of the *shtetl* Bershad

Top left: Moisey Muchnik (right), a tailor from Bershad, with his two brothers Folyk and Motl, all three born in Bershad in the 1880s. *Top right:* The Muchnik brothers before World War I, wearing papakhas and overcoats made by Moisey. Moisey "must have had an artistic talent. His jackets embroidered with red yarn were in great demand with Ukrainian farmers from nearby villages." — *Centropa interview with Moisey's daughter, Frida Muchnik, 2004.*
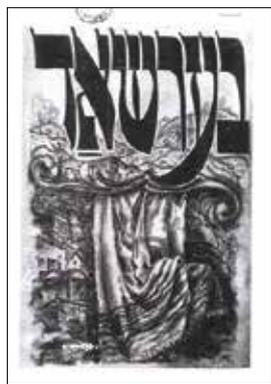
The story of Bershad—a small Jewish town in historic Podolia under tsarist rule (now in Vinnytsia oblast)—is a microcosm of the Jewish experience in the Pale of Settlement. Jews began to settle in Bershad in the late sixteenth century. In 1897 around three-quarters of the town's 8,885 inhabitants were Jews. Regarding trends in the wider Jewish world, the Sabbatian movement found adherents in seventeenth-century Bershad and the town became a centre of Hasidism in the early nineteenth century. There was also significant support for Zionism and the Bund in the early twentieth century in a diversified community that included observant traditional Jews as well as secular Yiddishists and socialists.

The community experienced violence from external sources during Cossack and peasant uprisings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and pogroms in 1905 and 1919. During World War II Bershad became the second largest ghetto in Romanian-administered Transnistria after receiving some 25,000 Jewish deportees from Bessarabia and Bukovina, the majority of whom died in this ghetto along with Bershad's Jews.

Far left: Gershko Shafer, born in Bershad in the 1860s, was a "religiously observant traditional Jew and a hard-working leather tanner." — *Centropa interview with Gershko Shafer's granddaughter, Yevgenia Kozak, 2004.*

Left: Frontispiece of the 1946 *Bershad yizkor* (memorial) book, with design representing the *tallit* (Jewish prayer shawl) weaving industry for which Bershad was famous throughout the Pale of Settlement. (Courtesy of I.P. Weisz)

How did Bershad's Jews make a living? How did they relate to their Ukrainian neighbours?

"In the old times Jews dealt in crafts: they were tailors, shoemakers, potters, glasscutters earning their living with what they were best at doing. They bought food products from Ukrainian farmers from the neighbouring villages…" — *Frida Muchnik, describing her family background in Bershad in an interview for Centropa in 2004.*

"Jews bought their food products from Ukrainian farmers, and the Ukrainians went to get their clothes, shoes and haberdashery from Jews. They were good neighbours and respected each other's traditions and religion. Jews spoke Yiddish and were also fluent in Ukrainian, and Ukrainians understood Yiddish very well." — *Bershad native Anatoliy Shor, interviewed in 2004 for Centropa.*

Right: Faces of Bershad: tombstone plaques from Bershad's Jewish cemetery. Photographs by Edgar Hauster, 2015.

Vestiges of the *shtetl*
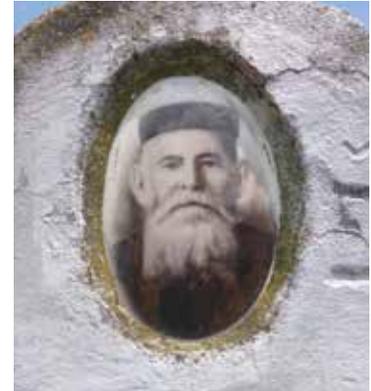
19th-century houses on a street in the *shtetl* Sharhorod in southern Podolia. *Top:* Pre-World War II photo (Yad Vashem Archives). *Bottom*: Same house in Sharhorod, 2014. Photograph by Oksana Geissbuehler.

Like Bershad, Sharhorod today evokes the traditional *shtetl*, which no longer exists.

From late June 1941 to 1943, the vast majority of the Jewish inhabitants of the *shtetls*, along with the Jews residing in villages and cities on Ukrainian lands, were murdered by mass shooting at sites not far from their homes or transported to nearby ghettos or death camps.

"Shargorod is today one of the very few Podolian shtetls with well-preserved golden age *[the fifty-year period of prosperity and stability, from the 1790s and 1840s]* architecture. Most if not all the houses on its central market street were owned by Jews. These houses had an elevated porch, a hallway serving as a storeroom, three or four adjoining rooms inside, at least two large windows looking onto the street… By opening the window, the owner of the house transformed the hallway into a store… the windowsill became a counter and the people on the other side of the window, customers…"

— Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl*

18th- and 19th-century tombstones in the Jewish cemetery of Kuty. As a commercial border town, Kuty became an administrative centre of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Following the 1772 partition of Poland, it came under Austrian rule, lost its town privileges, and was reduced to a provincial town inhabited mostly by Jewish and Armenian merchants. Of Kuty's 8,000 inhabitants in the late 1920s, around 3,300 were Jews, 1,900 Hutsuls (Ukrainian highlanders), 1,300 Poles, and 500 Armenians. Photograph by Christian Herrmann, July 2017.

Above left: 18th-century tombstone in Sataniv, Podolia. The Jewish community, established in the 16th century, built a fortress synagogue to fend off periodic attacks by Tatars and Cossacks. By the 18th century, the community grew in importance as a centre of both the *Haskalah* (Jewish enlighten-ment) and Hasidism. A trial of the Frankists was held in Sataniv in 1765. The town was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1793. The Jewish population in 1897 was 2,848, 64 percent of the total. (Courtesy of the Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Above right: 18th-century Baroque-style tombstone in Yabluniv, 15 km from Kolomyia, western Ukraine. The first Jewish settlers made a living from tenancy, taverns, small trade, and crafts. The Jewish population in 1900 was 1,105, then declined as a result of migration to the larger cities and overseas. (Courtesy of the Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Emergence of Hasidism on the territory of Ukraine: Medzhybizh and the Baal Shem Tov ("The Besht")

A hand-dug well just outside of Medzhybizh thought to have been dug by the Baal Shem Tov himself. Clean water still flows from this well.

Hasidism (from Hebrew *hasidut*, meaning "piety") is a Jewish revivalist movement that originated and flourished on Ukrainian lands. The movement was inspired by Yisrael ben Eliezer (1700–60), known as the Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Divine Name" — acronym: "The Besht"). Defining features of the movement include joyful worship in prayer and daily life, popularization of concepts of the Kabbalah (Jewish mystical religious tradition), validation of common folk, and devotion to a charismatic spiritual leader (*tzadik*, or *rebbe* in Yiddish).

The Besht's life is known to us mainly from Hasidic lore and legend. According to tradition, he was born in Okopy, Podolia (in southwest Ukraine), and was orphaned as a child. As a young man, he immersed himself in the study of Kabbalah and learned about herbal remedies from local peasants. For a time, he lived as a hermit, communing with nature in the Carpathian Mountains. Legend recounts that he befriended the famous Ukrainian Robin Hood figure Oleksa Dovbush, who gave the Besht a prized pipe in gratitude for being sheltered by him from pursuing authorities.

After years as a wandering teacher, healer, and miracle-worker in small towns in Podolia, distributing amulets and prescribing cures, the Besht was invited in 1742 to be the resident spiritual healer in the town of Medzhybizh. Recent research has overturned a popular assumption that the Besht was an anti-establishment rebel. Rather, archival records indicate that the local Jewish elite in Medzhybizh embraced him and provided him with a rent-free house to live in until his death in 1760.

The only written document attributed to the Besht is "The Holy Epistle" (extant in several versions), which he wrote in 1752 to his brother-in-law, Gershon of Kuty, then living in the Land of Israel. It contains reflections on the conditions for the ultimate redemption and the meaning of imminent catastrophes.

The village of Kuty in the Carpathian Mountains, home to Gershon of Kitev/Kuty, a prominent Torah scholar and the Besht's brother-in-law, with whom the Besht studied.

The town of Medzhybizh, where the Besht resided for twenty years and where he is buried, has become a Jewish pilgrimage site. It is also a tourist site because of the grand fortress that witnessed battles between Turks, Cossacks, and Russian imperial soldiers in the 17th and 18th centuries.
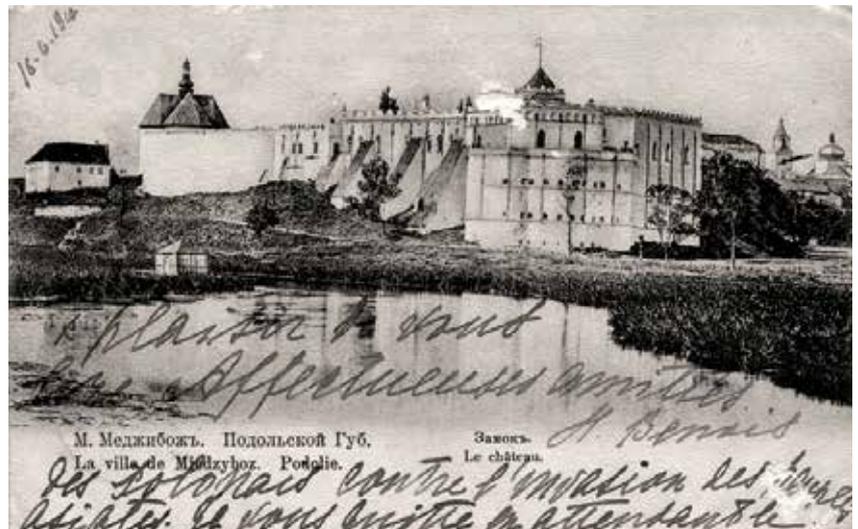
Exterior and interior views of the Ba'al Shem Tov's *beit midrash* (house of learning) in Medzhybizh, Ukraine.
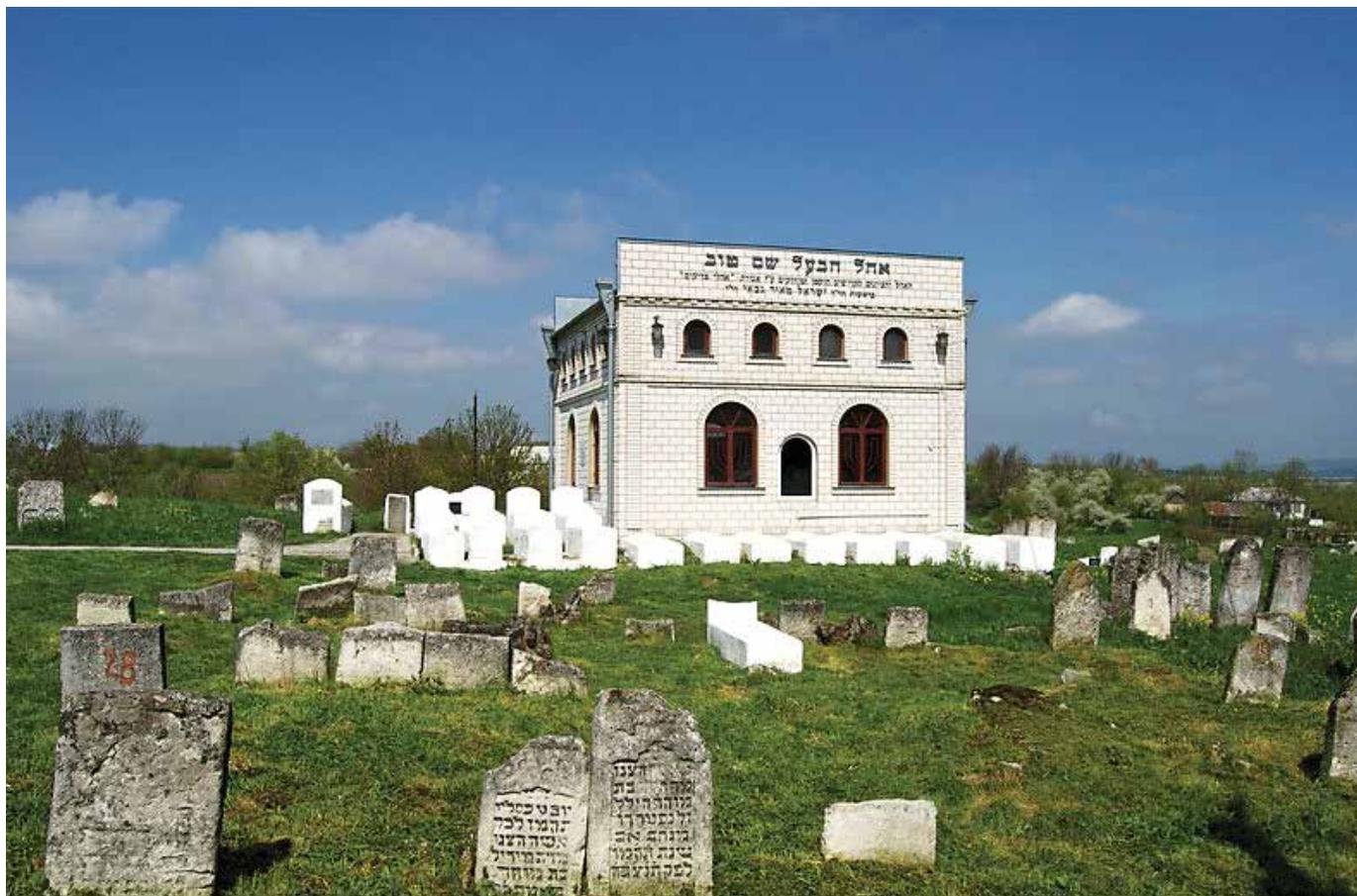
The contemporary shrine built around the vault believed to contain the tomb of the Baal Shem Tov in Medzhybizh, Ukraine.

The Besht's disciples and early Hasidic literature

The Besht and the pioneering leaders of early Hasidism taught primarily by oral means. The earliest Hasidic publications were based on notes compiled by the Besht's dedicated disciple, Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye/Polonne (1710–83), and summaries of sermons given by the Besht's charismatic disciple Dov Ber, the Maggid (preacher) of Mezritsh/Mezhyrich (d. 1772). These publications recorded and disseminated ideas attributed to the Besht and enabled the spread of Hasidism.

Unable to travel due to poor health, Dov Ber created the prototype of the Hasidic "court"—the residence of the spiritual leader where his adherents (*Hasidim*) would congregate on special occasions. Dov Ber attracted remarkable personalities as his disciples who, in turn became spiritual leaders of Hasidic courts throughout the historic Ukrainian lands of Podolia, Volhynia, Galicia, and beyond.

Yaakov Yosef, who had developed expertise in the Kabbalah, served as communal rabbi in Sharhorod in the 1740s, where his ascetic practices alienated the community's leaders. After meeting with the Besht, he moderated his asceticism and produced voluminous discourses on what he had learned from the Besht. Sharply critical of the inadequacies of contemporary religious functionaries, he advanced as a counterbalance the concept of the *tzadik* as communal leader, a doctrine of leadership that would become a defining feature of Hasidism.

Shivhei ha-Besht (In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov), a widely circulated hagiographic collection of more than two hundred stories about the Besht and his associates, was first printed in Kopust (Ukr. Kopys) in 1814–15. This collection illustrates how the founders of Hasidism reached out to the common Jew through tales and parables.

Compilations of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings were prepared by his disciples and published beginning in the 1780s in Korets, Lviv, Zhovkva, Slavuta, and other towns that are today in Ukraine. The most influential of these publications were *Toldot Ya'akov Yosef* (1780) and *Ben Porat Yosef* (1781) by Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye/Polonne, and *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'akov* (1781), based on sermons given by Dov Ber of Mezritsh/Mezhyrich.

Hasidic dance. Pencil sketch by Maurycy Gottlieb, 1876.

Opposite: Hasidim as seen through Christian eyes, expressing joy and gratitude through song. *Sabbath*, sketch by Michał Elwiro Andriolli for a novel by Eliza Orzeszkowa, *Meir Ezofowicz*. (History of Religion Museum, Lviv)

Teachings of early Hasidism

Although there were many Hasidic leaders, sects, and dynasties, they generally accepted a core set of teachings attributed to the Besht, which they personalized and embellished. These teachings were disseminated orally in Yiddish at gatherings of the Hasidim, and then translated into Hebrew, transcribed, and published in numerous books, mostly printed on Ukrainian lands beginning in the late eighteenth century. A central idea attributed to the Besht is that God is everywhere and can be revealed and reached in all things. This idea helped make complex Kabbalistic teachings accessible to common people, relating them to everyday life. Flowing from this idea were other key Hasidic concepts, including (as pronounced in Yiddish) *simkhe* (joy), *hislaves* (enthusiasm), *deveykes* (cleaving to God with all one's being), and *avoyde be-gashmiyes* (worship through material life). Added to these were more esoteric doctrines, such as communion with the very letters (as distinct from the words' meaning) of the holy texts, and prayer *kavones* (holy intentions, akin to meditational techniques). These Kabbalistic concepts were given socially far-reaching interpretations—often conveyed through stories—that the simple devotion of the unlettered Jew can be as holy as advanced Torah study; that God is best served through passionate prayer and proper intention; and that sparks of holiness are dispersed throughout all creation, including in the songs and dances of the surrounding non-Jewish cultures. These concepts also served to foster joyful Hasidic musical and dance traditions, including *nigunim* (spiritual melodies) borrowed from Ukrainian folk tunes, conducive to uplifting the soul.

Hasidism as a mass movement

"The Rebbe is coming! The Rebbe is already here!"
Postcard from a series by the Kraków-based Salon
Malarzy Polskich, 1902. (Private collection of
Marcin Wodziński)

The original synagogue of the Belz Hasidim, dedicated in
1843. The building was destroyed during World War II.

Ukraine has been called the "cradle of Hasidism" because the movement originated in and flourished on Ukrainian lands. Its founders initially encountered fierce opposition from established rabbinic authorities (referred to as *misnagdim* or "opponents"), in particular from the venerated Gaon of Vilna. The strong reaction may be attributed in part to the traumatic experience with messianic pretenders, and to concern about what was perceived as Hasidic vulgarization of the Kabbalah, overly enthusiastic modes of worship, and the discounting of textual knowledge. However, the emergence of several charismatic Hasidic leaders with compelling yet reassuring messages–such as Shneur Zalman of Liady (the founder of Chabad Hasidism), Menahem Nahum of Chornobyl, Levi Yitzhak of Berdychiv, and Nahman of Bratslav–paved the way for the eventual wide acceptance and spread of Hasidism across the Pale of Settlement, as well as in Galicia, the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia. Although Hasidism largely transcended political boundaries, the varieties that evolved in tsarist Russia and under Habsburg rule differed from those that emerged in the Congress Kingdom of Poland. The differences were evident in the patterns of leadership transfer and leadership styles, literary legacies, responses to modernity, and the extent of cross-cultural borrowing of melodies and folklore from neighbouring peoples.

Centres of Hasidism on the territory of Ukraine, 1740–1815.

This map shows 26 major Hasidic centres established on the territory of Ukraine between 1740 and 1815, most after 1772.

In addition to the centres shown on these two maps, there were hundreds of smaller centres and numerous Hasidic *shtieblech* (small prayer houses) in other towns and cities.

Spread of Hasidism, 1815–1929.

Hasidic centres proliferated after 1815, especially in Poland.

(These two maps are adapted from those provided in the *YIVO Encyclopedia* entry on Hasidism, which in turn, are based on maps prepared by Elżbieta Długosz for an exhibition on Hasidim at the Historical Museum of Kraków–Old Synagogue)

Hasidism in Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia

Hasidism spread from the Russian-ruled Ukrainian lands of Podolia and Volhynia to hundreds of towns and villages under Austrian rule in the course of the nineteenth century. The *tzadikim* established "courts" in the style of royal residences, to which hundreds of pilgrims travelled for blessings, healing, and advice, including in Belz and Chortkiv (Yid. Chortkev) in Galicia; Sadhora (Yid. Sadigura), Vyzhnytsia (Yid. Vizhnitz), and Boiany (Yid. Boyan) in Bukovina; and Mukachevo (Yid. Munkatsh) in Transcarpathia.

Left: The Hasid and His Wife ("Le Chasside et sa femme"). Léon Hollaenderski, *Les Israélites de Pologne.* Paris, 1846.

Right: A Jew from Galicia and a Jew from Mukachevo. Drawing, ca. 1821.

Rabbi David Moses Friedman (1828–1903), Sadigura Hasidic Dynasty, Chortkiv, Eastern Galicia, ca. 1900. (Kraków, National Museum)

Top: The Hasidic synagogue in Sadhora (Yid. Sadigura) in Chernivtsi oblast, where Rabbi Yisroel Friedman, the Ruzhiner Rebbe, relocated his court in 1842. The building was rededicated in 2016 after three years of reconstruction and renovation work.

Bottom: Synagogue and palace of the Friedman Hasidic dynasty in Chortkiv. The building was restored and is currently registered as a Cultural Heritage Monument of Ukraine.

Hasidism since 1914 and contemporary pilgrimage sites in Ukraine

After 1945, Hasidic survivors of the Holocaust re-established centres, mostly in the United States and Israel, preserving their distinctive garb, lifestyle, and the Yiddish language. Ukraine in the post-Holocaust and post-Soviet period has become a pilgrimage destination for thousands of Hasidim visiting the gravesites of their spiritual leaders. The best known of the Hasidic pilgrimage sites in Ukraine is Uman, where Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772–1810), the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, is buried.

Despite the pressures and appeal of modernity, Hasidism greatly influenced the religious worldview, ritual practices, folklore, social organization, and political activities of Eastern European Jewish communities. Though its growth slowed between the 1880s and the First Word War, Hasidism continued to flourish on Ukrainian territory under Soviet rule until the repression of religious life in the late 1920s. Until the beginning of World War II, Hasidism was strong in Poland, Galicia, and Bukovina, as well as in Transcarpathia, where Satmar and Munkatch Hasidic leaders became increasingly conservative in reaction to external societal changes. The vast majority of Hasidim and Hasidic centres in Ukraine, Poland, and Hungary were obliterated during World War II.

Opposite: An estimated 30,000 pilgrims from around the world gathered in the town of Uman (Cherkasy oblast, Ukraine) on Rosh Hashanah (3 October 2016) to pray near the burial site of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav. (Viktor Drachev/TASS/Alamy Live)

During Rabbi Nachman's lifetime, thousands of Hasidim travelled to be with him for the Jewish holidays to hear his inspirational talks. Shortly before his death in 1810, he asked his flock to pray at his grave each Rosh Hashanah, promising to intercede on their behalf at this time of heavenly judgment. The custom of making an annual pilgrimage to Rabbi Nachman's gravesite on Rosh Hashanah was instituted and followed by thousands until the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. A small number risked making the pilgrimage clandestinely during the Soviet era. Since Ukrainian independence in 1991 the number of pilgrims has grown to tens of thousands annually.

Map (in Hebrew) which shows the numerous Hasidic pilgrimage sites in Ukraine today. Most are the burial sites of Hasidic leaders (*tzadikim*), which are regarded as "high holy places" — even by pilgrims from Jerusalem.

Portraits of Hasidim
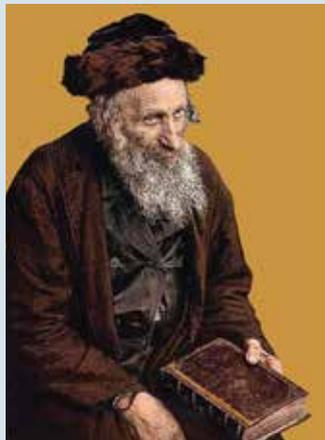
Old Man in a Fur Hat
(provenance unknown).

Galician Hasidic boy by
Wilhelm Wachtel (1875–1942), 1905.

Hasidic boy by Isidor Kaufmann.

Young Galician Hasidim by Isidor
Kaufmann (1853–1921). Kaufmann,
an acclaimed genre painter based
in Vienna, travelled throughout
central and eastern Europe in
search of scenes of Jewish life.
He was especially fascinated by
the Hasidim of Galicia.

Left top and bottom: Sefer pardes rimmonim, an important kabbalistic text composed in 1548 by Moses Cordovero, a mystic from Safed. Title page and detail. Published in Korets, in 1780. (YIVO, Strashun Library)

Right top: Levush Ir Shushan, collection of homilies and responsa. Published in Berdychiv in 1821.

Right bottom: Pri Megadim, review of Talmudic commentaries. Published in Ostroh in 1849.

Ukraine as a centre for Hebrew and Yiddish publishing

Hebrew publishing on Ukrainian lands dates back to the seventeenth century. From 1692 until the end of the eighteenth century, Zhovkva / Żółkiew (now Lviv oblast) was the only place in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth where Hebrew books were printed. Beginning in 1778 Korets / Korzec (now Rivne oblast) acquired prominence as a centre for the printing of Kabbalistic works originating in the Ottoman Empire. After a 1782 Habsburg governmental decree required printing houses to move to the city became a key centre for Hebrew and Yiddish printing, with its own censor's office.

By the 1830s Hebrew and Yiddish printing establishments had sprung up in more than fifty towns in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including Lutsk, Dubno, Slavuta, and Ostroh. This proliferation was partly caused by the dramatic population growth that increased demand for prayer books, Pentateuchs, Psalters, Haggadahs, and religious calendars, as well as ethical and homiletical literature (*musar*). The lively publication scene also reflected the ongoing conflict between the Hasidim and their opponents, both *misnagdim* (traditionalists) and *maskilim* (modernists, proponents of the *Haskalah* or Jewish Enlightenment). Among the most prominent publishers of the era was the Shapira family of Slavuta, famous for producing three beautiful editions of the Babylonian Talmud, editions of the Zohar, and numerous Hasidic works.

In 1836 the authorities in tsarist Russia shut down all but two Hebrew printing presses. Constraints were lifted in 1862, but extensive censorship of Jewish books continued, often with the help of modernized, acculturated Jews (*maskilim*) who were well versed in Hebrew and Yiddish.

Hebrew Printing and Publishing in Ukraine 1692-1943

Source: "A Preliminary Gazetteer of Towns of Hebrew Printing and Publishing in Ukraine" in Brad Sabin Hill, *Hebrew Printing in Ukraine: An Exhibition* (Washington: I. Edward Kiev Judaica Collection, The George Washington University, 2009) also online at http://exhibits.gelman.gwu.edu/ukraineprinting/ Map by: GIS and Cartography Office, University of Toronto © 2013

Publications in Slavuta. *Left to right:* Talmudic tractate on Rosh Hashanah; *Shulhan Arukh* (Code of Jewish Law); and *Sefer ha-Zohar,* the classic medieval text on Jewish mysticism. (YIVO, Strashun Library; Library and Archives Canada, Jacob M. Lowy Collection)

Publications in Lviv/Lemberg and Chernivtsi/Czernowitz. *Left: Sefer ha-Kuzari* (Lemberg, 1866), composed by the Spanish Jewish physician, poet, and philosopher Judah Halevi around 1140, on the benefits of the Jewish faith. (YIVO, Strashun Library)

Centre: Sefer ha-midot (Lemberg, 1867), Aristotle's classic work Nicomachean Ethics, with commentary by one of the earliest proponents of the *Haskalah* in Eastern Europe, Isaac Satanow (1733–1805). (YIVO, Strashun Library)

Right: Midrash Eliyahu (Czernowitz, 1864), includes sermons and commentary on the Talmud by Elijah ben Solomon Abraham ha-Kohen from Smyrna (d.1729). (YIVO, Strashun Library)

Two publications in Ostroh, 1795 and 1834.

Above: Meshullam Hurwitz, *Sefer Mishnat hakhamim*. Title page showing ornamental design. *Right: Urim ve-tumim*, a commentary on parts of Shulhan Arukh by Jonathan Eyebeschütz (1690–1764), a Talmudist, Kabbalist, and *dayan* (judge) of Prague, known for his involvement with the Emden-Eyebenschütz *Sabbatian* controversy of 1725. (YIVO, Strashun Library)

Map of Central and Eastern Europe in 1900, showing the extent of the three empires that partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Following the third partition in 1795, Russia ruled over close to 85 percent of Ukrainian lands, as well as 85 percent of the ethnic Ukrainian population. At the same time, it acquired the largest Jewish population in the world, numbering between 400,000 and 500,000 people, residing in territories that came to be known as the Pale of Settlement.

Catherine II by J. B. Lampi, 1780s.
(Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Ukrainian village family. Painting by
Taras Shevchenko, 1843.

The experience of Ukrainians and Jews in the Russian Empire

1760s–90s: Russian expansionism, aristocratic landlords, and proprietary serfs

The reign of Empress Catherine II (1762–96) was marked by oppressive internal policies, including institutionalized serfdom, and successful expansionist foreign policies, as demonstrated in Russia's wars with Turkey and the partitions of Poland. A policy of centralization was adopted in relation to the non-Russian peoples of the empire, in particular Ukrainians. In 1775 the Zaporozhian Sich was destroyed. Some Cossack officers became part of the Russian nobility, while the vast majority were classified as "state peasants." The empire incorporated Crimea in 1783 and the entire Right-Bank Ukraine in the 1790s. Increasingly rigorous Russification informed policy in the cultural sphere. The rights and interests of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine were curtailed, and measures were taken to destroy the Uniate church. Until the reforms of the 1860s, the vast majority of Ukrainians were made to work on state-owned lands or as proprietary serfs on large private estates, often only for a monthly ration of produce. Others became household serfs. Hardships intensified as landowners increased the corvée (labour obligation) to cover state-imposed taxes.

Ukrainian lands, ca. 1850.

Jewish population, ca. 1900.

GRODNO 17.3 · Slutsk · Babruisk · OREL
Siedlce · Brest Litovsk · Pinsk · MINSK 15.8 · Homel' · R U S S I A N
SIEDLCE -15.8 · Mazyr · Chernihiv · VORONEZH
Lublin · Chelm · Kovel' · Seim · KURSK
LUBLIN 13.3 · Luts'k · VOLHYNIA 13.3 · Rivne · Zhytomyr · Kyiv · POLTAVA 3.9 · K H A R K I V
Zamosc · Rava Rus'ka · Zhovkva · Kremianets' · Bardychiv · Bila Tserkva · E M P I R E
Przemysl · L'viv · Brody · Ternopil' · KIEV 12.0 · Uman'
Sanok · G A L I C I A · Buchach · Khmel'nyts'kyi · Bar · Vinnytsia
AUSTRIA · Stanyslaviv · Kamianets'-Podil's'kyi · PODOLIA 12.2
Kolomyia · Mohyliv-Podil's'kyi · Uman'
Mukachevo · Chernivtsi · Khotyn · Briceni · Balta · KATERYNOSLAV 4.7
Sighetul · BUKOVINA · Siret · Botosani · Balta · KHERSON 12.3
Satu-Mare · Suceava · Stefanesti · Balti · TAURIDA
Baia-Mare · R O M A N I A · B E S S A R A B I A · Chisinau · Mykolaiv
Oradea · Iasi · Bendery · Odessa · SEA OF AZOV · BLACK SEA
Cluj · Piatra Neamt · Husi · Bilhorod · CRIMEA · COSSACK LANDS
HUNGARY · Bacau · Vaslui · Izmail
Alba Iulia · Focsani · Galati · Braila · B L A C K   S E A

Pripet · Desna · Dnieper · Donets' · Southern Buh · Dniester

─··─ International boundaries, ca. 1900
━━━ Present-day boundary of Ukraine
─ ─ Provincial boundaries
KHERSON 12.3 Russian province in the Pale of Settlement with percentage of Jews

Scale 1 : 8 300 000
0   50   100 miles
0   50   100 kilometers

Copyright © by Paul Robert Magocsi

Density of Jewish population
More than 15% | 5-9%
10-14% | 1-4%

Percent of Jews in towns and cities
■ More than 50%
□ 30-50%
⊙ 10-29%

Right: "Expulsion of Jews of St. Petersburg: Scene at Baltic Railway Station." Engraving by D. Naumann after a sketch by B. Baruch, 1891. (Moldovan Family Collection, YIVO Archives)

Jewish coach drivers. Korets, Volhynia province, 1912. Photographs taken during the An-sky expeditions. (Petersburg Judaica Center, Yudovin Photograph Collection)

The Jewish Pale of Settlement

Since the late fifteenth century Jews had been generally forbidden to settle in lands ruled by the Russian tsars. With the acquisition of Polish territories, however, Catherine II suddenly found herself the ruler of the largest Jewish population in the world. Influenced by Enlightenment thinkers and the potential economic benefit of Jewish trade, Catherine resisted Orthodox Church pressures to expel this massive population, taking instead a compromise position that appeased Russian merchants concerned about Jewish competition in urban centres. In addition to exclusion from cities, Jewish residence was restricted to the territories annexed from Poland-Lithuania, which included most of the Russian Empire's Ukrainian-inhabited provinces. Thus, the Pale of Settlement was created. Some Jews received special permission to live in the major imperial cities (including Kyiv); others took up residence in the cities illegally. These were tenuous arrangements. In addition, the May Laws introduced by Alexander III in 1882 banned Jews from many rural areas within the Pale. Expulsions and migrations were therefore a common experience for Jews in the 1880s–90s. The Pale lasted until the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917.

The Pale of Settlement, ca. 1855. (©2010, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)

Russian reforms and Russification of Jews

The government of Tsar Nicholas I (r. 1825–55) enacted measures to refashion and forcibly assimilate the Jewish population. In 1827, it ordered a quota system of compulsory conscription of Jewish males aged 12 to 25 (for Christians it was 18 to 35) to the tsarist army and made the leadership of each Jewish community responsible for providing recruits. As the selection process tended to be arbitrary and influenced by bribery, Jews often turned their anger against their communal leaders. Tensions were exacerbated in 1852–55, when *khappers* (grabbers) were tasked with kidnapping Jewish boys, sometimes as young as eight, in order to meet the government's quotas. Once conscripted, the young Jewish recruits were pressured to convert to Russian Orthodoxy, with the result that around one-third were baptized. The drafting of children lasted until 1856.

Other assimilationist measures included the establishment of state-sponsored Russian-language secular elementary Jewish schools and rabbinic seminaries to train "Crown Rabbis" who were expected to modernize the Jews. An 1836 decree closed all but two Hebrew presses and enacted strict censorship of Hebrew printing. In 1844 the *kahal* system of Jewish autonomous administration was abolished. Decrees were also passed on how Jews should dress and in which economic activities they would be allowed to engage.

Tsar Nicholas I. Portrait by Horace Vernet.

Russian government decree regarding Jewish attire, 1846. (National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg)
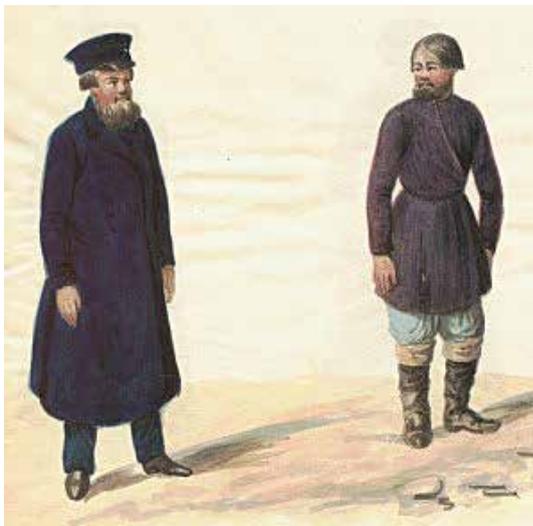
Top: Attire for Jews decreed by the Russian government
in 1846 to replace traditional Jewish dress.
Above: Example of peasant dress.

Military recruits, 1820s, referred to as cantonists (term derived from the
"canton schools" or military training camps to which they were sent).
Between 1827 and 1856, under Tsar Nicholas I, Jewish communities were
required to fill a quota of boys, aged 12 to 25, for cantonist training, to be
followed by 25 years of compulsory military service, during which they
would be subjected to harsh conditions and pressure to convert. Filling
such quotas created bitter tensions within the Jewish communities.

The *Haskalah* in the Russian Empire

The tsarist government's efforts to reform and assimilate the empire's Jews found allies among the *maskilim*. They were enlisted in censoring Jewish religious books, as these were said to promote fanaticism and be an obstacle to Russification. By the early 1900s, the combined efforts of the government and the *maskilim* advanced the assimilation of segments of the Jewish population into Russian culture.

"Jewish merchants of Odesa," from Piotre Artamof, *La Russie historique, monumentale et pittoresque* (Paris, 1862–65). The developing grain port of Odesa became an important centre for the *maskilim*. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Moyshe Tolpin and his family, Ostroh, 1906. Tolpin was a teacher in one of the government schools established by tsarist edict in 1844 to combat the influence of traditional Jewish education and to promote assimilation. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Graduation portrait at a government-run school for Jewish children, Ostroh, ca. 1904. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Yitshak Ber Levinzon (1788–1860), a leader of the early Russian *Haskalah* who lived in Kremianets in Volhynia, tried to convince the Russian imperial authorities of the need to transform Jewish educational and occupational structures. He also worked to disseminate Enlightenment ideas in Jewish circles and defended the Jewish people against blood libels and other unfounded charges. (YIVO Photo Archives)

The Ukrainian national and literary awakening under Russian rule

As the European-wide phenomenon of Romantic nationalism extended its reach to Eastern Europe in the early nineteenth century, Ukrainian writers, historians, and artists discovered resonant subject matter in Ukrainian history and asserted the distinctiveness of the Ukrainian people, giving rise to what is known as the Ukrainian national awakening. Foremost among the proponents of the Ukrainian national idea in the Russian Empire were Ivan Kotliarevskyi, Taras Shevchenko, Mykhailo Maksymovych, Panteleimon Kulish, Mykhailo Drahomanov, Lesia Ukrainka, and Mykola Kostomarov. Together they collected and disseminated the linguistic and folkloric heritage of their people, composed poetry and prose, plays and operas, and established cultural organizations and journals.

Also influential was an anonymous work, *Istoriia rusov ili Maloi Rossii* (A History of the Rus' People, or Little Russia), published in 1846. This work, which glorifies and romanticizes the Cossacks, inspired a generation of Ukrainian patriots in the 1840s and 1850s. At the same time, as observed by the historian Serhii Plokhy (*The Cossack Myth*), it "filled generations of readers with hatred of Polish Catholics and Jews." This work portrays Jews as contemptuous of the Orthodox religion,

Taras Shevchenko (1814–61), painter, poet, and national bard of Ukraine, depicted (*left*) in a self-portrait (1840) and (*right*) upon his return from exile in an 1871 painting by Ivan Kramskoi. The Ukrainian national idea is powerfully expressed in Shevchenko's collection of poems, *Kobzar* (1840), and the epic poem *Haidamaky* (1841). Although an ambivalent picture of Jews may be found in *Haidamaky*, the poem includes empathetic depictions of Jews and an appreciation of the intimacy and complexity of Ukrainian-Jewish relations.

Ivan Kotliarevskyi (1769–1838), poet and playwright, is regarded as the pioneer of modern Ukrainian literature and historical writing.

Nikolai Gogol (Ukrainian: Mykola Hohol, 1809–52), considered one of the greatest Russian-language writers, was deeply inspired by themes relating to his native Ukraine. His enormously popular tale about the Zaporozhian Cossacks, *Taras Bulba* (1835), includes Judeophobic stereotypes. Nonetheless, the Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem admired Gogol's literary talents and tried to emulate his style.

Mykhailo Maksymovych (1804–73), historian, ethnographer, philologist, botanist, poet, and first rector of Kyiv University, best known for his collection of Ukrainian songs.

as beneficiaries of the Poles' plunder of Eastern-rite houses of worship, and as holders of the keys to the Orthodox churches. By attacking a Cossack colonel who was a convert from Judaism, it also was "marked by the new era, in which ethnicity, not religion, defined people's primary identity"—as stated by Plokhy, "conversion to Orthodoxy was not sufficient to turn anyone into a true Rus' native, whether that person was originally an ethnic Jew or an ethnic Pole…"

Zhyd vs. *yevrei*

Some scholars have argued that the term *zhyd* (derived via Polish and Italian from the Hebrew term *yehudi* meaning "a Jew") is the only term used to designate a Jew in West Slavic languages such as Polish, Czech and also traditional spoken and written western Ukrainian. In East Slavic folklore tradition, however, *zhyd* was generally used as a term of abuse. The preferred, more properly neutral term in contemporary standard Ukrainian and Russian is *yevrei* (derived from the Hebrew word *ivri,* meaning "a Hebrew") — also the standard term for Jew in the Church Slavonic Bible. In the contemporary western Ukrainian context, however, *yevrei* is considered by many to be an alien word of Russian origin imposed during the Soviet period. At the same time, Ukrainian Jews and most Ukrainians today generally regard *zhyd* to be an offensive, derogatory term.

Panteleimon Kulish (1819–97), influential writer, historian, and ethnographer, the first person to have translated the entire Bible into modern Ukrainian, and also the first to write historical novels in Ukrainian. Kulish was among the group of prominent Ukrainian intellectuals in the Russian Empire who signed an open letter in 1858, protesting anti-Semitic comments in the St. Petersburg journal *Illiustratsiia*. In 1861, as editor of *Osnova*, he engaged in a debate with the editors of *Sion*, the Russian-language Jewish journal published in Odesa, on the use of the term *zhyd* for Jew, which Kulish believed was not pejorative.
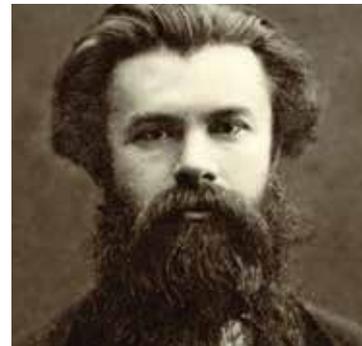
Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–95), a Ukrainian political theorist, economist, historian, philosopher, ethnographer, and activist in the Ukrainian national movement. In 1875 Drahomanov analyzed "the Jewish question" in Ukraine from a "progressive socialist" perspective, arguing that the Jews represent a "parasitic class" because the majority were petty tradesmen, innkeepers, and middlemen. He later qualified this harsh judgment by noting that one-third of Jews in Ukrainian lands were workingmen and that most were poor. He proposed the socioeconomic restructuring of both the Jewish community and Ukrainian society and a system of national-cultural pluralism that would give the Jews national-cultural self-government.

Lesia Ukrainka (pseudonym adopted by Larysa Kosach, 1871–1913), one of Ukraine's best-known poets and writers and a political activist opposed to Russian tsarism and its suppression of Ukrainian culture. Following advice received from her maternal uncle, the noted scholar and publicist Mykhailo Drahomanov, she produced poetic dramas and poems inspired not only by Ukrainian history and folklore, but also a range of Biblical texts.

Mykola Kostomarov (1817–85), historian, publicist, poet, professor of history at Kyiv University and later at St. Petersburg University; also, proponent of a Ukrainian national renaissance within the context of a pan-Slavic and federalized political system. He believed that ethnography and folksongs were a means of discerning a people's "national spirit," and on this basis concluded that Russians and Ukrainians constituted two separate nationalities. Kostomarov expressed anti-Jewish views in his 1862 article "To the Jews," even while advocating for their legal emancipation. In 1879, he attacked Professor Daniel Khvolson's refutation of the blood libel and opined that some Jews do engage in ritual murder. This toxic and unfounded belief found expression again in his 1883 fictionalized account of a Jewish ritual murder accusation in 17th-century Ukraine.

Members of the Kyiv *hromada* at the end of the 19th century. Young Ukrainian populists adopted the name *hromada* (which refers to the traditional village association) for the clandestine cultural associations they established in a number of cities beginning in the 1860s. Their goal was to spread literacy among Ukrainian peasants and workers and to educate them about their culture through publications and Sunday schools.

Impact of the "great reforms" of the 1860s on Ukrainians and the rise of official anti-Ukrainianism

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the ensuing reforms in local self-government, the courts, the military, education, and censorship laws had a major impact on the Ukrainian inhabitants of the Russian Empire. While serfs were released from personal and legal subjugation to landlords, many – particularly those who became underpaid labourers in urban centres – saw a deterioration in their economic status. Rumours that Ukrainian leaders were plotting to separate from Russia led to the arrest of Ukrainian activists and the closing of Ukrainian schools and cultural organizations such as the *hromadas* that sought to spread literacy and knowledge about Ukrainian culture. In 1863 the interior minister Count Petr Valuev issued a decree banning the publication in Ukrainian of secular and religious books (apart from fiction). In his opinion: "the Ukrainian language never existed, does not exist, and shall never exist." In 1876, the tsar signed the Ems Ukase, a secret decree extending the publication ban to all books and song lyrics in the "Little Russian dialect." In 1881, the new tsar, Alexander III amended the ukase, permitting Ukrainian lyrics, dictionaries, and approved plays but not the Ukrainian alphabet.

Impact of the "great reforms" of the 1860s on Jews and the persistence of official anti-Semitism

Under Alexander II a series of laws and decrees somewhat improved the situation of the Jews. Conscription requirements became less severe. Some categories of the Jewish population were allowed to reside outside the Pale and to vote. Political and social reforms enabled the first generation of Jewish journalists, censors, crown rabbis, doctors, and lawyers to obtain degrees at the state-sanctioned rabbinic seminaries and universities and to form the core of what would become a modernized Eastern European Jewish intelligentsia. Most chose integration into the state-based imperial culture and the Russian language. Journalists and writers, often from the ranks of the *maskilim*, began to publish the first Hebrew-, Yiddish-, and Russian-language Jewish newspapers in the Russian Empire. Modernist synagogues were established. Nonetheless, state-sponsored discrimination against Jews continued, as did

Above left: Vitalii Shulgin (1822–78), an ardent propagator of the myth of a secret Jewish world government, founded *Kievlianin*, a Russian-language newspaper in Kyiv in 1864. Noted for its extreme hostility to Jews, *Kievlianin* continued its anti-Jewish campaign until Shulgin's death and into the 1910s under the editorship of his son, Vasilii (1878–1976). Both father and son were right-wing Russian monarchists. In 1913, however, Vasilii strongly criticized the Russian government for its role in the Beilis blood libel trial.

Above right: In 1858 Osip Rabinovich, a pioneer of Russian-language Jewish journalism, debuted in *Odesskii vestnik*, a leading newspaper in Odesa. (Osip Rabinovich, *Sochineniia*, Collected works, St. Petersburg and Odesa, 1880–88)

Rassvet (Dawn), a Russian-language Jewish newspaper launched in Odesa, 27 May 1860.

anti-Semitic articles in the Russian press and the expulsion of Jews deemed to be residing in Kyiv illegally. The assassination of Tsar Alexander II by revolutionaries from the People's Will triggered a new round of impairments to the economic, religious, and social rights of Jews. The "Temporary Rules," issued on 3 May 1882, banned Jews from free professions and from villages, introduced *numerus clausu*s in education, and severely limited economic and electoral rights. Only those Jews who converted to Orthodox Christianity were exempt from these restrictions.

Right: Petr Valuev, Tsar Alexander II's minister of interior, issued a decree in 1863 banning publications in Ukrainian (except for fiction) in the Russian Empire, and denied the existence of a separate Ukrainian language. (Portrait by Ivan Kramskoi)

Far right: Portrait of Tsar Alexander II, ca. 1865, referred to by some as "Alexander the Liberator" for his emancipation of the serfs in 1861, as well as other reforms. His policies, however, led to the impoverishment of the peasants and included blatant anti-Ukrainian decrees.

View of the interior of the Brodsky Synagogue, the first "progressive" (i.e., non-Orthodox, modernist) synagogue in the Russian Empire, established in 1863 in Odesa. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Dnieper Ukraine—Demographic Profile, 1897
Total population: 23,833,000, of whom:

- Ukrainians 71.5%
- Russians 12.4%
- Jews 8.5%
- Germans 2.1%
- Poles 1.7%
- Other 3.8%
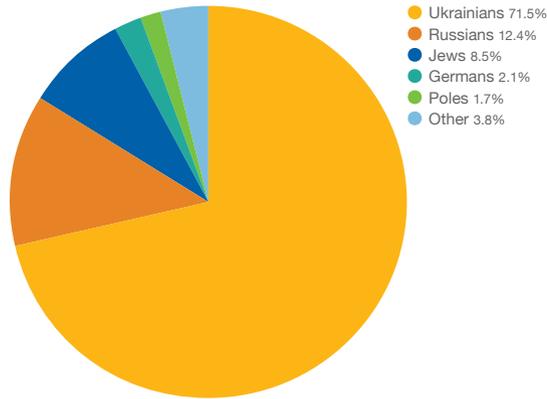
Dnieper Ukraine—Urban Population, 1897
Urban population: 3,085,000 of whom:

- Russians 34%
- Ukrainians 30.3%
- Jews 27%
- Other 8.7%

Demographic and economic factors, 1890s–1910s
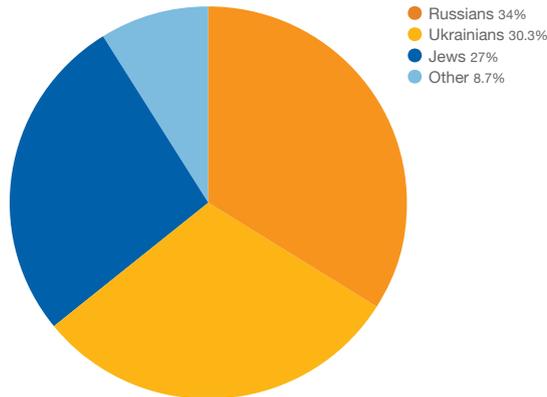
According to the 1897 census, 2.6 million Jews lived on the territory of present-day Ukraine. The largest proportions were in the tsarist provinces of Volhynia (Volyn), Kiev (Kyiv), Podolia (Podilia) and Kherson (around 12–13 percent each) and almost 30 percent in the metropolitan district of Odesa.

While the vast majority of Ukrainians in tsarist Russia were engaged in agriculture, the 1897 census indicates the following occupational structure of the Jewish population:

- more than 40 percent were engaged in trade
- 35 percent worked in production (10 percent workers, 20 percent artisans)
- 5 percent owned small businesses
- 5 percent were civil servants and members of "free professions" (doctors, lawyers, literati)
- 3–4 percent were employed in agriculture

The remaining 11–12 percent were employed by private companies, served in the army, performed religious services, worked as day labourers, or were unemployed.

Above: Jewish blacksmith, tailor, and shoemaker. Photographs taken during the An-sky expeditions, in Podolia and Volhynia. (Petersburg Judaica Center, Yudovin Photograph Collection)

Right: Prince Illarion Vasilchikov, the Russian governor-general of Kyiv, Podolia, and Volhynia, argued in 1858 that the growing number of Jewish craftsmen (including carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths, and tinsmiths) should be allowed to move beyond the Pale of Settlement.

Above left: Israel Brodsky, founder of the Brodsky dynasty (1880). *Above right:* Lazar Brodsky (ca. 1904). By the early 20th century, the Brodsky family had established a sugar cartel with other industrialists, including those from the Ukrainian Tereshchenko and Kharytonenko families, thereby making Kyiv the "sugar capital" of imperial Russia. Another major industrialist and generous philanthropist was David Margolin, whose son Arnold was active in the struggle for Ukrainian independence in 1917.

Right top: In 1898 Lazar Brodsky sponsored the building of the Brodsky (Choral) synagogue in Kyiv. Postcard, ca. 1900s.

Right bottom: The Brodsky family also supported non-Jewish cultural and welfare institutions and later funded the construction in Kyiv of the Bessarabka/ Bessarabian Covered Market. Postcard, 1910s.

Rich and poor

By the 1860s, the Russian government's general economic policies allowed for the emergence of a small group of prosperous traders but led to the impoverishment of most Jewish merchants. The vast majority of Jews lived a modest existence that often bordered on poverty.

Two Jews: Rich and Poor (Natasha Turovsky, 2005).

Systemic discrimination caused steady impoverishment of the Jewish masses. According to the Jewish Colonization Society, in 1898 the poor comprised 17 percent of the Jewish population in Volhynia and Chernihiv provinces, and 20 percent in the Katerynoslav, Kyiv, Podolia, Poltava, and Kherson provinces.

Top left: Illustration for the novella *Dos kleyne mentshele* (The Little Man) by Mendele Moykher-Sforim.

Left and above: Two poor boys in Dubno, Volhynia province, and a midwife with her "grandchildren." Photographs taken during the An-sky expeditions. (Petersburg Judaica Center, Yudovin Photograph Collection)

These images illustrate the poverty prevalent among both Jews and Ukrainians in tsarist Russia.

On a holiday, 1916, Voronkiv, Kyiv province. (Photograph from the historical-ethnographic album *Ukraine and Ukrainians* by Ivan Honchar, Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv)

Kobzars in Kharkiv, 1902. A Kobzar was an itinerant Ukrainian bard who sang epic-historical, religious, and folk songs to his own accompaniment on a multi-string traditional Ukrainian instrument, such as the bandura or kobza. Kobzars were often blind. (Alamy)

It was a custom in the village of Samovytsia, Poltava province, to organize dinners for the village poor on 27 July, the religious holiday of St. Panteleimon. This 1895 photo depicts participants of such a dinner in local attire. (Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv)

Young spinners from the village of Mordva near Chyhyryn, Kyiv province, 1906. (Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv)

Village children in Kovrai, Poltava province. Photographed in 1917 by Olena Trebinska. (Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv)

Graduating class of the Moriah School, a Hebrew-language school for girls. Zhvanets (Zvantz), Ukraine, 1910. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Children playing in Kremianets, Volhynia province, ca. 1913. Photograph taken during the An-sky expeditions.
(YIVO Photo Archives)

Girls in the village of Kropyvna, Poltava province. (Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv)

Students in a Talmud Torah school. Dubno, Volhynia province in western Ukraine. Photograph taken during the An-sky expeditions. (Petersburg Judaica Center, Yudovin Photograph Collection)

Anti-Semitism in the Russian Empire. Engraving depicting a pogrom in a village in Podolia in 1882. (Spanish and American Illustration, Alamy)

Pogrom

In the most general sense, the Russian word pogrom (derived from the verb *gromit*, meaning "to destroy" or "to wreak havoc") refers to a violent mass attack on the persons and property of members of any minority group. In a narrower sense, the word is associated with attacks on Jews, especially in the Russian Empire in 1881–82, 1903–06, and during the Russian Civil War.

Pogroms in the Russian Empire

Odesa, 1871

A pogrom was carried out during Holy Week by a mob of Greeks and Russians against the Jews of Odesa, largely motivated by growing commercial rivalry in the grain trade, as well as religion-based antipathy towards Jews which tended to intensify at Easter time.

The pogroms of 1881–84

The assassination in March 1881 of Tsar Alexander II triggered mobs of peasants and first-generation urban dwellers to attack Jewish residences and stores, beginning in Elisavetgrad (now Kropyvnytskyi), Kyiv, and Odesa. Of 259 recorded pogroms, 219 took place in villages, 4 in Jewish agricultural colonies, and 36 in cities and small towns. Altogether 35 Jews were killed in 1881–82, with another 10 in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia in 1884, the latter pogrom accompanied by an accusation of ritual murder. Many more were injured and there was considerable material damage. Contrary to assumptions at the time and in earlier historical accounts, historians now believe that the authorities did not instigate these pogroms. However, the pogroms coincided with a tendency in both government circles and the press to blame Jews for the ills resulting from industrialization and modernization.

Opposite: Sites of Major Pogroms, 1881–84 and 1903–06. (YIVO Encyclopedia Online, ©2010. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)

Major pogrom sites

Smela 1881–1884

Priluki 1903–1906

Golta 1881–1884 and 1903–1906

Persecution of the Jews in Russia: Scene Inside the Arsenal at Kiev. Engraving from *The Illustrated London News*, ca. 1881. (Moldovan Family Collection, YIVO Archives)

Black Hundred members and supporters marching on the streets of Odesa. (Photograph from *The Illustrated London News*, 1905)

Scene in a Jewish household following a pogrom, as a Russian-Jewish soldier returns home to find the bodies of his murdered family, 1906. (Alamy)

Anti-Jewish violence, 1903–06

A major pogrom occurred in Kishinev, Province of Bessarabia (now Moldova), beginning on Easter Day in 1903. The fact that the authorities did not intervene until the third day provoked worldwide outrage. Hayim Nahman Bialik, future poet laureate of the Zionist movement, published his seminal poem *In the City of Slaughter* shortly after visiting the site of the Kishinev pogrom. Two years later, after Nicholas II issued the manifesto pledging political freedoms and elections to the Duma (October 1905), around 650 pogroms occurred in 28 provinces. The mass violence was orchestrated with support from the police and the army and carried out by the "Black Hundreds" (monarchist, Russian Orthodox, nationalist, anti-revolutionary militants). Over 3,100 Jews were killed, around 800 in Odesa alone. Jews attempted to resist pogromists by organizing self-defence units. These appeared in Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kyiv, Elisavetgrad (now Kropyvnytskyi), and other centres.

Jewish responses to the pogroms, anti-Jewish legislation, and economic hardship

The 1881–82 pogroms set in motion new political and ideological movements among Jews and large-scale emigration. For many Jewish intellectuals, the goal of integration and transformation of communities through education and Russification was now discredited. Some perceived socialism, with its promise of equality, as the solution; others promoted emigration to America or Palestine. The vast majority of the population, however, was apolitical, preoccupied with daily struggles in difficult times.

In 1882 Leon Pinsker, a physician from Odesa, who had earlier promoted the integration of Jews into the broader Russian society, published his influential pamphlet *Autoemancipation*, in which he advocated that Jews establish a state of their own. He proceeded to found the Hibbat Zion movement, which paved the way for the Zionist movement. In 1882–84 some 60 members of the Kharkiv organization Bilu moved to Palestine, inaugurating the first mass resettlement of the Jews in the Land of Israel.

In response to the 1905–06 pogroms, the Bund (Jewish labor party) mobilized self-defence units and many Jews joined various political parties, including social-democratic, socialist-revolutionary, national autonomist, and Zionist in particular. The founder of "spiritual" Zionism, Ahad Ha'am,

Leon Pinsker, founder of the Hibbat Zion movement, a precursor to modern Zionism.

Jewish self-defence unit in Odesa (1905), which served as a model for later Jewish self-defence organizations formed in response to the 1918–19 pogroms.

was a native of Kyiv province. From 1897 Zionist circles were established in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and other cities, making Ukraine a centre of organized Zionism. The tsarist government was initially indifferent towards the Zionists, but eventually banned them.

Ukrainian political responses to anti-Semitism

Two Ukrainian political parties arose in the Russian Empire at the turn of the century, one on a social democratic platform conducive to Ukrainian-Jewish cooperation (the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party), the other (the Ukrainian People's Party) preaching exclusion of "foreigners," including Jews, from Ukrainian society.

Top: Dmytro Antonovych (1877–1945), art and theatre historian, founder and leader of the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party in 1900–05 and from 1905, of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers' Party, and an active figure in the Ukrainian Central Rada in 1917–18.

Left: Mykola Mikhnovsky (1873–1924), community activist, publicist, lawyer, ideologue of independent Ukrainian statehood, and a founder of the Ukrainian People's Party.

New trends in Ukrainian-Jewish political cooperation

In the aftermath of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Ukrainian and Jewish political parties in the Russian Empire began to cooperate closely in both legal and underground political activity, paving the way for an unprecedented degree of cooperation in 1917 between Jewish political parties (including socialist, Bundist, and Zionist) and the Ukrainian Central Rada (revolutionary parliament). Jews were well represented in the Central Rada, and Yiddish was recognized as an official language, even appearing alongside Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian on the Ukrainian National Republic's paper money.

Left top: Hnat Khotkevych (1877–1938), Ukrainian playwright, theatre director, composer, bandura player, and civic figure. Originally from Kharkiv, he migrated to Habsburg-ruled Galicia in 1906 to escape political persecution.

Left bottom: Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1880–1951), Ukrainian writer, playwright, artist, member of the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, and an organizer of the Central Rada in 1917.

These two writers were representative of a generation of modernist Ukrainian writers who were supportive of solidarity between Jews and Ukrainians and committed to democratic rights and social equality for all.

Olena Pchilka, a literary pseudonym adopted by Olha Drahomanova-Kosach, (1849–1930). Ukrainian publisher, writer, ethnographer, interpreter, and civil activist, who asserted that the Jewish intelligentsia was hostile to Ukrainian culture and language and always chose to join the ranks of the "ruling nations," such as Russians, Germans, or Poles.

In 1911, the prominent Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky, as if responding to Pchilka's charges, wrote to Ukrainian newspaper editors in Kyiv that proponents of the Ukrainian national idea and Zionists had the same enemies and goals, that Russifiers and Polonizers were problematic for both nations, and that the Zionist press would show the Jews "that they must turn their attention toward Ukrainians and not be Russifiers."

Mendel Beilis with his family.

Mendel Beilis before his trial in Kyiv. Photograph, 1913.

The Beilis Trial

Although many times dismissed as a baseless libel in papal pronouncements, the medieval "blood libel" (the accusation that Jews would abduct and kill Christian children in order to use their blood in the preparation of *matzot*, the unleavened bread eaten on Passover) found adherents in late imperial Russia. Mendel Beilis, a Jewish superintendent at a brick factory in Kyiv, was accused of killing the Christian boy Andrei Yushchinsky for "blood ritual purposes." The instigators of the case were anti-Semites in the office of the Kyiv prosecutor and their supporters among imperial bureaucrats — the police and judiciary in particular. The Beilis trial may be compared to France's Dreyfus Affair in that it shook and divided society on the basis of anti-Semitic sentiments and attempts to counter these. The jury, consisting largely of local Ukrainian peasants, found Beilis innocent, but the view that the killing was an act of ritual murder was upheld.

The jury at the trial of Mendel Beilis, the target of a blood libel in 1911–13. This sketch was made in 1913 following Beilis' release after having been found not guilty.


The prominent Ukrainian historian and statesman Mykhailo Hrushevskyi commented with disgust on the Beilis trial in 1913. He held the imperial government responsible for inciting anti-Semitism, which in his view prevented the development of culture and education among the Ukrainian population. Hrushevskyi knew that the Beilis case would tarnish the image of his homeland and was proud that the jury, which consisted of simple Ukrainian peasants, pronounced Beilis innocent.

"In Memory of the Beilis Trial: Beilis Not Guilty, Jews Guilty." Yiddish postcard, 1913. The cartoon depicts the "Jewish people" with a ball and chain labeled "Blood Libel" and Tsar Nicholas II saying: "Go, Mendel. You're free! Rejoice with your American friends. But I shall get even for your acquittal with your left-behind Russian brothers." Cartoon by Mitchel Loeb (1889–1968). Postcard printed by Progress Publishing Company, New York, ca. 1913. (YIVO Archives)

Ukrainian lands in Austria-Hungary, ca. 1875.

A proponent of enlightened absolutism, Emperor Joseph II (r. 1765–90) issued a series of Edicts of Tolerance in the 1780s, which extended religious rights to Jews, Ukrainians and other minority groups. At the same time, he advanced an assimilationist policy in his 1789 Edict of Tolerance for the Jews of Galicia, which called for abolishing Jewish communal autonomy and requiring compulsory military recruitment without provision for observance of religious practices.

Ukrainians, Jews, and others under Austrian rule

During the "long nineteenth century" (1770s to 1914), the westernmost regions of Ukraine (about 15 percent of present-day Ukraine) were within the boundaries of the multiethnic Habsburg-ruled Austrian Empire (as of 1867, Austro-Hungarian Empire, or the Dual Monarchy). These included Galicia, also known as the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, annexed from Poland in 1772; Bukovina, acquired from the Ottoman Empire in 1774; and Transcarpathia or Subcarpathian Rus', part of the Hungarian Kingdom that had been under Habsburg rule since the sixteenth century.

After the annexation of Galicia, new restrictions on the economic and civic rights of Jews were added in the 1770s to those already imposed during Empress Maria-Theresa's reign (1740–65), including a "toleration tax" in 1783 and fees for permission to marry. A series of edicts issued by Emperor Joseph II in the 1780s lifted some restrictions while narrowing the economic activities of Jews outside urban centres. After a period of renewed discriminatory measures in the early 1800s, the situation improved during Emperor Franz Josef's long reign (1848–1916). A far-reaching development for Ukrainians was the abolition of serfdom in 1848, which enabled many to become economically independent of their former landlords and even to participate in government. By 1867 Jews in the Habsburg Empire were granted full emancipation, while the Ukrainian national movement flourished in an environment that permitted multiple loyalties.

Top to bottom: The coats-of-arms for Bukovina, Carpathian-Rus' (Transcarpathia), and Galicia respectively.
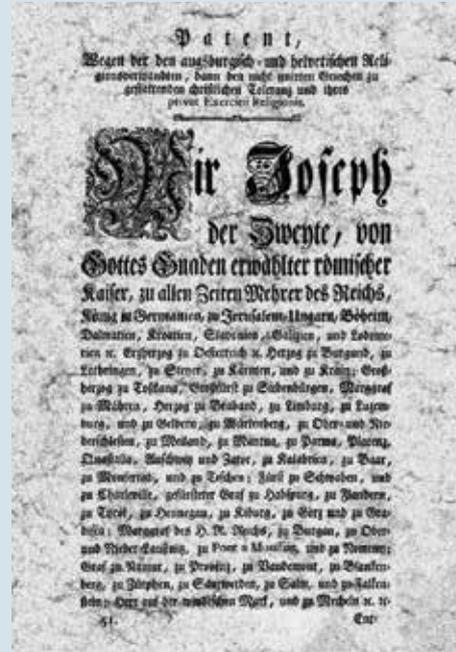
The 1781 Toleranzpatent (Edict of Tolerance) issued by Habsburg Emperor Joseph II extended religious freedom to non-Catholic Christians, including the Eastern Orthodox. A year later an Edict of Tolerance accorded Jews the freedom to pursue all branches of commerce and engage in crafts and gave them access to state secondary schools. In a series of subsequent edicts, pressure was put on the Jewish population to assimilate into German culture via such measures as compulsory German-language Jewish primary schools, military conscription, and requiring Jews to adopt German family names and non-Jewish attire.
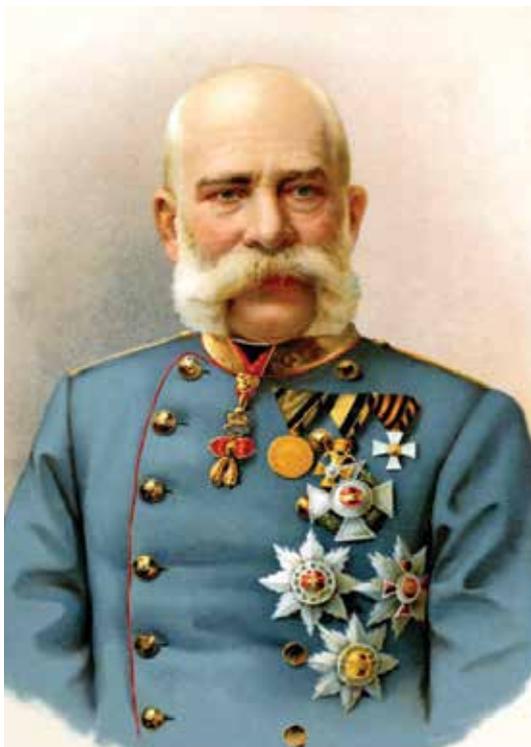
Franz Josef I (1830–1916), Habsburg Emperor of Austria-Hungary, whose 68-year benevolent reign from 1848 to 1916 encompassed the granting of cultural and civic rights that enabled national awakenings among Ukrainians and Jews in Galicia and Bukovina. At the same time, the 1867 constitution that inaugurated Jewish emancipation defined Jews as a community of faith rather than ethnicity.

Ukrainians under Austrian Habsburg rule were not culturally repressed as they were in tsarist Russia. In fact, the Austrian government took active measures to improve the educational level of the general population and allowed Polish, German, and Ukrainian to be taught concurrently in schools. In Russia, the Uniate Church was absorbed by Russian Orthodoxy, whereas in the Habsburg Empire it was renamed the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in 1774 and supported by the state. During the eighteenth-century rule of Maria Theresa and her son and successor Joseph II, the clergy in Austrian-ruled Ukrainian lands were able to study and worship in their own tongue and emerge as leaders in the Ukrainian national awakening. As proud Habsburg subjects, the Jews of Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia also had much warmer feelings toward "their" emperor, Franz Josef, than did the Jews of Russian-ruled Ukraine toward Tsar Nicholas II.

Galicia

The Jewish population in Galicia grew from 328,000 in 1849 to 872,000 in 1910, representing 11 percent of the population of the province. The growth in the Jewish population may be attributed to the high birth rate and the in-migration of refugees from pogroms in the neighbouring western provinces of the Russian Empire. Three-quarters of Galicia's Jews (660,000) lived in the eastern half of the province, in cities and small towns (76.2 percent); of these, 57,000 resided in Lviv, where they comprised 35.8 percent of the city's total population. The share of the rural and urban Jewish population relative to the general population of Eastern Galicia was 12.9 percent and 35.8 percent respectively. The high proportion of rural Jews was second only to Bukovina.

Galicia—Demographic Snapshot, 1910
Total population: 7,980,000, of whom:

- Ukrainians 43%
- Jews 10.7%
- Germans 0.8%
- Poles 45.5%

A page from the Austrian census of Galicia (1880s).

Types galiciens: paysans et juifs (Galician types: Peasants and Jews). Drawing by Charles Edouard Delort, based on a photograph by M. Krieger, ca. 1875. (Moldovan Family Collection, YIVO Archives)

The city of Lemberg in Eastern Galicia, end of the 18th century. Colour etching by G. Borowsky. (Lviv Historical Museum). Jews formed a significant segment of the city's population, as is reflected in the highlighted Jewish sites in the caption, including the Great Suburban synagogue, the Jewish cemetery, and Jewish homes.
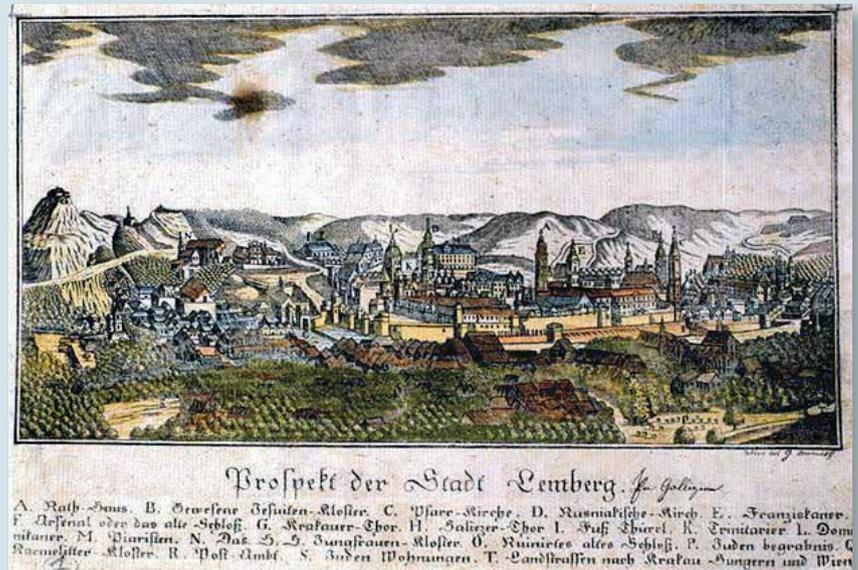
Jews made up the majority of the population in several important towns in Galicia. Included in the landmarks shown in this 1898 postcard for the town of Brody is the main synagogue (*lower right*).
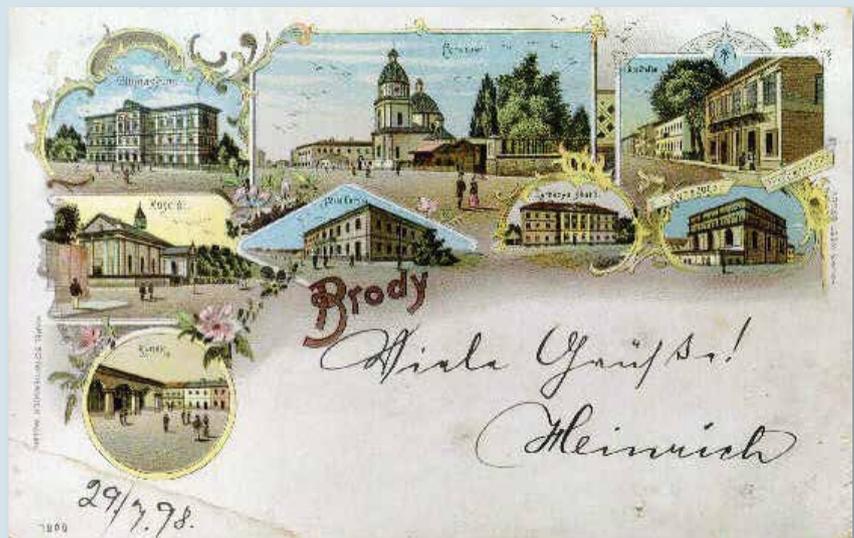
Economic profile of
Ukrainians and Jews in Galicia

Until 1848 nearly three-quarters of the population in Galicia were serfs attached to the land and obligated to carry out labour for their mostly Polish landlords. After their emancipation, they eked out their livelihood as peasant farmers on small plots and became chronically indebted to the large landowners, as well as to moneylenders who were often Jews. At the same time, poverty was rampant among Galician Jews. Government reports indicated that about one-third relied on irregular odd jobs. The rest made a living from petty trade, crafts, or leasing taverns and other enterprises from Polish landowners.

The Jewish tavern-keeper became an iconic figure in the Galician countryside, known for helping his Ukrainian and Polish peasant customers by means of loans, remedies, mediation, news, and advice, yet also perceived as exploiting them and addicting them to drink, and resented by Christian competitors. Starting in the late eighteenth century, both the Russian and Austrian authorities enacted decrees to close the occupation of tavern-keeping to Jews, though some Jews managed to evade the ban. In the nineteenth century numerous temperance societies arose, mostly under the influence of the clergy, which blamed the Jews for alcoholism among the people. By 1914, after the state controlled concessions for the sale of alcoholic beverages, tavern-keeping largely disappeared as an occupation for Jews.

At a market. Photograph by an unknown photographer, 1900. (Lviv Historical Museum)

Jewish tavern in Zhvanets (Zvantz), now Khmelnytsky oblast in western Ukraine. Early 20th century.

Booths at the market in Kolomyia, 1914–18. (Private collection of Ihor Kotlobulatov, Lviv)

Drohobycz.

Galicia's economy was largely agrarian. As a result, the marketplaces in nearby towns, where Jews figured prominently, played a particularly important role in the economy and in people's lives. An exception to the agrarian economy was Galicia's small but vibrant oil industry in Drohobych and Boryslav. The discovery of oil in the mid-nineteenth century changed the course of the two towns' history and the development of their Jewish communities. Boryslav became a sprawling boom town, while Drohobych became the urban hub of the Galician oil belt. Economic prosperity, alongside civil equality under Emperor Franz Josef, enabled greater social integration and community expression. The *Drohobyczer Zeitung*, a periodical published in German (with Hebrew lettering) was launched in 1883. The Great Synagogue was built in Drohobych, and modern Jewish schools, a hospital, and other community services were established in both towns.

Above: Panorama of Drohobych, the urban hub of the Galician oil belt. Postcard, ca. 1915.

Boryslav, early 20th-century postcard showing the oil refineries. (Private archive Oleksiy Kachmar and Julia Kysla)


The Drohobyczer Zeitung 1883–1914. (Courtesy of Drohobycz, Boryslaw and Vicinity Organization in Israel)

Bukovina

Bukovina—Demographic Snapshot, 1910
Total population: 795,000, of whom:

- Ukrainians 38%
- Romanians 34%
- Jews 12%
- Germans 8%
- Poles 4%
- Other 4%

In multiethnic Bukovina, Ukrainians were concentrated primarily in the northern and western rural areas. Jews lived primarily in small towns, the provincial capital of Chernivtsi (German: Czernowitz; Yiddish: Chernovits), as well as in villages. In 1910 Jews comprised 27.8 percent of the city's population of 85,000, Germans 20.9 percent, Ukrainians 18 percent, closely followed by Poles and Romanians.

Right top: Market day in the Ringplatz, the central square of Czernowitz/Chernivtsi. Postcard, early 1900s.

Right bottom: A Jewish-owned wagon that transported Jewish passengers between Sadhora (Yid. Sadigura) and Chernivtsi. Postcard, early 1900s.

Multicultural life in late 19th-century Bukovina was epitomized by the Ukrainian (a), Romanian (b), German (c), Jewish (d), and Polish (e) national centres in Chernivtsi.

The role of Jews in Bukovina's economy

Jews in Bukovina's urban areas were active in crafts, trade, construction, and moneylending, which reflected their role in the development of commerce and industry in this otherwise predominantly agricultural and underdeveloped province of Habsburg Austria. Jews from smaller towns were often part of the traditional agriculture-based economy, serving as middlemen between urban and rural areas.

Postcard in German depicts the multiethnic population of Bukovina, early 1900s.

The central synagogue of Munkatch (Mukachevo).

Greetings from Munkatch (Mukachevo).
Postcard, ca. 1900.

Transcarpathia

Transcarpathia's Ukrainians were concentrated in the northern and eastern Carpathian Mountains. The politically dominant population of Hungarians/Magyars lived exclusively in the rural areas of the southwestern lowland plain and in the small towns of Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, and Berehovo. Jews were concentrated in rural villages and towns in Hungary's Maramorosh and Bereg counties, where in some locales they comprised nearly half of the population. In the early 1900s, Transcarpathia had some 128,800 Jews (14 percent of the total population). It was the only region in central and eastern Europe where a significant proportion of the Jewish population worked in agriculture or as lumberjacks. An estimated 30 percent were illiterate and fervently religious, like their Ukrainian neighbours. Though their native language was Yiddish, most Jews communicated easily in spoken Ukrainian.

Transcarpathia—Demographic Snapshot, 1910
Total population: 599,000, of whom:

- Ukrainians 54%
- Hungarians 26%
- Jews 14%
- Other 6%
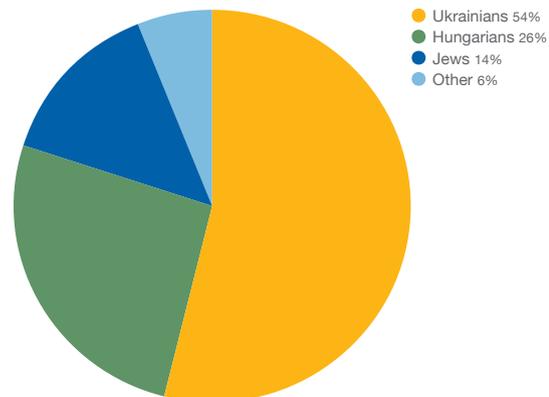
Jews and Ukrainians in a village in the Carpathian Mountains.

Village orchestra of Ukrainian and Jewish musicians. Verkhni Vorota, Volovets' district, 1895.

The *Haskalah* in Galicia and Bukovina

Left: Joseph Perl, an educator and author of influential anti-Hasidic satirical writings, established a modern Jewish school in Ternopil based on principles of the *Haskalah*.

Right: Rabbi Abraham Kohn (1807–48). The conflict within the Jewish community between supporters and opponents of religious modernization was particularly bitter in Lviv/Lwów/Lemberg in the 1840s, where Kohn, a Reform rabbi, died of food poisoning, which may have been the result of an attempt on his life. Portrait by W. Wachtel, 1902. (Lviv National Art Gallery)

As in the Russian Empire, *maskilim* in Austrian Galicia called for sweeping reform of the traditional Jewish lifestyle, cultivated the Hebrew language, and lampooned the popular mystical Hasidic movement in their satirical writings. Foremost among the Galician *maskilim* were Menachem Mendel Lefin of Sataniv (1749–1826), who sought to bring rationalist Western European Enlightenment ideas to Eastern European Jews in the Yiddish vernacular; Joseph Perl (1773–1839), an educator, writer, and vigorous opponent of Hasidism; and Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840), a philosopher, biblical critic, and historian who exemplified the religious person prepared to confront the perplexities of the modern age. Krochmal had a major influence on almost all those associated with the *Haskalah* in Eastern Europe.

By the mid-nineteenth century fourteen towns in Galicia had modern Jewish public schools, both primary and secondary, which used German as the language of instruction, and were based on *Haskalah* principles. A trend developed among traditional Jews, as well as among the Ukrainian peasantry, to send their daughters rather than sons to government public schools.

The Progressive Jewish Temple in the Old Town Square in Lviv. Constructed in 1844–45 on the site of a 17th-century synagogue. Destroyed in 1941.

New Year's greeting card in which a modernized Jew wishes a traditional Orthodox Jew a happy new year in Yiddish: "*Daytsh* (Germanized) or *Hasid*, rich or poor / Press hands, brothers! / Happy New Year / Whoever or whatever you are!" (YIVO Archives)

In Bukovina, the Austrian Habsburg administration's campaign since the 1770s to integrate the various nationalities of the empire bore results among the province's Jews. By the 1830s German became their language of communication with the authorities and with the empire's other peoples. Urban Jews enthusiastically enrolled their children in German-language public schools and established modernist, Reform synagogues. Nevertheless, Yiddish remained the everyday language of 85 percent of Bukovina's Jews.

Above: The residence of the Orthodox Metropolitan of Bukovina and Dalmatia (built in 1864–82), now the campus of the Yurii Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (formerly Franz Josef University). The proportion of Jewish students enrolled at this German-language university increased from 25 percent in 1883 to 42 percent in 1904. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Above left: Street scene and view of the Jewish Temple in Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk), ca. 1910. The building was heavily damaged in World War I, restored in 1922, and destroyed in World War II. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Above right: The Jewish Reform Temple in Czernowitz (Chernivtsi) ca. 1915. Construction was completed in 1878; the synagogue was destroyed by German and Romanian forces in 1941. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Right: The Jewish National House in Czernowitz (Chernivtsi) was built in 1908. By endorsing the establishment of a Jewish National House in the very heart of the provincial capital, the Habsburg administration acknowledged the important role of the Jewish community in Bukovina.

The Galician Diet (legislative assembly), which began to function in 1861, received its own building (built 1877–81), which today is the main building of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. (Photo archives of the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv)

Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews in the politics of Austrian Galicia

After the Polish gentry was granted local autonomy in Austrian Galicia in 1867, Galician Jews tended to favour the culture of the Polish nobility who exercised political and administrative control in the region. However, the "Shomer Israel" (Guardian of Israel) Society of Progressive Jews, founded in 1868 in Lviv, leaned toward assimilation into Austro-German culture. Its centralistic views ran counter to the views of the Polish majority in Galicia, who were advocating for the greatest possible autonomy for the province and complete assimilation of the Jewish population into Polish culture. In 1873, Shomer Israel founded its own electoral committee and formed a bloc with *Russka Rada*, the electoral committee of Ukrainians, against the Polish committee. Together they succeeded in placing five deputies in the parliament. Polish politicians responded with an economic boycott against the Jews.

Because of the delicate population balance in Galicia, Jews were drawn into the intensifying rivalries between Ukrainian national leaders and Polish authorities who sought to resist the demands for greater Ukrainian political and cultural autonomy. Subsequently, the Jewish electorate often comprised the "swing vote" between Ukrainians and Poles for seats in the Austrian imperial parliament, particularly after universal male suffrage was introduced in 1907. At the same time, the emergence of Ukrainian and Jewish political parties created opportunities for Ukrainian-Jewish political cooperation.

Markiian Shashkevych (1811–43), priest, poet, and national awakener among Galician Ukrainians.

Ivan Vahylevych (1811–66), Galician-Ukrainian ethnographer, priest, and poet who eventually favoured close cooperation with local Poles.

Leaders of the Ukrainian national awakening in the Austrian Empire

The national awakening among Ukrainians under Austrian Habsburg rule was led by the Ukrainian intelligentsia, including teachers, priests, lawyers, writers, historians, linguists, ethnographers, and dramatists. Among the best known were the prolific writer and scholar Ivan Franko and the prominent historian and political figure Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, who emigrated from the Russian Empire in 1894 to take up a professorship at the University of Lviv.

Yakiv Holovatskyi (1814–88), Galician-Ukrainian priest, historian, ethnographer, from 1848 to 1867 professor and first holder of the Chair of Ruthenian Language and Literature at the University of Lviv.

Yurii Fedkovych (1834–88), writer, editor, and main promoter of the Ukrainian national awakening in Bukovina.

Adolf Dobrianskyi (1817–1901), Transcarpathian political and civic activist thrice elected to the Hungarian Diet, who defended the rights of Ukrainians living in Transcarpathia during and after the Revolution of 1848.

Aleksander Dukhnovych (1803–65), Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest and writer, considered the national awakener of the Transcarpathian Ukrainian people.

Ivan Franko (1856–1916), the prodigiously productive and versatile author of more than one thousand works ranging from poetry to detective novels. Franko was a social and literary critic, journalist, political activist, ethnographer, and founder of the Ukrainian socialist national movement in Western Ukraine. Along with Taras Shevchenko, Franko had a tremendous impact on modern literary and political thought in Ukraine, as well as in the Ukrainian diaspora. He was also popular with Jewish writers, including in Soviet times, when his works were translated to Yiddish.

געזאַמלטע ווערק
א׳ פראנקאָ

Gezamelte verk (Collected Works) of Ivan Franko, translated into Yiddish by Dovid Hofshteyn and published in Kyiv in 1936.

Mykhailo Hrushevskyi (1866–1934), Ukrainian historian, academician, politician, and statesman. He headed the Shevchenko Scientific Society, was leader of the pre-revolution Ukrainian national movement in Habsburg-ruled Austria, later head of the Central Rada (Ukraine's 1917–18 revolutionary parliament), and a leading cultural figure in Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s.

First meeting of the Supreme Ruthenian Council (*Holovna rus'ka rada*) — the first legal Ukrainian political organization in modern time — Lviv, 2 May 1848. Painting by Edward Błotnicki, 1856. (Lviv Historical Museum)

Above: Cover of early *Prosvita* publication.
The society, which was founded by a group of young populist intellectuals, became the most important Ukrainian mass organization in Galicia and beyond. Alongside its goals of cultural enlightenment and economic betterment of the people, some anti-Semitic tropes would occasionally find their way into this publication.

Right: Participants of a meeting of the *Prosvita* (Enlightenment) Society, founded in Lviv in 1868.

Emergence of Ukrainian cultural and political organizations

Ukrainian culture flourished under Austrian rule – in great contrast to tsarist Russia, where the imperial government after the 1840s tried to suppress the very idea of a distinct Ukrainian nationality by banning Ukrainian-language schools, publications, and cultural organizations. Ukrainians in Austrian Galicia and Bukovina were able to establish numerous Ukrainian-language newspapers, journals, theatres, economic cooperatives, credit unions, and political parties to represent their interests. Again, in contrast to the Russian Empire, Habsburg Austria-Hungary fully supported the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which eventually developed into a stronghold of Ukrainian spirituality, language, and culture, in particular after 1900, when the primate of the church was Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky.

Members of the Shevchenko Scientific Society and the Lviv intelligentsia in 1898. Seated
in the first row in the middle is Olha Kobylianska (Ukrainian modernist writer and feminist).
Seated in the second row in the middle are Mykhailo Hrushevskyi and Ivan Franko.

Far left: Volodymyr Hnatiuk (1871–1926), the noted Ukrainian ethnographer, literary scholar, translator, journalist, and community figure. He served as the general secretary of the Shevchenko Scientific Society (*building pictured left*) for almost three decades and was also an active member of the Lviv *Prosvita* Society. (Photo archives of the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv)

Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky (1865–1944), prominent civic activist and cultural figure in Galicia. Count Sheptytsky, born into a Polonized aristocratic Roman Catholic family, adopted the Eastern-rite Catholicism of his ancestors and a Ukrainian national identity and became Archbishop of Lviv and Metropolitan of Galicia in 1900. He was to lead the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church for over four turbulent decades, during which time he fostered close relations with the Jews of Galicia. He is widely acknowledged today for saving over 150 Jews, mostly children, during World War II by sheltering them in monasteries and in his personal residence.
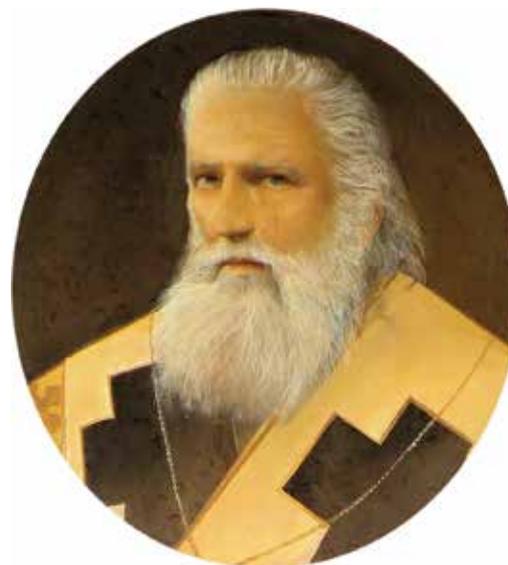
Ukrainian-Jewish political and civic cooperation in Galicia and Bukovina

Above left: Ivan Franko (1856–1916), the eminent Ukrainian writer and politician, drew parallels between the aspirations for a Jewish homeland and the Ukrainian desire for independence. Franko, who was familiar with Jewish culture and translated Yiddish poetry, published the article, *Pytannya zhydivske* (The Jewish Question), in 1883, in which he posited socialist-themed arguments current at the time about Jewish exploitation and domination in the economic sphere. His views evolved, however. In his 1887 article, "Semitism and Anti-Semitism in Galicia," he suggested granting Jews large-scale political rights to the extent of recognizing them as a separate nation. Franko is said to have met Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), (*above right*), in Vienna in 1893 and was inspired to write an enthusiastic review in 1896 of Herzl's *Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), the foundational text of political Zionism.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Ukrainian cultural aspirations were transformed into a political movement, particularly under Austrian rule in Galicia and to some extent in Bukovina. While anti-Semitic tropes were not uncommon in both Polish and Ukrainian intellectual circles in the 1870s and 1880s, the views of several important Ukrainian leaders, such as Ivan Franko and Yulian Romanchuk, evolved over time to support Jewish causes.

Jews in Galicia also became active in politics during this period. Jewish political parties cooperated initially with the Polish parties and then increasingly with the Ukrainian parties. On a number of occasions, Jews and Ukrainians came together in support of candidates with specific national minority claims and programs. Especially noteworthy is the agreement in 1906–07 between Galicia's Ukrainian National Democrats and the Jewish National Party to vote for one another's candidates in those electoral districts with either a majority Ukrainian or Jewish population. Although Jews and Ukrainians often found it difficult to support unanimously (and even more so to implement) the decisions of their respective political leaders, the result was, for the first time, joint Jewish and Ukrainian political clubs in the Austrian imperial parliament.

Yulian Romanchuk (1842–1932) was a Galician politician, community leader, journalist, scholar, and publisher who served in the Galician Diet. He headed the Ruthenian Club and was a member of the Austrian Reichsrat for nearly three decades. In 1879 Romanchuk founded the Ukrainian newspaper *Batkivshchyna*, which expressed anti-Semitic views at the start. However, as president (from 1899 to 1907) of the National Democratic Party, he rejected anti-Semitism and supported Zionism.

Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937) was an Austrian writer, educator, publicist, social activist, and Jewish nationalist politician. He first promoted Zionism (a term he coined), then secular Yiddishism (he was chief organizer of the historic Czernowitz/Chernivtsi Yiddish Language Conference in 1908). In 1905–07, during debates over franchise reform, Yulian Romanchuk proposed the formation of a separate Jewish electoral constituency and was supported by Zionists and Jewish Socialists. For his part, Birnbaum, a strong advocate of Jewish national autonomy in Austria-Hungary, publicly thanked Ukrainian politicians for recognizing the Jews as a people in "a modern, non-anti-Semitic way."

Above left: Benno Straucher (1854–1940), a prominent Jewish politician from Bukovina, was elected to the parliament in Vienna in 1877 and frequently thereafter acted as spokesperson for specifically Jewish interests. He led the Jewish National Party, which promoted a distinct type of Jewish diaspora nationalism and minority rights. After 1897, Straucher reinforced the Jewish-Ukrainian political coalition, cooperating in particular with Yulian Romanchuk, a prominent representative of the Ukrainians in Galicia, during the full parliamentary session of 1907 to 1911.

Above right: Members of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Club: Oleksander Kolessa, Yulian Romanchuk, and Kost Levytsky, 1915.

Delegates to the first convention of the Jewish Social-Democratic Party in Lemberg (Lviv), 9–10 June 1905. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Jewish socialist workers' circles were established in the 1890s in a number of Galician towns, including Lemberg/Lviv, Drohobych, Stryi, Kraków, Przemyśl/Peremyshl, and Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk). These unions identified with sections of the Social Democratic Party of Galicia.

Ukrainian deputies to the Galician Diet, 1908.

Although tensions existed, Jews in the Habsburg-ruled Ukrainian lands did not experience pogroms such as occurred in the Russian Empire. A distinctive feature in these regions was the relatively large proportion of Jews who resided in the countryside and spoke fluent Ukrainian. The majority of Galician and Bukovinian Jews lived in the cities and were more integrated into Polish or German culture. Nonetheless, Jews and Ukrainians in Galicia and Bukovina found common cause at the political level on a number of noteworthy occasions and cooperated in civic projects that benefited the broader society of which both were part.

The Israelite Hospital in Lviv. Photograph taken by Omer Bartov in 2003.

Interethnic civic cooperation characterized the team responsible for the construction of the Israelite Hospital in Lviv and was reflected in its architectural features. Built in 1898–1903 on a plot that had been in Jewish hands for five centuries, the hospital served Jews and non-Jews alike. As documented by the scholar Sergey Kravtsov, the initiative and funding came from the Jewish philanthropist Maurycy Lazarus. The contractor hired was the firm of Ivan Levynskyi — a Ukrainian patriot and an outstanding architect who also worked on Lviv's opera house and the new railway station. The project design was prepared by Levynskyi's Polish employee Kazimierz Mokłowski, an ethnographer, architectural historian, and member of the Social Democratic Party of Galicia. A new wing was commissioned in 1912 from the architectural firm of Michał Ulam, son-in-law of the Progressive Chief Rabbi of Lviv. The building, which now serves as a maternity hospital, is still regarded as a sumptuous landmark in the Lviv cityscape today.

Jews and Ukrainians under Austrian rule in Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia

Wedding party in the village of Banyliv in Bukovina. (Ivan Honchar Museum, Kyiv)

The Ringplatz, the central square in Bukovina's administrative centre Czernowitz/Chernivtsi. Postcard, early 1900s.

Gathering of western Ukrainian writers with Ivan Franko (*front row, centre*), before 1916. (Hordii Pshenychnyi Central Photo and Cinematic Archive of Ukraine — TsDKFFA, Kyiv)

Delegates at the Czernowitz/Chernivtsi Yiddish Language Conference, 1908.

Jewish block in the Zakątna Street district, Lviv. Early 20th century.

Mandolin orchestra at a high school in Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine), 1910. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky and relatives at the family estate in Prylbychi, Galicia, 1911. (Szeptycki Family Archive, Warsaw)

Hayyim Nahman Bialik (*left*) with Sholem Aleichem. Bialik (1873–1934) was a pioneer and most notable contributor to the development of modern Hebrew poetry. Born in Ivnytsia (now Zhytomyr oblast), he received a traditional religious education, while also becoming acquainted with *Haskalah* and Russian literature. At age 18, he moved to Odesa where for the next two decades he was at the centre of Zionist and literary circles. His epic poem "In the City of Slaughter," written in response to the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, condemned the passivity of Jews in the face of violence and inspired the founding of Jewish self-defence groups in the Russian Empire. Bialik moved to Tel Aviv in 1924 and became a central figure in the public and cultural life of the Jewish community in Palestine as national poet, editor, publisher, educator, essayist, translator, and collector of Jewish legends.

The Jewish literary renaissance 1860s–1914

In a parallel development to that in Ukrainian society, Jews experienced a national and literary awakening, in both Hebrew and Yiddish, in the nineteenth century.

Themes and concerns

Up to the 1860s, Eastern European *maskilim* regarded Yiddish as a jargon and an obstacle to cultural and social progress and believed that only Hebrew was worthy of representing Jewish culture. Other Jewish intellectuals advocated for the acceptance of Yiddish, the spoken vernacular of the vast majority of Ashkenazi Jews, as a literary language.

An efflorescence of Jewish literary creativity on Ukrainian lands followed the lifting of the tsarist prohibition on Hebrew and Yiddish printing in 1861. Hebrew literature during this period was preoccupied by the historical, national, and spiritual dilemmas facing Jews at the crossroads between a religious or traditional lifestyle practised for generations and the possibilities and opportunities of modernity.

Debates on whether Hebrew or Yiddish should be declared the national language of the Jewish people and how to foster the Yiddish language took place in 1908 at the landmark Yiddish Language Conference in Czernowitz/Chernivtsi, then the capital of Habsburg Austrian Bukovina. The debates concluded with a resolution that Yiddish was "a" (rather than "the") national language of the Jewish people.

Foremost among the contributors to a flourishing Yiddish literature were Mendele Moykher-Sforim (the "grandfather" of Yiddish literature) and Sholem Aleichem (the "father" of Yiddish literature).

Mendele Moykher-Sforim ("Mendele the Book Peddler"— pen name of Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, 1836–1917) lived in Kamianets-Podilskyi, Berdychiv, Zhytomyr, and Odesa. He was a literary innovator, creating a style of Hebrew writing that established the norm for pre-Israeli Hebrew prose. With his story *Dos kleyne mentshele* in 1864, he introduced Yiddish, the spoken language of Eastern European Jews, as a literary language on a par with Hebrew. His writings deliver a scathing critique of the Jewish world and, more subtly, of tsarist officialdom, while revealing a keen sensitivity to the daily travails of the poor.

Sholem Aleichem ("Peace be unto you"—pen name of Shalom Rabinowitz, 1859–1916), the pre-eminent Yiddish author and playwright, was born in Pereiaslav, Poltava province. He grew up in the nearby *shtetl* of Voronkov (Voronka) and lived in Kyiv. In 1908 he toured throughout the Jewish Pale of Settlement, performing monologues. A supreme humourist, Sholem Aleichem tapped into the energies of the spoken Yiddish idiom of Eastern Europe and invented modern Jewish archetypes, myths, and fables of universal appeal. In the 1960s his Tevye stories were transformed into *Fiddler on the Roof*, the Broadway musical classic. A theatrical adaptation in Ukrainian has been the longest-running play in Kyiv.
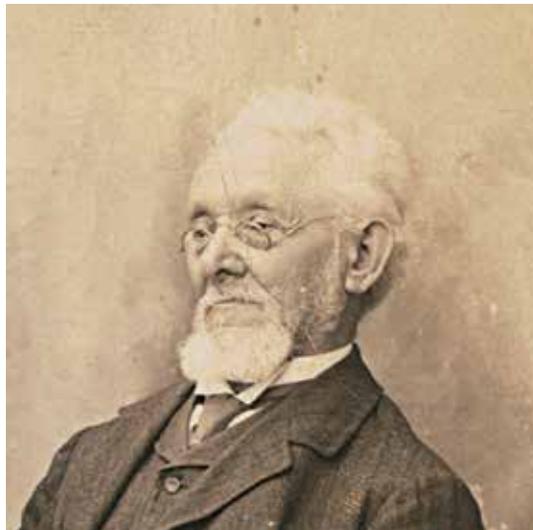
The depiction of Ukrainians in modern Jewish literature

Hebrew and Yiddish literature in the late nineteenth century tended to depict Ukrainians as part of the landscape, as background for the social and economic activities of the *shtetl*. Often referred to simply as "goyim" and their language as "goyish," Ukrainians also would appear in a fixed cast of figures and settings, especially in the marketplace:

"And they often meet in the market, and they know each other well by name, and they honour each other: Hrytsko calls Hirshko 'Swindler,' and Hirshko calls Hrytsko 'Villain,' but they both mean well…"

— Sholem Aleichem, *Di groyse behole fun di kleyne mentshalakh* (The Great Panic of the Little People)

Stock Ukrainian characters included the devoted maid who spoke Yiddish, the trustworthy village sorceress knowledgeable in folk medicine, and the *shabbes-goy*, whose role was to light the oven on the Sabbath. Depictions ranged from an ideologically-based admiration for peasants, seen as productive and relating positively with the land, to condescension and fear of the illiterate peasant prone to drunkenness. Descriptions of Ukrainians in the tavern are common in the literature from the 1880s onward, associated both with friendly contacts between Jews and Ukrainians and forebodings of violence.

The World of Sholem Aleichem. Wood sculptures by Shlomo Shochat. (Courtesy of Beit Shalom Aleichem, Tel Aviv)

The World of Sholem Aleichem. Painting by D. Labkovsky. (Courtesy of Beit Shalom Aleichem, Tel Aviv)

After the pogroms of 1881–82 and 1903–06, the experience of violence entered literary works. Writers such as Sholem Aleichem attributed these phenomena to outside forces, in particular the authorities, and to situational factors:

"Hungry people, drunk because of their many griefs, and incited, fell upon their brothers and sisters of another faith like wild beasts."

— Sholem Aleichem, *Der mabl* (The Deluge)

Above, right, and opposite: The World of Sholem Aleichem. Wood sculptures by Shlomo Shochat. (Courtesy of Beit Shalom Aleichem, Tel Aviv)

Emigration and diasporas

By the end of the nineteenth century, Jews and Ukrainians began to emigrate in large numbers from both tsarist Russia and Habsburg Austria-Hungary, mostly to North America. While most were motivated by a desire to improve their economic situation, Jews were also affected by pogroms in the early 1880s, especially the more widespread and deadly pogroms that occurred in tsarist Russia in 1905.

Landing at Ellis Island, New York harbour.

Coming up the boardwalk from the barge that took immigrants off the steamship company's docks.

Immigrants at Ellis Island awaiting a ferry to the city.

Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire, Quebec, 1911.
(Library and Archives Canada)
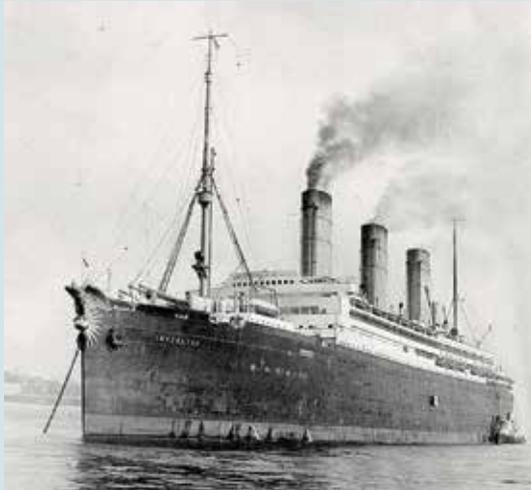
The large liners carried many immigrants in the unsanitary and cramped quarters of the lower deck steerage section, which accommodated passengers travelling on the cheapest class of ticket.

"Happy New Year Ship's Ticket — Good for a 120-year-round trip in the stream of life." Rosh Hashanah greeting card, ca. 1910. (YIVO Archives)
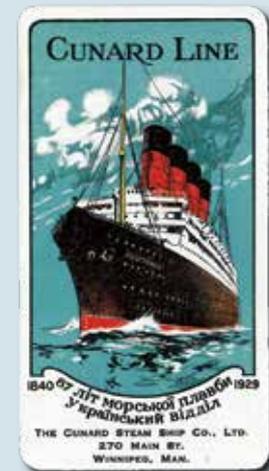
Pocket calendar / poster issued by the Ukrainian division of the Cunard Steam Ship Co. Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, with wording in Ukrainian: "87 years of seafaring." (Oseredok-UCEC Archives, Winnipeg)

Jewish emigration from Ukrainian lands

More than two million Jews migrated to North America from Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914, mainly from Ukrainian lands – about 1.6 million from the Russian Empire (including Poland), and 380,000 from Austria-Hungary (mainly Galicia). Another 400,000 Eastern European Jews migrated to other destinations, including Western Europe, Palestine, Latin America, and southern Africa. Jews comprised an estimated 50 to 70 percent of all immigrants to the United States from the Russian Empire between 1881 and 1910.

About 10,000 Jews arrived in Canada by the turn of the century. The numbers peaked between 1900 and 1914, when almost 100,000 Jewish immigrants entered Canada, settling mostly in Montreal and Toronto. Jewish immigrants also came to western Canada and established a number of Jewish farm colonies. Most, however, moved on to the cities and worked in retail and other urban businesses. Winnipeg became the third largest Canadian centre for Jewish immigrants.

Jewish immigrants in North America soon established religious and communal organizations, including *landsmanschaftn*, societies that brought together immigrants from specific towns or regions in the old country.

Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire in a farming colony in Argentina, 1905. They were sponsored by the Jewish Colonization Association, established in 1891 by the philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch, which also planned and fostered Jewish farming colonies in western Canada. (YIVO Photo Archives)

Jewish wedding ceremony in Lipton Colony, Saskatchewan. (Library and Archives Canada)

Jewish farm colonies and settlements on the Canadian Prairies.

ALBERTA

SASKATCHEWAN

MANITOBA

EDMONTON

RUMSEY/TROCHU
7

CALGARY

PRINCE ALBERT

EDENBRIDGE
6

8
ALSASK

SASKATOON
LIPTON
4

QU'APPELLE
MOOSE JAW

SONNENFELD
5

ESTEVAN

2
WAPELLA
1
MOOSOMIN

REGINA
HIRSCH
3

10
9 **15**
14 **13** **11** **12**
WINNIPEG

● FARM COLONY
● PRINCIPAL CITY

	FARM COLONY	PROVINCE	FOUNDED
1	MOOSOMIN	Saskatchewan	1882
2	WAPELLA	Saskatchewan	1888
3	HIRSCH	Saskatchewan	1892
4	LIPTON	Saskatchewan	1901
5	SONNENFELD	Saskatchewan	1906
6	DENBRIDGE	Saskatchewan	1906
7	RUMSEY/TROCHU	Alberta	1906
8	ALSASK/MONTEFIORE	Saskatchewan	1910
9	NARCISSE/BENDER	Manitoba	1903
10	CAMPER	Manitoba	1911

Manitoba farm settlements founded during and after the first World War.

11	BIRDS HILL
12	PINE RIDGE
13	WEST KILDONAN
14	ROSENFELD
15	ROSSER

Above: Tiferes Isroel school and synagogue.
Lipton Colony, Saskatchewan, 1915–18.
(Library and Archives Canada)

Top right: Jewish farm children in a one-room school in
Saskatchewan. (Library and Archives Canada)

Bottom right: Dancing to the music of a mouth organ on
the school grounds. (Library and Archives Canada)

Top: Bishop Budka and parishioners in front of the church. Borschiw, Alberta, 1916. (Library and Archives Canada)

Middle: Galician-Ukrainian settlers in Stuartburn, Manitoba. (Library and Archives Canada)

Bottom: Ukrainian family harvesting on the Canadian Prairies. (Library and Archives Canada)

Ukrainian emigration

The large-scale emigration of Ukrainians, particularly from western Ukrainian lands, was motivated primarily by economic pressures. Between the 1880s and 1914 an estimated 430,000 Ukrainians from Galicia and Bukovina, and another 170,000 from Transcarpathia, emigrated. Most headed for the industrial regions of the northeastern United States and the Canadian Prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

Around 170,000 Ukrainians settled in Canada in the first and largest immigration wave between 1891 and 1914. The majority came from Galicia and Bukovina. They were attracted by the Canadian government's offer of homestead allotments in the Prairie Provinces. Winnipeg, the hub of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was usually the arrival point of immigrants, who would then disperse into the vast Prairies, where they would often endure years of extreme hardship.

By 1914, some 600,000 Ukrainians established distinct community structures in North America, which included a range of secular and religious, cultural, and benevolent organizations. These immigrants were determined to maintain their Ukrainian heritage in North America. They also maintained an ongoing and active interest in developments in the European homeland.

Ukrainian wedding, Samburg,
Saskatchewan, 1917.
(Library and Archives Canada)

Rural drama club, Plum Ridge School,
Pleasant Home, Manitoba. 1912.
(Library and Archives Canada)

Opposite: Ukrainian immigrants from Austrian Galicia, Québec, ca. 1911. (Library and Archives Canada)

Right top: First Ukrainian Teachers and Students Convention in Edmonton, Alberta. 1915. (Library and Archives Canada)

Right bottom: Ukrainian immigrants in Canada.

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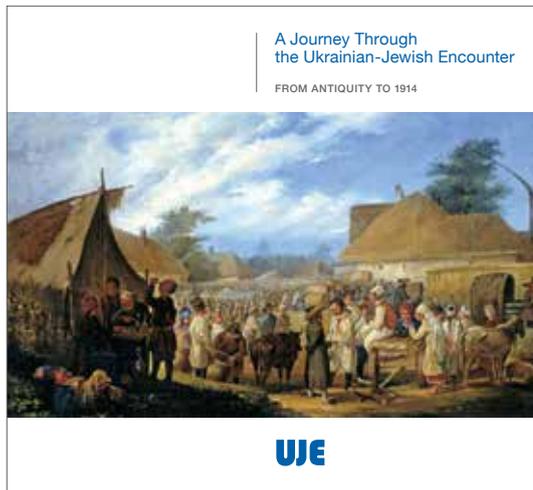
About this publication

This publication is based on an exhibition created by the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter (UJE).

UJE, a privately organized, multinational initiative launched in 2008, engages scholars, civic leaders, artists, governments, and the broader public in an effort to build mutual comprehension and solidarity between the Ukrainian and Jewish peoples worldwide. To achieve this goal, UJE undertakes and promotes activities that deepen understanding of the breadth, complexity, and diversity of Ukrainian-Jewish relations over the centuries.

The exhibition, curated and written by UJE Co-Director Alti Rodal, toured major cities across Canada in 2015. Alti is a historian and writer, a former professor of Jewish history, and official and advisor to the Government of Canada. She was educated at McGill, Oxford, and Hebrew Universities.

This publication has benefited from the diligent research carried out by Oksana Rosenblum and Vassili Shchedrin for UJE's 2015 travelling exhibition, the expert advice offered by UJE Board Members Professor Paul Robert Magocsi and Professor Wolf Moskovich, Natalia Feduschak's and Sonia Holiad's helpful observations, the professional editorial work of Peter Bejger and Vasyl Starko, and Claudia Shadursky's meticulous and effective management of the design and production process from beginning to end. The idea for this publication came from Raya Shadursky, and its realization would not have been possible without the vision and support of UJE Chair, James Temerty.

A Journey Through
the Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter

FROM ANTIQUITY TO 1914

UJE

Ukrainian Jewish Encounter

Українсько Єврейська Зустріч

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