

Central European University

Department of History

**The Past of Ukrainian Jews in Local and National Histories
in Post-Soviet Ukraine**

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Introduction

Among various ethnic and religious groups inhabiting Ukraine, Jewish population occupies a special place. First historical records of Jewish presence in Greek polities on the Northern Black Sea coast date back to late antiquity. In the core area of Ukraine, Jewish communities emerge simultaneously with East Slavic statehood. Mass expansion of Jewish population took place during 16th- early 17th centuries, prompted both by expulsion of the Jews from West-European countries, and the favorable policy of Polish-Lithuanian state, which then included the lands of the present-day Ukraine. According to the data provided by Paul Robert Magocsi, in early 17th century the number of the Jews in Ukrainian lands estimated 45,000, and by the middle of the century increased to 150,000.¹

The “golden age” of Jewry in Ukrainian lands came to an end due to Cossack uprisings in the middle 17th century, which brought about violent death of thousand Jews², and emigration of the survivors to the west. Yet even after the massacre and the emigration, the lands remaining under Polish rule – Right-bank Ukraine and Western-Ukrainian historical regions of Galicia and Volhynia – had high concentration of Jewish population. As the result of the successive partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795, these and other former Polish

¹ Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 1996), p. 147.

² Cossack massacres of the Jews became the most traumatic event in Jewish history of Early Modern period, and were reflected in a number of chronicles which greatly influenced Jewish historical memory. The most renowned chronicler, Nathan Hannover, claims that up to 80,000 Jews perished in the massacres of 1640-ies. See: Nathan Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah)* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1983). Contemporary authors narrow this number to 6,000-14,000 (Magocsi, *A History*, p. 201.)

territories, together with their inhabitants, were distributed between Austrian empire, which acquired Galicia and 200.000 new Jewish subjects, and Russian empire, which got hold of the Right Bank of Ukraine, Volhynia, the lands of present-day Belorussia, and 800.000 Jews. The territorial division lasted until the World War I, while the number of Jews in the Russian part of Ukraine by the end of the 19th century rose up to and 2,030,000, and up to 872,000 by 1910 in Galicia.³

The 20th century historical cataclysms had most adverse impact on Ukrainian Jewry. Whereas in 1926 the number of Jews in the Ukrainian republic, which at the time comprised all contemporary Ukrainian lands except for Polish-controlled Galicia and Volhynia, was estimated at 1.600.000, by 1945 from 850.000 to 900.000 of Ukrainian Jews fall victims of the Holocaust, and a significant part of those who managed to flee from the German occupation to the east never returned to Ukraine. In Western Ukraine, incorporated into the Soviet Union, only 1% of Jewish inhabitants survived the World War II.⁴

Even though under the Soviet rule after 1945 the Jews were not targeted for physical persecution, they suffered from national discrimination, and cultural and religious suppression. As the result of assimilation and mass emigration, the number of Jews in Ukraine from 840,311 in 1959 diminished to 775,993 in 1970, to 632,610 in 1979, to 486,326 in 1989.⁵ After Ukrainian independence, the process continued and even accelerated, largely because of sharply decreasing living standards. According to the population census of 2001, only 103,591 of Ukrainian Jews still stayed in the country.⁶ At the same time, lifted restrictions allowed for revival of Jewish culture and religious practices. Among other signs of revival, there was an increased interest to the past of the Jews in Ukraine, reflected in

³ Magocsi, *A History*, p.331, 430.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 630-632.

⁵ http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/g/d5_other.gif, visited on June 4 2007.

⁶ Item.

publications and cultural activism. In independent Ukraine, Jewish studies, suppressed under the Soviet rule, became the manifest of national rebirth and an instrument of identity politics.⁷

Representations of Ukrainian-Jewish history in Post-Soviet Ukraine constitute especially interesting material for a study of minority identities, due to the unique situation of the country in regional context. Similarly to other Eastern and Central European countries, Ukraine possesses a rich historical and cultural heritage produced by the Jews. All over the region, not excepting Ukraine, this heritage has been used for the construction of historical narratives adjusted to the need of the post-socialist time. But in Ukraine, which became independent only in 1991, social transformation has been accompanied by a nation-building process, which also influenced historical representations of the titular nation, i. e. Ukrainians, and ethnic minorities. Arguably, the impact of nation-building sets Ukrainian society apart from the neighboring Russia and Belorussia. On the other hand, the presence of a still significant Jewish minority differentiates Ukraine from the remaining countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Jewish population of Ukraine, through more or less active communal organizations, pursues its own cultural policy, which makes the contrast to the “virtual Jewish world” of the other Eastern and Central European countries even more striking. Consequently, in Ukraine there exist at least two major target audiences for history narratives about the Jewish past.

However, historical memory of Ukrainians is divided not only along their Jewish/non-Jewish origin. Both among non-Jewish and Jewish Ukrainians are those who accepted Ukrainian national identity, together with national narrative of Ukrainian history, and those who resorted to other forms of collective identification and rejected this narrative; the division

⁷ See: Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern, “The Revival of Academic Studies of Judaica in Independent Ukraine.” In *Jewish Life after the USSR*, ed. By Zvi Gitelman with Musya Glants and Marshall I. Goldman (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003) pp. 152-172.

does not coincide, but correlates to regional distinctions.⁸ Coexistence of disparate historical representations on various spatial and social levels makes Ukrainian case particularly attractive for a researcher.

The goal of the research is to explore interrelation of Jewish and Ukrainian history narratives produced after Ukrainian independence. This major issue encompass a number of specific questions, which partly concern the prevailing narrative of national history: what place is allotted to the Jews within the scheme of national history; which way Jewish history narratives are adjusted to this latter, and/or which way they subvert it; and how flexible the Ukrainian national history narrative is when it comes to including the past of ethnic minorities? Another set of question is connected to the attempts to create alternative narratives of Ukrainian history – accounts, the central idea of which is different from nation- and state-building teleology: are non-national histories more inclusive than national ones, or otherwise; and what role ethnic minorities such as the Jews play in non-national history narratives?

Finally, comparison of different spatial historical representations can shed more light on the issue of the interrelations of Jewish and Ukrainian history narratives. Therefore, the research of national narratives will be supplemented by two local cases – histories of Odessa and Lviv. Each city was home to a large Jewish community in the past; each has a significant Jewish population in the present, though decimated due to the Holocaust and emigration. Both cities occupy an important place in general history of the Jews in Ukraine, as well as in Ukrainian national history. Tracing specific features of Jewish history in local, regional and

⁸ See: Peter Rogers, "Understanding Regionalism and the Politics of Identity in Ukraine's Eastern Borderlands." *Nationalities Papers* Vol. 34, No 2 (May 2006), p. 171; Kuzio, Taras. "History, Memory and Nation Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space." *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 30, No 2 (2002), pp. 242-264; Graham, Smith; Vivien Law; Andrew Wilson; Annette Bohr and Edward Allworth. *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Shulman, Stephen. "The Contours of Civic and Ethnic National Identification in Ukraine." *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 56, No. 1. (2004), pp. 35-56. Paul S. Pirie, "National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine." *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 48, Issue 7 (Nov. 1996), pp. 1079-1104.

national narratives will help to establish hierarchy of these narratives, and to explore the negotiation of minority and majority identities at a range of levels.

To answer the addressed questions, at the first instance it is necessary to analyze general accounts of Ukrainian history and of history of the Jews in Ukraine. These accounts are represented mostly by textbooks and popular history writings, yet the apparently insurmountable task of scrutinizing them is, in fact, achievable, since in textbooks of Ukrainian history the Jews are barely mentioned; on the other hand, there are only three general surveys or textbooks on Ukrainian Jewish history. For the purpose of the research, it the analysis has been limited to a few representative Ukrainian accounts; whereas all (the three) accessible popular accounts of Jewish history have been taken into consideration. On the regional and local level, sources are more variegated, and verbal elements of the texts are supplemented with visual ones. Since representations of local history are regularly expressed in travel guides, museum exhibitions and monuments, these artifacts have been included into the source base of the research.

The central concept for analysis is the master-narrative – the general scheme which endows with meaning events and phenomena addressed by the sources. Particular master-narratives have been established by close reading and structural analysis of the texts; these procedures will be followed by comparison of the findings. Representation of particular historical phenomena has been analyzed within the framework of history narratives. Among such phenomena, crucial for Jewish history, are emancipation, modernity, tradition, Chasidism, Zionism and other political movements. Hypothetically, representation of these phenomena constitutes one of the principal differences between Jewish and non-Jewish history narratives.

In general, the representation of Jewish history in independent Ukraine has been addressed in only two scholarly works. One of them, a monograph by a Swedish scholar

Johan Dietch,⁹ covers the image of a singular event in Jewish history. In his study, Dietsch explores crucial elements of Ukrainian and Jewish historical narratives. Both Famine 1932-1933 and the Holocaust of Ukrainian Jews took places on the territory of contemporary Ukraine and affected large segments of its population, but received unequal treatment in the politics of memory of Ukrainian independent state. Author describes shaping of Ukrainian historical culture in connection with the process of post-Soviet identity-building. The Holocaust, according to Dietsch, provides a model for conceptualization of Ukrainian famine as genocide against Ukrainians, and, at the same time, is repressed in the official memory discourse, because it threatens the status of Ukrainians as the greatest victims. Notwithstanding its obvious relevance to the topic of the thesis, the monograph has a serious drawback, equating Ukrainian historical culture with the official politics of memory, and paying little attention to commemorative practice of Jewish minority.

Another research is the already mentioned article by Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern.¹⁰ The author describes the tradition of Jewish studies in Ukraine from 19th century to 1930s, and writes about their reestablishment after 1991. As Petrovsky-Stern argues, at present, 3 major trends dominate the landscape: the Holocaust studies, local studies, and the “revisionism” - a “typically Ukrainian phenomenon,” absent in Russia and other post-Soviet countries. Revisionists – scholars of Ukrainian as well as of Ukrainian-Jewish background, attempt at rewriting Ukrainian-Jewish history and tend to acquit Ukrainians of crimes perpetrated against Ukrainian Jews during Cossack uprisings the Civil War, and the World War II. According to the author, many of these ideas are scholarly unsustainable, but very influential in Ukrainian intellectual environment. Another trend – the Holocaust studies, as Petrovsky-Stern claims, have been instrumentalized in the struggle for power within the Jewish community in

⁹ Johan Dietch, *Making Sense of Sufferings; Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture* (Lund, 2006).

¹⁰ Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern, “The Revival of Academic Studies of Judaica in Independent Ukraine,” *Jewish Life after the USSR*, pp. 152-172.

Ukraine. The least politicized of the three - local studies - have contributed significantly to the knowledge of Jewish urban history, but, as a rule, ignore Western scholarly publications, and Yiddish and Hebrew sources. This article is extremely helpful for understanding political and academic background of popular narratives of Jewish history created in independent Ukraine.

In addition to the works on Ukrainian identity politics, some which have been already referred to, there are a few scholarly works addressing general issues of historical memory in post-Soviet Ukraine, the most important of them *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998) by Catherine Wanner.¹¹ Numerous field trips and talks with ordinary Ukrainians allowed the author collect unique material on popular historical representations in Ukraine soon after the declaration of independence. Due to direct communication, Wanner was able to approach also phenomena underrepresented in the official discourse – such as the Soviet nostalgia, memory of recent traumatic events, and persistence of Soviet social practice. Her work could have become an attempt to research popular reception of the official politics of history in the nationalizing state – yet the author rarely goes beyond observations. Thus, the book only underscores the necessity of systematic analytical approach to historical representations, attempted at in the thesis.

The structure of the Master's thesis corresponds to the theoretical and practical issues addressed in the text. First chapter includes the description of various approaches to the study of narrative, and attempts at establishing theoretical relationship between history narratives and collective identities. Next chapter deals with Ukrainian and Jewish history master-narratives on the material of post-Soviet publications, followed by chapters on the specific cases of Lviv and Odessa.

¹¹ Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

Ukrainian names and titles, used in the thesis, have been transliterated according to the official Ukrainian-English transliteration system adopted by the Ukrainian Legal Terminology Commission.¹² Translations of Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish quotations in the text are mine.

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Chapter 1. Identity and Narrative: In Search of Useful Concepts

The goal of the thesis is to reconstruct political relationship between two ethnic or, according to the official terminology, national collectives inhabiting contemporary Ukraine - the titular nation and Jewish minority, - on the basis of historical narratives produced and used by both groups after 1991. Reaching this goal involves addressing to basic questions addressed in this chapter: first, what is the social mechanism that connects political realities and historical texts? Second, which methods of analysis and interpretation of historical narratives it produces by a given society allow establishing political relationship between its ethnic/national groups?

The last several decades generated colossal amount of theoretical literature about ethnic and national relations, collective historical representations, and historical narratives, which, within the scope of this work, cannot be summarized even cursory. Instead, on the basis of some works relevant to the topic, I attempt to establish main notions used for conceptualizing social role of historical narratives, to select the most productive and economic

¹² <http://www.rada.gov.ua/translit.htm>, visited on June 1 2007.

concepts in the context of the thesis, and to chose appropriate methods which will be then applied to the sources.

Historical representations traditionally occupy a central place in scholarly discourse about ethnicity/nationhood. The idea of a common past has been regarded as one of essential features that unify member of an ethnic community and distinguish this community both from other ethnic communities, and from their non-ethnic counterparts. Common past alone, however, is not sufficient to bound individuals into a group; the social effect is achieved only if its members know about the group's past and identify with it. Thus, history has become a part of both "objective" and "subjective" ways of defining ethnic communities.¹³ According to the working definition established by a symposium on ethnic identity held by Social Sciences Research Council in 1973, a past oriented group identification emphasizing common origin and history is of the central defining features of ethnic community. (In fact, this criteria is listed the first, followed by an idea of cultural and social distinctiveness held by the group members, perceptible position of the group in a broader network of social relations, and a specific group name.)¹⁴ The sociologist Richard Schermerhorn defined ethnic group as "a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood."¹⁵

This also means that the role of history is not that of a mere marker of a group distinctiveness; history has been perceived as a crucial factor in shaping a group and producing its distinctiveness by designating boundaries of a given groups among all others.

Already in 1970, the classic of ethnic studies Frederik Barth claimed that "boundary defines

¹³ *Ethnicity*, ed. By John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 85.

¹⁴ Anya Peterson Royce, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 24 Richard Schermerhorn, "Ethnicity and Minority Groups," p. 17.

¹⁴ Frederik Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries", *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*, ed. By Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 300.

¹⁵ *Ethnicity*, p. 17.

the group, not the cultural staff that it encloses.”¹⁶ The notion of boundaries, along with subjective criteria of groupness in general, has been problematized with the advent of social constructivism.¹⁷ The constructionist turn, which took place in late 1970-ies – early 1980-ies, shifted the focus of scholars “from ethnicity as social organization[...] to ethnicity as consciousness, ideology, and imagination.” When ethnic groups began to be treated as imagined rather than actual communities, ethnic consciousness replaced “objective” ethnic criteria as an object of research. Yet despite the shift of perspectives, the notion of common past retained its significance in the study of ethnic and national groups. Thus, Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, in the introduction to the volume *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness* (1997) written from the constructionist position, claim that belief in common ancestry is not only important, but, as a central criterion of ethnicity, is even preferable to language and other “objective” cultural features: “Ethnic identity may[...] be defined as an identity distinguished from other social identities by a belief in common origin, descent, history and culture.”

Having lost its status as an “objective” distinguishing feature, a common past began to be regarded as a crucial instrument of a group construction. For instance, the oral historian Elizabeth Tonkin argues that promotion of the idea of a common history is a crucial part of the nation-building process: there, as in other “historically oriented legitimations,” history is used “to convince people of a social identity”; a “conscious, argued” representation of the past therefore becomes a political statement.¹⁸ Moreover, a common national or ethnic past has

¹⁶ Frederik Barth, “Ethnic Groups,” p. 300.

¹⁷ Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, “From Political Mobilization to the Politics of Consciousness,” *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness*, ed. by Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers (New York, London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), pp. 2-5.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 130.

been no longer referred to as “real,” but rather as “perceived,” “imagined,” or “invented.”¹⁹ According to the classic of national constructivism Benedict Anderson, the historical narrative which lays the basis of national identity is but a screen, created to cover up the actual absence of a group history, to disguise the fact that the nation had come into being out of nothing.²⁰

Admittedly, the social constructivist trend, particularly applied to national and ethnic studies, has its opponents: yet, logically, they seem to be even more “historically” oriented. Thus Anthony Smith, who in his numerous works argues that modern national communities were usually not constructed out of nothing, but were preceded by pre-modern ethnic communities, points out at the following distinctive features of an *ethnos* (*ethnie*): name; myth of common ancestry; shared historical memories and traditions; one or more elements of common culture; a link with an historical territory or ‘homeland’; a degree of social solidarity.²¹ As we can see, all the criteria, except for the first and the last, have to deal with historical representations. In the process of transformation of *ethnies* into modern nations, according to Smith, an “ethno-history” – “the ethnic members’ memories and understanding of their communal past or pasts” – becomes a valuable symbolic capital for re-definition of the group identity.²²

Thus the idea of a crucial role of historical representations in shaping and persistence of ethnic groups is shared by constructivists and their opponents. Yet there is no such consensus in the issue how exactly the idea of a common past perform this social function. Among several notions-intermediaries used to conceptualize the relationship between collectives and ideas about history they share, the most significant, in the context of the thesis, are the concepts of myth, collective memory, and narrative. These concepts are rarely iv ever

¹⁹ See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London, New York: Verso, 1991), especially pp. 199-205; and *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992).

²⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 205.

²¹ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 13.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 15.

used exclusively; instead different authors apply them in different combinations. Nevertheless, it is possible to make out which concept acquires the status of the main explanatory tool.

The first in the row, the concept of myth, is not the most popular among theorists, but is of the oldest provenance, being imported to social and political studies from functionalist anthropology. According to the definition by George Schoepflin, who applies the concept to the study of the late 20th century nationalisms, “myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by a community about itself”,²³ Students of nationalism who believe in the heuristic value of the concept hold that historical myths of modern ethnic and national groups function in the same basic way as myths of primitive communities, providing a group with cohesion, giving its members a pattern for identification, and setting cognitive frames for self-understanding, and understanding of the society in general. According to Smith, who also extensively uses the concept in his writings, myths serve and legitimate the needs and specific interests of ethnic groups or particular strata within them.²⁴ Some myths, such as the myth of origin and descent, are especially important for the ability of a group to persist over time and even to survive in adverse circumstances; others – for instance, the myth of being a chosen people, or the myth of a Golden Age, its loss and possible revival, - are important tools of political mobilization.²⁵

Schoepflin argues that myth is a means of transcending the gap between diverse group and individual experience by establishing an illusion of community; it is also a way to explain the fate of the community and to account for its failures; myth also can serve as an instrument of identity change, providing a group with meaningful patterns of behavior, as, for instance, in

²³ George Schoepflin “The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths,” *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schoepflin, (London: Hurst & Company London, 1997), p. 19.

²⁴ Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, p. 61.

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 15, 62-67.

case of modernization and assimilation.²⁶ The scholar agrees with Anthony Smith in that a well developed, complex system of myths is a valuable social capital which allows a community “to withstand much greater stress and turbulence (political, economical, social, and so on) than those with only a relatively poor set of myths.”²⁷ Generally speaking, “myth is one of the ways in which collectives [...] more especially nations – establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own system of morality and values.”²⁸ More specifically, “myth plays a role in the maintenance of memory; the range of forgetting, which part of memory is made salient, how it is understood and how the resonance itself is to be controlled – these are all part of regulation by myth.”²⁹

Dealing with memories and forgetting, myths of the past can be also a powerful instrument of manipulation by certain political agents: “those who can invoke myth and establish resonance can mobilize people, exclude others, screen out certain memories, establish solidarity or, indeed, reinforce the hierarchy of status and values.”³⁰ Indeed, some authors emphasize that political effect of myths is no less powerful than their cognitive effect (in fact, the former is based on the latter.)³¹ And if George Schoepflin explains the powerful effect of myths by making them responsible in the domain in public (collective) memory, Joanna Overing directly connects myths with collective identity: “Mythic discourse remind a community of its own identity through the public process of specifying and defining for that community its distinctive social norms.”³² Myths of identity, quite logically, “are equally

²⁶ Schoepflin “The Functions of Myth,” pp. 19, 23-25.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 20.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 19.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 26.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 20.

³¹ Joanna Overing “The Role of Myth: An Anthropological Perspective, or: ‘The Reality of the Really Made-Up,’” *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schoepflin, (London: Hurst & Company London, 1997, p. 16.

³² Ibidem, p. 3.

myths of alterity, or significant otherness,” and, obviously, ”images of identity and alterity [...] have obvious political as well as social implications.”³³

The concept of myth has been also applied to the direct context of my own work –the politics of history in post-Soviet Ukraine. Anthony Smith, in his essay on the myth of the Golden Age, which, as he claims, “is used to establish and delineate the idea of the ‘true self’, the authentic being, of the collectivity,” argues that in Ukrainian national mythology such a golden age is associated with Kyevan Rus’ – the supposed peak of Ukrainian political power and cultural development. Smith points out at the success of this myth in Ukrainian politics after independence, despite the fact that the East-Slavic medieval state remains a contested legacy, and that, to become usable in political discourse, Kyevan Rus’ had to be “reconquered” from Russians.³⁴

Andrew Wilson adds to the list of Ukrainian historical myths the second “golden age” – the Cossack-Orthodox revival of 16th -17th centuries, and argues that myths of national resistant and revival are rather strong in Ukraine, even if not strong enough to measure up to national liberation mythologies of some other Eastern European countries.³⁵ Thus in nationalist discourse Ukrainian history is presented “as a morality play of national resistance and revival against the main national ‘Other’”, that is, Russia.³⁶ Wilson, however, makes important reservation regarding the concept of myth: whereas in a common use the meaning of “myth” is opposed to the truth, scholars should not perceive national myths as inventions. In fact, invented stories cannot perform the political functions of a myth: “although national and/or nationalist historiographies can indeed be understood as mythic structures, as

³³ Ibidem, p. 16.

³⁴ Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Revival,” *Myths and Nationhood*, p. 53.

³⁵ Andrew Wilson, “Myths of National History in Belarus’ and Ukraine,” *Myths and Nationhood*, pp. 193-197.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 183.

‘narratives’ in a broader sense, they must also resonate in a plausible past and find an appropriate place in the mainstream of popular memory to take root.”³⁷

Yet what exactly is the relationship between historical myths and the past? In this issue either scholarly consensus or any degree of clarity are lacking. Schoepflin, for instance, believes that “myth is about perceptions rather than historically validate truth,” but, at the same time, a “myth cannot be constructed purely out of false material; it has to have some relationship with the memory of the collectivity which fashioned it.”³⁸ Overing calls researchers to liberate themselves from the classical tradition, according to which “myth” is synonymous to invention and opposed to logical discourse, yet she concedes that “boundaries between myth and history are not clear.”³⁹

Remarkably, two of the three scholars quoted in the passage, refer to another concept used to explain the relationship between a social group and its past – namely, collective, or popular memory. The term “collective memory” was coined in 1925 by Maurice Halbwachs, originating from his argument that recollections of the individual belong not so much to the realm of individual psyche, but are framed by social conventions.⁴⁰ Among the social institutions most responsible for shaping individual memories, Halbwachs lists family, religion, and social classes.⁴¹

The boom of memory studies beginning in early 1980-ies⁴² brought two major changes of perspective on collective or social memory. First, as the spectrum of research has spread from small groups such as families to large social entities such as nations, and even supranational collectives, these objects of research would often turn also into the subjects of

³⁷ Ibidem, pp. 182-183.

³⁸ Schoepflin “The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths,” p. 19

³⁹ Overing “The Role of Myth,” pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited, translated, and with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 173-182.

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 52-166, *passim*.

⁴² Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From “Collective Memory” to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 24. (1998), p. 107.

collective memory.⁴³ Second, in the works written in 1980-ies and 1990-ies memory acquired a material dimension, most notably under impact of the French scholar Pierre Nora and his concept of *lieux de memoire* or memorial “sites,” which included a widest variety symbolic, topographic, monumental, architectural and other kinds of objects.⁴⁴

The concept of collective memory has been welcomed among social constructivists. This happened because collective memory, along with collective identity could be regarded a political and social construct, and, no less important, because the concept of collective memory, along with the practice of commemoration, could be used to elucidate the process of constructing collective identities.⁴⁵ We can see a good illustration of the constructivist position in matters of identity and memory in the quote from the work by Yael Zerubavel on Israeli national memories/myths: “Nationalist movement typically attempts to create a master commemorative narrative that highlights their members’ common past and legitimizes their aspiration for a shared destiny. Indeed, establishment of such a narrative constitutes one of the most important mechanisms by which a nation constructs a collective identity.”⁴⁶

Yet the concept of collective memory also aroused serious critique from various positions. The first line of criticism regards the legacy of Halbwachs in the distinction he drew between collective memory and historiography. This idea has been appropriated and applied by such authoritative scholars as Pierre Nora and Yosef Yerushalmi.⁴⁷ According to Pierre Nora, “Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it [...] History, because it is an intellectual and secular production, calls for analysis

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 189

⁴⁴ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory. (Spring, 1989), p. 22-23.

⁴⁵ John R. Gillis, “Memory and Identity: History of a Relationship,” *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁶ Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and The Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press, 1995), p. 214.

⁴⁷ See: Yosep Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002), especially p. 94.

and criticism.”⁴⁸ The implication of this view is that memory, as less “exact” and not guarded by professional standards of acquiring facts is potentially more politically manipulative than “history,” that is, academic historiography. Criticism of this point has been extensive and can be summarized as following: production of history has multiple agents and various forms, and cannot be divided into two separate branches; neither professional historiography no popular commemoration is politically innocent; and on the other hand, academic historical works and what is called collective memory share basic claim for truth, rejection of which would mean the loss of their social effect.⁴⁹ In recent writings, according to Kerwin Klein, it has become a cliché that no opposition between history and memory exists.⁵⁰

The concept of collective memory also provoked a suspicion of being ahistorical. Connected to this are common objections against the use of psychological terminology, such as “trauma” and “repression”, in writings about memorial practice of large social groups.⁵¹ Collective memory discourse has been also criticized for quasi-religious implications, and even irrationalism and rejection of scholarly historiography.⁵² On top of all, memory studies have been blamed for methodological imprecision. According to Olick and Robbins, these studies remain “a nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise.”⁵³ Kerwin Klein points out that scholars produced valuable studies of particular commemorative practices, yet the achievement in generalization has been very modest:

It is one objective to write the intellectual history of the coming into being of a number of cultural artifacts [...] It is an altogether different endeavor to tie these representations to specific social groups and their understanding of the past. The second step entails knowledge about reception processes which

⁴⁸ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History, p. 8-9.

⁴⁹ Olick, Robbins, “Social Memory Studies,” p. 110.

⁵⁰ Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse,” *Representations*, No. 69, Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering. (Winter, 2000), p. 128.

⁵¹ Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 41, No. 2. (May, 2002), pp. 185-188.

⁵² Klein, p. 145; Peter Burke, “French Historians and their cultural Identities”, pp. 163-164.

⁵³ Olick, Robbins, “Social Memory Studies,” p. 106.

is beyond the conventional purview of historical know-how; it is also objectively very difficult to establish.⁵⁴

Finally, critics argue that the concept of memory, even when it is used in the studies written from the perspective of social constructivism, bears essentialist implications; as the same Kerwin Klein put it, “memory” became so popular exactly because “it promises to let us have our essentialism and deconstruct it, too”.⁵⁵ In this point, the criticism of collective memory concept comes close to the criticism of its conceptual companion⁵⁶ – the notion of collective identity.⁵⁷

Discussion of the issue in this chapter looks neither necessary nor possible; however, I should point out that for the purpose of the thesis both the concepts – collective memory and identity – seem unfruitful, since they do not provide a clear methodological tool for analyzing the sources. Moreover, these concepts are, in fact, optional, because, as it has been noted, both memory and identity have narrative infrastructure,⁵⁸ and the concept of narrative seems well applicable for analysis of the artifacts in question, and promising for achieving the goals of research – establishing political relations through historical representations - without resorting to the concepts-intermediaries. However, it should be also noted, that both collective memory and identity remain what Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper call categories of practice:⁵⁹ “identity politics” goes on, in particular through the production of historical texts, and identity discourse is saturated with reference to collective memory.

The example of productive use of the concept of narrative in the analyses of commemorative practiques can be found in the work by Yael Zerubavel to which I have

⁵⁴ Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory”, p. 192.

⁵⁵ Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory,” p. 131, 144.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 122.

⁵⁷ See: Rogers Brubaker; Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’” *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1. (Feb., 2000), pp. 1-47.

⁵⁸ Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory”, p., p. 191-192.

⁵⁹ Brubaker, Cooper; “Beyond ‘Identity’”, pp. 4-5.

already referred. At the same time, this work illustrates some problematic aspects of the notion of collective memory – its optional role in conceptualization of the issue, and the danger of turning the concept into a social agent. Thus, according to Zerubavel, commemorative practices contribute to the formation of a master commemorative narrative, which provides a structure for collective memory.⁶⁰ “Master commemorative narrative focuses on the group’s distinct social identity and highlights its historical development. In this sense it contributes to the formation of the nation, portraying it as a unified group moving through history.”⁶¹ This narrative is concentrated on events that are important for group’s emergence as an independent social actor. “The commemoration of beginnings is clearly essential for demarcating the group’s distinct identity vis-à-vis others”⁶² While historical time is uniform, commemorative time comprises periods of unequal density. (Yet it is possible to argue that uniform historical time is an abstraction that cannot be found in any historical narrative, including purely academic writings.) The dense periods, in their turn, can be transformed (by collective memory) into political myths.⁶³ In this context, periodization acquires an extraordinary importance: “Drawing upon selective criteria, collective memory divides the past into major stages, reducing complex historical events to basic plot structures” – images that aim to “articulate and reinforce a particular ideological stance.”⁶⁴

Valuable for our own topic are observations of the scholars about the relationship between opposing historical narratives: since turning points of the narrative, its most important elements occupy liminal position, they are open to different interpretations, which creates tension and can provoke a conflict on historical grounds.⁶⁵ “The alternative commemorative narrative that directly opposes the master commemorative narrative,

⁶⁰ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, p. 6

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 7.

⁶² Ibidem. p. 7.

⁶³ Ibidem, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 10.

operating under and against its hegemony[...] constitutes a *countermemory*” and “can be part of a different commemorative framework forming an alternative overview of the past that stands in opposition to the hegemonic one.” And counter-memory is politically subversive because it challenges not the memory of any particular event but the master narrative of the dominant group in whole⁶⁶

According the definition by Jorn Ruesen, historical narration is “the process of making sense of the experience of time.”⁶⁷ Through narrative, people mobilize experience of the past to make sense of the present and to base their expectations of the future. Narratives provides orientation of practical life in time by uniting past, present and future by the concept of continuity; and establishing the identity of its authors and listeners.⁶⁸ Ruesen also provides a formal classification of historical narratives according to the way in which they perform their social functions⁶⁹

Robert F. Berkhofer also attempts at delineating formal features of historical narratives and connecting these features with ideology. The point of departure in his analysis is the paradigm of Normal History – modern historical writing which applies professionally accepted methods of obtaining facts from sources – acts as “a transparent medium between the past and the reader’s mind.”⁷⁰ Yet in fact normal histories are not impartial; instead they fundamentally “embody a political stance or partisanship[...] in two closely related ways” First, they may pretend to be politically neutral; second, by “mimetic” representation of some social or political order, historians make it appear natural.

Thus political hegemony makes its way into historical narratives; it “asserts a single “right” viewpoint and narrows the choice of representations to the preferred one(s), excluding

⁶⁶ Ibidem, pp. 10 -11.

⁶⁷ Jorn Ruesen, *Studies in Methahistory* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1993), p. 4.

⁶⁸ Ibidem. pp. 5-3.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, pp. 6-10

⁷⁰ Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge, Ma., London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 28.

others.⁷¹ Ideological goals of a text can be established by formal criteria: the authorial voice and point of view, and by perceptual, ideological, evaluative, emotional dimension of the text.⁷² Degrees of authorial intervention a text also bear ideological implications: the more historians intervene, the more aspects of viewpoint become incorporated into a historical discourse – and the more biases creates the historical narrative.⁷³

What is important for the thesis attempting to analyze the relationship between local and general histories is that Berkhofer delineates a hierarchy of historical narratives. On the top are situated Great Stories – the largest context for a normal history. Their function is to provide a device for embedding partial stories in a larger context and to show their significance; to offer a framing device for (creating) national histories; and to prove that a particular history is unique (unlike comparative, social etc. history).⁷⁴ Ukrainian national, regional, and local histories represent a clear case of such hierarchical narratives.

⁷¹ Ibidem, pp. 210-211.

⁷² Ibidem, p. 155.

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 168.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 40

Chapter 2. Master-Narratives of Ukrainian-Jewish History

The goal of this chapter is to compare representations of Jewish history in general texts about the history of Ukraine, and, on the other hand, in works devoted specifically to the history of the Jews in Ukrainian lands. All these books belong to the didactic genre and are directed to non-specialist – either students of secondary school and universities, or general public interested in the subject; their purpose is not so much to inform the readers about the latest trends of historiography as to provide them with a general framework of national history. These works, covering the whole period of historical existence of a given group, can and will be used to establish main constituents of the historical grand-narratives, whereas the study of the treatment of particular topics will shed the light on a political agenda of the texts.

1. Jewish past in comprehensive surveys of Ukrainian history

General histories of Ukraine have an unsurprising common feature: all of them tell about the history of the Ukrainian people. Whether it follows from ethnocentric perspective of the author, or is just a consequence of a chosen narrative strategy, but this observation concerns all the texts dealt with in the subchapter. History of other groups is included in not when they feature in the same events as Ukrainians (in fact, it would be hard to find a single historical in Ukrainian history where only ethnic Ukrainians were involved), but when they play a certain role in a plot where the Ukrainian people is a protagonist. However, even within the paradigm of Ukrainian national history, in particular texts representation of the Jews can be quantitatively unequal.

An example where the Jews are nearly absent is “A History of Ukraine” produced by the Institute of Ukrainian history as a textbook for university students. This result of a collective effort of Ukrainian academic establishment does tell nothing about the Jews until the end of the 18th century, when it mentions equalization of Jewish (religious) rights by the Austrian emperor Joseph II in a brief phrase which does not even constitute a full sentence.⁷⁵ Further, it lists the Jews among national minorities in the 19th century Ukraine, provides their brief demographic history, and mentions the Pale of Settlement⁷⁶ - all in one paragraph, and this is the most extensive information about the Jews in the whole book. Respectively, it tells nothing about Jewish casualties during Cossack and Haidamak uprisings in the 16th – 18th centuries or about anti-Jewish pogroms during the Civil War in 1918-1920.

Unsurprisingly, the Holocaust is also absent in this textbook. In the chapter “Nazi occupation and Resistance movement” the Nazi politics towards Ukraine is characterized as that of economic exploitation and racist persecution (against Ukrainians and Russian). During the occupation, the book says, the Nazis “in the Ukrainian land murdered 5264 civilians (Jews and Gypsies – almost to a man).”⁷⁷ Such brevity allows avoiding topic of Ukrainian participation in the extermination of the Jews, and generally, the issue of collaboration. Thus, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), both wings of which by 1941 declared their loyalty to the Nazi Germany and at certain times acted in accord with the occupational administration, could be easily described as a force striving against the Nazis and the Soviets for national liberation of Ukraine.⁷⁸

A survey of Ukrainian-Canadian historian Orest Subtelny “*Ukraine: A History*,” Ukrainian translation of which in several editions and tens of thousand copies circulated in Ukraine in early 1990-ies, has been much more popular than any publication of the Institute

⁷⁵ *Istoriya Ukrainy* [A History of Ukraine], ed. Valerii Smolii et al. (Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 1997), p. 160.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 318.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 319.

of Ukrainian history. This book, unlike the one dealt with above, does mention all major contentious issues of the history of Ukrainian Jewish relations. However, in most of the times it acquits the Ukrainian side, and at times evokes century-old anti-Jewish prejudice. Thus, Subtelny claims that “Jewish participation in the oppressive practice of the noble/ Jewish alliance” was “the most important single cause of the terrible retribution” during the Cossack uprising of Bohdan Khmelnyts’ky.⁷⁹

Describing Josephine reforms after the incorporation of Galicia into Austrian empire, the author mentions the Jews only as tavern-keepers who contributed to miserable situation of peasantry.⁸⁰ “Exploitative actions of some Jewish merchants and moneylenders” (along with anti-Semitic policy of the tsarist government) are also mentioned among the causes of pogrom in Russian empire.⁸¹ When it comes to the pogroms of 1918-1920, however, other causes add to anti-Jewish attitude of the masses; among others, this is the “disproportional representation” of the Jews in the Bolshevik leadership and Cheka (secret police).

Further on, Subtelny juxtaposes pogroms committed by the White Army on the one hand, and by Ukrainian military units on the other: whereas the former were systematic, the latter were spontaneous and led to fewer casualties; but “because many Jews considered themselves to be Russian, they found it easier to lay all the blame for the pogroms on Petliura and Ukrainians rather than on Denikin and Russian generals.”⁸²

Subtelny depicts the Holocaust of Ukrainian Jewry as a part of the Nazi policy towards Ukraine in general: “Early indications of the nature of the Nazi regime were its treatment of Jews and prisoners of war.”⁸³ Writing about the collaboration, he claims that

⁷⁹ Subtelny, *Ukraine, A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto, 1994) p. 124. To corroborate this point, the author quotes the popular Polish-American historian Norman Davis.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p. 214.

⁸¹ Ibidem, pp. 276-278.

⁸² Ibidem, p. 364.

⁸³ Ibidem, pp.467-471. Later, however, he tells that in the first month of occupation the Nazis killed about 850.000 Jews and mentions mass execution of the Jews Babi Yar (p. 468).

“Ukrainian participation in the massacres [of the Jews] was neither extensive nor decisive. However, there were also many Ukrainians who risked the death penalty by aiding Jews.”⁸⁴ Metropolitan Andrey Sheptyts’kyi, “adamantly opposed to the Nazi anti-Semitic outrages,” was an outstanding example of such help.

A survey of Modern Ukrainian history (19th-20th centuries) by Yaroslav Hrytsak,⁸⁵ noted for his revisionist position towards the master-narrative of Ukrainian national history, displays certain parallelism to the work of Subtelny. For instance, he also explains the motives of Josephine reforms in Galicia by the need to alleviate the situation of peasantry. (One of the ways to attain this goal was to attack usury, which “flourished” in the countryside).⁸⁶

However, Hrytsak approaches the topic of Ukrainian-Jewish relationship from the perspective of Ukrainian national cause rather than from that of traditional prejudice. Thus, economical antagonism between Ukrainians and the Jews in 19th century Galicia, in his representation, was aggravated by political factors: for a variety of reasons, 1860-ies on, “numerous Jews” became ardent Polish patriots. Hrytsak assumes that the position of Jewish intellectuals differed from Jewish masses, which mostly remained non-assimilated and politically indifferent. Still, pro-Polish elites retained dominance over the Jewish community and tried to use it in Polish political interests.⁸⁷

Similarly to Subtelny, in a much more cautiously, Hrytsak explains the outburst of anti-Jewish violence in 1918-19120 by the fact that, in the eyes of many Ukrainian patriots, the Jews born direct responsibility for the defeat of the Ukrainian republic, and that many Jews joined the Bolsheviks. The ultimate reason of the pogroms was, for him, the lack of any

⁸⁴ Ibidem, p. 472.

⁸⁵ Yaroslav Hrytsak, *Narys Istorii Ukrainy: Formuvannia modernoyi ukrayins’koyi natsiyi XIX-XX stolittia* [A Survey of Ukrainian History: the Shaping of Modern Ukrainian Nation] (Kyiv: Heneza, 1996).

⁸⁶ Ibidem, p. 41.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, p. 75.

experience in political resolution of conflicts on the both sides; thus, indirectly, he puts the blame on the Russian imperial government, which prevented from political participation both Ukrainians and Jews.⁸⁸

Along familiar lines, Hrytsak writes of the Holocaust as a part of the Nazis' racist policy of towards all population of Ukraine (although he admits that Jews and Gypsies fared the worst - "they were doomed to extermination"). Further, he list the Jews among other groups targeted for extermination: Communists, criminals, saboteurs, prisoners of war, NKVD agents, Soviet informers, infectious patients.⁸⁹ Although the historian is known for his courageous attempt to treat with the issue of Ukrainian collaboration during the World War II without national biases,⁹⁰ his assessment of the phenomenon looks, in fact, very cautious: "Some part of Ukrainian society indeed collaborated with the Germans and helped them to exterminate the Jews. But the question remains, was it done deliberately, and how much this behavior reflected the attitude of Ukrainians toward the German regime." This is question belongs to those which already contain an answer; yet further in the text Hrytsak reiterates that Ukrainian collaboration, most of the times, was forced and hardly if ever ideological.⁹¹ In the particular case of the pogroms in Western Ukraine in summer 1941, Hrytsak claims that the behavior of their Ukrainian participants was caused "by the concrete situation rather than by rooted national stereotypes," and blames Soviet terror for the rise of anti-Semitism on the eve of the war.⁹² Generally, he acquits Ukrainian masses and political organizations from the

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 145-147.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p. 228.

⁹⁰ Vladyslav Hrynevych, "Polietnichnist' u vitchyznianskykh shkilnykh pidruchnykh z istoriyi Ukrayiny," *Materialy IX mizhnarodnoji naukovoji konferentsiyi "Dolya yevreys'koyi dukhovnoyi ta material'noyi spadshchyny v XX stolitti"* ["Multiethnicity in Ukrainian School Textbooks of Ukrainian History," Materials of the 9th International Conference "The Fate of Jewish Spiritual and Material Heritage in the 20th century"]. Kiev, 28-30 September 2001. <http://www.judaica.kiev.ua/Conference/Conf16.htm> Visited on June 1 2007.

⁹¹ Ibidem, pp. 232-233.

⁹² Hrytsak, Narys, p. 237.

participation in pogroms; instead, he tells extensively about the help of Greek-Catholic church to the Jews.⁹³

Natalia Yakovenko's "Survey of Ukrainian history," which covers the period till the end of the 18th century,⁹⁴ was written as a first part of the common project with Hrytsak. Yet her book is not preoccupied entirely with Ukrainian national issues; on the contrary, this work, among all others historical surveys produced in Ukraine, is the closest to multicultural approach. To my knowledge, Yakovenko is the only author of a Ukrainian textbook, who gives a definitively positive appraisal of the multiethnic composition of Ukrainian lands' population. Writing about medieval and early-modern cities, she appreciates their ethnic diversity, and values especially the communities like Armenians and Jews, who did not assimilate with the Slavic population and formed the background, thereby, for the first time in Ruthenian lands, allowing the development of "an urban-type open society." Describing the Jewish community of early-Modern Lviv, of all distinguishing features of the Jews, she chose to mention their high literary culture and love for learning (corroborating it by a quotation from the medieval legal code "Shulkhan Arukh").⁹⁵ She also devotes a special subchapter to the Chasidism – "one of the biggest turnovers in the spiritual history of the Jews".⁹⁶

Nevertheless, elsewhere Yakovenko was unable to get rid of nationalist historical clichés. Thus she explains the rise of anti-Jewish sentiments on the even of the Cossack uprisings by socio-economic factor, briefly mentions anti-Judaic religious prejudice, and concludes "the Jews had to pay dearly for their own sins and for those of others."⁹⁷ Writing about the Jews in the 18th century Rzecz Pospolita, she explains anti-Jewish pogroms by the

⁹³ Ibidem, pp. 238, 240.

⁹⁴ Natalia Yakovenko, *Narys Istoriyi Ukrayiny z Naydavnishykh Chasiv do Kintsia XVIII Stolittia* [Survey of Ukrainian History from the antiquity till the end of the 18th century] (Kyiv: Heneza, 1997). 2nd edition of this work was published as *Narys Istoriyi Seredniovichnoyi ta Ranniomodernoyi Ukrayiny* [Survey of Medieval and Early-Modern History of Ukraine] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2005). In my thesis, I will refer to the latter edition.

⁹⁵ Yakovenko, *Narys*, pp. 126-127.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 479-480. Here, however, Yakovenko follows 19th century Jewish historians, especially Shimon Dubnov, in their romantic characterization of Chasidism as a "religion of the poor."

⁹⁷ Ibidem, p. 251.

ostensible wealth of some Jews.⁹⁸ And in the final account, her history still remains a history of Ukrainians.

The revision of Ukrainian national historiographical cannon, attempted in the 1990-ies, proved very moderate, and despite the popularity of textbooks by Hrytsak and Yakovenko, they did not change the established mode of narrating Ukrainian history. Ukrainian historiography still waits on a multi-perspective comprehensive work about the history of Ukraine. An attempt to introduce elements of other historical traditions into the narrative of Ukrainian history was made by the Canadian historian Paul Magocsi, in his “History of Ukraine.” This author not only mentions the contentious issues of Ukrainian-Jewish relationship in the past, but refers to their different interpretations. For instance, dealing with anti-Jewish massacres of Khmelnytsky time, he quotes a Jewish chronicler Nathan Hannover not to defend the Ukrainian side, but to evaluate the impact of the events on the fate of the Jewish community in Polish Commonwealth.⁹⁹ Similarly, when it comes to the Haydamak uprisings and the massacre of Uman’ (1768), he devotes a separate section to Uman’ as a symbol for Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews, and quotes Dubnov.¹⁰⁰ Another small section of the book is titled “Memories of the Shtetl” and tells refers to Jewish emigration from Ukraine in the late 19th – early 20th century.¹⁰¹

Unlike other authors, Magocsi describes political convictions of assimilated Jews in Galicia resorting to the concept of multiple loyalties; the authors argues that these group adopted German, Polish or even Ukrainian national identity combined with loyalty to their Jewish religious background; furthermore, the Polish-oriented Jews had divergent political affiliation. Therefore, he puts assimilated Jews on par with many Galician Ruthenians who

⁹⁸ Ibidem, p. 479.

⁹⁹ Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, pp. 201-202.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, pp. 297-299.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 339.

did not necessary develop Ukrainian national identity.¹⁰² To summarize, in this work, among all other surveys, one can find the most detailed information about the history of the Jews in Ukraine, even though it is narrated separately from the main plot of Ukrainian national history, in subchapters about national minorities at the end of respective chronological chapters.¹⁰³

However, Ukrainian translation of this book still has not been published, and thus, its influence on public historical representations in Ukraine is minimal. The majority of Ukrainian national histories do not treat the Jewish community of Ukraine as an actor of historical process. Even if these works mention the Jews as a religious or ethnic group populating Ukrainian lands, this group is depicted statically, and social changes affecting it are underrepresented. Moreover, some popular works on Ukrainian history are imbued with anti-Jewish prejudice, which affects the representation of crucial points of Jewish history.

2. Surveys of the history of Ukrainian Jews: interpretations and politics

All the three general surveys of the history of Ukrainian Jews published in Ukraine, as their target audience, declare students and non-specialists interested in Jewish history and culture; their aim is to compensate for the lack of knowledge on the subject in other accessible sources. (The goal of one of this books - *The Jews of Ukraine: a textbook* – is even more explicit: to supplement existing school curricula on Ukrainian and world history.) Yet apart from factual information, these works also have a political agenda: each of the books supports a particular project of Jewish identity.

¹⁰² Ibidem, pp. 430-434.

¹⁰³ Ibidem, p. 394

The first of these is the two-volume textbook “The Jews of Ukraine: Brief Historical outline” written in early 1990-ies as a textbook for university students.¹⁰⁴ This book was the first comprehensive publication on Ukrainian-Jewish history, and served as a model and a source of factual content and interpretations for later works. The coverage of particular subjects here bears traces of the Enlightenment paradigm (often through Soviet Marxist mediation), and reflects hopes and anxieties of Ukrainian Jews at the early period of Ukrainian independence. The authors, among the sources of their textbook, list the founders of Jewish historiography Heinrich Graetz, Shimon Dubnov, Majer Balaban, as well as Ukrainian nationalist historians Mykola Kostomarov, Mylhaylo Hrushevskyi, and Ivan Krypjakevych. (In the parts on the history of the Jews in Western Ukraine, written by the Lviv-based scholar Yakov Khonigsmann, the author relies heavily on local historians of 1890-1930-ies: Cholowski, Shipper, Schall).

In the preface, they underscore that no ethnic group developed in isolation, and that interethnic contacts led to a large-scale mutual cultural exchange. They admit that “now and then conflicts took place on the ground of interethnic resentment,” but point out that most of the time these conflicts were provoked by external forces.¹⁰⁵ In independent Ukraine, to their mind, “the situation of Jewish population has been changing to the better. The state actively supports the development of Jewish culture and education.” Whereas political instability, low level standards, and the rise of anti-Semitism force the Jews to emigrate, they conclude with a hopeful note: “We would like to believe that the long-suffering history of the Jewish people in the blessed land of Independent Ukraine will not end by their exodus.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Yakov Khonigsmann, Aleksandr Nayman, *Yevrei Ukrainy: Kratkii ocherk istorii* [The Jews of Ukraine: Brief outline of history] Part 1. (Kiev, 1993); F. Ya Gorovskii, Ya S. Khonigsmann, A. Ya. Nayman, S. Ya. Yelizavetskii; *Yevrei Ukrainy (kratkii ocherk istorii)* [The Jews of Ukraine (Brief historical outline)] Part 2. (Kiev, 1995).

¹⁰⁵ Khonigsmann; Nayman, *Yevrei Ukrainy*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, p. 4.

Another publication, *The Jews in Ukraine: A textbook*, by Ilya Kabanchik, was designed as a supplement to the secondary school courses “History of Ukraine” and “World History,”¹⁰⁷ Despite the fact that it has not been used in non-Jewish schools, it is extraordinarily important as the most consistent text written from an anti-assimilationist and Zionist perspective. The last book, *A Survey of History and Culture of the Jews in Ukraine*,¹⁰⁸ is as a collective monograph with the agenda of an encyclopedia of Ukrainian-Jewish history and culture. Despite the fact that its authors have different ethnic origin and represent diverse profession background, the book in whole well complies with the trend termed as Ukrainian-Jewish revisionism: elimination of contented issues from historical accounts for the sake of “mutual understanding” and “rapprochement” of the two ethnic groups.

In their periodization scheme, all of the books take the perspective of political developments in Ukrainian lands, yet this does not mean complying with the dominant way of narrating Ukrainian history: neither of these works accepts the scheme of Ukrainian national revival. For example, in the “Brief outline” of the history of Ukrainian Jews, the section “Under the Polish rule” covers over four centuries of Ukrainian and Jewish history, from the “occupation” of the Ruthenian principality of Galicia by Polish kings in the middle 14th century till the demise of the Polish Commonwealth. The period usually termed in Ukrainian historical narratives as the Cossack age, for the reasons which can be guessed, is missed out from the periodization framework.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, a scheme based on the processes within the Jewish community is also rejected. Thus, information about Jewish emancipation, the Haskalah, and assimilation does not constitute an integral whole, and can be found at various points of the texts.

¹⁰⁷ *Yevrei v Ukrainie. Uchebno-metodicheskie materialy (prilozhenije k kursam “Istoria Ukrainy” I “Vsiemirnaya istoria”)* [The Jews in Ukraine: A textbook] , ed. Ilya Kabanchik.(Lvov/Dniepropetrovsk, 2004). 5th edition.

¹⁰⁸ *Narysy z Istorii ta Kultury Yevreyiv Ukrayiny* [A Survey of History and Culture of the Jews of Ukraine] Ed. Leonid Finberg, Volodymyr Liubchenko. (Kyiv, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ Khonigsman, Nayman, *Yevrei Ukrainy*, Part 1, passim.

All the three books begin their narrative with the first Jewish settlements in the Black Sea cost Greek colonies. Interesting is that whereas the other works tell about ethnic diversity and different wave of Jewish migration, Kabanchik's textbook from the start emphasizes the spiritual connection of the Jews with the land of Israel, and at the same time, with all subsequent generations of Jews in Ukrainian lands.¹¹⁰ Similarly to Ukrainian textbooks with their belief in perennial existence of Ukrainian nation, Kabanchik's work creates continuities and downplays discontinuities. Thus, already in 1113, in Kiev there took place "the first pogrom. First, but unfortunately not last"; the author does not speak about the reasons of pogrom, but from the context it is possible to assume that main reason was Christian anti-Judaism and refusal of the Jews to convert.¹¹¹ The *Survey*, written from the position of interethnic reconciliation, characterizes the same event only as "a riot which also affected the Jews of Kiev"¹¹²

Yet despite neither of the books accepts the narrative of Ukrainian national history as its own framework, all the three make certain concessions to it. Since the period of Polish rule in the accounts of Ukrainian history is traditional characterized as the time of national and social oppression, to describe this time as a "golden age" for the Polish Jewry becomes unacceptable. Accordingly, Yakov Khonigsman, one of the authors of *The Jews of Ukraine*, claims that with the "occupation" of Galician principality by the Polish king Kazimierz III, "the situation of the Jews changed for the worse," because of the immigration of German merchants, who created competition, and the spread of Catholic Church.¹¹³ In the interpretation of Ilya Kabanchik, Jewish life in medieval Poland was also far from a "golden age": the Jews came to seek haven "in ethnic Ukrainian lands occupied by Polish and Lithuanian feudals" because their life there was only relatively safer than in Western Europe

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 8.

¹¹¹ Ibidem, p. 11.

¹¹² Narysy, p. 35.

¹¹³ Ibidem, p. 20

of the time. In Poland, the Jews suffered from religious fanaticism incited by Catholic Church, had no civic rights and were totally dependent on the whim of the rulers; the Jews were hated by their competitors-merchants, peasants, clergy, and humiliated and abused by the nobility.¹¹⁴

Yet the most important elements of national historical tradition are hard to sacrifice even for a good cause. Jewish massacres during Khmelnyts'ky revolt belong to such cases. Interestingly, this topic got to be avoided only in the 20th century Ukrainian historical writing; in the 19th century, it was covered by many classical works of Ukrainian historians. Thus the author of *The Jews of Ukraine* (Aleksandr Nayman), telling about the massacres, was able to corroborate his account by referring to Mykola Kostomarov and Mykhaylo Hrushevsky.¹¹⁵ He writes extensively about Cossack anti-Jewish violence¹¹⁶ but provides a certain balance by describing persecution of the Jews by Polish Catholic church.¹¹⁷ Ilya Kabanchik openly writes about “anti-Jewish stance” of Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi, and also refers to Hrushevs'kyi.¹¹⁸ He relates in detail stories about the martyrdom and heroism of Jews who fall victims to the rebels but did not betray the faith of their ancestors, and draws a parallel between the Cossack wars and the Holocaust.¹¹⁹ The “revisionists” *Survey*, on the contrary, represents the massacres in the context of 17th century religious wars in Europe, and argues that their effect on the Jewish community in Ukrainian lands was not so horrible as a their “subjective reception” Among the three, this work also provides the lowest numbers of victims of the Cossacks (20.000).¹²⁰

Remarkable dissimilarity characterizes the books' treatment of tradition and modernity in Jewish history. The earliest textbook, two-volume survey written by in 1993, is informed

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 16-21.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, pp. 51-52.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 54-55.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 33.

¹¹⁹ Ibidem, pp.33-34.

¹²⁰ *Narysy*, p. 51-54

by secular outlook, and, in addition, bears the imprint of Soviet-Marxist historiography. Consequently, the authors treat Jewish communal self-government, together with rabbinic Judaism and Jewish traditional way of life, as a social atavism of pre-Modern time. Writing about late 18th century, the Yakov Khonigsman and Aleksandr Nayman depict “religious laws and Talmudic rules” as Medieval phenomena, and call rabbinic authority “devaluated”.¹²¹

In its turn, the textbook by Ilya Kabanchik is marked by nostalgia for the traditional way of life. For him, Chasidism is not a retrograde, but a democratic religious and ethic movement. (He points out that some Chasidim left for the “Holy land” already in late 18th century).¹²² The author concedes that conservatism of the shtetl Jews led to a certain isolation, narrow world-view and conservatism. Yet, the shtetl nurtured and preserved traditional Jewish values, which then could be transmitted to subsequent generations. In the end, Kabanchik sympathizes not with those who “ironically smile” to express their superiority over “a shtetl Jew”, but with those who treat this image with respect and nostalgia.¹²³

Curiously, both *The Jews of Ukraine*, and the textbook by Kabanchik attempt to represent the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) as a native process, prompted not so much by external stimuli as by “local conditions of Jewish life”¹²⁴. Khonigsman and Nayman underscore a major difference between the Jewish Enlightenment in Ukraine and in Europe:

The Haskalah movement in Ukraine, unlike in Germany, where it was conceived, did not lead to the mass assimilation of Jewry, to abandoning the forefathers’ religion[...] In Ukraine [...] this movement took another path and lead most of its adherents to the strengthening of national self-consciousness.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ Khonigsman, Nayman, *Yevrei Ukrainy*, Part 1, p. 73. Hasidism is also blamed for its “negative” role, since it became “a stronghold of the medieval way of life.”

¹²² *Yevrei v Ukrainie*, p. 40-44.

¹²³ Ibidem, p. 39.

¹²⁴ Ibidem, p. 73.

¹²⁵ Ibidem, p. 75.

Much attention is devoted to the figure of “the philosopher from Satanov” – Mendel Lewin (1749-1823),¹²⁶ who, according to the authors, “unlike Mendelssohn-kind enlighteners, did not reject the language of his people – Yiddish.”¹²⁷ Similarly, Kabanchik tells in detail about “one of the first Russian Enlighteners”, Isaak Baer Levinsohn, who, as the textbook argues, “defended dignity of his people and its religion”:

Unlike European maskilim, he did not call the Jews upon rejection their national distinctiveness. On the contrary, he believed that they should adhere to their national traditions.¹²⁸

Instead, opinions about Jewish acculturation and assimilation, which can be found in the analyzed texts, are rather similar. While acculturation – the adoption of European high culture by the Jews - is usually regarded a beneficial process, assimilation – the national identification with another group,¹²⁹ – is uniformly condemned (although the authors differently evaluate the role of assimilated groups in history of Ukrainian Jews).

Among the three texts, the textbook by Ilya Kabanchik stands out by its harsh criticism of any forms Jewish assimilation, and by the promotion of a distinctive identity among Ukrainian-Jewish youth.¹³⁰ Thus, the author negatively assesses even the Josephine reforms: in Austria, similarly to the assimilationist policy of Russian regime, government tried to “correct” the Jews. The introduction of secular education among the Jews is described

¹²⁶ On Mendel Lewin (Lefin), and on specific features of the Haskalah in the lands of the former Polish Commonwealth, see Nancy Sinkoff, *Out of the Shtetl: Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands* (=Brown Judaic Studies, No 336; Providence, 2004).

¹²⁷ Khonigsman, Nayman, p. 74.

¹²⁸ Ibidem, p. 51. It is interesting to compare this interpretation of the origins of the Haskalah in the lands of the former Poland with that of Simon Dubnov, who wrote that new ideas of Enlightenment, literally as rays of light, “penetrated” from Europe into the local “dark realm” of stagnant Rabbinism and irrational Hasidism (Simon M. Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Poland and Russia* (Bergenfield, NJ: Avotaynu Inc, 2000) , pp. 114-115). The historian perceived the Haskalah as an entirely Western phenomenon and called Mendel Lewin “a faint reflection of the Western literature [...] on the somber horizon of Russia.” (Ibidem, p. 188). As for Levinsohn, Dubnov writes that his “actions [the struggle against traditional culture] would have been ignoble had it not been [politically] naive” (Ibidem, p. 264).

¹²⁹ Definitions of assimilation and acculturation in the context of the history of Galician Jewry can be found in article: Lucia Kapralska “Drogi z getta. Uwagi o procesach asymilacyjnych w społeczności Żydów galicyjskich” [The Paths out of Ghetto: Remarks about Assimilation Process among Galician Jews], *Ortodoksja, emansypacja, asymilacja: Studia z dziejów ludności żydowskiej na ziemiach polskich w okresie rozbiorów*, ed. Konrad Zielinski and Monika Adamczyk-Gabrowska (Liublin: Wydawnictwo uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2003), pp. 97-118.

¹³⁰ *Yevrei v Ukrainie*, passim.

with little enthusiasm.¹³¹ Kabanchik points out that assimilation of the Jews allowed for greater social mobility, but meant nearly total rejection of Jewish values and severing the ties with their people. Moreover, in Ukrainian lands it put the Jews into antagonistic relations with Ukrainians.¹³²

Another element of Jewish traditional historical narrative stemming from Dubnov is persecution of the Jews in Russian empire. All the books describe this period in the history of Ukrainian Jews negatively, but some express harsher criticism than the others. In the book *The Jews of Ukraine*, the chapter on the Jews in Russian empire is titled “Aliens in their own country,” and, accordingly to the title, tells about persecutions of the Jews starting with the Empress Catherine I and continuing with the subsequent rulers.¹³³ Yet the author (Aleksandr Nayman) finds some positive moments in the official policy. Thus, he writes that the Emperor Paul abolished some restrictions of Jewish residence, and “argued against ritual accusations against the Jews.”¹³⁴ Describing the hard lot of the Jews in the Russian army, Nayman, unlike other authors, writes about heroic deeds of Jewish soldier in the imperial wars.¹³⁵

Nayman writes about Zionism mostly as an ideology developed abroad.¹³⁶ In the late-19th- early 20th century, he argues, among the Jews, “Zionism had much more opponents than supporters;”¹³⁷ political movements with social agenda were much more popular than any national ones.¹³⁸ The subchapter “The Jews in Industry, Science, and Culture,” in his book, proudly tells about the success of Jewish manufacturers, doctors, and scholars,¹³⁹ testifying to the high integration of at least a part of the Russian Jews into imperial society.

¹³¹ Ibidem, p. 53.

¹³² *Yevrei v Ukrainie*, p. 57.

¹³³ Ibidem, pp. 109-110, 114-118.

¹³⁴ Ibidem, p. 111.

¹³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 119-120, 140.

¹³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 133-137.

¹³⁷ Ibidem, p. 137.

¹³⁸ Ibidem, p. 138.

¹³⁹ Ibidem, pp. 144-157.

The *Survey* generally describes Russian imperial policy towards the Jews in the 19th century as anti-Semitic: all the system of legislation was intended to make the Jews abandon their national and religious traditions.¹⁴⁰

Ilya Kabanchik, whose history of the Jews is indeed a tale of persecution and suffering, negatively characterizes enlightened absolutism in Russian empire, which “tried to strengthen autocracy, centralize the power and unify the territory” (the author refers to the abolition of Ukrainian autonomy). He reminds that Jewish residence in Russia “was forbidden since Middle Ages” and calls the Pale of Settlement “a disgraceful ghetto.” Generally, all reforms introduced by the imperial government, are termed as attempts to “correct” the Jews by depriving them from their “national identification.”¹⁴¹ Even moderate liberal reforms of Tsar Alexander II are characterized as the continuation of the policy of “correcting, only with subtler means.” According to the textbook, the Jews of Russian Empire had a narrow possibility of choice: either to suffer from poverty and persecution, or assimilate and convert.¹⁴²

Luckily, Kabanchik writes, there were some Jews who did not repudiate their nation; these were philanthropists, who helped the Jews by all available means, and writers, who promoted national language (Yiddish).¹⁴³ But Zionists, in the long run, did the best service to their people; thus he pays much attention to the birth of Palestinian movement in Russia, describes the heroism of the first settlers in Palestine, provides a detailed biography of the Zionist politician Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinski (1880-1840), and emphasizes a role of the Jewish community of Ukraine in the world Zionist movement.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Narysy, p. 69.

¹⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 46-49.

¹⁴² Ibidem, pp. 56-57.

¹⁴³ Ibidem, p. 58.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem, pp. 61-63, 70-72.

In any case, the condemnation of Russian Empire and its national policy well agrees with the official historical narrative of post 1991- Ukraine. Much more problematic issue is the attitude of Ukrainian national activists of 19th- 20th centuries towards the Jews. The authors of “Jewish” histories are rarely explicit about Ukrainian “popular” or modern political anti-Semitism; instead, they try either to downplay the issue, or to explain it by external factors. Thus Nayman writes about sympathetic attitude towards the Jews among 19th century Russian and Ukrainian political activists and men of letters.¹⁴⁵ Yet, he warns, “it is possible to term hastily the works and views of a number of prominent Ukrainian figures as Judeophobic.” It is a secret for none, he follows, that “some expressions” in the poetry of the Ukrainian genius Taras Shevchenko can be perceived as anti-Semitic, but in fact there are evidences of his “rather tolerant” attitude towards the Jews. One such “evidence” is worth a quotation:

At the time of the poet’s stay in [the city of] Pereyaslav, the drawing room where he worked now and then was crowded by Jews, who were coming business to the house owner A. Kazachkovskii. Their [that is, Jewish] noisy talks, apparently did not bother the poet. In any case, he would never leave for the study-room, and kept writing[...]¹⁴⁶

Whereas Kabanchik writes explicitly about anti-Jewish violence of 17th-18th centuries, he understates anti-Semitism of nascent Ukrainian nationalist movement of 19th century. On the contrary, he represent the relationship between Ukrainian and Jewish national intelligentsia of the time as sympathetic if not supportive: “Ukrainian intelligentsia[...] comes to the realization of the similarity between the problems faced by the Ukrainians and the Jews.” He refers to Ukrainian national activists Mykhailo Drahomanov and Mykola Kostomarov, who argued against the policy of Russian imperial government and in favor of Jewish legal

¹⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 161-167.

¹⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 162.

emancipation.¹⁴⁷ The author admits that some unnamed representatives of Ukrainian intelligentsia nurtured anti-Semitic sentiments but at the same time hints at external forces that might have prevented the mutual understanding.¹⁴⁸

It is worth noting, that the participants of pogroms in Russian empire, in all the analyzed texts, are never described in ethnic terms. Consequently, Ukrainians are acquitted from the pogroms, even though most of them took place in the lands of present-day Ukraine. Yet when it comes to anti-Jewish violence in the 20th century the situation differs; now, not only anonymous masses, but Ukrainian military units took part in looting and murder of the Jews, and the authors of Ukrainian-Jewish histories could not avoid this issue.

The book *The Jews of Ukraine* (Part II) lists various causes of during the Civil War in 1918-1920: anarchy, social and mental contradictions between the city and the countryside, anti-Bolshevik propaganda. The author (Nayman) refers to the Ukrainian politician Volodymyr Vynnychenko, who put the blame for the pogroms on the “black-hundred atamans” formally subordinated to the Ukrainian Army, but trying to discredit Ukrainian government. Yet Nayman also points out that the attitude of the leader of the Ukrainian republic in 1919-1920 Symon Petliura (whose name is associated with the pogroms most often) was “contradictory,” and quotes one of his anti-Semitic declarations. In the end, he finds it is impossible to acquit Petliura from the responsibility for pogroms.¹⁴⁹

Ilya Kabanchik, writing about Ukrainian People’s Republic of 1917-1918, underscores the support Ukrainian national aspirations received from the Jews, and recognition of this

¹⁴⁷ Kostomarov indeed condemned discrimination of the Jews by religious criteria, but firmly believed in a . (It is hard to refrain from the comment that Kostomarov is a strangest choice to support the authors’ point: this personage indeed condemned discrimination of the Jews by religious criteria, but firmly believed in a socially negative role of the Jews in Ukrainian past and present, and became infamous for his anti-Semitic declarations. Drahomanov also believed that Jews exploited the Ukrainian people, and the aim of legal emancipation, for him, was to stop this practice. See: Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Nineteenth-Century Ukrainian Political Thought,” *Ukrainian-Jewish relations in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Howard Aster and Peter Potichnyj, 2nd ed. (Edmonton, 1990), pp. 71-77.

¹⁴⁸ Khonigsman, Nayman, *Yevrei Ukrainy*, p. 87.

¹⁴⁹ F. Ya Gorovskii, Ya S. Khonigsman, A. Ya. Nayman, S. Ya. Yelizavetskii; *Yevrei Ukrainy (kratkii ocherk istorii)* [The Jews of Ukraine (Brief historical outline)] Part II (Kiev, 1995), pp. 15-23.

support by the top-level Ukrainian politicians Hrushevskyi and Vynnychenko. Yet he writes about “Judeophobia” of the majority of Ukrainian politicians (“especially of middle and lower level”) and peasantry. In great detail and vividness, he writes about pogroms of 1918-1920 and concludes that participation of Ukrainian military units in pogroms eventually led to the defeat of Ukrainian national movement.¹⁵⁰

In contrast to the other authors, Ukrainian historians Liudmyla Hrynevych and Volodymyr Hrynevych, who wrote the chapter “The Jews of Ukraine at the time of the revolution and Civil war” for the *Survey*, describe the pogroms not as a fault but as a “misfortune” for the Ukrainian government.¹⁵¹ Petliura, they argue, became associated with the pogroms “not without the help of the Bolshevik propaganda.” They describe the attempts of Petliura to prevent the spread of pogroms and underscore that he ordered to shoot 92 of his subordinates for participation in the murder of Jews.¹⁵² The historians claim that, whereas the pogroms perpetrated by the Ukrainian Army were the most numerous, researchers believe that the pogrom committed by the (Russian) White Army had the largest-scale and were the most murderous.¹⁵³

As will be showed below, the *Survey* display similar position in the issue of Ukrainian collaboration in the Holocaust. The other two books writes about it more or less explicitly and do not attempt to acquit Ukrainians. Thus Yakov Khonigsman writes about pogroms in Western Ukraine in early July 1941, organized “with the help of the provocation by Hitlerites’ accomplices” (Among other cities, he mentions the pogrom in Ternopil about 5000 people were killed). He blames the Germans for organizing the pogroms, but points out that they

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 135.

¹⁵¹ *Narysy*, p. 129.

¹⁵² Ibidem, p. 131.

¹⁵³ *Narysy*, p. 132.

were actively helped by “the local activists from among Ukrainian police, and all kind of rabble who happen to serve the occupiers.”¹⁵⁴ In general, he argues that

Hitlers’ executors would not have been able to achieve total extermination of the Jews in Ukraine without the support by the auxiliary police, without active help of all kind of accomplices [...], without neutral, indifferent attitude of the majority of population.¹⁵⁵

Yet, apart from mentioning the Ukrainian police, he is not specific about the collaborators and usually calls them “local accomplices.”

Kabanchik is more explicit in this question. He writes about prewar contacts between the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Nazi Germany, and extensively quotes documents testifying to anti-Semitism among the OUN leadership. (He also mentions the hatred of radical Ukrainian nationalists toward the Poles.) Logical consequence of nationalist ideology was the participation of Ukrainian police in extermination of the Jews.¹⁵⁶ Instead, he relates a horrifying case of a Ukrainian man in the Western Ukrainian city of Stary Sambir, who, after the Soviet retreat, “declared himself Ukrainian police” and methodically shot seven Jews on the Jewish cemetery before the Germans got to the city.¹⁵⁷ He also writes about indifference of non-Jewish population to the Jewish fate and their greed for Jewish property.¹⁵⁸

In contrast to this, in the *Survey*’s chapter “The Jews of Ukraine during World War II: The Holocaust and resistance” its authors Zhanna Kovba and Yurii Korohods’kyi barely mention the contentious issue. Along with the Soviet and the post-Soviet Ukrainian tradition,

¹⁵⁴ *Yevrei Ukrainy*, Part II, pp. 129-131.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 143.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 185-189. However, Kabanchik does not write about the role of the OUN in organization of militia units in Western Ukraine in summer 1941, many of which participated in anti-Jewish pogroms and later joined the police subordinated to the Nazi administration. Neither does he mention about relationship of the Jews and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army; to be sure, he does not mention at all this military organization, joined en masse by OUN-indoctrinated policemen in 1943, apart from a single case where he writes that some Jews fought in the UPA (p. 204).

¹⁵⁷ *Yvreyei v Unrainie*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 190.

they depict extermination of the Jews as a part of anti-Ukrainian policy,¹⁵⁹ although later they specify that the Jews were murdered only because they were Jews.¹⁶⁰ The Holocaust, according to these authors, was perpetrated exclusively by the Nazis.¹⁶¹ Ukrainian policemen are mentioned only in the subchapter “Rescue” (!) first, as unwilling accomplices who were manipulated by the Nazis; second, among those the Ukrainians who sometimes helped the Jews to escape death.¹⁶² Further on, Kovba and Korohods’kyi argue:

It is impossible to establish how many Ukrainians participated in the persecution of the Jews. But there is no doubt that this was a marginal part of Ukrainian society.¹⁶³

As it was already said, *Narys* is a collective work, and not all its chapters display the same desire to avoid debated issues of Ukrainian-Jewish relations. However, the book in whole represents an attempt to write a history of Jews in Ukraine which would be acceptable for non-Jewish majority. The other two books, dealt with in this chapter, treat the crucial elements of Jewish historical traditions quite differently from texts on Ukrainian national history.

However, the analyzed narratives of Ukrainian-Jewish history share a major feature with Ukrainian national ones - perennialism in the national question. They, too, consider Ukrainians and Jews as ever-existing entities, and not as communities in the making. This approach is exemplified in one of the *Survey*’s chapter on the Jews in Habsburg Empire, written by Ivan Monolatii.¹⁶⁴ This author treats Galician Jews as a national minority in Western Ukrainian lands; yet the very term “Western Ukraine” in the context of late 18th century is highly anachronistic: at the time described, “Ukraine” designated a relatively small region around Dnepr banks, and was not applied to the whole territory populated by ethnic

¹⁵⁹ *Narys*, p. 182.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 184-195.

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 200-201.

¹⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 200.

¹⁶⁴ *Narys*, p. 97.

Ukrainians until the beginning of the 20th century, when the term was finally adopted by the proponents of Ukrainian national cause.¹⁶⁵ In this particular case, such a perspective allows the author to include the Jews into the narrative of Ukrainian history, and at the same time demonstrates their subordinate status in this narrative; in general, it reflects the idea of national identity determined by origin at the first place.

The second similarity is that both the peoples are described as victims of external forces. Thus Ilya Kabanchik admits that in the history of Ukrainian-Jewish relations there were “dramatic, even tragic times;” but in fact the two peoples had similar fates – they lacked their own statehood and were oppressed by their neighbors; and this similarity must have brought them even closer to each other than mere living side by side. He quotes the Ukrainian dissident Ivan Dziuba, who called for mutual understanding between the two peoples – “victims of historical process, victims of oppressive regimes.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, the work which considers the difficult way of the term “Ukraine” into Ukrainian historiography: Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevs’kyi and the writing of Ukrainian history* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 168-170.

¹⁶⁶ *Yevrei v Ukrainie*, p. 5.

Chapter 3. Lviv: Reconstructing the Ghetto

Separation between the representations of Ukrainian national history and Jewish history on the local level is well illustrated by the case of Lviv, where public commemoration in the last fifteen years has been reproducing interethnic boundaries which existed for centuries. Lviv (Lemberg, Lwow) is a city of numerous ethnic traditions, which, however, never developed into a single cosmopolitan culture.¹⁶⁷ Yaroslav Hrytsak, in his prolegomena to a multicultural history of Lviv, writes that the city's history is, in fact, a story of "a failed multicultural experience." In the Middle Ages, different ethnic and religious groups formed separate social structures and did not intermix; and in the Modern age, old religious and cultural boundaries were supplanted by new national ones. "As the result," Hrytsak concludes, "instead of a single one, several competing civil societies developed along national lines."¹⁶⁸

Lviv was founded in middle 13th century by the rulers of Galician-Volhynian principality, and from the very beginning it was populated by various ethnic and religious groups: Orthodox Ruthenians, Catholic Germans, Armenians belonging to their own autocephalous church, Muslim Tatars, and Jews. (From the 14th century, there were two separate Jewish communities: one in the walled ghetto within the city, and the other one in Krakow suburb). In the 1340 Galicia was overtaken by the Polish king Kazimierz III, and

¹⁶⁷ See Philipp Ther, "War Versus Peace: Interethnic Relations in Lviv during the First Half of the Twentieth century," *Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents of Culture*, ed. by John Czaplicka (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 251-274.

¹⁶⁸ Yaroslav Hrytsak, "Lviv: a Multicultural History through the Centuries," *Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents*, p. 60.

later became an integral part of the crown lands. At the time, Catholic Poles joined the mixed population of the city, and eventually acquired demographical and social domination.

Among the major events that shaped the city's history and interethnic relations, was a religious confrontation between Catholic, Orthodox, and Uniate (later Greek-Catholic) churches, which in the early 17th centuries brought an end to the relatively peaceful interethnic coexistence in Polish Commonwealth and ushered in a decades-long period of Cossack uprisings and wars. The Jews became hostages of the conflict between the Orthodox peasant and Cossack rebels on the one hand, and the predominantly Catholic elites of Poland on the other hand. The Cossack leader Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi, who besieged Lviv in 1648 and 1655, both times demanded the magistrate to give up the Jews.¹⁶⁹ He was denied twice; and yet the relationship between Gentiles and Jews in Lviv was far from idyllic. Counterreformation turned religious intolerance and competition into hatred, and the 17th century witnessed a number of anti-Jewish riots and cases of religious persecution, including Jesuit-inspired pogrom of 1664 when dozens of Jews were murdered.¹⁷⁰

After the first partition of Poland in 1772, Lviv became the capital of Galicia – a newly created province of Austrian empire. The politics of enlightened absolutism aimed at bringing order in the relationship between different social groups, which, in the case of the Jews, initially often meant not new rights but the reestablishment of old social restrictions and the increased tax burden. Yet however difficult the road to emancipation was, already in 1789 by the Tolerance Patent of the Emperor Joseph the Jews acquired religious equality and a number of social rights. In 1867, last limitations of Jewish rights and of their freedom of movement were abolished. By the time, the Jews of Lviv had already been well integrated

¹⁶⁹ Waclaw Wierzhbienieć, "The Processes of Jewish Emancipation and Assimilation," *Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents*, pp. 225-226.

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem, p 226.

into imperial society and many of them adopted languages (German and Polish) and culture of their non-Jewish neighbors.¹⁷¹

By early 20th century, the city became a scene of conflicting Polish and Ruthenian/Ukrainian national aspirations. Whereas the Poles strove to increase their political influence in the empire and the autonomous (since 1867) province, Ukrainians tried to overcome Polish domination, even though numerically they occupied only the third place among the city's national groups (15-20%). The first place belonged to the Poles (50-55%), and the second place to the Jews (30-35%),¹⁷² who after the final legal emancipation in 1867 significantly improved their economic and social status, but could not and would not compete in the struggle of Polish and Ukrainian nationalisms. In late 19th-early 20th century, Jewish political movement in Lviv fall apart into pro-Austrian and pro-Polish assimilationist trends, and Zionism, none of which dominated.¹⁷³

The World War I, during which Lviv for several months was under Russian occupation, and the ensuing disintegration of Habsburg empire exacerbated Ukrainian-Polish antagonism. To pass ahead of the Polish state-building process, in October 1918, Ukrainian politicians proclaimed Western Ukrainian National Republic, and in a few days Lviv, as a projected capital, was occupied by Ukrainian military units. As the result of Ukrainian-Polish war, which lasted till November of the same year, the Poles recaptured the city; an immediate consequence of it was an anti-Jewish pogrom. The Jews, who took a neutral side during the war, were "punished" for an alleged disloyalty to Polish state. About 150 Jews were murdered, and dozens of houses in the traditional area of Jewish residence were looted and burned.¹⁷⁴ Although in the reestablished Polish Republic (1919-1939) such cases of mass

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, pp. 226-232.

¹⁷² Hrytsak, "Lviv", p. 58. The percentage is approximate and regards to the whole period of Austrian rule (1772-1939).

¹⁷³ Wierzbieniec, "Processes," pp. 232-238.

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 238; Ther, "War Versus Peace," p. 260.

interethnic violence never repeated, the relationship between Ukrainians and Poles variegated from concealed resentment to open animosity, whereas the Jews were strained between the escalating political anti-Semitism and the promise of social advance and cultural achievement offered by further integration into Polish society.¹⁷⁵

According to Alois Woldan, the idea of multinational and multicultural Lviv was an essential part of the city's imagery before 1939,¹⁷⁶ yet this "multiculturalism" was rarely free of partiality to one's own group and restrained attitude to, or even condemnation of the others. Already at the Renaissance period, texts about the city (for instance, the poem "Roxolania" by Sebastian Klonowicz, or the description of the city by Jan Alnpek) displayed virulent anti-Jewish sentiments and, at the same time, condemned Orthodox Ruthenian as heretics.¹⁷⁷ The continuity between anti-Modern prejudice and ethnic imagery developed in the age of nationalism is a debated issue; in any case, up to the beginning of the 20th century one-sided representations of the city dominated.¹⁷⁸ The presence of other groups was rarely celebrated, and even though the Jews were seen as an inherent element of the city's past and present, this element of the multicultural palette was rarely perceived as a desirable one. Even the writer Karl-Emil Franzos (1808-1858), himself a German-assimilated Jew, connected the "half-Asian" uncivilized appearance of Lviv with the large population of traditional Jews in the city. (However, he was equally critical of the local "emancipated Polish Jews who would like to be Jewish Poles and look for roast pork on the menu.")¹⁷⁹

In the first half of the 20th century, the city's history and urban space were clearly demarcated along national lines, and its heritage was assigned new meaning in relations to

¹⁷⁵ Wierzbienec, "Processes," p. 242.

¹⁷⁶ Alois Woldan, "The Imagery of Lviv in Ukrainian, Polish, and Austrian Literatures: From the Sixteenth Century to 1918," *Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents*, p. 75.

¹⁷⁷ Ibidem, p. 77.

¹⁷⁸ According to Woldan, the only exception here is the Austrian writer of Jewish origin Joseph Roth (1894-1939), who was born in the Galician city of Brody, but left Galicia for Vienna and Paris, and from the position of a "European" outsider described Lviv as being rich and strong by its diversity. Ibidem, p. 89.

¹⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 85.

external paradigms of national histories. In 1915, in Petrograd there was published a peculiar memento of the Russian occupation of Lviv – a description of the city’s history and heritage by V.A. Vereschagin.¹⁸⁰ In this high-quality illustrated book, written from the perspective of the “reunification” of all “Russian” lands, the Jews are mentioned twice: first, among the “exotic” types populating the city in the Middle Ages (the “already then ubiquitous Jews”),¹⁸¹ and then, in connection to the description of the synagogue “which displays Gothic remnants.”¹⁸² Vereschagin briefly relates the “poetic” legend about a Jewish woman who gave her name to the synagogue and sacrificed her life to save it from capturing by the Jesuits, but also refers to another, “less tragic” version, according to which “the beauty paid an incomparably lower price for saving the synagogue.”¹⁸³ Thus the monument of architecture is used to express the author’s anti-Jewish and anti-women biases.

In 1925, there was published the first Polish-language travel guide through the city, written by Mieczyslaw Orlowicz and addressed to Polish soldiers, who came from other regions of Poland to defend the city (from Ukrainians), but knew little of its heritage and meaning in the history of their fatherland. In this text, the history of Lviv is closely bound to the history of Polish statehood, and architectural heritage is evaluated by the standards of styles that were seen as a part of the national culture. The travel guide briefly mentions the oldest synagogue of Lviv - the famous Golden Rose (“surrounded by legends”), built by an Italian architect Paolo Romano in 1584 and other landmarks of Jewish Lviv, such as the Great synagogue of Krakow suburb (built in 1632) and Jewish cemeteries, but describes them

¹⁸⁰ V. A. Vereschagin, *Staryi L'vov* [The Old Lviv] (St. Petersburg, 1915).

¹⁸¹ Ibidem, p. 28.

¹⁸² Ibidem, p. 78.

¹⁸³ Ibidem, p. 79. A classical version of the legend tells of a beautiful Jewish woman Roza (Rose), who agreed to spend a night with an omnipotent Catholic bishop as a price for not turning the synagogue into a church, and committed suicide next morning. Apart from the fact that the synagogue’s founder daughter-in-law was indeed called Roza, the legend has no historical basis, but its different versions and interpretations deserve a special study.

mostly in esthetic categories.¹⁸⁴ Their historic value, for Polish readers, was apparently considered minimal.

First Ukrainian guide through the city appeared only in 1932, but was as much nationally consistent as its Russian and Polish predecessors. Ivan Krypyakevych, a disciple of Hrushevs'kyi and an important Ukrainian historian himself, in his "Historical walks through Lviv,"¹⁸⁵ does mention the Jews as actors of the city's history; yet he ascribes them a role of invaders in the initially Ukrainian Lviv. This is how he describes the demographical history of one of the two traditional areas of Jewish residence – Krakow (Zhovkva) suburb:

The Jews, which were already present at the time of the [Galician-Volhynian] princes, but were few in number, later began multiplying, and eventually got so numerous that completely ousted the Christians from the main Zhovkivs'ka street to the outskirts of the suburb.¹⁸⁶

Along the same lines, he writes about the Jewish ghetto within the city walls; there too, the houses in the ancient Rus'ka (Ruthenian) street had been allegedly taken over from the Ruthenians-Ukrainians by the expanding and commercially active Jewish community.¹⁸⁷ At the same time, Krypyakevych condemns early Modern anti-Jewish pogroms and describes the Golden Rose synagogue with reverence, as a "majestic" building and a "spiritual center of the Jewish district." His mentioning of the related legend is brief and neutral.¹⁸⁸

The attempts of Jewish authors to define and describe Jewish heritage of Lviv might have been a reaction to the virtual battle over the city and its history waged between Ukrainians and Poles, but this reaction was not so much belated as Jewish activists of the time used to complain. As late as in 1935, the prominent historian of Lviv and Galician Jewry Majer (Meir) Balaban (1874-1941) reproved the Jews for not following the example of other

¹⁸⁴ Mieczysław Orłowicz, *Przewodnik po Lwowie* [A Guide through Lviv], (Lwow-Warszawa, 1925), pp. 102, 166, 168 172.

¹⁸⁵ Ivan Krypyakevych, *Istorychni prokhody po L'voivi (z bahat'ma ilustratsiyamy)* [Historical Walks Through Lviv (richly illustrated)] (Lviv: Prosvita, 1932).

¹⁸⁶ Ibidem, p. 14.

¹⁸⁷ Ibidem, p. 61.

¹⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 80-81.

nationalities in preserving antiquities.¹⁸⁹ However, a year before Lviv saw the opening of the museum of Jewish religious community. Collecting of Judaica and compiling the inventory of Jewish immovable heritage actually began two decades earlier: in 1910, the collector Maksymilian Goldstein (1885-1942) called for the creation of Jewish museum and started collecting items of religious and domestic use, intending to donate them to the projected museum. The book “Culture and Art of Galician Jews,” – the same publication where Balaban complained on neglecting Jewish heritage, - was a result of Goldstein’s two decades studies of the material culture of East European Jewry. About 90 percent of the book’s content is devoted to Jewish traditional art and the way of life, which had been rapidly disappearing at the time. Although Goldstein was interested in Modern Jewish art as well, and collected contemporary drawings and engravings on Jewish topics, in his opinion, and that of like-minded assimilated Jews, ethnography had the priority.

In 1925, Jewish community of the city organized the Committee for Preservation of Jewish Artistic Heritage, with the task to restore and professional describe the monuments of Jewish art in Lviv and other cities of the region. Again, among the “monuments” considered worth preservation, early Modern synagogues and cemeteries heavily dominated.¹⁹⁰ (Today, the fruit of the Committee’s work - about 20 voluminous albums full of photos and measurements of synagogues and tombstones, are being kept in the library of Lviv museum of Ethnography.)

As for publications, the first work devoted particularly to Jewish Lviv was published as early as in 1902. The book “Alt Lemberg” by Nathan Samuely represents a Jewish

¹⁸⁹ Maksymilian Goldstein, Karol Dresdner. *Kultura i sztuka ludu zydowskiego na ziemiach polskich* [Culture and Art of Polish Jews] (Lwow, 1935).

¹⁹⁰ Halyna Hlembots’ka, “Deyatel’niost’ yevreyskikh obschestvennykh organizatsyi L’vova v oblasti siokhranenia natsyonal’no-culturnogoi naslediya” [The activity of Jewish Communal Organizations of Lviv in the Domain of the Preservation of National-Cultural Heritage] *Materialy IX mizhnarodnoji naukovoji konferentsiyi “Dolya yevreys’koyi dukhovnoyi ta material’noyi spadschyny v XX stolitti”* [Materials of the 9th International Conference “The Fate of Jewish Spiritual and Material Heritage in the 20th century”]. Kiev, 28-30 September 2001. www.judaica.kiev.ua/Conference/Conf2003/39.htm visited on June 1 2007.

perspective on the city, in contrast to the works produced by other national camps. It also contains an early record of the famous legend about the Golden Rose – the synagogue and the women. Alois Woldan, to whose essay I refer here, writes that for Samuely, the history of Jewish community of Lviv is the “one of oppression, endurance, and martyrdom.”¹⁹¹ Samuely associates historic Jewish sufferings with bloody deeds of Bohdan Khmelnyts’kyi (even though he misspells the Cossack hetman’s name), and with religious persecutions inspired by the Catholic clergy. Thus the medieval Jewish ghetto within the city walls receives most of his attention. Another site connected with the history of Jewish suffering, which Samuely depicts in his book, is the old Jewish cemetery.¹⁹² In the subsequent decades, the ghetto and the cemetery, sometimes with the addition of the old Jewish district in Krakow suburb, would constitute a classic map of Jewish sites in Lviv.

These landmarks have been thoroughly studied and further popularized by Majer Balaban, who wrote a number of works on the early Modern history of Lviv Jewry. In contrast to the “half-Asian” imagery of Karl-Emil Franzos, he portrayed the city as an “outpost of Western culture,” which acquired its significance and prosperity, not least, due to the activities of “culturally advanced” Ashkenazic Jews. In the context of Eastern-European Jewish history, according to Balaban, Lviv played a paramount role as the biggest Jewish community in Ruthenian lands, “the city and mother of Israel.”¹⁹³ (However, after the Cossack wars and the siege by Bohdan Khmelnyts’kyi, Lviv drastically lost its dominance among Jewish communities of the region.)¹⁹⁴

Himself highly assimilated to Polish culture, Balaban positively appraised Jewish Enlightenment and emancipation in Habsburg Empire. He characterized traditional Jews and

¹⁹¹ Woldan, “The Imagery of Lviv,” p. 87.

¹⁹² Ibidem, p. 87.

¹⁹³ Majer Balaban, *Zydzi lwowsce na przełomie XVI-go i XVII-go wieku* [Lviv Jews at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries] (Lwów: Nakładem funduszu konkursowego im. H. Wawelberga, 1906), pp. xv-xx.

¹⁹⁴ Ibidem, p. xxii.

Chasids - his contemporaries, and even those who lived a century before him, as “simpletons” and “boors,” and blamed them for poor command of Polish and adherence to the “ossified” Talmudic learning.¹⁹⁵ In short, he displayed no nostalgia for the past. And at the same time, medieval and early Modern Jewish history, along with the related urban heritage, for Balaban constituted an indispensable symbol of Jewish identity. The description of the Golden Rose synagogue (“the oldest one in the Ruthenian lands,” “a piece of Middle Ages”) in his brochure devoted to the history and heritage of Lviv Jewish ghetto, exemplifies this ambivalence:

All the history of the Jews in the city is concentrated in this cramped courtyard [in front of the synagogue] enclosed by the walls, as if symbolizing the narrowness of ghetto and the sultriness of Jewish life. The synagogue’s ancient walls emanate coldness, the chill of ages, the shiver of the four long centuries.¹⁹⁶

In this work, Balaban relates the legend about the sacrifice of the pious and generous woman who gave its name to the synagogue in great detail (even though he did much work on disproving the legend elsewhere.)¹⁹⁷ In the same brochure, the author tells about other synagogues and communal institutions of the ghetto, and extends the geographical span of the work to two objects located outside: the Great synagogue of the suburb – the Renaissance building which, for him, had a “medieval or even Eastern appearance”, and the ancient Jewish cemetery – the “pantheon” where, in his words, “Lviv buried[...] all the good it possessed, and in this way passed it to the posterity.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Majer Balaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Galicji I w Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej 1772-1868* [A History of the Jews in Galicia and the Republic of Krakow 1772-1868] (Lwow: Nakładem Księgarni Polskiej B. Polonieckiego, 1916), pp. 9-12.

¹⁹⁶ Majer Balaban, *Dzielnica żydowska. Jej dzieje i zabytki* [Jewish District. Its History and Heritage] (Lwow, 1909), p. 34.

¹⁹⁷ Ibidem, pp. 64-67. See also Balaban, *Żydzi Lwowscy*, where the historian gives an archival based account of the lawsuit between the Jewish community of Lviv and the order of Jesuits who claimed their right on the plot of land where the synagogue had been built. Balaban believed that this 17th century historical event laid the basis for the legend.

¹⁹⁸ Balaban, *Dzielnica*, pp. 98-99.

During and after the World War II, most of the landmarks indicating the Jewish nature of Krakow suburb were destroyed, including the cemetery, all the synagogues (with a single exception), and even whole streets, which presently can be seen only on old photos. The site of the cemetery has been built up as a market, and the site of the destroyed synagogues cannot be located without special knowledge. The area of the former medieval ghetto fared relatively better: here, the ruins of the Golden Rose, empty spaces at the site of the former Great synagogue and the Bet-Hamidrash, and a few mezuzah openings at the doors of residential houses still remind that the district once had been something else than it is nowadays.

Nearly without exception, Jewish synagogues and cemeteries of Lviv fall victims to intentional destruction. At the same time, other buildings of the city suffered very little from the war. As the result, today Lviv boasts of an almost intact urban architectural complex of 16th-19th centuries, which creates a stark contrast with the fate of the Jewish heritage. Enthusiasts of its preservation – Majer Balaban and Maksymilian Goldstein, along with 98% of the 100 000 of the city Jews perished in the Holocaust.

The World War II, which resulting in disappearance of Polish and Jewish community of the city, completed the process of national homogenization of the urban space that rival nationalisms of the first half of the 20th century tried to, but could not implement by their own means.¹⁹⁹ Yet ethnic cleansing of the city was not performed by external forces alone: anti-Jewish pogroms of July 1941, which claimed hundreds of victims, became possible due to the mass participation of local non-Jews, and the active role of radical Ukrainian nationalists.²⁰⁰ The postwar transfer of population between the USSR and Poland, as the result of which the city's Polish community ceased to exist, was preceded by a violent Ukrainian-Polish conflict.

¹⁹⁹ John Czaplicka, "Lviv, Leopoldis, Lwow, Lvov: A City in the Crosscurrents of European Culture," *Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents*, p. 13.

²⁰⁰ Aharon Weiss, "Jewish Ukrainian Relations during the Holocaust," *Ukrainian-Jewish relations in Historical perspective*, pp. 413-414.

As the result of the war, Lviv lost approximately 80% of its prewar population,²⁰¹ whereas “the heterogeneity of cultures in the region gave way to homogeneous cultural territories.”²⁰²

The migration of population from other areas in the postwar period was not limited to representatives of any particular ethnic group: in 1955, Ukrainians constituted 44,2% of the city’s population, while Russians constituted significant 35%. Due to the Soviet demographic policy, which encouraged resettlement of people, especially professionals, from the core area of the USSR, Lviv reestablished its Jewish community, although it was incomparably smaller than in the prewar one and had little continuity with it. But rapid urbanization of Lviv in 1960-ies and 1970-ies lead to the influx of population from the surrounding countryside, and since this countryside was predominantly Ukrainian, this ethnic group at last acquired undisputed primacy in the city (in 1989, in Lviv there lived 79,1% Ukrainians, 16% Russians, 1.6% Jews and 1.2% Poles.)²⁰³ Today, according to the census of 2001, main ethnic groups of Lviv are estimated as follows: Ukrainians 639.000 (88%), Russians 64.600 (8,9%), Poles 6.400 (0,9%), Jews 1,9 (0,3%).²⁰⁴ As the result of the demographic developments during the last seven decades, the formerly multicultural Lviv now can serve as a model of a nationally homogenized city.

In the cultural domain, especially after Ukrainian independence, Lviv underwent a similar process. However, demographical situation is not the only reason for the cultural homogenization. Since late 1980-ies, Lviv has been in the vanguard of Ukrainian national movement, and political declarations were often manifested through cultural activity,²⁰⁵ from the public “rebirth” of folk traditions to the recent construction of Ukrainian nationalists’

²⁰¹ Hrytsak, “Lviv,” p. 59.

²⁰² Czaplicka, “Lviv,” p. 13.

²⁰³ Hrytsak, “Lviv,” p. 59.

²⁰⁴ See <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/Lviv/> visited On June 1 2007. Real number of Jewish population might be higher: the charity organization Khesed Arye supports over 5.000 Jewish seniors in the whole region, and the majority of them, apparently, are Lviv inhabitants. Still, the total number of Jews in Lviv barely exceeds 4 or 5 thousands.

²⁰⁵ See: Padraic Kenney, “Lviv’s Central European Renaissance, 1987-1990,” *Lviv: City in the Crosscurrents*, pp. 304-306.

pantheon on the historical Lychakiv cemetery.²⁰⁶ Historical and architectural heritage could not escape the process of nationalization either. As John Czaplicka argues, “much as the question of nation and ethnicity in the city’s past was often a question of choice, the question of choice now poses itself with regard to recognizing or rejecting aspects of the city’s broad heritage.”²⁰⁷ The representation of Jewish heritage of Lviv, in the last 15 years, has been influenced by three factors: national homogenization of the city’s public memory; identity policy of the local Jewish community; and the shaping of “European” multicultural trend.

The first factor is the most powerful, but the least interesting for the detailed analysis. It is the representation of Jewish heritage as something belonging to “the Jews,” located in the past, and completely unrelated to the agendas of contemporary Lviv and its inhabitants.²⁰⁸ Evidence to this can be found in permanent exhibitions of Lviv public museums. Collections of the pre-war city Jewish museum and the collection of Goldstein had been distributed among several thematic museums, none of which has a special purpose to inform about the history and heritage of local Jews. The most complete and interesting collection” stored in Lviv Museum of the History of Religion, which proudly possesses “the most significant in Ukraine collection of the Torah of the 17th-20th c.”²⁰⁹ Only a small part of this collection, comprising over a thousand items, is exhibited in the museum section on Judaism. The purpose of the museum, created in the Soviet period, was to inform about different religions existent before the advent of scientific atheism; thus the exhibit does not go into details or provides any deep insight into the essence of Judaism. The visitor can only see cult objects which look differently from Christian ones, and learns little about their meaning and purpose.

²⁰⁶ See: <http://www.khpg.org/en/index.php?id=1161553853>, visited on June 1 2007.

²⁰⁷ Czaplicka, “Lviv,” p. 31.

²⁰⁸ On the virtual and physical erasure of Jewish heritage in Western Ukraine, and Lviv in particular, see: Omer Bartov, *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

²⁰⁹ *Lviv: Sightseeing Guide* (Lviv: Tsentr Yevropy, 1999), p. 438.

In all probability, in the eyes of a visitor these objects do not evoke any association with the rich history of the Jews in this particular city.

Still it is the largest collection of Judaica permanently exhibited in Lviv public museums. In Lviv History Museum, the only exhibit that somehow reminds of Jewish presence in the city's past is a 19th century watercolor depicting the Golden Rose synagogue. And even this watercolor is displayed in a series of other 19th century views of the city, without any historical comments. In the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts, which inherited the largest part of the pre-war collection of Judaica, only a few artifacts are exhibited.

This does not mean that the museums' workers do not realize the value of the collection;. In the Museum of Ethnography, for instance, recently there has created "Fayina Petryakova Academic Center of Judaica and Jewish Art," which, in April 2007, organized the seminar "History and Culture of Galician Jews."²¹⁰ In 2003, Lviv Art Gallery, the Museum of Ethnography, and the Museum of History of Religion co-organized the exhibition "The Jews of Eastern Galicia (From the mid-19th century to the first third of the 20th century)," and published a catalogue.²¹¹ Yet the very title of the exhibition ("Images of a Vanished World"), and the fact that the catalogue was published in English, testifies to the same trend which was already mentioned and which can be briefly termed as the ghettoization of Jewish heritage.

Significantly different strategy of the representation of Jewish past in Lviv has been performed by the local Jewish community, however small it is, and however invisible the results of its activities are outside its own network of communication. Here, Jewish history of Lviv is being put into the context of world Jewish history; moreover, some commemorative practices rejected by nationalist historical discourse and absent in the city public sphere, such

²¹⁰ http://jn.com.ua/community/lvov_2504.html, visited on June 1 2007.

²¹¹ *Images of a Vanished World: Exhibition catalogue from the collections of the Lviv Art Gallery, Lviv Museum of History, Museum of Ethnography and Crafts, Museum of Religious History, private collections* (Lviv: "Centre of Europe" Publishing House, 2003).

as the celebration of the victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War, has been cultivated.

Perestroika enabled the revival of Jewish cultural and social activities in the USSR, and Jewish community of Lviv was among the first to take new opportunities. On July 7 1988, there was founded Shalom Aleikhem Jewish Cultural Society, which was eventually able to base itself in one of the two synagogue buildings still extant in the city.²¹² Apart from putting up a memorial to the victims of the war-time Jewish ghetto (1992), the society organized a Sunday school for children (in early years of the society activity, there about 100 pupils studied there “Jewish traditions and history”),²¹³ Hebrew and Yiddish classes for adults, and a club of Jewish veterans of the Great Patriotic war (in 1990, the club comprised 520 members and had weekly meetings and lectures about the participation of Jews in World War II).²¹⁴ Since 1989, Shalom Aleikhem Society has been publishing a monthly “Shofar,” which became one of the most long-lived Jewish periodicals in the former Soviet Union. In this newspaper, among other topics, there are published materials on the history of Jews in Lviv, the history of world Jewry, and, significantly, numerous stories about Jewish soldiers who fought against the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War.

In early 1990-ies, Lviv-based scholars of Jewish origin did some steps to introduced Jewish studies in the curriculum of Lviv university; as the result, the university chair of ethnography opened a special program in Jewish studies and offered the students several selective courses on Jewish history and culture (“Biblical period in Jewish history,” “The Jews of Ukraine,” “History of Israel,” “The Holocaust and the Anti-Fascist resistance,”) with Yakov Khonigsmann and Ilya Kabanchik among the professors. In 1990, Professor Rudolf

²¹² Arkadii Parkhomovskiy, “Stanovlennia vidrodzhenoyi hromady” [“Formation of the Re-born Community”] *Halyts’ka Brama*, zhovten’-lystopad 1997, #10-11 (34-35), “Yevreyi L’vova” pp. 4-5.

²¹³ B. Rechyster, “Yevreys’ka nedil’na shkola u L’vovi” [“Jewish Sunday School in Lviv”], *Halyts’ka Brama*, p. 5.

²¹⁴ Teodor Mochuls’kyi, “Yevrei – veterany viyny u L’vovi” [“Jewish Veterans of the Great Patriotic War”] *Halyts’ka Brama*, p. 25.

Myrs'kyi and Yu. G. Shternberg founded the Regional Center for Studies of Jewish Issues, which later was reorganized as Lviv Center of Judaica and Jewish Education, and eventually was transformed into the department of Jewish history and culture at the Institute of National and Political Studies of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.²¹⁵ At different periods, the center had among its collaborators Ilya Kabanchik, who wrote a school textbook of Jewish history, and Vladimir Melamed – the author of a book about the history of Jews in Lviv. In this work, which combines features of a scholarly monograph and travel guide, Melamed provides an overview of the history of the Jews in the city, and heavily relying on Balaban, attempts at virtual reconstruction of their heritage.²¹⁶

Another culturally active Jewish organization Lviv is Khesed Arye, primal mission of which is looking after old Jewish people who live in the city and the region. Thus Khesed Arye was founded in 1993 as a charity institution, but soon assumed the role of communal cultural center. The organization publishes its own eponymous monthly, runs several communal programs, such as a club for senior people, a club for those interested in local history, literary society, a Jewish library, and a museum of Galician Jews. In the small museum (which actually occupies one room in the cultural center),²¹⁷ Lviv is represented as the center of Galician Jewry with its specific cultural tradition, the site of the Holocaust, and the scene of Jewish communal life of 19th and 20th centuries. The society publishes an eponymous monthly bulletin, which, similarly to “Shofar,” contains publications on local and world Jewish history.²¹⁸

The “multicultural” strategy is represented primarily by the activity of the publishing house “Tsentr Yeuropy” (Centre of Europe). The publishing house specialty are travel guides

²¹⁵ Рудольф Мирський “Відновлення юдаїки у Львові,” *Halyts'ka Brama*, p. 25. The publication to which I refer dates back to 1997, and I have no information about the subsequent fate of this institution.

²¹⁶ Vladimir Melamed, *Yevrei L'vova XIII – polovina XX veka: Sobytiya, obschestvo, liudi* [The Jews of Lviv: Events, Society, People] (Lvov, 1994)

²¹⁷ See: <http://www.hesed.lviv.ua/museum.html>, visited on June 1 2007.

²¹⁸ See: <http://www.hesed.lviv.ua/gazeta.html>, visited on June 1 2007.

and works on local history; it also publishes the bulletin “Halyts’ka Brama,” devoted to the history, culture, and architectural heritage of Galicia. One of the issues of the bulletin was devoted to the old and recent history of Lviv Jews (mostly history and reconstructions of local synagogues and cemeteries destroyed during the war, but also information about the activity of Jewish cultural organizations since 1988).²¹⁹ The travel guide through Lviv, published by “Tsentr Yevropy,” is characterized by the widest coverage of Jewish built heritage among other Lviv guides.²²⁰ Later, materials related to the Jews were published as a separate small sightseeing guide. Further, I will refer only to the latter publication, since its content is close to the general guide.

The brochure “Jewish Heritage of Lviv” was published in Russian and English, and is a rare source of information about Jewish history of the city available for general public. Unlike fragmented museum collections, episodic mentioning of Jewish topics in popular texts for non-Jewish audience, and publications in the local Jewish press directed to and distributed primarily among the members of Lviv Jewish community, it provides the readers with brief general overview of the history of Lviv Jews and enables them to link this history with the city’s topography and built heritage.

The introduction to the brochure reminds the reader of the most important periods of Jewish history of Lviv and connects it with the Jewish history in general. Thus, according to the text, in the “golden centuries” the “best representatives” of Lviv Jewry achieved high social and financial status; the same time was marked by the flourishing of culture and Talmudic scholarship.²²¹ The Austrian period is summed up as the struggle of the Jews for the equality of rights and against assimilation. The Haskalah, Chasidism, Zionism, and Antisemitism are mentioned in connection with the Modern age; and high development of

²¹⁹ *Halyts’ka Brama*, passim.

²²⁰ *Lviv: Sightseeing Guide*, passim.

²²¹ *Yevreyskoye nasledie L’vova. Putevoditel’*. Tekst i graficheskaya ideya: Yurii Biriuliov. [Jewish Heritage of Lviv. A Guide. Text and Graphic idea: Yurii Biriuliov] (Lvov: Izdatel’stvo “Tsentr Yevropy”, 2002), p. 1.

education, art, and journalism – with the Interwar period. The Holocaust, according to the author, severed the many-century history of Lviv Jewry; yet Jews from other regions of the USSR set out to revive the destroyed traditions. In independent Ukraine, this process became legalized and intensified, while the local Jews strive both for preserving their historical memory, and for development of their national particularity. (This last point reverberates more with the rhetoric of the “Ukraine-Jewish revisionism” than with the actual situation of contemporary Lviv Jewry; yet the wishful thinking also allows substituting problems with hopes without violating the truth).

Although the description of the city’s heritage starts with the medieval ghetto within the former city walls, and proceeds to the equally ancient Jewish district in the Krakow suburb, the bigger portion of it is devoted to the streets and buildings which emerged since middle 19th century and are connected with the developments of the community in modern age rather than with the image of “traditional” Jewry. The honorable place is devoted to the Golden Rose synagogue; yet the brochure does not stop with it, and tells other synagogues of the district, as well as other religious and secular institutions.²²² The text is accompanied by archival photos and drawings, which, again, evokes associations with the ancient and absent. In Krakow suburb, once, there were situated numerous synagogues of different branches of modern-time Judaism, including several Chasidic houses of prayer and the reformist Temple (constructed in 1843-1846 and destroyed in 1942). The travel guide, having stated that all the key structures of the district perished during the Holocaust, invites the readers to reconstruct them, even if only in imagination.²²³ Strangely, the imaginary excludes the present: mentioning the place where the Temple once had stood, the brochure forgets to inform about the modest memorial to the Holocaust victims presently situated at the same spot. (Similarly, it “forgets” about the memorial plaque on the wall near the Golden Rose ruins).

²²² Ibidem, pp. 1-3.

²²³ Ibidem, p. 4.

The rest of the historical walk is devoted to various Jewish communal institutions: the long list of schools, hospitals, theaters, shops, and living houses hints at the vibrant life of Lviv Jewry in late 19th- early 20th century. A separate chapter of the brochure describes collections of Judaica in Lviv museums. The guide attempts to reconstruct the collection of the pre-war Jewish museum at least on paper and put together the dispersed artifacts. Thus the brochure also serves as a virtual museum of religious art and traditions of the local Jewry. (Remarkably, the only museum in the city specifically devoted to culture and history of the Galician Jews – the museum at the Khesed Arye - is not even mentioned, though by the time the brochure was published it had already existed for 4 years). The penultimate section of the guide leads the reader through Jewish cemeteries of the city, only one of which still exists. The last section tells about the Holocaust and specific places associated with the destruction and memory of the Jewish community of Lviv. Thus the reader learns that already in July 1941 about 6000 Jews were murdered in two pogroms which took place in the prisons “Brygidki” and on Lontski Street. Nothing is said about the circumstances of the pogroms, not to mention the participation of local non-Jews. Only a small English-language map locates the latter prisons as the site of the so-called “Petliura days.”²²⁴ Generally, extermination of the Jewish community of Lviv is described either impersonally (the Jews “had been deported by train” to the death camp; the victims of mass shooting “had been buried in huge trenches”), or ascribed to the Nazis (“Fascists”, “occupiers”).²²⁵

The retrospective multiculturalism promoted by “Tsentr Yevropy” in this brochure and other publications might turn into an important trend in the future, since it shows an opportunity to integrate the Jewish past into the city’s history without reminding about conflicts and crimes of the past. As far, it has been unable to affect either public memory or

²²⁴ The anti-Jewish action which took place in late July 1941 is known by this name because Ukrainian nationalists and the Nazis allegedly represented is as a retribution for the death of the Ukrainian leader Symon Petliura, who was killed in 1926 by the Jewish anarchist Sholom Schwartzbard. See: Aharon Weiss, “Jewish Ukrainian Relations,” p. 413.

²²⁵ *Yevreyskoye nasledie*, p. 22-23.

the fate of Jewish built heritage in the city. In the fall 2006, when Lviv celebrated its 750-ies anniversary, the ruins of the Golden Rose were closed by a two-meter high metal fence. The motive of this step might have been to protect the ruins from vandalizing, which have taken place for a few times in the last years; but the fence made inaccessible for the visitors not only the Golden Rose remains, but also the memorial plaque to the Holocaust victims placed there. The fence remains on the site up to the present, apparently to the mutual satisfaction of the city administration and the Jewish community.²²⁶ Accidentally, it symbolizes the wall between non-Jewish and Jewish memory of the city.

Curiously, the wall has been constructed from the both sides. The already mentioned textbook by Ilya Kabanchik illustrates “the life of Jews in medieval Poland” by the virtual “excursion over Jewish Lviv.” This remarkable text mixes different periods of Jewish history, represents personages of different epochs as contemporaries, and conflates different sites: the Jewish district in the book is situated “between the castle hill and the river Poltva,” that is, in Krakow suburb, but the synagogue to which the further text refers is the Golden Rose, which stood in the ghetto within the city. The legend of the Golden Rose is related without its “romantic” details; instead of a self-sacrificial beauty, Rosa Nakhmanovich is portrayed as an active woman who succeeded in returning the synagogue to the community, and the epithet “beautiful” here refers to her cunningness and determination in the struggle against the Jesuits rather than to her physical appearance.²²⁷ The time of the imaginary walk is chosen as to emphasize the difference between the Jews and the Christians. On the Sabbath morning, the reader is prompted to imagine busy city streets filled with merchants and craftsmen. Meanwhile, the Jewish district is solemn and calm: the Jews “clad in holiday dress” are

²²⁶ A worker of Khesed Arye, with whom I talked on May 6 2007, expressed her satisfaction that, at least, the site had not being used for dumping garbage anymore.

²²⁷ *Yevrei v Ukrainie*, p. 25.

proceeding to the synagogue.²²⁸ Listening to their talks, the reader learns about the failed attempts of the Christians to convert the Jews. Jews and Gentiles are represented as antagonists, their interaction as a confrontation, and everyday life of the two communities as separate domains divided by the essential cultural and religious difference even more than by the ghetto walls.

Chapter 4. Odessa in Memory and Myth

One of major centers of „Other Ukraine” – the region where overwhelming majority of population is either Russian speaking or bilingual,²²⁹ and the support of Ukrainian nationalism is relatively low, in these aspects Odessa represents a startling contrast to Lviv. Thus it would be logical to expect the same difference between identity politics and the representation of Jewish history in both cities. Yet historical narratives created for Jewish and non-Jewish audiences testify to a similar degree of separation between Jewish and non-Jewish public memory.

In Odessa Museum of Local History,²³⁰ unlike in the Museum of History in Lviv, the Jewish present in the city's past has been mentioned both in visual exhibits and in verbal commentary. Yet the narrative logic adheres to the Soviet-nationalist patterns: the protagonist of Odessa history, according to the museum exhibition, is the Ukrainian people, struggling against the Turkish „oppressors” and colonizing the land after its „liberation” by Russian imperial army. Quite unexpectedly for a city founded after the abolition of the last remnants of Ukrainian Cossack polity, the opening part of the museum exhibition is devoted to the

²²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 24-27.

²²⁹ See <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/language/Odesa>, visited on April 15 2007. It should be noted that the census takes into account not the language spoken but a „mother tongue,” and therefore testifies more to ethnic identification than to linguistic situation. Moreover, there is no separate data on Odessa, and the data in the table represent the average of those on urban and rural parts of the region.

²³⁰ Visited on April 23 2007.

Cossacks and hetmans – a crucial element of the Ukrainian nationalist historical narrative. The portraits of hetmans, Cossack sabres and cannons, as well as Ukrainian ethnographic costume exhibited in the museum might be the legacy of Ukrainian-Soviet nationalism, but certainly reverberate within the paradigm of post-Soviet nationalizing history.

In the museum exhibition, the Jews have been mentioned twice: for the first time, in the 19th century population statistic, and for then in a separate exhibition on the Great Patriotic war. This latter part of the museum, devoted to Soviet military journalists, was created in post-Soviet time and represents an attempt to speak about the war in ideologically neutral terms. However, it remains completely Soviet in the interpretation of the war and occupation: extermination of the Jews in Odessa does not constitute a separate topic and is subsumed by a general description of the civilians' sufferings from German and Romanian occupiers.

The history of Odessa Museum of Jewish Culture and the fate of its collection symbolize the changes in Soviet policy towards the Jews – from the affirmative action to state anti-Semitism. The museum, named after Mendele Mokher-Seforim, was opened in November 1927, and according to the memoir of the Odessa-based Soviet-Jewish historian Saul Borovoy, was the last manifestation of the sympathetic attitude of Soviet authorities to Jewish culture.²³¹ Indeed, initially the museum, founded within the network of Soviet national ethnographic museums, was supported by the city administration, which sponsored expeditions into the former Pale of Settlement aimed at collecting items of Jewish traditional art and everyday life. Museum workers also lead archival and library research, and managed to bring together the most substantial collection of artifacts and historical documents about the history and culture of Russian Jews in 19th-20th centuries. According to descriptions, visual representation of Jewish life in the shtetl occupied a significant place in the museum exhibitions, but modern history of the Jews, including Odessa local history, was also present

²³¹ Vera Solodova, "Odeskii muzey yevrejskoy kultury (1927-1941)" [Odessa Museum of Jewish Culture]

(one of the projects suggested by the museum staff was collecting materials on the history of pogroms and Jewish self-defense.)²³² Yet in 1933 the museum was closed, and its collection piled in a cellar. A new attempt to open the museum took place in 1940. In a new location, 9 rooms of the museum exhibition “reflected the life of working Jewish masses in the 19th century,” as well as biographies and works of literary classics, including the same Mendele and Shalom Aleikhem. (In the interim, four workers of the museum in its first incarnation had been repressed.) In 1941, the museum ceased to exist and was not restored after the war. A part of its collection were kept in the depository of Odessa archeological museum till 1952 and finally ended up in the Museum of Historical Jewelry in Kiev, where it was “rediscovered” only in 1991.²³³ Today, silver items of religious use from the collection have been a part of the permanent exhibition of this museum; other artifacts and documents from Odessa museum of Jewish culture apparently perished.

New Jewish museum in Odessa was opened only in 1995 by a Jewish cultural society officially titled “The Communal House of Jewish Learning ‘Moriah.’” The society, active since 1993, was founded simultaneously with Odessa Public Jewish library and has been based in the same premise.²³⁴ As the library director Mrs. Maksimova proudly told, it was the only public library in Odessa belonging to a national minority. She underscored that the library, created on the basis of a district public library, was accessible to general audience in contrast to, for example, the library of Odessa Greek cultural center. From the beginning, the library has been supported by the city administration (Eduard Gurvits, the Mayor of Odessa at the time, was Jewish and proved easy to persuade in this issue). In 1990-ies, the society Moriah, , was receiving funding from the Joint Distribution Committee; due to this, for a few years it was able to run several communal projects: the educational program “The University

²³² Ibidem.

²³³ Ibidem.

²³⁴ My information about the library, “Moriah” society, and its museum of Judaica is based on the interview with the director of the library Vieta Maksimova, taken on April 23 2007. As Ms. Maksimova was proud to tell,

of Jewish Culture” with a youth section (1995-1998); the club “*Biesieda*” (in Russian, “discussion” – among others, the discussion included topics from local history); series of lectures about the history of Jews in Odessa (as Mrs. Maksimova recalled, the lectures were devoted to Zionist activists); several study groups for children; and regular excursions to the sites of Jewish history. (Presently, funding from the Joint has been cut down, and the programs do not function).

In 1995, the Jewish community of Baltimore, a twin city of Odessa, donated to the society a collection of Judaica – mostly ritual items that had no connection with Odessa but could be used to educate assimilated and secular Odessan Jews about Jewish traditions. Gradually, the museum, which occupies a separate room in the library, assembled a collection of religious literature. Even though due to private donations the museum acquired a few items connected with Jewish everyday life in Odessa, its exhibition informs mainly about Judaism and has little local specific. (However, when I visited the museum in April 2007, I saw there a small temporary exhibition of publications about the history of Odessa Jews.)

Another Jewish museum in Odessa is of a completely different nature. Museum of the History of Odessa Jews “Migdal-Shorashim” was founded in 2002 by the enthusiasts-collectors associated with the Jewish cultural society “Migdal.”²³⁵ Initially, the museum exhibition comprised several thematic sections: “The Jews in Odessa” (history of Jewish migration into the city; cultural and professional life of Odessa Jews); “Jewish Odessa” (activities of Jewish organizations; Jewish educational institutions; and Jewish press). Separate room were devoted to the history of Odessa pogroms, Jewish self-defense, and Zionist movement; Yiddish culture and education in 1920-ies; Jewish music; and the revival

²³⁵ The biggest part of the exhibits comes from the private collection of Anatolii Drozdovski, who has been assembling materials on Odessa history related to various ethnic communities, and not exclusively Jews. See: Anatoliiy Drozdovskiy Yevreyskaya tema v chastnoy kollektsii staroy Odessy” [Jewish Topics in a Private Collection of Old Odessa], Materials of the 12th International Conference “Jewish history and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe – Jewish Local History and Collecting”, <http://www.judaica.kiev.ua/Conference/conf2004/35-2004.htm>, visited on June 4 2007.

of Jewish communal life in 1990-ies – 2000-s. Only a small part of the exhibition referred to religious life of Odessa Jews – old photos of local synagogues, fragments of tombstones, and ritual items. The Holocaust and anti-Semitic campaigns of the Soviet time received even less attention, although were mentioned and illustrated by a few exhibits.²³⁶

In 2005, the museum received a grant from the London-based Rothschild Foundation, which allowed to repair the museum premise (a private flat in a 19th century building), and to renew the exhibition. As Mikhail Rashkovetskii, the museum's director, explains on the museum's web-page, the new exhibition aims at "an analytic juxtaposition of old and recent history of Odessa Jews," and therefore chronological principle (which was not strictly observed in the museum from the very start) has been abandoned. Instead, artifacts and documents (mostly the same as in the old exhibitions) of different periods have been arranged to represent the contrast between the former flourishing of Odessa Jewish community and its present condition, and to raise the question about its future. Another goal was to recreate a specific ambience of everyday life in old Odessa, where people of different ethnic and religious denominations lived side by side.²³⁷

When the patriarch of Jewish historiography Simon Dubnov called Odessa "the least historical of all cities,"²³⁸ he referred the city's relatively young age, commercial nature, and the lack of connection with the traditional Jewish world; for the historian all of these meant total insignificance of the city for the Jewish past and, consequently, for the Jewish future. Yet by the use of superlative Dubnov also unwittingly indicates Odessa's exceptional status. "The least historical" city was simultaneously the most advanced in all social processes

²³⁶ See: "Muzei istorii yevreyev Odessy" [The Museum of History of Odessa Jews] <http://www.migdal.ru/migdal.php?artid=1582>, visited on June 1 2007.

²³⁷ Mikhail Rashkovetskiy, "Tol'ko li proshloye?" [Is it only the Past?] <http://www.migdal.ru/article.php?artid=8882>, visited on June 1 2007.

²³⁸ Quoted in Steven J. Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), p. 70.

brought to the traditional Jewish world by modernization. Odessa's uniqueness has been reflected in self-consciousness of Russian Jewry since late 19-th century, and in literary works of major Russian-Jewish authors. Contemporary publications, including local Jewish periodicals, testify that the image of the Odessa as an exceptional place is well alive in popular memory.

The city of Odessa was founded in 1794, soon after the incorporation of Polish lands into Russian empire. As a free port actively engaged in international trade and a rapidly growing urban center, the city attracted large masses of Jews from their former places of residence in Volhynia, Belarus', and Lithuania. Because of the fast development of the city, which profited on the grain trade, and due to fact that influx of the Jews was not limited by restrictive regulations, Odessa soon became the largest city within the Pale of Settlement, and, according to Patricia Herlihy, once could even boast of the largest concentration of Jews in the world.²³⁹ The fast growth of Jewish population in Odessa, as well as the growth of the city itself, can be illustrated by the following statistics: in 1795, 240 of the 2349 inhabitants of Odessa were Jewish (10%); in 1815 the Jews were estimated at 4.000 of the 35.000 (11,5%); in 1861 the ratio of Jewish to the total population was 17.000 to 116.700 (14,5%); in 1880 – 55.378 to 219.300 (25,22%); in 1897 – 138.935 to 403.815 (34.41%); in 1912 – 200.000 to 620.143 (32,25%).²⁴⁰ The increase was both absolute and relative – Jewish population of Odessa grew faster than non-Jewish, and this growth was not affected significantly either by economic decline after the Crimean war and the loss of the free port status,²⁴¹ or even by the pogroms of 1881 and 1905. Apart from the inhabitants of the Pale of Settlement, Odessa became a destination for numerous Jewish immigrants from Austrian Galicia, who would

²³⁹ Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: Istoriya mista* [Odessa: History of the City] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 1999), p. 127.

²⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 242.

²⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 198.

usually come there through the border city of Brody.²⁴² Such a steady increase testifies not only to the worsening of economical conditions in the traditional places of Jewish residence, but also to the fact that, for the most part of the 19th century and even in early 20th century Odessa was a good place to live, particularly for the Jews.

In one of his works, Steven Zipperstein quotes the Yiddish saying “to live like God in Odessa,” which meant the life of opulence. Indeed, unlike the overpopulated and economically declining shtetl, with its settled social hierarchy and very narrow choice of occupations, Odessa offered unprecedented opportunities of fast enrichment and social advance. Admittedly, the restrictions imposed on the Black Sea trade after the Crimean war, the rise of other world centers of agricultural productions, and the abolition of serfdom, which resulted in the flooding of market with cheap labor force of the former peasants, was a serious blow for the city’s well-being. According to some turn-of-the-20th-century works, 1860-ies marked the end of the “golden age” of Odessa,²⁴³ this view of the city’s prosperity and decline has been repeated in writings of contemporary local historians.²⁴⁴

Yet apparently the trauma in urban memory was greater than the actual impact of these events. As Patricia Herlihy argues in her comprehensive history of Odessa, the decline of the city’s role in international trade in 1860-ies had been followed by a new rise until the end of the 19th century.²⁴⁵ According to the Zipperstein, by the 1860-ies, Jewish merchants became dominant in the major field of Odessa’s economic activity, and profited from the biggest source of its wealth at the time – grain trade; “a large number of the city’s retail shops, including luxury stores in the city center,” also belonged to Jewish owners.²⁴⁶

²⁴² Ibidem, p. 127.

²⁴³ Ibidem, p.130.

²⁴⁴ For instance, in the popular work by Oleg Gubar' *100 voprosov "za Odessu"* [One Hundred Questions about Odessa] (Odessa: Kinotsentr, 1994), pp. 8-10.

²⁴⁵ Herlihy, pp. 198-221.

²⁴⁶ Steven J. Zipperstein, “How the things were done were done in Odessa,” *Homage to Odessa*, ed. By Rachel Arbel (Bet Hatefutsoth, Tel Aviv, 2002), pp. 75-76.

At the same time, the overwhelming majority of Odessan Jews made their living by selling their labor, was it hard physical work of port loaders or no less exhausting service of salesclerks. Salesclerks - “economically marginal men and women” whose working hours were not regulated by legislation, whose income barely reached subsistence level, who had to get up earlier and go to bed later than either their masters or customers, and who were demanded to stand up even when there was no customers in the shop,²⁴⁷ exemplified the other side of the “Odessa dream.” According to the data provided by Zipperstein, mortality rate in poor Jewish families was very high, and a large number of them could not even afford burying their own dead without communal assistance.²⁴⁸ Vladimir Jabotinski, through the words of his well-to-do hero describes his impression of visiting a poor Jewish dwelling and the embarrassment he felt there:

It had a feature I hadn't encountered before: a two-storey cellar[...] One banal thought kept nagging me persistently: had a little slip of the good Lord's pen in the book of reckoning occurred when you were about to be born [...] you might have been living here today, in this dismal cellar, envying the boys upstairs, and they would be the ones 'putting on airs.'²⁴⁹

A real megalopolis of the time, Odessa also was a site of dynamic criminal activity. Contraband and prostitution, not unexpectedly, were an integral part of the port city's everyday life. Partly owing to real criminal figures who originated from Odessa and made their names familiar far outside their native city (for instance, the notorious Son'ka the Golden Hand – a woman who in early 20th century run a whole thief syndicate was active in the vast expanses from Switzerland to the Russian Far East), and even more due to popularization in the sensational press and literature, Odessa became known as a city of

²⁴⁷ Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry*, p. 66.

²⁴⁸ Zipperstein, “How the things were done,” p. 76.

²⁴⁹ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Five. A Novel of Jewish Life in Turn-of-the-Century Odessa*. Translated from Russian by Michael R. Katz (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 50.

thieves.²⁵⁰ Today some local historians feel not entirely at ease with this aspect of the city's fame. Thus in a contemporary Odessa Jewish newspaper "Shomrey Shabos," its regular corresponded and the author of numerous publications on the city history Anna Misiuk draws turn-of-the-20th-century police statistic to dispel the myth of Odessa as a criminal capital of Russian empire.²⁵¹ On the other hand, the preceding issue of the same newspaper contains a memoir about Odessa thieves, which indicates the editors' belief in the relevance of the topic for the representation of Jewish Odessa.²⁵² The myth of criminal Odessa, it seems, still bears some of its romantic connotations; yet it is hard to assume that everyday direct or indirect encounter with crime, even if only on newspaper pages, could have contributed to the sense of safety among Odessa dwellers.

However, Odessa was not exceptional among the cities of Russian empire for its bad working and living standards. What made it different was that many newcomers still managed to succeed there. Significant is that even after the abolition of serfdom and subsequent devaluation of labor, earnings of hired workers in Odessa were higher than in any other city of the empire, and the variety of possible occupations much wider than elsewhere.²⁵³ If we are to believe a fictional account of Mendeleyev, even Jewish beggars in Odessa looked down on their colleagues from the shtetl.²⁵⁴ Interestingly, the image of Odessa as Eldorado, the city of wealth, freedom, and all possible sensual pleasures, finds its parallel in Ukrainian folk songs of the period: for the impoverished peasants who flooded Odessa after

²⁵⁰ Roshanna P. Sylvester. *The Tales of Old Odessa: Crime and Civility in a City of Thieves* (Chicago: Illinois University press, 2005), p. 48.

²⁵¹ Anna Misiuk, "S grantom po Odessie," [With a Grant through Odessa] *Shomrey Shabos*, 15 July 2005, p. 11.

²⁵² Ilya Shykhtman, "Tramvay v dietstvo," [The Tram into Childhood] *Shomrey Shabos*, 8 July 2005, p. 11.

²⁵³ Dorotea Atlas, *Staraya Odesa: yeye druz'ya i nedrugi* [Old Odessa, its Friends and Enemies] (Odessa, Tipografiya "Tekhnika", 1911; reprint Odessa: Lasmi, 1992), pp. 174-176.

²⁵⁴ Mendeleyev Mocher-Seforim, *Malienkii chelovechek, Putieshestvie Veniamina Tretiego, Fishka Khromoy* (Moskva, 1961), p. 488.

the abolition of serfdom, the city provided plenty of opportunities both to earn and to spent the money they had never seen in their native villages.²⁵⁵

To many newcomers, Odessa becomes the place of their first encounter with modernity. In the novel “Fishke the Lame” Mendele Mocher-Seforim ironically describes the disorientation of a such newcomer, who feels lost on the wide streets among unusually high houses. To the utmost distress of Fishke, and in contrast to his native shtetl Glupsk, Odessan houses look inaccessible, and, on the top of all, it is impossible to distinguish between Jewish and non-Jewish dwellings.²⁵⁶ Yet Odessan people annoy the hero even more than buildings:

It is true that Odessa is a beautiful city... But, unfortunately, there are no people here! Tell me, can the locals be called people at all? Do people dress the way they do, do people live this way? Look, on the boulevard of yours, there are men walking with women on their arm! What a shame! Jews shave their beards, women do not wear wigs[...] Disgusting sight! But had our Jews, the Jews from Glupsk lived here, - then this would have been a real city, and it would have looked decently.²⁵⁷

In the city, even the most important markers of Jewish presence look unrecognizable and bizarre: the service in a reformist synagogue is characterized by a total lack of decency (the cantor keeps silence most of the time; instead, a choir sings; and both the cantor and the rabbi wear not a usual dress but “a kind of mantle”); in Odessa ritual baths (mikva), there is just a “translucent clear water, just simple water, like any other water, the water you can drink.”²⁵⁸

Odessa is not only impious, it is barely Jewish at all. If synagogue looks like a church, and a mikva like an ordinary basin, sacral objects are reduced to the profane, and the symbolical topography of the shtetl is destroyed, causing confusion and alienation. The unholy city, concludes Fishke, well deserves the proverbial fires of hell burning forty miles around it.

²⁵⁵ See the essay by Dorotea Atlas, “Staraya Odessa I russkoye obshchestvo” [Old Odessa and Russian society], in her book *Staraya Odesa: yeye druž'ya i niedrugi*, pp. 164-177.

²⁵⁶ Mendele Mocher-Seforim, *Malen'kii chelovechek*. Pp. 483-484.

²⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 491.

²⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 498.

Among all Russian cities, Odessa was in the vanguard of Jewish modernization, acculturation, and assimilation. Connected with this is not only the spread of reformed Judaism (the first reformist synagogue in the country, the famous Brody synagogue, was actually founded in Odessa in 1841), but also another aspect of the myth of Odessa. As a cosmopolitan city, Odessa has been juxtaposed to the provincial regions of Russian empire for being more cultured, more European, and more advanced on the way of innovations. Indeed, as a port city with active international trade and a large percentage of international subjects, Odessa became the gates for incoming cultural trends, patterns, and fashion. One of such trends, already mentioned, was Jewish acculturation, which manifested itself in the adoption of visible signs of European culture, such as language and dress (those of higher social strata, and adopted, first of all, by higher social strata).

In the 19th century, Odessa became a site of vibrant modern Jewish cultural life: “Teachers, public figures and writers who had absorbed the spirit of the Haskalah and later on that of modern Jewish nationalism flocked to Odessa in the second part of the 19th century and soon constituted a critical mass.” Indeed, most influent figures of Russian Jewry political thought (such as Leon Pinsker, or Vladimir Jabotinsky), literature (Hayim Nachman Bialik, Shalom Abramovich (Mendele Mokher Seforim), Shalom Aleikhem), and scholarship (Shimon Dubnov, Ahad Ha-Am) lived in Odessa, even if finally they had to leave it for bigger centers of Russian empire, or emigrated.²⁵⁹

Another manifestation of this process was less illustrious, but its impact went far beyond Jewish bourgeoisie: this was active consumption of European mass culture, and later also production of one’s own popular cultural forms along European patterns.²⁶⁰ Theater, opera and the press were much more popular among Jewish masses than works produced by

²⁵⁹ On Jewish intellectual life of Odessa, see: Dan Miron, “The Odessa Sages,” *Homage to Odessa*, pp. 58-62.

²⁶⁰ See: Steven Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 71-72.

high-brow writers and scholars. Zipperstein points out that due to the notorious Odessan materialism, thirst for entertainment, sensationalism, and avoidance of serious topics, Jewish intellectuals in the city, in fact, felt isolated; their fame might be great, and the audience wide, but elsewhere, and never in Odessa itself. The scholars quotes a contemporary author, who claimed that the renown Jewish writer of the time, Mendele Mocher-Seforim could walk in the city streets without being recognized.²⁶¹ Mendele himself ironically describes a penniless Odessan Jewish writer or poet, whose fate was even less admirable than that of a beggar.²⁶² Instead, in the novel “The Five” by Vladimir Jabotinsky, we encounter a truly successful and popular author – a columnist of the police chronicle in a local newspaper, whose sensational articles were read as novels.²⁶³

The assimilated Jewish family of Milgrom, whose fate is depicted in the novel by Jabotinsky, epitomizes the phenomenon of Jewish acculturation in Odessa. The family is wealthy and cultured; even the father, who did not have a good opportunity for education in his youth, loves reading and often quotes German Romantic poets.²⁶⁴ Yet, with the only exception, there is not a single book with Jewish content in the whole house.²⁶⁵ The Milgroms seem never to attend a synagogue. Certainly, they do not observe the Sabbath, and do not keep at home the dishes required by dietary laws.²⁶⁶ Still, religion, however irrelevant in the family life, remains an invisible wall that the Jews from their Christian fellow citizens: the older daughter of the Milgroms refuses to baptize even in order to be able to marry the Russian officer she loves; and yet she explains her position not by attachment to the religion of her ancestors, not even by a sense of decency, but by mere unwillingness to break settled

²⁶¹ Zipperstein, *Imagining Russian Jewry*, p. 73.

²⁶² Mendel Mocher-Seforim, *Malen'kii chelovechek*, pp. 484-487.

²⁶³ Jabotinsky, *The Five*, pp. 65-67.

²⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 18.

²⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 30.

²⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 75.

social boundaries.²⁶⁷ For other Jewish heroes of the novel religion is no more than a sign of their Jewishness. Yet paradoxically, due to this, the desacralized religion acquires importance in a new role. It is no more than a symbol of belonging to Jewry – and no less: raised to the status of *the* symbol of Jewishness, the denominational attribution can be got rid of, with Jewishness together: the novel ends by “rational” conversion of the youngest and the only surviving child of the family.²⁶⁸ Yet this symbolical role of Judaism lasted not for long, and died together with the assimilationist project. As a consequence of nationality being associated not with religion but with origin, sacral objects lost their little significance in Odessa’s symbolic geography. In contemporary texts, the city’s synagogues do not mean much even in the imaginary landscape of *Jewish* Odessa, and receive little more attention than other old buildings²⁶⁹ (and sometimes even less than such tourist landmarks as the opera or Primorskii Boulevard.)

Even though Jabotinsky’s novel was written decades after he left Russia, the language he chose to describe “Jewish life in turn of-the-century Odessa” was Russian. Himself greatly assimilated to Russian society and high culture, he still depicts the conversion of a young hero as a betrayal, the last act of a Greek tragedy. Thus from a perspective of time and Zionist cause, Jabotinsky seals the verdict on Jewish Russian assimilation. Yet tragic plot aside, the novel is full of nostalgia for the old Odessa of which “no trace” has been left: Odessa where different ethnic communities peacefully interacted, to the cultural enrichment of each other. For the nationalist Jabotinsky, cosmopolitanism was synonymous to decline, yet he admits that the “decline” of Odessa was “most fascinating”, and even “sublime.”²⁷⁰ In Odessa,

ten tribes converged, each and every one so fascinating, one more interesting than the next[...]

Gradually their customs rubbed up against each other and they ceased regarding their own sacred altars

²⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 53.

²⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 193.

²⁶⁹ The Internet project of the Odessan Jewish cultural society “Moria” seems to be an exception. See: <http://www.moria.farlep.net/vjodessa/ru/index.html>, visited on 15 April 2007.

²⁷⁰ Jabotinsky, p. 199.

in such a serious manner; they gradually discovered a very important secret in the world: that what you hold sacred, you neighbor thinks is rubbish, and that you neighbor isn't a thief or a vagrant.²⁷¹

Interestingly, Jabotinsky describes this state of affair as “disintegration.” For the writer and politician who, according to his own words, wanted “all people living on their own islands”, disintegration of national life was an obviously undesirable condition; yet from the vantage point of nationalist teleology, it was important as unavoidable and objectively necessary step before national regeneration.²⁷²

Yet widespread is another perspective, according to which it was exactly the rising of nationalism that brought an end to peaceful coexistence in all multiethnic societies of Europe of the time, and in Odessa in particular. Nothing unexpected is in the fact that conscious and unconscious adherents of this view tend to idealize “old Odessa” as a normal society innocent of the nationalist sin. And for them, “disintegration” would mean exactly the opposite to Jabotinsky’s. Both perspectives share the idea of irretrievable loss connected with the transformation of cosmopolitan multiethnic Odessa into national space, and the difference between them can be best illustrated by the metaphor of Babylonian confusion of languages.

Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern points out that in the Midrash there are two interpretations of the biblical story. According to the first, there existed a single primeval language, which was then replaced by the multitude. Second interpretation holds that different languages had existed even before the tower of Babylon was destroyed, but, apart from those, there had been also a common language, “comprehensible and accessible to everyone”; and it was this language that disappeared as a result of the divine wrath.²⁷³ Jabotinsky seems to be closer to the latter view: disappearance of the common language was a loss, but also a return to the normal condition. For cosmopolitan-minded audience, it was the end of a Golden Age.

²⁷¹ Ibidem, p 198.

²⁷² Ibidem, p. 199.

²⁷³ Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern, “Isaak Vavilonskii: Yazyk I mif ‘Odesskikh rasskazov’ ” [Isaak of Babylon: the Language and Myth of the ‘Odessan Tales’] *Yehupets*, Issue 13, Kiev, 2003, pp. 88-89.

According to the sophisticated interpretation of Petrovsky-Stern, there was at least one attempt to reconstruct “pre-Babylonian” language of Odessa, represented by Isaak Babel’s “Odessa Tales.” Odessan language, immortalized by Babel, is “always a mixture of languages. Here we can hear Yiddish, Hebrew, Ukrainian, urban Russian and rural Russian, again Ukrainian...”²⁷⁴ “It is as if Babel’s heroes and narrators had no idea about boundaries between languages, and about strict rules within languages[...] By intermingling Ukrainian, Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian dialect forms, Babel creates a unique language – a port lingua franca[...], a risible analog of Babylon language.”²⁷⁵ And the very name the writer chose for himself means nothing else but “Babylon.”²⁷⁶ (Curiously, in this characterization of Babel’s language by Petrovsky-Stern there is much in common with the nostalgic image of Odessa by Jabotinsky: creative interaction of many cultures, liberation from restrictive rules, fascination with joviality and, most of all, uniqueness of Odessa.)

Indeed, Odessa language has become a vital element of the Odessan myth up to the present: “what seemed to set it apart, clearly and emphatically from other places in Russia in imperial and Soviet times, was, as even its critics agreed, the distinctive, colorful way in which so many of its inhabitants spoke.”²⁷⁷ This colorful speech, however, was not always praised even by those responsible for creating Odessa myth. Jabotinsky, in his novel, refers to it only indirectly, by pointing out at the correct Russian language of some of his cultured Jewish heroes, and at the “accent” of others.²⁷⁸ At the same time, he pokes fun at a certain “well brought up” offspring of a wealthy Jewish family, who “tried to speak Russian as a Muscovite – but [...] couldn’t pronounce the letter *r*,” and blamed for it his French governess.²⁷⁹ Even Babel was ambivalent about Odessan vernacular: “Odessa is a horrible

²⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 93.

²⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 95.

²⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 88.

²⁷⁷ Steven Zipperstein, “How the Things Were Done in Odessa,” p. 81.

²⁷⁸ Jabotinsky, p. 18.

²⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 21.

town. It's a common knowledge. Instead of saying 'a great difference,' people say 'two great differences,' and '*tuda i siuda*' they pronounce '*tudoyu i siudoyu*.'"²⁸⁰

Yet other authors, who associated this linguistic mixture defying rules of any literary language not only with Odessa in general, but with Odessa Jewry in particular, remember its with nostalgia and deplore its loss. David Shekhter, a cultured activist in the 1980-ies, and an immigrant since 1987, claims that the language of Odessa Jews, who, according to him *thought* in Yiddish but *had to* speak Russian, was so important for the air of freedom, humor, and love of life associated with the city (in his view, all this was completely alien to Ukrainian province), that, having lost this language together with the Jews, Odessa turned into an ordinary provincial town. Explaining his unwillingness to visit his native city after the decades of emigration, Shekhter asks rhetorically: "What will I see there if fate ever brings me to the city? Deribasovskaya [street] speaking Ukrainian?"²⁸¹

Presently, there seem to be no danger of a radical Ukrainization of Odessa. Yet, even though mythical Odessa language has long become history (or history of literature), the myth of cosmopolitan Odessa has been still used as a symbolic resource for resistance against state-led identity politics. The anthropologist Tanya Richardson, who in 2002 and 2003 conducted a field research in Odessa, walking through the city streets with members of the historical club "My Odessa," argues that the club members generate a sense of the city "as distinct from national space." In contrast with Ukrainian nationalist discourse, which dominates on the national level, Odessa is conceived by the locals as "Russian, cosmopolitan, cultured, distinct from Ukraine." Richardson claims that, to reassert local identity in opposition to the

²⁸⁰ Quoted in: *Homage to Odessa*, p. 85. My own very modest linguistic knowledge does not allow me recognize the origin of the first phrase; yet the second – "*tudoyu i siudoyu*" – is a Ukrainianism, still widespread in Southern Ukraine. Curiously, Ukrainian accent and incorrect linguistic forms brought into Russian by former Ukrainian speakers (or simply Russian speakers from Ukraine), in contemporary Russian mass culture have become a humorous language which occupies the traditional place of a 'Jewish' speech: in the highly successful Russian remake of the American sitcom "Nanny," originally Jewish heroin became a native of Southern Ukraine.

²⁸¹ David Shekhter, "Yest' gorod kotoryi nie vizhu vo snie," [There is a City which I don't Dream about] http://club.sunround.com/22/22dshechter_estgorod.htm, visited on April 15 2007.

nationalizing pressure from above, Odessa amateurs of local history revive previously hidden past of certain ethnic groups, such as Jews and Greeks, reconnect it to the city.²⁸²

Many features deemed characteristic for Odessa a century ago still contribute to the city's unique image – cosmopolitan Odessa, Zionist Odessa, cultured Odessa, even criminal Odessa still find receptive audience. However, an essential feature of Jewish life in Odessa has become subject to oblivion. In fact, this very feature was the root of all the others; yet in popular memory of contemporary Odessa Jews this feature – a very high degree of Jewish assimilation – certainly does not belong to the topics of priority since the assimilationist paradigm disappeared in Russian and Ukrainian-Jewish writings.

Yelena Karakina, in the preface to the conference volume “Odessa and Jewish civilization” addresses two principal questions: “What does Odessa mean for the Jews? What do the Jews mean for Odessa?” Her answer represents an antithesis to Dubnov's idea of the city's ahistoricity. She concedes that Odessa cannot measure up to any renown center of Jewish culture and learning, such as mediaeval Cordoba caliphate; neither did the city produce Jewish autonomous political bodies, so highly praised by Dubnov. Yet, Karakina asks, what happened to all those famous centers? Weren't they just short a intermission in the long and tragic history of stateless existence? Was there a single exception when a period of flourishing did not end with persecution and destruction? What would have happened to the Jewish people, if not for the Palestinian movement founded in Odessa? The history of Odessa, she follows, has been short; but it has been so intense that for two hundred years Odessan Jews have passed the whole course of the “Short History of Jewish People,” and managed to

²⁸² Tanya Richardson, “Walking Streets, Talking History: The Making of Odessa.” *Ethnology* 44(1) 2005, pp. 13-33.

learn the most important lesson from this history – the aliah is a duty of every historically conscious Jew.²⁸³

Today, in Odessa there are 13 Jewish organizations, three religious communities (Orthodox, Progressive, and Chasidic “Khabad Liubavich” – the three persuasions of Judaism presently active in Ukraine), two Jewish schools and a Jewish kindergarten (each belonging to a separate religious community), and a state secondary school with teaching of Hebrew.²⁸⁴ Yet the director of the Museum of History of Odessa Jews Mr. Rashkovetskii bitterly admits that the Jewish population of Odessa has never been so small, except for the period of 1942-1944 when Odessa was declared Judenfrei.²⁸⁵ According to the last census, in the whole Odessa region there live 15.000 Jews. Even if this number is smaller than the actual number of Jews in the city (in a private talk, the director of the Jewish library estimated it at about 30.000),²⁸⁶ in a 1 million megalopolis they constitute a tiny minority.²⁸⁷

In response to the official nationalizing narrative, local Jewish population developed two competitive narratives about Odessa. According to the first, Odessa always was a cosmopolitan city, where ethnic origin and religious belonging played little role. The second, promoted by the locals who emphasize their Jewish identity over all others, makes sense of Odessa in relation to the world history of Jewish people, and represents the city as a birthplace of Zionism. Both the modes dwell not on medieval history and the imagery of traditional Jewry, as in the case of Lviv, but mainly on the rich tradition of Russian and Russian-Jewish literature, which created specific components of Odessa myth. In the local Jewish identity

²⁸³ Yelena Karakina, “Spasatel’naya lodka,” [The Saving Boat] *I-ya Mezhdunarodnaya nauchnaya konferentsiya “Odessa I Yevreyskaya tsyvilizatsiya”* (Odessa, 2004), <http://www.migdal.ru/book-chapter.php?chapid=4828>, visited on April 15 2007.

²⁸⁴ This data based on the referred interview with Mrs. Maksimova.

²⁸⁵ Rashkovietskii, “Tol’ko li Proshloye?”

²⁸⁶ Mrs. Maksimova told that at the local charity organization “Khesed” there are registered 9.000 old Jewish people in Odessa alone, and assumed that at least a part of these old people might have younger relatives.

²⁸⁷ According to the census of 2001, the population of Odessa was estimated at 1.029.000, see: <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/urban-rural/Odesa>, visited on June 4 2007.

narratives, these components dominate over purely historical symbols or ethnographical symbols.

Conclusion

The thesis covers representation of the past of Ukrainian Jews in historical narratives addressed to the popular audience, i.e. textbooks, travel guides, general historical surveys, and museum exhibitions produced since Ukrainian independence in 1991. Main issue addressed is the use of history in identity building of two ethnic communities which share complicated and contentious past. Tracing specific features of Jewish history in local, regional and national narratives provides an opportunity for establishing the hierarchy of narratives, and for explication of the negotiation of minority and majority identities at a range of levels; therefore, the analysis of national historical narratives has been supplemented by the study of local historical representations - the cases of Jewish history of Odessa and Lviv.

The first chapter examines main theoretical approaches to the relationship between collective identities and historical narratives, which can be found in scholarly literature on nationalism, historical writing, and social anthropology. One of the intermediary concept used to explain the relationship in question is myth, particularly, myth of the group origin, which serves to the group cohesion and political legitimization of the group's elite, and sometimes of the group's dominance within wider collectivities. Despite the fact that the notion of myth has been applied to the study of identity politics in post-Soviet Ukraine, its heuristic value is

limited, since it does not explain the mechanism of interaction between historical texts and social collectives. The concept of collective memory became even popular in historical/anthropological writings of the last three decades, yet its ambivalence and the unclear status in relations to essentialist and constructionist approaches to groupness makes it optional in the context of the thesis. Instead, the concept of narrative is chosen for methodological purposes, since it allows avoiding essentialist traps and provides the tool for establishing actual and projected social relations through formal analysis of historical texts. In particular, the concept of master-narrative enables establishing relations between the projects of national identity and national histories, and between general texts on the history of the nation and histories of a smaller scale.

In the chapter „Master-Narratives of Ukrainian-Jewish History,” First subchapter is devoted to the analysis of the representation of Jewish topics in the narratives of Ukrainian national history. Among the sources are contemporary surveys of Ukrainian history, including English-language volumes of Ukrainian-Canadian authors Orest Subtelny and Paul-Robert Magocsi, which served as the channel of re-import of the nationalist master narrative paradigm of Ukrainian history in the post-Soviet period; and histories written by Yaroslav Hrytsak and Natalia Yakovenko as an attempt to revise the nationalist paradigm, but still adhering to its narrative logic.

Second subchapter deals with general accounts of the history of the Jews in Ukraine, which have been published since independence, and which by their genre belong to textbooks and popular historical writings. Excepting anti-Semitic publications, there are three such general histories of Ukrainian Jewry. The two-volume textbook “The Jews of Ukraine: Brief Historical outline” written by Ukrainian-Jewish historians Yakov Khonigsmann and Aleksandr Nayman in early 1990-ies as a textbook for university students. This book was the first comprehensive publication on Ukrainian-Jewish history and an attempt to write a historically-

based project of Ukrainian-Jewish identity as one of national minorities in the multi-ethnic Ukrainian society. Another publication, *The Jews in Ukraine: A textbook*, by Ilya Kabanchik, designed as a supplement to the secondary school courses “History of Ukraine” and “World History,” represents the most consistent text written from anti-Assimilationist and Zionist perspective. The last book, *A Survey of History and Culture of the Jews in Ukraine*, is as a collective monograph; accordingly, its authors have different ethnic origin and represent diverse profession background. Still the book as whole complies with the trend termed as Ukrainian-Jewish revisionism: elimination of contented issues from historical accounts for the sake of “mutual understanding” and “rapprochement” of the two ethnic groups.

Western Ukrainian city of Lviv, the case of which is analyzed in Chapter 3 provides a graphic example of appropriating multiethnic and multicultural history by the politically and demographically dominant Ukrainian community. In Lviv, travel literature and museum exhibition addressed to non-Jewish audience cover mostly artifacts connected with religious life and traditional culture of the Jews, while references to historical changes affecting the local Jewish community, especially at the Modern age, are usually omitted. As the result, historical and cultural distance between the audience and the Jews has been emphasized, and the “ossified” image of Jewry perpetuated. Representation of the Jews as “ancient” and “alien” also helps to avoid painful issues of complicity of some Ukrainians in anti-Jewish violence and extermination of the Jews during the Holocaust.

Meanwhile, the Jewish community of Lviv, comprising some 6000 people among the 800 000 city’s population, conducts its own politics of memory, which, in various aspects, resists to and complies with the nationalizing pressure of the dominant group. On the one hand, the above mentioned tabooed topics are well present in the local Jewish press and publications. On the other hand, texts on Jewish history and heritage of the city produced by and circulating among Lviv Jews, as well as the museum of Galician Jews created by and for

the local Jewish community, reproduce traditionally oriented imagery of the Jews, connecting “the Jewish” with the same chronological-spatial orienteer as it has been done in non-Jewish discourse on Lviv – medieval ghetto. The third trend that shapes the representation of Jewish past in the city – multiculturalism – seems to have been rather insignificant up to the present, but might develop into an important of public memory in the future.

Due to its particular situation on the ethno-political map of Ukraine, particularly, to the Russian-speaking population being in overwhelming majority, and to the relatively low support of Ukrainian nationalism Odessa could have been a startling contrast to Lviv as regards identity politics and the representation of Jewish history. Yet, as it has been demonstrated in Chapter 4, historical narratives created for general public, in particular, travel literature and the exhibition of the museum of local history, testifies to the same degree of exclusion of Jewish topics from the public space. In the museum, unlike in Lviv, the Jewish present in the city’s past has been mentioned yet the narrative logic adheres to the Soviet-nationalist patterns, which willingly or unwillingly comply with the post-Soviet nationalizing history.

In response to the official line, local population, among which there is a small percentage of Jewish people and a much bigger part of people of mixed origin, developed two narratives about Odessa. According to the first, Odessa has been a cosmopolitan city, where ethnic origin and religious belonging are insignificant. The second narrative, promoted by some local Jewish activists, makes sense of Odessa in relation to the world history of Jews, and represents the city as a birthplace of Zionism. Both the narratives rely not on medieval history and the imagery of traditional Jewry, as in Lviv, but primarily on the rich tradition of Russian and Russian-Jewish literature, which created specific components of Odessa myth. These components and are analyzed in the chapter in detail, since in the local Jewish identity narratives they dominate over purely historical symbols. This rich symbolic tradition

produced somewhat unexpected results: since Jewish Odessa has no particular spatial or chronological location, it is both everywhere and nowhere. Yet in the context of the thesis it only testifies to the alienation of the Jewish minority in non-Jewish public space.

State-promoted Ukrainization of history has been exerting twofold influence on representation of the past of ethnic minorities, including the Jews. Whereas at the national level, this past has been effectively left out as incompatible with the master-narrative of Ukrainians' striving for statehood, at the level of local histories, some elements of other-ethnic heritage has been included at the cost of losing their subversive potential. The comparison of the representation of Jewish topics on national and local level has been useful exactly because it allowed defining two trend, which are still absent in national histories, but already influence local historical narratives and might play a bigger role in the future – cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism. Whereas cosmopolitanism downplays ethnic and religious differences as socially insignificant, multiculturalism values diversity over uniformity. In Ukraine, the latter trend, as far, has been represented by few texts, and looks as an imported product. Yet its presence testify to the dissatisfaction by the paradigm of nationalizing history among at least a part of Ukrainian population.

On the Jewish side, two divergent trends can be distinguished, represented, on one hand, by the Jewish intelligentsia assimilated into Ukrainian culture, and, on the other hand, by the communal activists who argue for preservation and reconstruction of a distinctive Jewish identity. The former trend finds its expression in understating contentious issues of Ukrainian-Jewish history, and is supported by a number of leading Ukrainian intellectuals. The latter dominates in communal education and commemorative projects. Since this trend does not comply with the dominant discourse, it is arguably more efficient in identity-mobilization among the local Jews, but pays the price of being absent from the non-Jewish public space. Yet the Jewish “separatist” historical narrative shares important aspect with the

Ukrainian nationalist one: ethnic and national identities are represented as direct consequence of genetic belonging to a group, and not as a result of social and historic processes.

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