Volume 1

The Road from Letichev

The History and Culture of a Forgotten Jewish Community in Eastern Europe

David A. Chapin Ben Weinstock

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The history and culture of a forgotten Jewish community in Eastern Europe.

by

David A. Chapin
and
Ben Weinstock

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The Road from Letichev: Volume 1
The History and Culture of a Forgotten Jewish Community in Eastern Europe

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We dedicate this book to the memory of the tens of thousands of Jews who lived along The Road from Letichev, and to the rich culture they passed on to their descendents.

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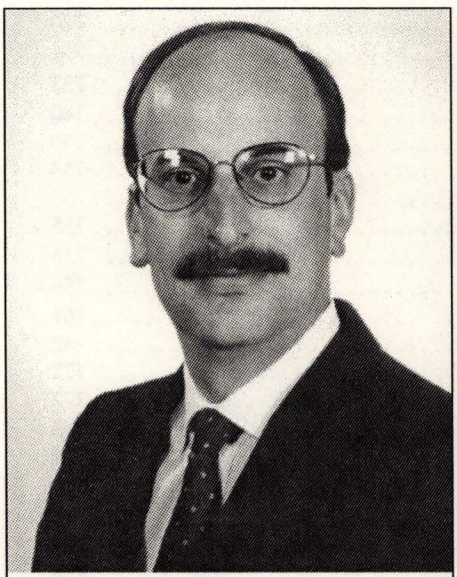

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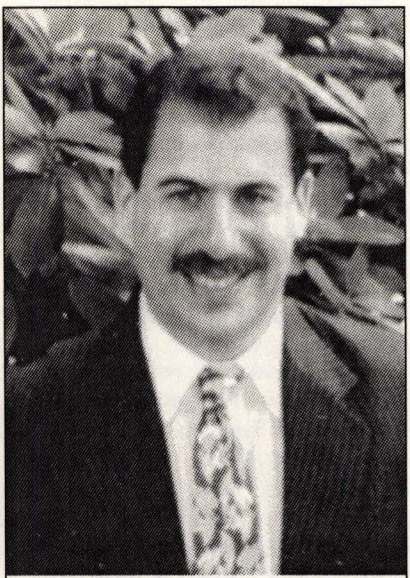


Ben Weinstock.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

How we came to write this book is, itself, a fascinating story. In 1991, we encountered each other through our interest in genealogy. We were introduced by Sonya Breidbart, a mutual cousin who was born in Letichev. Chapin is related through Sonya's father, Weinstock through her mother. Neither of us were professional historians, we each had full time careers in totally different fields: Chapin was a geophysicist who worked for an oil company in Dallas, Texas and Weinstock was a physical therapist who worked in Brooklyn, New York. We did this project on our own time, with our own meager funds and without any financial grants or support. That is one of the reasons it took so long.

Sonya Trachtenberg Breidbart.
Born in Letichev in 1921, she was the link which led to Chapin and Weinstock meeting that ultimately led to the writing this book

Our mutual interests in our roots kept us driven to dig deeper and deeper. It was an exciting time. Jewish genealogical methodology was maturing, the Internet was exploding, and the fall of the Soviet Union occured, all contributing to opening incredible resources for us.

In 1993, we encountered Vladimir Goykher, a recent Russian immigrant and survivor of the Letichev ghetto. We discovered him through resources available in the newly opened U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Vladimir opened our eyes to the cruelty of the Nazis in Letichev District. He also opened the doors to the Russian immigrant community. We melted in the best we could and they welcomed us with open arms as if we were family. Both of us learned Russian in the process of doing this book. We also discovered that the new immigrants had much to teach us about our roots. And we soon recognized that we had a responsibility to them to make sure their stories were heard.

What started as a project to accumulate our genealogies turned into a much bigger project. We realized early on that collecting names in a family tree was only a minor part of the story. We wanted to put flesh and blood back onto their bones. Once we heard the Holocaust stories, we knew that to do these stories proper justice, we needed to put the stories into the proper context. The only way to do this was to document the cultural heritage that was lost. Only then can the devastation of the Holocaust be truly understood.

This led us on a path of leaving no stone unturned. We soon discovered that there was a wealth of material available in obscure places. This led us to obtaining documentation from places such as the U.S. Library of Congress

(Washington), Yad Vashem (Jerusalem), Russian State Historical Archives (St. Petersburg), St. Petersburg Jewish University, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg, Jewish Preservation Committee of Ukraine, archives in Khmelnitsky, Vinnitsa, and Kamenets-Podolsky, Archives of the Jewish People (Jerusalem), YIVO (New York), the New York Public Library and many other resources including some in Finland, Poland, Germany and France.

In the process, we have become photographers, cemetery specialists, map makers, computer wizards, graphic artists, military specialists, archivists, interlibrary loaners, intrepid explorers, good listeners, klezmer officianados and connoisseurs of Russian-Jewish food.

We both have had many interesting experiences related to this book. For example, Chapin received the complete microfilm of a key list from the Russian State Historical Archive without paying a cent, by simply trading them for some recent Stephen King bestsellers. Chapin also had the unique opportunity to go to Letichev District and perform research in person.

Weinstock initially focused on researching the history of the agricultural colony settled by his ancestors. He was told by a famous Jewish researcher (who shall remain nameless) that he was wasting his time and would not find any information of value about the colony, Not taking *no* for an answer, Weinstock made up his mind to continue digging. After years of persistence and uncovering one scrap of information after another, Weinstock was able to piece together a detailed history of the colony. He succeeded beyond all expectations in producing a unique history of a forgotten episode in the Jewish fabric.

This book has truly changed our lives. We now can claim to have discovered our place in history. History is made up of many individuals living their lives. We have learned about some of the individuals of Letichev District, and made their histories part of our own lives.

And our lives have changed while writing this book. Between the two of us, we have been through three operations, had two bar/bat mitzvahs (Chapin), changed jobs several times, moved to another city (Chapin), became an uncle (Weinstock), and lost our hair (Chapin and Weinstock).

We would like to thank the following people, without whose help, this book would not be possible: Vadim Altskan, a native of Podolia, found us unique documents in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Leonid Rapoport, provided his stories and translations. Evgenia Tretyak, who lives in Letichev, was helpful in providing information and logistical support. Rabbi Moshe and Beatrice Furst, provided information about Medzhibozh and the Bick rabbinic family, as well as occasional translation help. Lou Goldman found all kinds of unique resources and helped considerably in researching and writing the Jewish Farmers chapter. Michael Gerver (and his friends and family including Kenneth, Robert, and Eli Gerver) was very helpful in many different ways. He helped with the cemetery research, translations, and the Music chapter. Particularly helpful in this group were Asher Fischman and Sara Tarsish for the Dora Zichroni interviews and

information about K'far Vitkin. Stephen Silverman, through his travels to Letichev and to Jerusalem, laid the groundwork for some key research. He also provided important documentation of the Philadelphia Letichevers. Beatrice Silverman-Weinreich of YIVO provided critical information about folk sayings and recipes. Stephen and Rolf Saxon were helpful with their fascinating stories of their Zinkover families. The late Ilya Abramovich of Zinkov provided important background information and inspiration to the project. Simyon and Eta Bik, natives of Derazhnia, had an incredible amount information about Jewish life in Derazhnia and the effects of the Holocaust there. Jakob Bialoblocki was very interested in this project and provide numerous high-quality photographs. Photographs and documents are also greatfully acknowledged from Alicia Amiel, Adam Bronstein, Sonya Breidbart, Randy Davis, Valery Dymshits, D. Guberman, Benjamin Lukin, Douglas Seidman, Eddie Miller, Anatoliy Chayesh, Roza Vaks, Lyudmilla Shpilevaya, Bernard Stein, Dinah Foglia, Betty Levinson, Peter Myers Boris Senderovich, Stephen Saxon, Stephen Zimmerman, Pauline Chapin, Irvin Darivoff, Leo Celniker, Suzanne Pulier, Hedy Augenbraun, and Betty Rollin. Stephen Saxon, Leo Celniker and Suzanne Pulier provided wonderful unpublished memoirs of turn-of-the-century immigrants.

One of our goals in this book was to write it in English. This was not just a selfish exercise, since English is our native language. It was done primarily because English has become the *lingua franca* of the world. The documentation we researched was obscure primarily because of the language barrier. We sifted through documents written in Latin, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Yiddish, and French. Once in a common language, we feel the word will be broadcast to a larger audience. Our tireless team of translators included Vladimir Goykher, Leonid Rapoport, J. Michoel Ronn, Anita Turtletaub, Boris Gemarnik, Michael Meiberg, Leonid Popokh, Marik Feldman, Kate Shubova, Sora Ludmir, Elena Tsvetkova, Vadim Altskan, Yulia and Alex Zevelev, Leonid Shpirt, Carmel Ravid, Fred Rump, Marek Kacewicz, Michael Gerver, Miriam L. Gerver, Lech S. Rakowski and Igor Malkiman. If we forgot to mention anyone who participated in this project, we apologize.

Finally, we would like to thank our families, not only for putting up with us all these years for having a lonely love affair with this project, but for providing the inspiration for having interest in our own families. We would like to thank (Chapin): the Gillers, Singers, Rokhmans, Zimmermans, Rapoports, and Trachtenbergs, mostly from Letichev; (Weinstock): the Vaynshtoks, Zinshteyns, Grubshteyns, Feldbergs and Zilbermans, mostly from Staro Zakrevsky Meidan but also from all the major towns in Letichev District.

NOTE TO READER ABOUT TRANSLITERATIONS

We attempted to translate every letter from its equivalent sound. The Hebrew and Russian names are transliterated exactly as spelled. Therefore, some of the names may not be spelled the way they are normally seen in English. The only excepts are those words which are common in English, such as Chasidic or Mitzvah. We have attempted to be consistent in the letter combinations. To be consistent and to avoid confusion, some of the unusual Hebrew and Cyrillic letter sounds are always transliterated as follows:

Heb.	Cyr.	Transliteration	
צ	ц	ts	as in bits (sometimes seen as tz, but not used this way in transliterations)
ח/כ	х	kh	as in the Scottish pronunciation of loch or the Hebrew Chanukah (sometimes seen as *ch* or *h* but not used this way in transliterations; in Polish, spelled *ch*)
ה	*	h	as in hard
*	ч	ch	as in chain (in Polish, spelled *cz*)
ג	г	g	as in get (hard g sound)
ש	ш	sh	as in short (in Polish, spelled *sz*)
ז	з	z	as in zoo
*	ж	zh	as in pleasure
*	щ	shch	as in fresh cheese
*	я	ya	as in Asia; *ia* - at the end of place names
*	ю	yu	as in use
י	й	y	a vowel as in my
*	у	u	a vowel as in duke
*	ы	i	a vowel as in bit
*	и	i	a vowel as in bit
*	ѣ	i	obsolete, a vowel as in bit
*	е	e	a vowel as in bet

*No letter equivalent. In Hebrew, there may be vowel symbols but most often Hebrew is written without any vowels. This sometimes makes transliteration difficult, especially when one has to guess at the vowels.

There is no *h* letter equivalent in Cyrillic. The letter *g* is usually substituted. For instance, the Yiddish name Hersh become Gersh in Russian; Horvits in Yiddish might be Gervits in Russian.

There is no *j* letter equivalent in Cyrillic. This letter is often replaced by the letter combination *io* (or perhaps *i*). For instance, the name Joseph becomes Iosef.

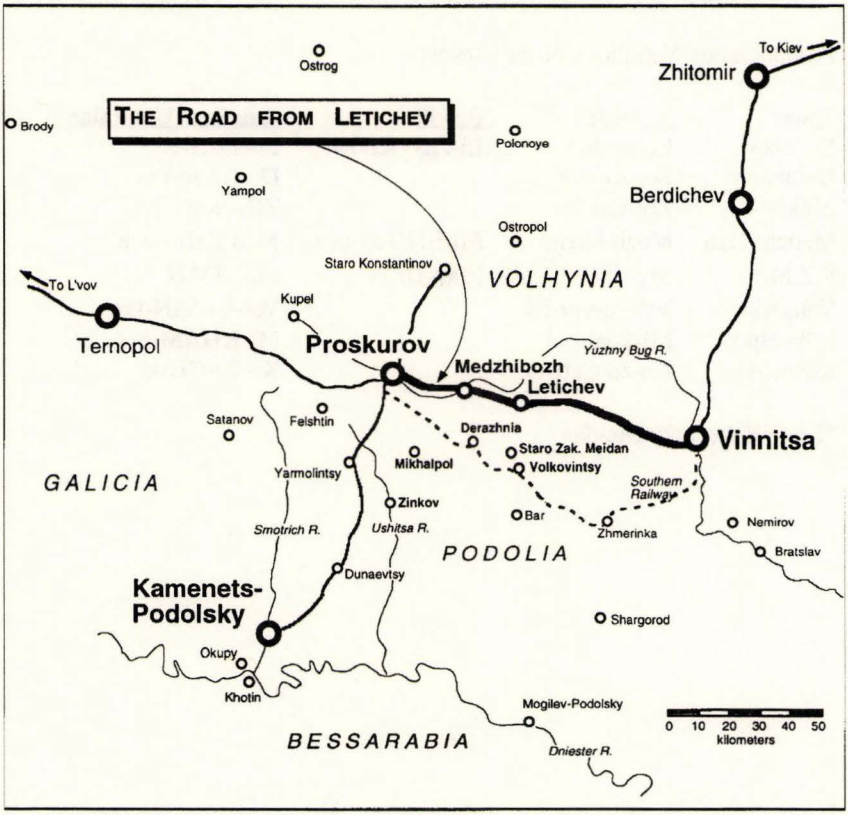
There is no *w* letter equivalent in Cyrillic or Hebrew but is a valid consonant in Polish. The letter *v* is usually substituted.

The names listed here often include the patronymics. These are easily recognizable as names having the suffix *-ova* or *ovna*, (feminine) *ov* or *-ovich* (masculine). This would be the first name of this person's father. For instance, Shmul Froimovich is Shmul who's father was Froim (Ephaim).

Pronunciation Variations of the Towns:

Town	Yiddish	Polish	Russian / Ukrainian
Letichev	Let-i-chef	Li-AT-y-chow	Le-TI-chev
Derazhnia	Drozh-nya		De-RAzh-nia
Zinkov	Zin-kuv		ZIN-kov
Medzhibozh	Mezh-buzh	Mi-END-zi-bozh	Med-ZHI-bozh
S.Z.M.*	My-din	May-DAN	May-DAN
Volkovintsy	Val-ke-vin-its		Vol-ko-VIN-tsy
Mikhalpol	Mi-khal-pol		Mi-KHAM-pol
Kozachki	Ko-za-CHUK		Ko-ZACH-ki

*Staro Zakrevsky Meidan


THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV
Ostrog
To Kiev
Zhitomir
Brody
Polonoye
Yampol
Berdichev
Ostropol
Staro Konstantinov
VOLHYNIA
To L'vov
Kupel
Ternopol
Proskurov
Yuzhny Bug R.
Medzhibozh
Letichev
Satanov
Felshtin
Derazhnia
Vinnitsa
Staro Zak. Meidan
Mikhalpol
Volkovintsy
Yarmolintsy
GALICIA
Southern Railway
Zinkov
Bar
Nemirov
Smotrich R.
Ushitsa R.
Zhmerinka
Bratslav
PODOLIA
Dunaevtsy
Kamenets-Podolsky
Shargorod
Okupy
Khotin
Mogilev-Podolsky
0 10 20 30 40 50
kilometers
BESSARABIA
Dniester R.

Introduction

Only guard yourself and guard your soul carefully—lest these things depart your heart all the days of your life. And you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children. (Deuteronomy 4:9)

THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV is about the ebb and flow of Jewish lives and culture in the Letichev District, Ukraine. This is the area that included the towns of Letichev, Medzhibozh, Derazhnia, Volkovintsy, Zinkov, Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, Mikhalpol, and scores of smaller towns and villages. The Letichev District's lifeblood flowed along the main highway—THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV—between the larger cities of Proskurov (now called Khmelnitsky) to the west, and Vinnitsa to the east. This main highway was the key route where commerce and humanity flowed on their way between the main centers of Western Europe and the centers within the heart of Russia. Along this highway came the spiritual and material wealth of Europe. It served also as a key migratory and invasion route.

The towns along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV represents a microcosm of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. However, in spite of the similarities with other areas in Eastern Europe, there were significant differences which helped make this area distinctly unique from a Jewish perspective. This area's unique geographic location was the catalyst which precipitated great events in the Jewish world. For instance, the Letichev District was in close proximity to the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, it was considered a frontier area, so new ideas could flourish.

Thus, the flourishing of various false messiah sects, as well as the origins of the Chasidic movement, could grow relatively unimpeded.

Much of this story is being told here for the very first time. It surprised us when we began this project how little about this area was recorded in the modern literature. We are fortunate that in recent years, records are now available which had restricted access for over 70 years. These records, along with the accessibility of knowledgeable recent Russian emigres has helped to shape the story of this area.

The purpose of this book is to document the Jewish life in the area once known as Letichev District. Some of this material represents raw facts gleaned from various documents. Other material represents personal recollections and family histories. Our hope is that the history of this area can be best explained from a personal level to the extent that we can name names and personal events of individuals who actually participated.

The Jews along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV suffered tremendous hardships in the past 500 years. In spite of these hardships, the Jewish community was able to flourish, until being almost completely wiped out during the Holocaust. Even so, significant portions of the Letichev District Jewish society lives on in communities outside of Eastern Europe. THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV was the birthplace of the Chasidic movement, which radiated explosively out of the area and is very strong even today. This area brought the Jewish world unique contributions in art, in song, and in culinary experience.

While Jews had occupied the Letichev area in the Middle Ages, the modern history of the Jewish community there really began after the Bogdan Khmelnitsky massacres of 1648-53. Khmelnitsky and his Cossack hordes marched through this area, nominally controlled by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Polish and Jewish populations of the towns through the area were systematically eliminated, at the encouragement of Poland's arch-enemy, the Russ. It is thought that Khmelnitsky was responsible for killing one-third of the world's Jewish population of the time—a greater percentage of Jews killed than by the Nazis 300 years later. The Poles restored control of the area shortly thereafter, but found themselves with depopulated territory. Taking advantage of the power vacuum, the Turks invaded this area. The Poles successfully drove out the Turks and reestablished themselves in 1699.

The Polish magnates encouraged Jews to help settle in their southern territories with favorable business terms and religious toleration. Furthermore, the Poles were able to control the native Ukrainian population and Haidamak bandits—the successors to Khmelnitsky's hordes—through a stronger military presence.

There were two types of territorial control in 18th century Poland: Crown lands, controlled by the King and feudal land holdings, controlled by various noble families. Generally speaking, the Jews of the Crown lands faired worse through legal and taxation laws than did their counterparts in private lands. In the private lands, the Jews were often partners with the noble families. Many noble

families recognized Jews for their abilities to help the trade in their realms, and thus were able to bring wealth to the estates of their Lords.

Letichev (Polish: Latyczów) was a minor town at the time. The major town and administrative center was Medzhibozh (Polish: Miedzybóz), under the control of the Sieniawa-Czartoryski noble family, It was under these conditions that the Chasidic movement was founded. Rabbi Israel ben Eliezar (1699-1760), better known as the Baal Shem Tov, was the spiritual leader of the movement. In his early years he roamed from town to town performing miracles, healing the sick and interpreting Jewish laws. In his later years, he settled in Medzhibozh where he assembled an impressive group of disciples, perhaps the most learned men of the day. After the Baal Shem Tov died, these disciples spread Chasidism throughout Eastern Europe. The Heshel branch of Chasidism evolved with a rabbinical dynasty in the towns of Zinkov and Medzhibozh. The famous 20th century Jewish scholar Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel was a notable descendant.

In the late 1700s, under the reign of Tsarina Catherine the Great, Poland lost a series of wars between Austria-Hungary, Prussia, and Russia. The territory that was once Poland was partitioned between these countries. The Letichev District came under Russian control in 1793. Thus began over 100 years of Russian Imperial rule. Letichev became the administrative center and the area became formally known as Letichev District, one of several within Podolia Guberniya.

Russian rule brought with it a number of oppressive measures imposed upon the Jews. These included limitation of property rights, harsh taxes, military service requirements and travel limitations. In spite of these restrictions, the Jewish population of the District soared five-fold in just a century. The 19th century Jewish population had one of the highest birthrates in the world at the time. At the same time, the mortality rate declined throughout the century.

In association with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, 1881 brought the first in a series of pogroms to the Jews in Russia. Letichev District was not immune: a pogrom took place in Letichev in April 1882. This single event was a signal to the Jewish community that there was no future in living in Russia and thus stirred a wave of immigration along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV, mostly to America. The years 1903-7 also brought a series of pogroms, but Letichev District was relatively unscathed by these events. The year 1906 was the peak year of immigration of Russian Jews to the U.S. for three reasons: people were escaping the pogroms of that year; there was a steamship line price war and travel was cheaper than it had been in previous years; and it was announced that American immigration laws were about to change so people wanted to arrive before the changes were implemented. Large-scale immigration continued until the first World War began in 1914.

The immigration wave was a major force of change in the Jewish community. Loved ones were separated forever. Family life was disrupted. In America, where most people came, groups of landsmen gathered together into organized

societies. These societies looked after the immigrants and provided for family members back in the old country.

People with family roots along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV prospered and became highly successful businessmen, educators, entertainers, scientists, doctors, lawyers and government officials in their lives in America, Israel and other parts of the world.

The October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution brought the next major change along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV. Hungarian and German troops briefly occupied the towns of Letichev District. Jews warmly welcomed the German troops, and they served as interpreters for the Germans. Following the German occupation, there was a civil war that erupted in the Ukraine from 1919 through 1921. It was primarily a three-sided power struggle which pitted Tsarist elements (the "Whites") against Ukrainian nationalists and Communists (the "Reds"). However, each group itself was divided. For instance, there were struggles within the Communists between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. There were various Ukrainian nationalistic leaders, etc. Of these three sides in the conflict, Jews generally sided with the Communists. This was primarily because they were opposed to the Tsar after years of oppression and they were allowed to participate in highest levels of the Communist organization. The Communists generally condemned anti-Semitic acts. The Ukrainian nationalists were by-and-large ferociously anti-Semitic. Various elements of the nationalists, in particular those under the control of Simon Petliura, were responsible for some of the worst atrocities since Bogdan Khmelnitsky. Numerous pogroms against Jews took place, and Letichev District was not immune. Wave after wave of atrocities hit the communities within the District, as various participants in the civil war gained or lost power in the area. It is estimated that throughout the Ukraine, over 150,000 Jews were killed in pogroms during the civil war. Eventually, by 1922 the area was under firm control by the Bolsheviks.

Between 1925-1935, the district's institutions were restored to their pre-war levels. The Soviets allowed Jewish institutions to flourish, and they attempted to modernize the district. In the mid 1920s, property from the wealthy segments of the population was confiscated. By the early 1930s collectivization began. The rebirth of Jewish culture was largely extinguished due to suspicion and fear brought on by the Stalinist purges of 1934-39. Large numbers of people were "resettled" to other parts of the Soviet Union. Many of the new regime's Jewish leaders were arrested and sent to prison. By 1937, most organized Jewish cultural activities ceased to exist and synagogues were closed.

World War II brought the slaughter of over 1.5 million Jews in the Ukraine. In an area that was once the greatest concentration of Jews in the world, the Nazis were largely successful in their goal of making the area *Judenfrei*. Letichev District was the area of operation for the S.S. Einsatzgruppen "C" unit. This was a specially organized mobile killing squad. Einsatzgruppen actions resulted in more Jews executed than were killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau. However, since

they were active on Soviet soil, they generally did not transport their victims very far to be killed. Thus, these murders have been virtually ignored in the popular Western media.

Typically the Einsatzgruppen would dig a pit, or use a ravine in the woods outside of town. They would enlist the help of local Ukrainian sympathizers—often people with ideological ties to Ukrainian nationalists from two decades earlier. They would round up all the Jews in the town and nearby vicinity. Then they would make the Jews give up their valuables. They would then march them (or truck them) to a selected killing site, made them strip naked and then they would shoot them at the edge of the pit. Often, the people were only wounded, and they would be buried alive. Sometimes, the pits were used over and over again at different times.

In a one year period, from 1941-42, the Einsatzgruppen were largely successful in executing nearly all the Jews in northern Podolia who did not evacuate to the east or who were not taken into the military.. However, Letichev seemed to be the exception. Letichev was along the main route, half-way between the cities of Proskurov and Vinnitsa. Thus, THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV served as a major supply line for the German army's offensive into the Caucasus and the Baku oil fields. Hitler assigned Vinnitsa as the headquarters for the German army in the Soviet Union, and his Todt organization (under the command of Albert Speer) built bunkers for Hitler in Vinnitsa. The Germans determined that the road between Proskurov and Vinnitsa could hardly handle the German mechanized traffic. Hitler's engineers set about rebuilding the road. They created a ghetto in Letichev to serve as a slave-labor force for the road-building project. The living conditions in the Letichev ghetto were abysmal, and the population was swelled by moving Jews from nearby towns and some from as far away as Moldavia. Eventually, by the end of 1942 the road was completed. In late 1942 to early 1943 the Jews of Letichev were liquidated.

Today, little is left of the Jewish community of Letichev District. Only a handful of Jewish pensioners remain in the area. Most of these people either came from elsewhere, or they survived the war by either fleeing the area or serving in the Soviet army.

This book is dedicated to the memory of the once thriving Jewish community along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV. What follows is our attempt to bring back to life the rich Jewish culture that no longer exists through official documents, family stories, family histories, and compiled histories, Holocaust testimonials and memoirs and other interesting materials.

Much of this material is presented for the very first time. The story of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan represents a little-known episode in the Jewish agricultural history of Russia. We have uncovered unique name-lists which show patterns of family movement throughout the area. Our detailed rabbinical catalog documents what probably is the most complete history of the pastoral leadership in any eastern European Jewish community. We are particularly proud to provide details of Jewish religious and educational institutions. No cultural history is complete without understanding the food and songs, the health and welfare, and the crimes

that took place in the community And finally, the horrific and poignant Holocaust eyewitness reports provide first-hand documentation of the ruthless and brutal behavior of the Nazis and their sympathizers. The real crime of what the Nazis perpetrated in the Holocaust can only be understood in the context of the culture that was wiped out.

From a woodcut by S. Yudovin, a member of the An-sky expeditions (1911-1914).

1

The Early History

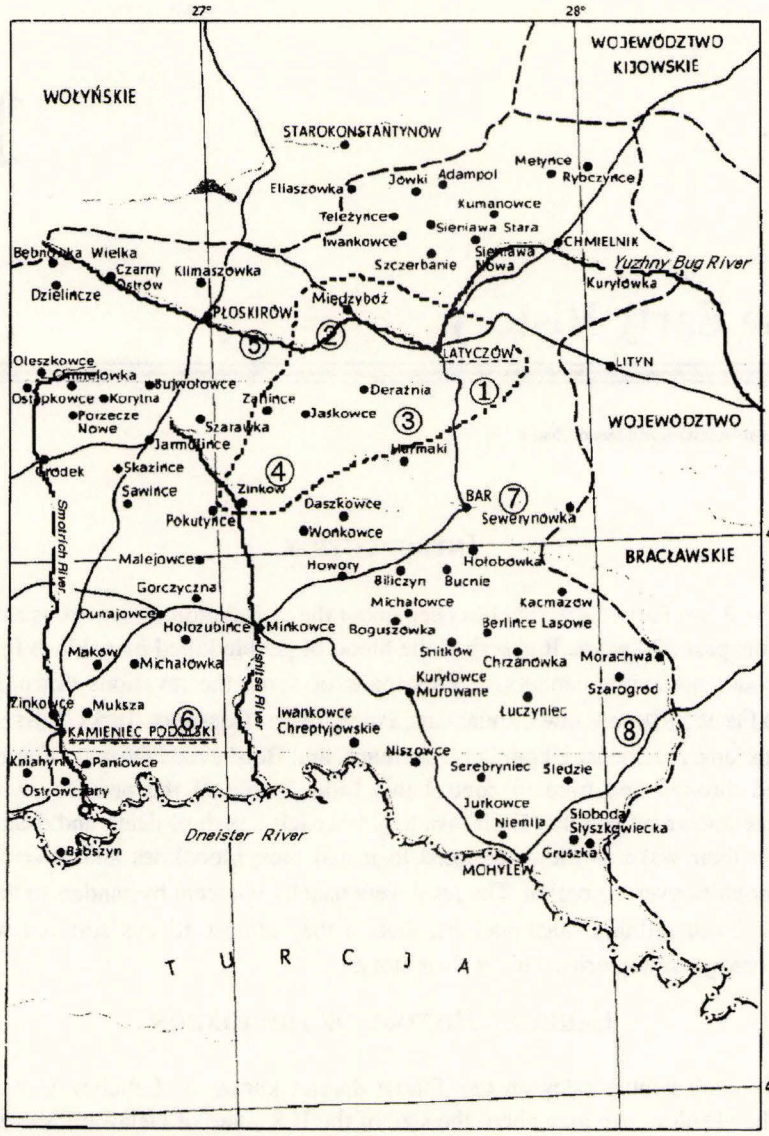
by Ben Weinstock and David Chapin

Introduction

The Road From Letichev has been under the jurisdiction of numerous rulers over the past 500 years. It absorbed the blood of people killed by soldiers fighting under numerous banners. A crossroads of sorts, the invasions down The Road From Letichev saw Lithuanians, Poles, Tatars, Cossacks, Turks, Russians, Hungarians, Austrians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Bolsheviks. Dozens of armies passed through and tried to control this little district of the province which became known as Podolia. Each invading army left a path of death and destruction in their wake as they attempted to install their bloodlines and governing philosophies over the region. The Jews were usually innocent bystanders to these political and military machinations, though they almost always suffered with each change of authority. This is their story.

Earliest History of the Region

This book concentrates on the Tsarist district known as Letichev *Uyezd*—Letichev District. An area about the size of the U.S. state of Delaware, this was the northern-most organized district within the province (*Guberniya*, in Russian) known as Podolia. Today, Podolia is divided into two Ukrainian *Oblasti* (Khmelnitsky and Vinnitsa) but this is a recent division. Throughout most of its



Podolia Province Roads, late 1700.
This map has the Polish spellings of the place names. The dotted line outlines Letichev District and the major towns are numbered: 1. Letichev, 2. Medzhibozh, 3. Derazhnia, 4. Zinkov. Prominant towns in the vicinity include: 5. Proskurov (Polish: Ploskirow; now Khmelnitsky), 6. Kamenets-Podolsky, 7. Bar, 8. Shargorod. Map modified after Aftanazy.[1]

history, both Podolia Province and Letichev District existed as unique administrative entities regardless of the controlling powers.

Podolia, which means "lowlands," was called the "Pontic Steppe" by the Greek historian Herodotus in the sixth century BCE. Although the borders of Podolia have been fluid over the years, it has generally been bound on the west by the Zbruch River and the Galicia Province, on the south by the Dniester River and Bessarabia, on the north by the Yuzhny Bug River and Volhynia Province, and on the east by an ill-defined boundary with Kiev Province.

Letichev District sits at about 300 meters in elevation, a beautiful land in the fertile, gently rolling Ukrainian plains. These black soil plains were formed by glacial outwash from the great continental ice sheets during the ice ages. Dissecting this terrain are a series of rivers, the most important of which is the west-to-east flowing Yuzhny Bug River (Southern Bug River). The name "Bug" (pronounced "Boog" or "Boozh") is an ancient Slavic name for "God", an appropriate name considering the flow of history that followed the course of this river. THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV is the overland route which parallels this river.

Over the years, most of the major towns along the Yuzhny Bug have built dams across it to power their water-mill industries. These mill lakes helped form defensive barriers for the towns, as well as provide a convenient place to stock fish. The mills themselves provided the means to grind grain to flour, as well as a means to power heavy machinery for lumber and other industries. In its natural state, the Yuzhny Bug is not navigable, forming mostly a wide stream that can easily be forded. However, where it is dammed it forms deep picturesque lakes which can be traversed only by boat.

The oldest towns in area are all founded on the banks of the Yuzhny Bug. From west to east they are Proskurov, Medzhibozh, and Letichev. Proskurov, now called Khmelnitsky, is not actually in the Letichev District, but shares a common history with it. It was founded at the location of a series of natural springs feeding into the Yuzhny Bug. Downstream from Proskurov is the town of Medzhibozh with a name which comes from the the fact that it is founded at the confluence of the Yuzhny Bug River with its tributary the River Buzhenka.[2] Medzhibozh was located on an easily defended bluff within a triangle formed by the two rivers. Thus, it had natural moats on two sides. Medzhibozh is arguably the most easily defensible location along the river, thus it has a long and interesting history. Letichev was founded at the confluence of the River Volk (meaning "Wolf") and the Yuzhny Bug. Even with natural moats all around, Letichev unfortunately did not have the topographic relief that blesses Medzhibozh's location. Thus, Letichev was more easily attacked and harder to defend. Because of this, throughout its history Letichev played a more subordinate role to Medzhibozh and tended to see more deprivations from invading armies.

The other towns in the Letichev District included Derazhnia and Mikhalpol (also known as Mikhampol and Mikhailovka) were smaller villages on a tributary to the River Volk known as Volchok. These towns had little to do with the early defense of the region.

To the south of the Yuzhny Bug lies a region which becomes part of the foothills to the Carpathian Mountains of Rumania. Here, the glacial outwash is stripped off, exposing limestone bedrock deposited during ancient Mesozoic seas. Glacial run-off carved deep north-south valleys into the limestone, valleys which become deeper and more rugged as one approaches the Carpathians. The town of Zinkov sits astride one of these narrow valleys, with its river, the Ushitsa, feeding southward directly into the great Dniester River. The most spectacular terrain in Podolia occurs near the city Kamenets-Podolsky. In its location near the southern border of Slav territory, this city is well south of the Letichev District, but it has historically been viewed as the heart and soul of Podolia Province, serving as its capitol during Turkish and Tsarist rule. At Kamenets-Podolsky—the oldest town in Podolia—the River Smotrich carved a complete meander loop into the limestone. The cliffs on all sides form a natural barrier to invading armies. The city was built within the inside of the meander and was easily defensible by strong fortifications on either side of a high bridge over the Smotrich. Thus, Kamenets-Podolsky successfully defended itself against numerous attacks while fortifying the southern border of Poland.

Kamenets-Podolsky.
Kamenets-Podolsky is the heart-and-soul of Podolia Province. Perhaps Podolia's oldest town, Kamenets-Podolsky is formed on a site where the River Smotrich, which flows from north to south, formed an entrenched meander in the limestone plateau. The natural cliffs create an easily defensible "island" with a natural moat. Perched on top of the cliffs, formidable castles guard a high bridge, the only way into the town prior to the 1800s. The defenses around the bridge successfully held off Tatar, Cossack and Turkish attacks until 1672 when a large Turkish army overran these positions manned by only 200 Polish soldiers. This photo taken in the late 1800s.

The natural vegetation in the area would be old-growth forests. However, the long history of human occupation cleared most of the forests in favor of crop and pasture land. Today the terrain is open, much like the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, with scant forests. The larger forests are second-growth trees cultivated

by human hands. Some orchards exist, as well. Around Medzhibozh are ancient groves of mulberry trees, almost certainly a Tatar import which was designed to build a silk industry in the region. Near Letichev, THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV is lined by stately poplar trees (in Russian, *topol*). Russian poplar trees are more similar-looking to California eucalyptus trees than they are to American poplars. They are tall and straight, with narrow teardrop-shaped branches. These trees, in single file on either side of the road, give this road a stately beauty that makes it one of the most scenic roads in all of Ukraine. Unfortunately, these trees and their beauty came at a price of Jewish blood. They were planted with slave labor during the Nazi regime to keep blowing snow from blocking their major supply line to Vinnitsa.

Origins of the Settlements and the Tatar Invasions

Prior to the establishment of settlements in Podolia, the region was a vast, unpopulated upland. Paleolithic man passed through in his nomadic wanderings to hunt ice age game such as mammoth and deer. To the north in Mezerich, Volhynia (later in the 18th century to become home to the Maggid of Mezerich), paleolithic huts constructed out of mammoth bones have been found. This attests to the long history of man's wanderings though the region. Along a major Indo-European migration route, these lands saw the migrations of the Cimmerian, Scythian and Sarmatian peoples during Greek times. During Roman times, the Germanic tribes of the Huns, Goths, Ostrogoths and Visagoths from central Asia passed through here on their way to invade and populate central Europe. Only in medieval Kievan Rus days were the first permanent settlements established.

Medzhibozh may be the oldest town in the district. It has been documented in the annals of the Russian history that Medzhibozh was given to Prince Svyatoslav by the Prince of Kiev in the year 1146. In 1148, ownership was transferred to Rostislav the son of Yuri Dolgaruky Svyatoslav.[3]

Attacks in Letichev District 1453-1615

1453 : 9,000 Tatars attack Medzhibozh, Letichev, and Zinkov; destroy Zinkov
1474 : Tatars attack Zinkov
1476 : Turks attack Zinkov
1506 : Tatars destroy Zinkov and Medzhibozh
1516 : Tatars attack Medzhibozh, Letichev, and Zinkov but are defeated
1524 : Tatars attack and burn Zinkov
1530 : Tatars attack Zinkov
1546 : Tatars attack Medzhibozh
1558 : Tatars attack Letichev and Medzhibozh
1566 : Tatars attack Medzhibozh
1567 : Tatars attack Letichev and Derazhnia
1615 : Tatars attack Medzhibozh (last Tatar attack)

In 1360, the area passed into the hands of the Lithuanians. Podolia in the 14th through the 16th century was a land of great economic potential. Unfortunately it was also an untamed wilderness plagued by numerous attacks by Tatars (known in the west as Mongols) and Turks. The major towns were frequently terrorized, burned or looted,and sometimes totally destroyed. However, the tenacious settlers repeatedly rebuilt their communities. Fortresses, initially

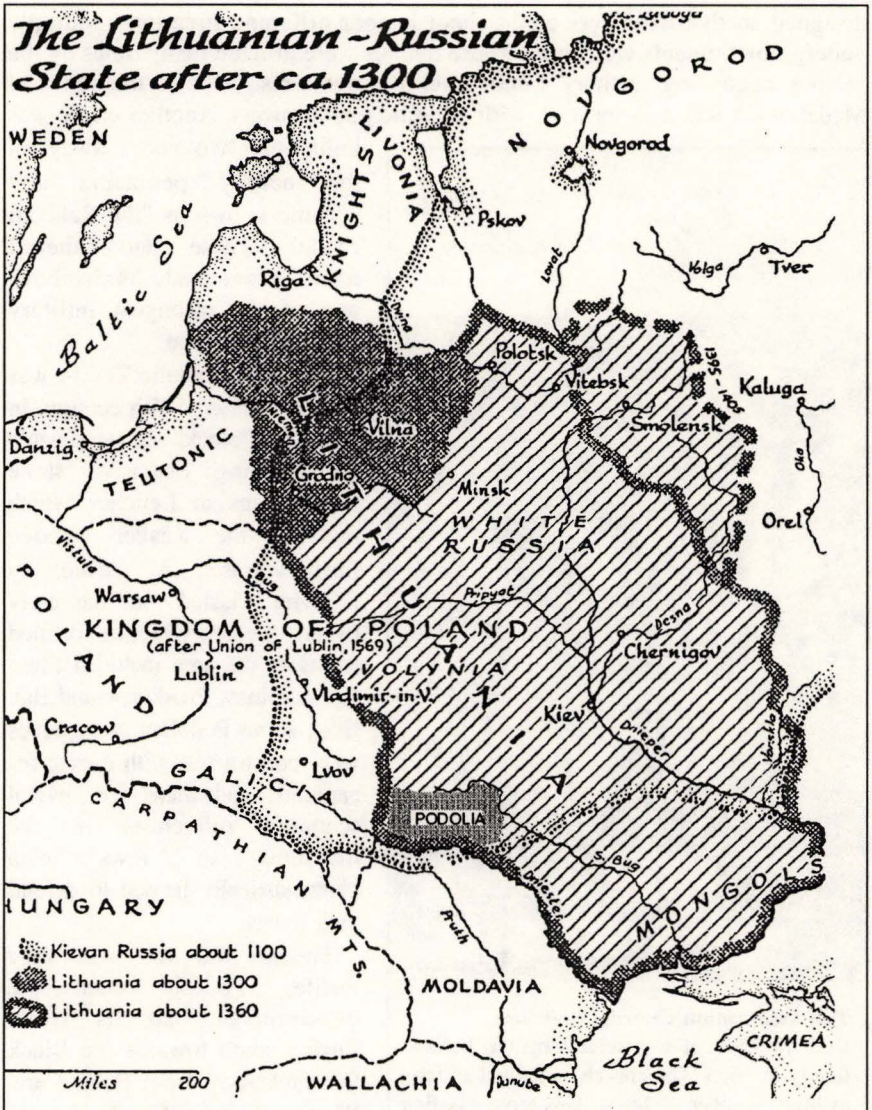
made of wood, were later built of stone to protect the settlers from the brutal Tatar attacks.

The first mention of the town of Letichev is in connection with the beginning of the Tatar invasions. Letichev is mentioned first as a fortress in 1411 and then as a settlement in 1429. After 1434, Podolia passed into *Rechipospolita* (the government of Lithuania-Poland). Medzhibozh was one of the most important fortifications in the path of the Tatar invasions, successfully defending itself from wave after wave of attacks. The town of Zinkov is also first mentioned in relation to the Tatar attacks. It seemed to have suffered the most in the Tatar invasions. Letichev District saw at least eleven waves of Tatar attacks between 1453 and 1615.

A visitor to the area in the 1590s reported that he "saw forts where the farm population sought refuge in time of Tatar attacks. While he plowed the soil, the peasant carried a gun on his back and a sword at his side, because the Tatar bands frequented the country and no one felt safe without weapons."[4]

In the 1500s, the Polish noble families of Sieniawska and Potocki controlled the Letichev District. In 1511, work began to replace the wooden palisades in Medzhibozh with massive stone fortifications. A dam was constructed across the Yuzhny Bug which formed a lake to protect the city from attack. The castle itself had four towers, one of which was a rhomboid (named *Skhidna*) which was

Shargorod Synagogue.
Built in the 1500s, it is perhaps the oldest Jewish synagogue still in existence in Ukraine. It follows the fortress-like style of the churches built in the same era. No longer a working synagogue, today it is a juice factory. Photo by D. Chapin, 1995.



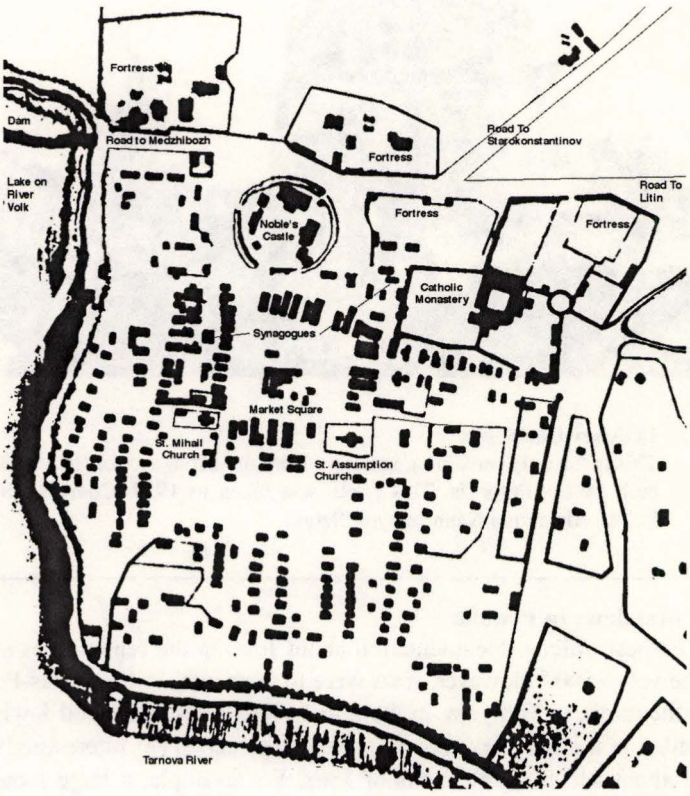
Historic boundaries in Ukraine.
Map of Ukraine showing the various borders in relation to the Province of Podolia. The earliest rulers were the Kievan Rus, who were supplanted by Lithuania by 1300. In 1569, Lithuania merged with Poland. Modified from Riasanovsky.[5]

designed so that defenders could shoot in four different directions. Multiple underground tunnels were built. These tunnels were utilized many times by the various occupying military forces over the centuries. Around the town of Medzhibozh was a stone wall, with periodic guard towers. Another castle was built only two *versts* away on the nearby peninsula and became known as "the Rakochi castle".[6] These state-of-the-art fortifications made Medzhibozh one of the strongest military sites in the region.

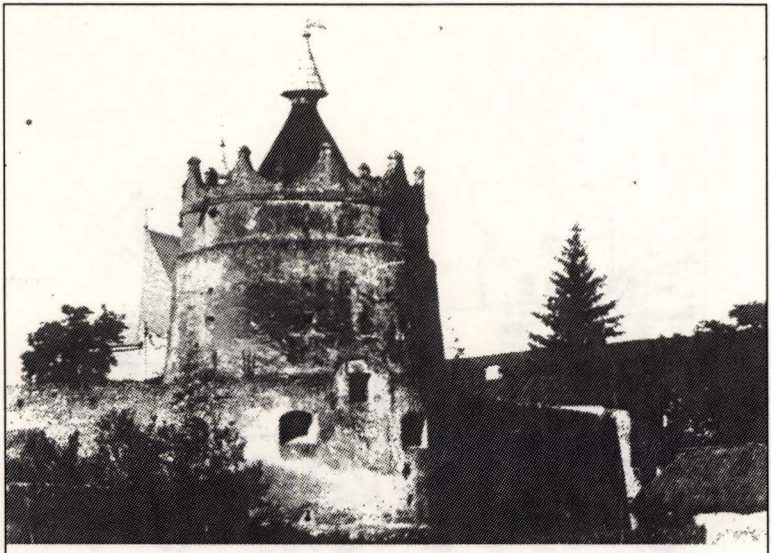
The Assumption Church, Letichev.
Built in 1546, it was rebuilt by the Potocki family in 1605. The church contained an icon to Mary, mother of Jesus. This icon was first brought to Letichev by Dominican monks in the late 1400s. It was removed to Lvov for safekeeping during the Khmelnitsky massacres and was returned to Letichev in 1723. In 1778 Pope Clement XIV ordered that a special crown from Rome be installed on the icon. Courtesy of Polska Akademia Naun Instytut Sztuki

The stone castle in Zinkov was built in the early 15th century. In 1598, Jan Potocki was responsible for building extensive stone fortifications in Letichev which replaced the weaker wooden fortifications.[7] A castle in Derazhnia lasted into the early twentieth century.[8] Other fortified towns in the area included Staro Konstantinov, Proskurov and Bar. Even some Podolian synagogues were constructed with turrets for cannons, and there are several scattered references in the literature to Jews who enthusiastically helped to defend their towns.

Though the soil was very fertile, Podolia had the disadvantage that its rivers flowed south towards the Black Sea and away from Poland and Western Europe. Overland trade routes had to be established to facilitate the westward export of grain and lumber. Thus the development of fortified towns were essential to establishing the economic vitality of the region. THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV was first constructed at that time.



Map of Letichev, ca. 1798.
This map shows the fortifications built by the Potocki family who owned the town. Letichev guards a vital crossroads where the Volk River enters the Yuzhny Bug. Not blessed with any special topographic advantage, the fortifications were extensive. Over the years, almost all of them have been destroyed.



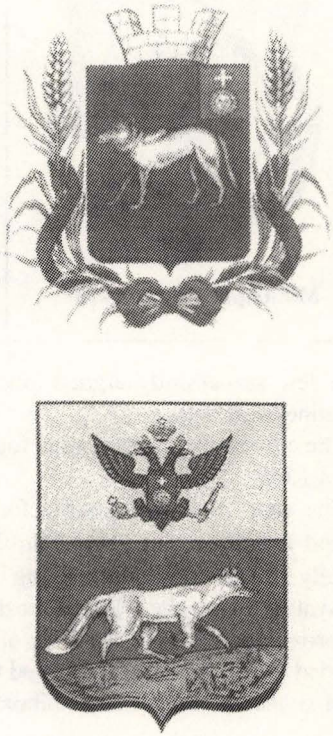
Letichev Castle tower.
This is the only remaining structure from the defensive fortifications built by the Potockis. This photo was taken in 1917. Courtesy of Polska Akademia Naun Instytut Sztuki.

The first Jews in Podolia

The earliest official documentation about Jews in the region does not appear until the year 1500.[9] However, Jews were to the south, in Kamenets-Podolsky,[10] and to the north, in Volhynia, in the mid 1400s. In all likelihood Jewish traders also settled in the Letichev area before the 16th century.[11] Interestingly, legends existed about ancient settlements of Jews. For example, a large mound in the town of Felshtin, near Proskurov, was believed to a mass grave for Jews who died in the Black Plague in the 1200s. Local peasants believed in the power of the mound and refused to touch it. However, Jews were probably not in Felshtin until the early 1600s. The earliest tombstone there was dated to 1696.[12]

The obvious question, of where these "earliest" Jews came from cannot be answered with any great precision. Weinryb's study of Jewish migration into Poland from Germany provides us with an excellent understanding from where the bulk of these people originated.[13] Recent genetic studies provide additional clues that the Jews of the Ukraine migrated from Lithuania and Belorussia.[14] It is also possible that a few Jews were refugees of the Inquisitions of Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th and beginning 16th centuries, as there are scattered references to small Sephardic communities in eastern Poland, and to Jews with Sephardic surnames in Podolia.[15]

We dispute the claim by numerous scholars that the origins of the Jewish community in Derazhnia can be traced to an early Karaite settlement. The Karaites were a sect of Jews believed to originate in Persia in the ninth century, who rejected the Talmudic-Rabbinical tradition. By the 1500s there were established Karaite communities in Lutsk, Lvov, and in several towns in Lithuania.[16] A recent study on the subject discusses the discrepancy in the supposed founding of the Jewish community of Derazhnia.[17] Some scholars have proposed that there was a Jewish community in Derazhnia by the middle of the 16th century, but Turkish documents of 1542-43 indicate that Derazhnia was the site of a Cossack detachment, comprising of no more than a few huts. In 1552 there were only eleven persons living in Derazhnia, four of whom later died in an epidemic.[18] Moreover, it is reported that some members of the Karaite community of Derazhnia who fled from the Khmelnitsky attacks found shelter in the homes of the Karaite community of Lutsk.[19] In an era when transportation was at the speed of no more than a few miles per hour, it is unlikely that hungry, fear-stricken refugees would flee from a town in northern Podolia to a town in central Volhynia, a distance of 250 kilometers. We therefore propose that the Karaite community existed in the Volhynia town of Derazhno, only 50 kilometers away from Lutsk, and not in Derazhnia, Podolia.

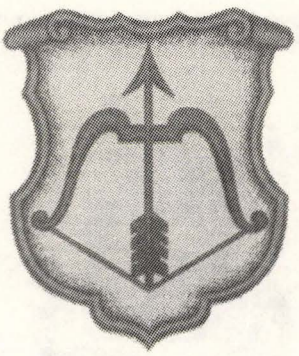


Letichev Coats of Arms.
The upper was originally presented to the town by Stephan Batory in 1569. The Russian Imperial double eagle was added after the Polish Partition, lower. The wolf symbolizes the River Volk (wolf) which runs through the town.

In the 16th century, Poland entered into its golden age, the age of the enlightened Jagiellon royal dynasty, which united Lithuanian and Polish royalty. It was during this period that the first European university was founded in Cracow and when Nikolas Copernicus published his astronomy works challenging the centuries-old Ptolemaic earth-centered universe. It was a time of great revolution in thought and a time of tolerance of extraordinary proportions as far as European Jews were concerned. Almost certainly because of this tolerance, Poland attracted Jews

from less tolerant regimes in Europe. It resulted in a migration which ultimately gave Poland the largest Jewish population in Europe.

Records of Jews in Medzhibozh begin to show up in the early 1500s. At the beginning of the 1500s, the king Sigizmund Yagellon granted the Jewish community of Medzhibozh special privileges. As a result, in 1509 a Jew by the name of Liberman from Medzhibozh was named "treasurer of Podolia and Rus". These privileges were confirmed in 1566 by King Sigizmund II August, that the Medzhibozh Jews were "released forever from paying any kind of duty, government taxes or dues." This stimulated the Medzhibozh Jews to create commercial bonds with their counterparts in the Lublin and Lvov communities.[20]



Mikhalpol Coats of Arms.

In 1534, the wife of a nobleman attempted to prosecute a Jew from Medzhibozh. The Jew successfully argued that his case should be tried in the court of the Palatine of Podolia.[21]

The earliest dated gravestone found in the Medzhibozh Jewish Cemetery dates from 1555.

The year 1569 was notable for the signing of the Union of Lublin, which bound Lithuania and Poland firmly together. At this time there were approximately 750 Jews in Podolia living in nine major communities: Bar, Chemerovtsy, Husyatin, Yaslovsky, Medzhibozh, Satanov, Sidorova, Sharovka, and Zinkov. Approximately 300 of the Jews of Podolia lived in Medzhibozh.[22] Jews mostly resided in private, nobility-owned towns, not in crown lands.

In sixteenth century Medzhibozh there was the "Jewish market," which consisted of seven merchant families. There were also two empty stalls. More Jews, who are also recorded in the family lists, lived on the side streets. They were referred to as "the coarse Jews." From archival documents and contemporary descriptions of the town we are able to describe a few of the Jews: Froim, who had a brewery, also transported goods to the fair. His goal was to try to accumulate enough money to ransom his son who was held as a slave by the Turks. Dawid from Orinin held an arenda contract. Efraim held a contract in Volhynia. The "doctor" of the town was a barber-surgeon. Liberman, undoubtedly a descendent of the person of the same name mentioned in 1509 documents, also served as a financial middleman in

Population breakdown of Medzhibozh in 1571[23]

Russians :	95 (59 %)
Jews :	35 (22 %)
Poles :	30 (19 %)

1582. His name is cited in contracts involving deals between Sieniawski and other nobles with the Turks and Tatars in Podolia and Moldavia.

The Jews engaged in commerce for many years. In 1534 four Medzhibozh Jews brought 600 head of cattle to the fair in Yaroslav. In 1584 Szmoilo Dankowicz brought the following goods to the fair in Bar: a barrel of spirits; two barrels of beer; wax; carp; a goat; a lamb; pelts; hats; two knives from Hungary; and woolen cloth from Poltava and other regions.

The importance of Jews to the landowners, and to the Polish Crown, is reflected in the 1534 decision of Zofia Zamoyski granting Medzhibozh Jews the right to sue in Polish courts, and the 1547 decree by Sigizmund I freeing Medzhibozh Jews from paying duties and tolls. This was enforced as a compensatory measure for the Jews, who had suffered severe financial losses in a previous Tatar attack. In 1555 Medzhibozh Jews were granted the right to organize trade and craft guilds. In following years additional rights were added and previous ones were reinforced.[25]

Arrendas were unique contracts or concessions granted by the Polish magnates in exchange for fees and royalty rights. Jews often served as either arendators themselves or middlemen for the various contracts. An example of an arenda contract is one in 1594 for Prince Piotr Zabreski, who leased several towns, villages, and settlements of Volhynia "...together with the noble boyars,...serfs...and their debts, obligations, and privileges, with the arendas, taverns, tolls, ponds, mills and their

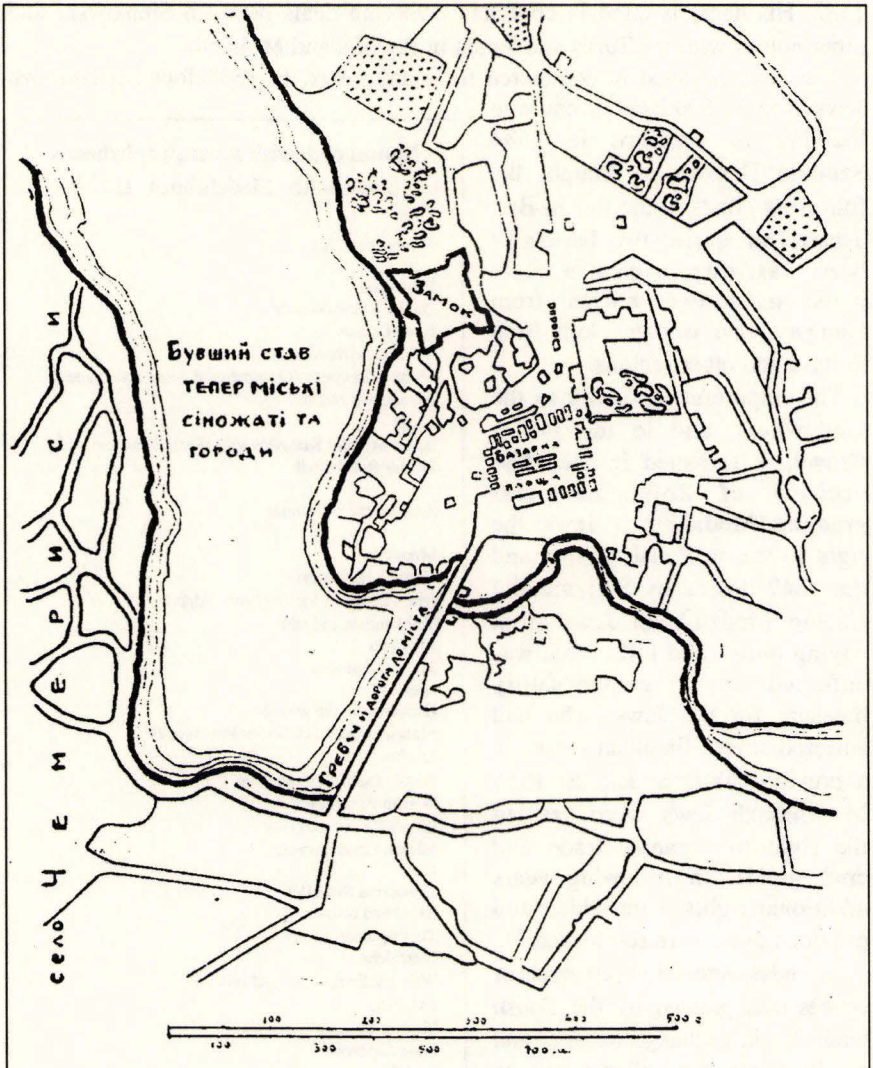
Names of Jewish townspeople/heads of households, Medzhibozh, 1571[24]

Marketplace Jews:

Liberman
Danko Sziewukowicz
Iszak Doctor
Schoma Ivrikowicz
Mithnik Szamecz (Occupational name :"shammes")
Baruchowa and son
Izrael
Issam Moszko Kraszilowszki (From Krasilov.)
Doctor Rab Izdrail

Jews on the sidestreets:

Monczin
Chanko Hadzimow
Izrael Borichin Vilnin (From Vilna.)
Trebkanowa and son
Moszeya
Massan Szaniow
Gierdzin
Chroczkowa the widow
Mosziei Pohorylko (From Pogorele ?)
Liszko
Korola the widow, and son
Miszan Pszachin
Iakusz Czerminkowicz
Missan Chodzimowicz
Isa
Chenczma Szmoilov
Izrael and brother
Thomana and son
Inszczicha
Wolczek Szmonkow and brother
Kvbaicha
Pieszak Dankow
Frain Lipczow
Pszachim
Thvrkow
Izachacz Zvzmanow's brother
Dawid krzywy (Surname means "curved, bent"-- hunchbacked ?)
Sachin
Moszeiecz Oszwin
Machin Szarawski (From Sharovka.)
Soroczen Simowicz
three from Constantinovie (Probably refers to Staro Konstantinov.)



Map of Bar, 1552.
Typical of many towns in Podolia, Bar had a star-shaped castle and a town lake used for both commerce and defense. Scale bar is in *sazhens*.

revenues,...and the various tithes paid...to Mr. Mikolaj Wransowicz and to Efraim the Jew of Medzhibozh for the amount of 9,000 Polish *zlotys* for three years..."[26]

In the first half of the 1600s, Medzhibozh had a total population of 12,000. As Medzhibozh grew, the community was able to attract many notable religious leaders, such as Rabbi Joel Sirkes. He was the religious leader in Medzhibozh from around 1605 to 1612. During this time he judged many difficult cases. As

the Jewish presence in the economy of the Polish estates grew Sirkes repeatedly advised his coreligionists to be cautious in the collection of liquor taxes. He made the intelligent observation that "...the danger is exceedingly great. Cries of oppression are emanating from Gentiles in most areas, that the Jews are lording over them and ruling over them forcefully, as would kings and officers."[27] Although Sirkes died in 1640, his fear of the rift between Jews and Gentiles would ring true eight years later.

KHMELNITSKY MASSACRES

The Cossacks were not so much a defined people as they were a way of life. The name "Cossack" is from a Tatar-Turkish word meaning 'free soldier' indicating their free reign over any territorial jurisdiction. The Cossacks of the lower Dnieper River valley region of Zaporozhe were the offspring of the invading Tatars and the local Slavic population. They learned their horsemanship and military tactics from their Tatar ancestors (and those Tatars who settled in their homeland), yet they retained their taste for their territorial independence from their Slavic forebearers.[28] They were first mentioned in chronicles dated 1444.[29]

Bogdan Khmelnitsky (1595-1657).
The leader of the Cossack rebellion in Ukraine beginning in 1648.

By the mid 1600s, the Cossacks became a force to be reckoned with. As the armies of the Cossacks grew, they also demanded political power. They were an army for hire. For example, both Tatar and Cossack forces joined up to fight against the Turks in Moldavia and Crimea.[30]

The Polish government, preoccupied with the military ambitions of Sweden, refused to grant them separate political recognition, and attempted to suppress any rebel movement. The Cossacks saw themselves as the direct spiritual heirs of the long-since destroyed

Kievan Rus empire. The weak Muscovite Tsars saw the Cossacks as the means to wrest traditional Kievan Rus lands away from their allies the Catholic Poles; territories that were the birthplace of Eastern Orthodox Russia they now ruled. With the secret funding and support of Moscow, the leader of the Cossacks, Bogdan Khmelnitsky (1595-1657), was encouraged to send his armies westward to invade Polish Ukraine. This was the climax on the heels of a series of peasant uprisings which occurred in Ukraine from the late 16th century into the 17th century. Large scale uprisings broke out starting in 1591 and from 1595 to 1596 in Podolia, with many battles fought in the vicinity of Bar.[31]

Zaporozhian Cossack.
Typical of many in Khmelnitsky's army, these fierce horsemen developed their style and tactics from Tatars who lived among them. They travelled light, living off the land in typical Tatar fashion. These Cossacks struck fear and terror in their wake as they destroyed Polish towns in Ukraine and were responsible for the wholesale massacres of Poles and Jews. One out of every three Jews living in the world at the time met a horrible death at the end of a Cossack sword.

It has been estimated by the late scholar Shmuel Ettinger that the Jewish population of Podolia expanded to approximately 4,000 people by 1648, living primarily in eighteen communities.[32] Medzhibozh was the major town in Podolia (with around 12,000 residents); we estimate that perhaps 2,500 Jews resided there on the eve of the massacres by Khmelnitsky's Cossack forces. The reason for this estimate is based on comparison of eyewitness accounts of the slaughters. In *one historish lid* (epic song), the description is as follows: "5,000 souls were killed on Wednesday in the month of Av, 1648, in the cities of Medzhibozh and Bar."[33] Then there is a narrative (quoted below) which describes the battle for Bar. The eyewitness claims 2,000 Jews were killed there. It is possible that both accounts are somewhat exaggerated.

The Cossacks viewed anyone who was not Orthodox as their enemies. They indiscriminately killed Catholic Poles and Jews alike in their slaughters. The wave of terror began in the summer of 1648 when Colonel Maksim Krivonos attacked the line from Medzhibozh to Bar, destroying Derazhnia, Volkovintsy, and Letichev along the way. Thousands of Jews and Poles were butchered in

17th Century map of the Polish Provinces.
Podolia, annotated with a sun (the symbol of the province), is shown along the southern border of Poland, north of Moldavia, labeled number 35.

Medzhibozh on July 20, 1648.[34] Zinkov was invaded and destroyed as well. Major battles took place in Medzhibozh and in Bar on March 24, 1649 and on June 10, 1649, in which the Cossack Daniel Nekhaya committed atrocities. Another slaughter, which occurred on the Hebrew date of 11 Teveth in either 1648 or 1649 (this roughly corresponds to the month of December), was later remembered by the Jews of Medzhibozh as a day of celebration because the Jewish population was not completely destroyed.[35]

The destruction of the town of Bar was described by eyewitnesses:[36]

> [Khmelnitsky] sent some of his forces to capture the city of Bar, because in that fortified city was a large settlement of Jews and nobles. When the enemies came close to the city, the gunners on the wall shot at them and they were unable to storm the wall. And they laid siege to the city for many days.
>
> What did the local people, the Ukrainians, do? They dug a tunnel under the city and allowed the scoundrels to enter the city at night, and the enemies began to massacre the people. The Jews and nobles took refuge in the mighty fortress and they fortified it strongly. There were no Ukrainians among them. And the enemies laid siege to the fortress for several days, and they built against it

> mounds and buklers, and they shot at them with big cannons, which they call in German Roeder Biksen, until they subdued the fortress and killed all the Jews and the nobles therein, inflicting upon them the most violent deaths in the world, and they took the booty for prey. The number of the slain in the city of Bar was approximately two thousand Jewish persons.

After many battles in which the Poles were defeated, a peace treaty was signed between Jan Casimir and Khmelnitsky in the town of Zborov in August of 1649. A clause was included forbidding the residence of Jews in the portion of Ukraine inhabited by the Cossacks (including parts of Podolia).[37] However, this peace was to be short-lived. In May of 1651 it was reported to the Polish nobility that "on the way to Zborov, Cossacks and Tatars burned and destroyed the towns of Bar, Satanov, Staro Konstantinov, Novo Konstantinov, Medzhibozh, and others, massacring Poles and Jews everywhere and taking some of them as prisoners."[38]

The victims of the slaughters met horrible deaths. "Whoever failed to escape or was unable to flee was killed. Some were skinned alive and their flesh thrown to the dogs; some had their hands and limbs chopped off, and their bodies thrown on the highway only to be trampled by wagons and crushed by horses; some had wounds inflicted upon them, and thrown in the streets to die a slow death; they writhed in their blood until they breathed their last; others were buried alive. The enemy slaughtered infants in the laps of their mothers..."[39]

Thousands of Jews were taken hostage by the Cossacks and Tatars and brought to the slave markets of Malta and Constantinople. "The Fund for the Redemption of Captives," (*Khevras Pidion Shevuim* in Hebrew) one of the first international Jewish charity drives, was begun in Venice in the 17th century to help ransom Jewish hostages captured during pirate raids on Mediterranean ships. After the Khmelnitsky massacres this fund grew as money was collected from the *kahalim* of Jewish communities all over Europe. The cost of ransoming a Jewish hostage was higher than the cost of ransoming any other slave.[40] The following passage describes the method by which money was raised in the early 1650s:[41]

> The following action is taken inasmuch as we have seen how so many Jews, unfortunately, have been taken captive, dispersed among the nations, and as a result have been practically lost among them. Now it has been made clear in the minutes of the "Medinah" [the Lithuanian National Jewish Council] that in this matter the involved expenses rest upon the whole "Medinah"....Therefore we have written granting permission to every town and place where there are ten Jews, authorizing them to ransom anyone, spending as much as ten gold-pieces without need for any special need or application or authorization....Whoever takes a zealous interest in this matter of ransoming captives is to be commended and will receive his full reward from Him who dwells on high...Whereas the

rabbis of Constantinople have sent to us and have described at length their heavy outlay, running into the tens of thousands, which they have expended in this fine religious work, and have besought us to strengthen their hands with a substantial grant—for many are still unransomed, subject to suffering and to captivity. Therefore it was agreed to make provision for their ransom and to help the Constantinople authorities. Voluntary donations to help the captives shall be collected twice in every town and village. And all the moneys collected shall be sent by every village, town, and district to their highest court, no later than Purim—may it come upon them auspiciously! This is to be done in order that the moneys may be ready and prepared to be sent to the chief Jewish authorities at Lublin...from Lublin the funds are to be sent to Constantinople...

Polish Husaria.
These winged calvary, with their oriental dress, painted horses, and unusual battle tactics, were highly successful at routing Poland's 17th century Turkish, Tatar and Cossack enemies. From a Polish tapestry.

The displacement of the Jewish population is described by R. Nathan Hanover in *Yeven Metsulah.*[42] He says that some of the Jews who fled during each wave of Khmelnitsky's terror then returned during each lull in the killings. This appears to be true in the case of Medzhibozh. Although there were several waves of pogroms in Medzhibozh between the years 1648 and 1664 in which a large percentage of the Jewish population was killed, it is documented that there were Jews who were in the town in 1649, 1651, and 1653.[43] There are references to a small number of Jews in Medzhibozh by the early 1660s. There were two Jewish inns in the town in 1661.[44] In a Russian description of Medzhibozh, it was noted that "Krivonos killed *almost all* Catholics and Jews"[45] {italics added}. It is possible that some Jews who survived by allowing themselves to be baptized into the Eastern Orthodox Church reverted back to Judaism when the threat of death disappeared. It is also possible that some of the new residents of Medzhibozh were refugees from the northwestern

provinces, fleeing from the armies fighting the Swedish-Poland War. However, other towns remained small and impoverished, as Derazhnia had only 21 homes in 1661, with no Jews recorded even twenty years later under Turkish rule.[46] Zinkov, which in 1578 had more houses (275) than either Medzhibozh or Letichev, lost its wealth and importance as a town.[47] An Italian traveler to Podolia in the 1660s noted that after the rebellion, "...Podolia...once rich and densely populated...is now completely destroyed." [48]

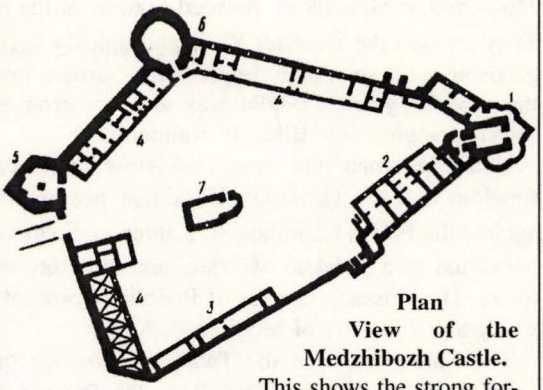
In June of 1664, the last slaughter of the pogrom wave which began in 1648 took place. Cossacks swept across the provinces of Bratslav and Podolia, killing "all Poles, elderly, and Jews in Kamenets-Podolsky, Medzhibozh, Mogilev-Podolsky, and Bratslav."[49] Interestingly, in 1666, less than twenty years after Medzhibozh was initially captured and devastated, a dispute between the Medzhibozh Jewish *kahal* and the Polish landlord was tried in the Letichev District court.[50] In 1667 there were four taxpaying Jewish households in Medzhibozh.[51]

By the end of the time of the Khmelnitsky massacres, tens of thousands of Jews were dead throughout Poland--possibly as many as 150,000. Tens of thousands were slaughtered outright, and there were probably just as many who died in epidemics in the 1650s. Traditional estimates of hundreds of thousands killed has been reasoned to be demographically impossible.[52] It is not known how many Jews did submit to baptism in order to survive, but an observer in Podolia

Medzhibozh Castle.
Completed by the Czartoryski family by the early 1700s. From a painting ca. 1850.

in the 1670s took note of Jews in the region, some of them living as Christians.[53]

Bogdan Khmelnitsky and his heirs failed to achieve their goal of wresting control of Ukraine from the Poles and developing an empire of their own modeled after the Kievan Rus. Instead, the Poles managed to recover most of Ukraine through a series of alliances, treaties and military victories, leaving the Dnieper River valley (including Kiev) firmly in the control of the Muscovite Russians, to whom Khmelnitsky swore allegiance out of expediency for the cause. This Ukrainian allegiance to Moscow would be misinterpreted ever since, with the repercussions appearing again in the twentieth century.[54] Khmelnitsky himself became deified by Ukrainians as the founder of Ukrainian nationalism, identifying Ukrainians as a people separate from the rest of the Slavic community. An example of Khmelnitsky's continuing legacy is the renaming of the city of Proskurov in 1954 to Khmelnitsky as a symbol of Ukrainian nationalism.



Plan View of the Medzhibozh Castle. This shows the strong fortifications in the castle, including Tower 1, named Skhidna, which could defend the Yuzhny Bug from four sides.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY REVIVAL

Turkish Rule

Prior to the Khmelnitsky Massacres, the Polish Commonwealth was the largest and most progressive state in all of Europe. The Polish Commonwealth was an experiment in a democratic monarchy. Rather than being dynastic as in the rest of Europe, Polish kings were elected from among the noblemen. Thus, they tended to be weak, controlled by the desires of families of the wealthy Polish magnates. The *liberum veto,* a political instrument which allowed any magnate to veto the will of the majority, was particularly paralyzing. With the *liberum veto* in place, without a unanimous vote, it was extremely difficult for the central Polish government to enact legislation which could be adopted for the betterment of the entire country. Thus, the Polish Crown power became weaker while the power of individual magnates grew.

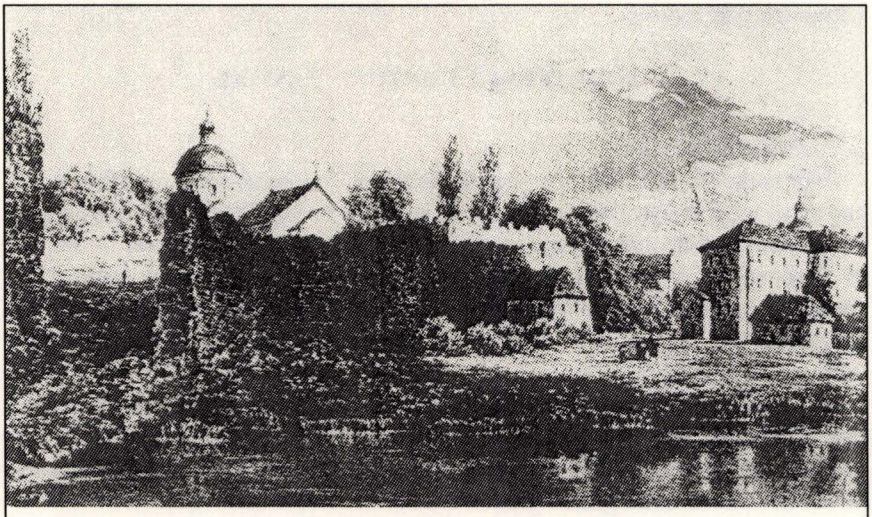
Weakened in both military strength and by a lack of population in Podolia after the Cossack Uprising, Poland was again pressured by the Ottoman Turks. The Turks were especially interested in ending the growing power of the Cossacks

and their cross-border raids on wealthy Turkish towns along the Black Sea. In 1672, Sultan Mehmet IV invaded Podolia at the head of a large Ottoman army. They crossed the Dniester River and quickly overwhelmed the 200 man Polish garrison in the seemingly impregnable fortress town of Kamenets-Podolsky. For the next 27 years, Podolia was the northernmost province of the expanding Turkish empire—the Ejalet of Kamieniecki.

Under Ottoman rule, Jews and Armenians were granted religious and legal freedom and the Orthodox Ukrainian peasants were supported in their fight against the Polish Catholics. In Kamenets-Podolsky, the Catholic Cathedral was converted to a Moslem Mosque, and minerets were installed which still exist today. The Cossack hetman of Podolia, Dorosenko, retained his autonomy and was granted the city of Mogilev-Podolsky.

The Sultan imposed the Treaty of Buczacz on the Polish Commonwealth, grant-ing the province of Podolia to the Turks in 1672. However, the Poles continued to launch campaigns against the Turks, which were largely unsuccessful. An armistice was signed at Zuravno in 1676.

There are a few scattered references to the Jews of Podolia under Ottoman rule. The Jewish population was so devastated by Cossack attacks just prior to this period, it is miraculous that Jews had survived into this period. A poem describing the lonely life of Turkish soldiers stationed in the garrisons of Podolia, preserved in a British Library manuscript, makes note of their anger against their commanding officers, who were accused of selling the soldiers' grain stores to Jewish and Christian distillers.[55] It must have been a terrible life indeed for the warm-weather Turks stranded in the cold and forbidding Ejalet of Kamieniecki. Although Jews were free to establish synagogues, resume their trades, and travel



Bar Castle ruins, 1815.

to Turkey (where no doubt some became followers of the pseudo-messiah Sabbatai Tsvi) there were continued Tatar raids and molestations.[56]

It cannot be overemphasized that the Turkish invasion served a pivotal role in the development of Jewish thinking in Podolia. The exposure of the Sephardic world during this period, with their tolerance of variety of false messianic movements which passed through this area, ultimately led to Podolian Jews tolerance of new fundamental Jewish ideals. Podolia's unique geographic circumstances were critical in the development of Jewish principles which influenced the rest of Jewish Europe and still persist today. It could happen no place else in Europe.

Fortunately, we have the ability to analyze population statistics of the Jews of Podolia during the years of Turkish rule. Conclusions can also be drawn about the number of survivors after the Cossack massacres. A census taken by the Turks in 1681 recorded approximately 1,500 Jews in all of Podolia, with 88 living in Medzhibozh, the largest Jewish community in the province at the time.[57] This figure compares favorably with the Polish headcount of 975 Jews in Podolia in 1662[58]. In all likelihood the 1681 census of residents of Podolia included some Jews of Turkish origin, who were free to travel within the Ottoman Empire, as well as new migrants from Poland and Belorussia. Subtracting several hundred for natural population growth and new inhabitants, we arrive at an estimate of 900 Jews in Podolia in 1664 after the last of the Cossack massacres, or less than a 25 percent survival rate. The survival rate in Medzhibozh was lower, probably because it was the epicenter of warfare. Therefore, we estimate that there were fewer than sixty survivors who returned to the town, i.e. an estimated 97% of the Jews of Medzhibozh were either killed, died in epidemics, taken captive, or fled and did not return.[59]

Attacks in Letichev District 1591-1777

1591 : Cossacks attack many towns
1595-1596 : Cossacks attack many towns
1648 : Cossacks attack ; Medzhibozh, Derazhnia, Volkovintsy, Letichev, Zinkov destroyed
1649 : Cossack slaughters in Medzhibozh
1651 : Cossacks attack Medzhibozh
1664 : Cossacks attack Medzhibozh
1672 : Turks invade Podolia
1702-1704 : Cossacks attack Zinkov, Letichev, Medzhibozh
1734 : Haidamaks attack Zinkov, Derazhnia, Letichev, Medzhibozh
1735 : Haidamaks attack Medzhibozh
1737 : Haidamaks atack Letichev
1749 : Haidamaks attack Letichev, Mikhalpol
1750 : Haidamaks attack Letichev, Goloskov
1755 : Haidamaks attack Letichev and Medzhibozh
1768 : Haidamaks attack Letichev
1777 : Haidamaks attack Letichev

The Turkish invasion of southern Poland was a wake up call to the Polish nobles to raise money for an army to defeat their most dangerous foe. In 1673, Prince Jan Sobiesky brilliantly defeated a much larger Turkish force at Chocim in Moldavia, thus checking the northward expansion of the Ottomans. In 1674,

Sobiesky ascended to the throne of Poland. Through clever political alliances and brilliant battlefield tactics, Sobiesky systematically dispatched Poland's enemies. He settled his northern border wars with Prussia and Sweden to focus his attention to the Turkish expansion to the south.

In the summer of 1683, the Ottomans invaded Hungary and laid siege to Vienna. The Austria-Hungarians, failing to understand Oriental tactics, met their enemies on the battlefield with ineffectual and outdated medieval tactics. Most of Europe rose to the defense of Vienna, but the enemy did not play by European battlefield rules. The siege went badly for the Europeans. Only the Poles were experienced in Oriental tactics, the only European army to have successfully defeated this new threat. In late September, Jan Sobiesky arrived in Vienna at the head of a large Polish army. He soundly defeated the Turks with his brilliant new tactics. By saving Vienna, the Poles effectively ended Turkish expansionism in Europe. In 1686, Medzhibozh was recaptured by the Poles. By 1699, the Poles successfully re-acquired all Turkish-controlled land in Podolia. A new Poland was born but it would only last another century.

Podolia, 1770.
At the twilight of the Polish sovereignty, this map shows all the major towns in Podolia just before the partition.

Polish Lords and their Jews

In many respects, the era from the end of Turkish domination to the last partition of Poland marked a golden age for Jews. The towns in Podolia were rebuilt, mercantile enterprises were thriving, and the population went through a general growth.

The wealthiest of the *szlachta*, or Polish landowners, of Podolia were the aristocratic families of Sieniawski, Potocki, Czartoryski, Zamoyski, Radziwill, and Lubomirski. Their fortunes had grown since the late 1500s when their ancestors followed the early settlers of the area, eventually obtaining title to the fertile plains of Podolia and other regions. In the words of the historian Michael Hrushevsky, "the result was that within a short time this one-time wilderness had become the possession of powerful nobles, who governed their immense lands through swarms of officials, in complete independence..."[60] Each of these great families vied for political power. However, it was the Czartoryskis who emerged as the most powerful by the end of the eighteenth century by means of several "marriage alliances," royal privileges, land purchases, and through political backing by other landowners.[61]

There were over one hundred Polish landowners in the area which was to later be demarcated by the Tsars as the Letichev District. A few towns and serfs were owned by churches, monasteries, or parishes. The largest number of towns and serfs were owned by Prince Adam Czartoryski (42 towns, approximately 10,000 serfs). Other prominent estate holders were Count Arkady Markov (15 towns, approximately 2,600 serfs) and Prince-General Marius Wurttemberg (12 towns, approximately 4,300 serfs). Many towns had several owners; for example, Volkovintsy was owned by seven people, including two members of the Wolkowinski ("Volkovinski") family.[62]

During the eighteenth century thousands of Jewish families migrated to Podolia. Attracted by the promise of religious freedom and economic opportunity, they flocked to the vast estates of the Polish magnates. Under the protection of these Polish lords, Jews engaged in a variety of businesses which were economically profitable for themselves and for the landowners. By the early 1800s there were approximately 11,500 Jews living in the Letichev District, with about 10% of them engaged in skilled crafts and 30% engaged in trade. The majority lived in Medzhibozh. However, it is important to note that many Jews still lived in the small villages. For example, the 444 Jews who comprised the *Latyczowa* (Letichev) *kahal* in 1784 were distributed as follows:[63]

Town (in Polish)	*number of Jews*
Latyczow	341
Zawolki	6
Szczodrowa	8
Horbasow	6
Markowce	5

Suslowce	8
Kopytynce	5
Popowce	7
Rudnia	10
Bochny	7
Bilecki	8
Holeniszcze	8
Woytowce	9
Kozaczki	6
Tarlowka	5
Zalatyczowka	5

The largest town in Podolia at the time was Medzhibozh. It was here that the Jewish community developed anew. By the mid 1700s, Medzhibozh became a thriving center of rabbinic activity. And it is here that the Baal Shem Tov made his home.

18th Century Uprisings and Massacres

Although the Treaty of Karlowitz between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish Commonwealth (signed January 26, 1699) returned Podolia to Poland, full control was delayed by additional Cossack uprisings. Semen Pallii and Samuil Samus led several waves of terror in which many towns, including Zinkov, Letichev, and Medzhibozh, were attacked between 1702 and 1704. A January 10, 1703 letter, written in Lvov, stated: "News from Medzhibozh and Satanov—there are over 3,000 Cossacks. They sack settlements, damaging everything as much as they can. Whenever they find Poles or Jews, they kill them."[64] The Cossack Mazepa and his successor Orlyk orchestrated continued uprisings until 1714. After a decade of relative calm, another phase of attacks by gangs of discontented serfs, former Cossacks, and petty thieves, called *Haidamaky* (after the Turkish word for "robber" or "vagrant") broke out in 1734. The revolt was sparked by the Russian-Polish war. Hoping that the Russians would liberate the Polish peasants from the oppression of the Polish lords, the Haidamaks attacked the Polish gentry and their Jewish lessees. Medzhibozh, Derazhnia, Letichev, and Zinkov suffered severely in the spring and summer of 1734. Two lines of a Ukrainian folksong make reference to the events of 1734 in Zinkov:[65]

> Out came the Cossacks from the town of Zinkov----
> Releasing fear from even the straw.

A complaint was lodged in the Letichev district court on August 27, 1734 by Prince Lubomirski that a gang of Medzhibozh peasants attacked and killed several people in Derazhnia, and destroyed a house occupied by Jews.[66] On June 14, 1735 Medzhibozh Jews Shmul Voloshin and his wife Khaika reported to the court that four of their relatives were killed by Podolian peasants who joined a

Haidamak gang. Property was stolen and sold by the gang for 8,000 Polish *zlotys*. Voloshin and his wife requested that the peasants be captured and put on trial for their terrible crimes.[68]

After peace was restored between Russia and Poland, the Haidamak uprising was quickly suppressed by Russian forces, as were all subsequent uprisings. In 1737 Letichev was repeatedly invaded by bands of murderous Haidamaks; the brother of the Letichev starosta Pavenski was impaled on a stake during an attack in September of that year.[69]

Haidamak revolts continued to sporadically flareup. The next wave to affect this area occurred in 1749. In February of that year, Hetman Potocki, fearful of the spread of the revolt, ordered 400 infantrymen to guard the towns of Mikhalpol, Bogdanovich, Kolibanya, Khmelnik, and Letichev.[70] Letichev and Goloskov were among the towns which were attacked, occupied, and burned by the Haidamaks in 1750. Fearful of further terror, the Baal Shem Tov prayed for a plague to sweep through Podolia to prevent subsequent invasions by Haidamaks. When a pestilence did occur, stopping the spread of attacks, the esteem of the Baal Shem Tov increased among the masses.[71] In 1755, Medzhibozh and Letichev were again terrorized.[72] The 1768 Confederation of Bar, formed just south of the Letichev District by a faction of Polish nobles and clergy in opposition to Russian interference in local Polish affairs, sparked new attacks. Although the Polish rebel forces of Casimir Pulaski were forced to retreat from northern Podolia by the summer, Letichev was among the numerous fortified towns which were attacked and occupied by Haidamaks.[73] Several years later, in the last wave of Haidamak devastations, Letichev was attacked on October 22, 1777.[74]

List of Jews who lived in Zinkov, 1758[67]

1. Eyzyk
2. Hershko, son of Ruvin
3. Ikhil(?)Manashko
4. old Hersh
5. Schary (?) the tailor
6. Ruvin, son of Yankel
7. Ios, son of Ruvin
8. Shymon, son of Itsko
9. Shmulko, son of Itsko
10. Leyci, son of Nakhman
11. Nyson, son of Yankel
12. Motal, son of El
13. Berko, son of Itsko
14. Mikhel from Hungary
15. Ruvin, son of Shaya
16. Davidko the dealer
17. Moshko, son of Yankel
18. Hershko the renter
19. Ios the baker
20. Berko the tavern-keeper
21. Minory (?) the capmaker
22. Abramko Manashko
23. Enoch the *behalfer* (carried children to *kheder*)
24. Leyba the tailor
25. Benya the tavern-keeper
26. wife of El the *behalfer*
27. Khaim the tailor
28. Yankel the winemaker
29. Yankel the schoolteacher
30. Leybka the schoolteacher
31. wife of Itsko, the rabbi's son
32. Shmul the winemaker
33. rabbi
34. Abramko
35. Moshko the butcher
36. Hershko the butcher
37. Shaya the baker
38. Leyzor the winemaker
39. Hershko's mother
40. Abramko (?)
41. El the carpenter
42. Shmuie, son of Ios
43. Abramko the tailor
44. Abramko, Abram's son-in-law
45. Shmunio, son of the rabbi
46. Moshko the baker
47. Borukh the tavern-keeper
48. Leyba the baker
49. Srul

The Haidamak attacks have been characterized by some historians as being as horrendous as those perpetrated by Khmelnitsky's forces, but little documentation exists which records the numbers killed. Analysts of the historical record[75] conclude that despite the fact that the Haidamaks inspired a great deal of terror and murdered thousands of Jews and Poles throughout the Ukraine, the overall number of victims was probably far below that of the massacres which began in 1648.

Map showing the three Polish Partitions.
By the end of the 18th century, Poland was absorbed out of existence by its neighbors Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The Province of Podolia is annotated and was lost to Tsarina Catherine the Great's Russian Empire in the Second Partition of 1792. Modified from Zamoyski.[66]

Polish Partition - the beginning of Tsarist Rule

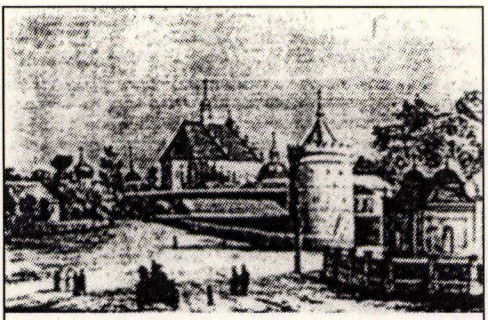
On March 3, 1792, a complaint was lodged by the town council of Letichev to the police commission of the Polish Government. Prince Adam Czartoryski had sent several thousand of his serfs to the huge forests near Letichev to cut down down almost all of the trees. The wood was taken to Czartoryski's estates in Granov, Sinyava, and Medzhibozh. Some wood was sold to Jews who operated distilleries. However, the Letichev town council stated that the forests no longer belonged to the Prince, as the property had been confiscated by order of the Polish Sejm's constitution and was actually under the the jurisdiction of the town of Letichev.[78] Soon after, Podolia was placed under Russian rule as Poland suffered its second partition.

A description of Letichev of 1797 provides us with an additional example of the types of disputes that occurred between the Polish owners of towns and the *starostas,* or village elders, who wanted the towns to be classified as *starostvos*, (towns run by the village elders):[79]

> In Letichev, the Christian inhabitants, as well as the Jews (the latter to a larger degree), engage in petty trade for small sums of money, receiving goods from towns of Podolia and neighboring provinces, making handicrafts and hand-made goods, and most of all engage in businesses dealing with the manufacturing and selling of spirits. This village has had the privilege to organize guilds since 1555. Inhabitants built ordinary wooden homes. There is a controversy between the owner and the starostvo. The owner, Secret Councillor and Cavalier Count Markov affirms that the lands which belong to the town of Letichev according to privileges are his and not the starostvo's. The magistrate of Podolia province is considering this case now. As long as all public towns should have lands of communes of vicegerency, after the case's resolution, some lands will be recognized as Letichev's lands. If these lands will not be sufficient, the rest of the lands should be allotted from the lands around town--former starosta's and other public lands, allotted by the land surveyor. There are no indicated public houses in this town, although Letichev's Magistrate indicated that Letichev has a Town and *Zemstvo* Court of Law and Archives. There are three stone and one wooden public building in which offices are located..."

List of Letichev *meschane* Jews, 1768[77]

Berko Yosiowicz
Eyzyk Abramowicz
Mikhel Abramowicz
Mikhel Leybowicz
Leyba Shlomowicz
Borukh Duwidowicz
Duwid Medlowicz
Duwid Yowel Yankielowicz
Abramko Yohoshowicz
Aron Moshkowicz
Froim Yudkowicz
Abramko Aronowicz
Meierko Yudkowicz
Zeylik Moshkowicz
Wol Meyerowicz
Borukh Khaimowicz
Yos Shlomowicz
Berko Yosiowicz
Nukhum Borukhowicz
Kopel Faybishowicz
Duwid Zusiowicz
Hershko Leyzorowicz
Yudko Yownowicz
Mortko Limanowicz
Shloma Mortkowicz
Duwid Yosiowicz
Shrul Moshkowicz
Shmuylo Leyzorowicz
Mikhel Moshkowicz
Moshko Zbramowicz
Yudka Owshiyowicz
Srul Owshiyowicz
Moshko Yankielowicz
Zalman Ickowicz
Abramko Hershkowicz
Shedla Hershkowiczowa
Hershko Shmuylowicz



Letichev in the late 1700s.
This is a view of THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV looking towards Letichev Castle in the foreground and the Polish Catholic Church in the background.

In the early 1790s, Prussia, Austria, and Russia tried to acquire additional land by annexing parts of Poland as they had done diplomatically in 1772. However, this land struggle led to an armed conflict, with the Polish army bravely fighting the superior Russian and Prussian armies. By the summer of 1792, Polish troops were completely overwhelmed by Russian troops. "In every part of the country there were requisitions, organized pillage under the pretext of domiciliary visits, and arbitrary arrests. There was terrorism in the towns. In the rural districts the serfs were encouraged to rise against their feudal lords... all the horrors of civil war were combined with those of foreign invasion...[80] In the "second partitioning" of Poland in 1793 Russia acquired the Polish provinces of Kiev, Bratslav, Podolia, and eastern Volhynia. The last partition, in 1795, brought western Volhynia under Russian control. The land of Poland no longer existed. The fate of the Jews of Podolia, and of these other provinces, were no longer to be determined by the Polish government. The era of Russian domination had begun.

JEWISH POPULATION STATISTICS IN LETICHEV DISTRICT

Census records, especially the early Polish and Russian ones, were at times very inaccurate. As tax rates were based upon head counts it was in the financial interest of the Jews to be undercounted. For example, as Polish census takers did not count children less than one year of age, many small Jewish children were probably represented by their parents as being younger than a year old. The great historian Raphael Mahler reasoned that population figures of this census should be increased by approximately 26% to compensate for underreporting. We have added this amount to each town listing for the 1764 census.[81]

Early Russian census takers missed many individuals. It was not uncommon for Jews to try to avoid documentation. For example, there are numerous entries which reveal that Jewish men (and sometimes their entire families) were "on the run" to avoid the military draft. However, it is generally believed that the 1897 census was very accurate.[82] The 1926 Soviet census also involved a dedicated effort, but the validity of the 1939 census has been questioned.[83]

Even with the possible shortcomings of some of these census records we can see a general trend for our towns, which match the historical record: a small early Jewish population in the 16th century; a drastic decline due to the Khmelnitsky massacres; a significant recovery by the mid-eighteenth century; continued growth until the early decades of the 20th century where the first World War, pogroms, and immigration resulted in a large decline. The Nazis exterminated approximately 99% of the Jews of the Letichev District.

Reported or Estimated Jewish Population of:

year	Podolia	Medzhibozh	Letichev	Zinkov	Derazhnia	Mikhalpol	Meidan	notes
1569	750	300	?	?	?	?	0	84
1648	4,000	2,500	?	?	?	?	0	85
1664	900	60	?	?	?	?	0	86
1681	1,500	88	?	3	0	?	0	87
1764	60,000	2,500	850	675	385	400	0	88
1784	75,000	2,000	800	1,000	600	500	0	89
1847	200,000	2,000	2,100	2,500	2,100	1,000	120	90
1897	370,000	6,000	4,100	3,700	3,300	1,400	595	91
1926	347,500	4,600	2,400	3,000	3,250	1,100	500	92
1939	370,000	5,000	2,600	2,500	2,650	725	900	93
1944	30,000	?	100	100	100	?	0	94
1996	20,000	1	7	1	0	1	0	95

Chapter Notes:

1. Aftanazy, R., 1996, *Dzieje rezydencji na dawnych kresach Rzeczypospolitej,* Tom 9: Wroslaw.

2. The name Medzhibozh comes from *mezhbuzhye* which literally means "between the Buzhenka [and the Bug] rivers."

3. Yuri Dolgoruky was the founder of Moscow. From Evgenia Tretyak, pers. comm., 1993; and Louis, Victor and Jennifer, 1991, *The Complete Guide to the Soviet Union:* St. Martin's Press, p. 214-215.

4. Hrushevsky, Michael, 1941, *A History of Ukraine*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 175.

5. Modified from Riasanovsky, Nicholas V., 1984, *A History of Russia:* Oxford Univ. Press, p. 113.

6. This castle fell into disrepair by the early nineteenth century but was cared for by Prince Adam Czartoryski. While Czartoryski was abroad in 1820, Sinyavski ordered his manager, a certain Pukhalsky, to have the Rakochi castle torn down and the bricks to be used for the building of new stables. When Czartoryski returned, he ordered Pukhalsky to be lashed and to be fired. From: *Istorichesky ocherk mestechka Medzhibozha. Iz posmertnih zapisok generala Oranovsogo,* Odessa, 1886. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova, pers. comm. June 29, 1995.

7. Most of the history described here comes from Louis, Victor and Jennifer, 1991, *The Complete Guide to the Soviet Union:* St. Martin's Press, p. 214-215. Their information may have come from: 1971, *Istoriya Mist I Sil Ukrainskoy RSR:* Kiev.

8. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston.

9. The earliest official documentation of Jews in Medzhibozh was in 1500; "Raniya Stadii Kolonizatsii", *Evreiskaya Starina,* 1911, p. 356. The earliest documentation of Jews in Zinkov is in the year 1526, and in Letichev in 1581. Shmuel Ettinger, "Maamadam ha-mishpati ve-hachevrati shel yehudey Ukraina ba-meot hatetvav-hayudzayin," *Zion,* v. 20, 1955.

10. Jews were first described in Kamenets-Podolsky in 1465, "Raniya Stadii Kolonizatsii", *Evreiskaya Starina,* 1911, p. 356.

11. The earliest Jewish tombstone in Podolia, if the reading of the inscription is correct, dates to the year 1240. Weinryb, Bernard, 1973, *The Jews of Poland:* Philadelphia, p. 25. The earliest Jewish synagogue in Podolia that still survives is located in Shargorod and was built in the 1400s.

12. "Vi Alt iz der Yiddisher Yishuv in Felshtin?" by Shmuel Landau in *Felshtin:* New York, 1937, p. 265-269. Translated from Yiddish by J. Michoel Ronn.

13. Weinryb, Bernard, 1973, *The Jews of Poland:* Philadelphia, p. 18-32.

14. *Nature Genetics,* Feb. 1995, "Genetic analysis of idiopathic torsion dystonia in Ashkenazi Jews and their descent from a small founder population" by Niel Risch et al.

15. Beider, Alexander, 1996, *A dictionary of Jewish surnames from the Kingdom of Poland:* Avotaynu, p. 6.

16. "Karaites", Encyclopedia Judaicia, v. 10, p. 762-786.

17. Nosonovsky, Mikhail, 1996, "On the history of the Karaite community in Derazhnia," *Obshestvo Evreiski Naseleni,* Moscow.

18. Stepniav, Jaroslav, "A Turkish document in Ukrainian from the mid-sixteenth century on the origin of the Ukrainian Cossacks," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies,* vol. 1, no. 2, June 1977, p. 220.

19. Nosonovsky, Mikhail, 1996, "On the history of the Karaite community in Derazhnia," *Obshestvo Evreiski Naseleni,* Moscow.

20. Benjamin Lukin, pers. comm.

21. Bialkowski, L., 1920, *Podole w 16-tym wieku:* Warsaw, p. 111.

22. "Podolia", *Encyclopedia Judaica,* v. 13, cols. 667-670; also, Zenon Guldon, Jacek Wijaczka, "Procesy O Mordy Rytualne na Rusi Czerwonej, Podolu i Prawobrzeznej Ukrainie w XVI-XVIII Wieku", *Nasza Przeszlosc* 81 (1994), p. 67.

23. Bialkowski, L., 1920, *Podole w 16-tym wieku:* Warsaw, p. 9.

24. Ibid, p. 178-181. Parentheses represent authors' interpretation of the name.

25. Bialkowski, p. 80, 109-111, 215-216; translated and summarized from Polish by Ben Weinstock; and Salo Baron, 1976, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* Vol. XVI, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 188, 272.

26. Salo Baron, 1976, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* Vol. XVI, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 272

27. Schochet, E.J., 1971, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes: His Life, Works and Times:* Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem-New York, p. 134.

28. Zamoyski, Adam, 1988, *The Polish Way:* Franklin Watts, p. 161-162.

29. Riasanovsky, Nicholas V., 1984, *A History of Russia:* Oxford Univ. Press, p. 159.

30. Zamoyski, Adam, 1988, *The Polish Way:* Franklin Watts, p. 165.

31. Fr.-Chirovsky, Nicholas L., 1984, *An Introduction to Ukrainian History:* Philosophical Library, vol. 2, p. 170.

32. Weinryb, Bernard, 1973, *The Jews of Poland:* Philadelphia, p. 316.

33. Weinreich, Max, 1928, *Bilder fun der yidisher literatur geshikhte:* Vilna, p. 209.

34. See Chapter 6 for folk ballads which memorialized the Jewish communities destroyed by Khmelnitsky's massacres.

35. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, The Macmillan Company, Jerusalem, 1972, "Purim", v. 13, col. 1398.

36. Mesch, Abraham J., 1959, translator, *Yeven Metzulah* (Abyss of Despair) by Rabbi Nathan Hanover, New York, Block Publishing, p. 80-81.

37. Dubnow, Simon, 1916, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland,* vol. 1, p. 151.

38. *Registi i Nadpisi,* vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1899, entry # 934.

39. Mesch, Abraham J., 1959, translator, *Yeven Metsulah* (Abyss of Despair) by Rabbi Nathan Hanover, New York, Block Publishing, p. 43.

40. "The Slave Community of Malta," by Cecil Roth, in *The Menorah Journal,* vol. 17, no. 3, Dec. 1929; Halperin, Israel.

41. Marcus, Jacob R., 1971, "The Ransom of Captives," *The Jew in the Medieval World:* Atheneum Publishers, p. 454-456.

42. Recently reinforced by historian Jonathan Israel: *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550-1750:* Claredon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 122 and 165.

43. "Medzhibozh" by Benjamin Lukin, Jerusalem, 1990.

44. *Registi i Nadpisi,* vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1899, entry # 995. Translated from Russian by Ben Weinstock.

45. *Gorodskaia poselenia v Rossiisoi imperii,* Emperor's Geographical Society, P.P. Semenov, 1863-1885; Medzhibozh entry translated by Elena Tsvetkova.

46. *Istoriya Mist i Sil Ukrainskoi RSR:* Khmelnitski Oblast, p. 216; Dariusz, K., p. 142.

47. "Zinkov", by Anatoli Chayesh, 1997.

48. D. Caccamo, 1974, "Osservatori italani della crisi palacca a meta del Seicento; la relatione di S. Cefali e le repicationi di S. Masini," in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 132, p. 356.

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50. *Akta w sprawie sporu miedzy szlachcicem a kahalem Miedzybozskim o falszywe swiadectwo Zyda z Miedzyborza*, TsGia Kiev, fond 40, opis 1, delo 2; The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, code HM2/7924.6.

51. Rosman, Moshe, 1996, *Founder of Hasidism*, Univerity of California Press, p. 236.

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53. Ibid, p. 195.

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55. Koldzijczuk, Darius, 1994, *Podole pod panowaniem turckim: Ejalet Kamieniecki 1872-1699:* Polczek, Warszawa, p. 231.

56. Dubnow, Simon, 1971, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland:* Thomas Yoselof Publ., vol. 4, p. 92-93.

57. Koldzijczuk, Darius, 1994, *Podole pod panowaniem turckim: Ejalet Kamieniecki 1872-1699:* Polczek, Warszawa, p. 142.

58. Zenon Guldon, Jacek Wijaczka, 1994, "Proceszy o mordy Rytualne na Rsui Czerwonej, Podolu i Prawobrzeznej Ukraine w XVI-XVIII wieku" in *Nasza Przeszosc* 81, p. 20-22.

59. Sadly, this low percentage of survival was to be repeated in the Letichev District during the Nazi occupation.

60. Hrushevsky, Michael, 1941, *A History of Ukraine*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 176.

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62. Marczynski, X., 1820, *Statystyka Gubernii Podolskiey*, Volume 1, Vilna, p. 323-349.

63. *Arkhiv Yugo Zapadnai Rossia*, Kiev, 1890, Chast 5, Tom 2, p. 455.

64. *Registi i Nadpisi*, ORPME, St. Petersburg, 1899, entry # 1371.

65. "Zinkiv", *Istoriya Mist i Sil Ukrainskoi RSR, Khmelnitski Oblast:* Kiev, 1971, p. 134. Translated from Ukrainian by Ben Weinstock.

66. *Registi i Nadpisi,* vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1899, entry #1776. Translated from Russian by Ben Weinstock.

67. *Registi i Nadpisi,* vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1899, entry #1792. Translated from Russian by Ben Weinstock.

68. Czartoryski Archive, BC(*Biblioteka Czartoryski*) 4114.

69. Ivan Butch and Fedir Shevchenko, editors, *Haidamats'kyi Rukh Na Ukraini v XVIII st.:* Kiev, Naukova Dumka, 1970, p. 99. Translated from Ukrainian by Vladimir Goykher.

70. Lola,Aleksander, 1965, *Gaidamatskoe Dvizhenie na Ukraine v 20-60kh godakh XVIII st*, Naukova Dumka, Kiev, 1965, p. 67.

71. Simon Dubnow, "The Beginnings: The Baal Shem Tov (Besht) and the Center in Podolia," in Gershon David Hundert, editor, *Essential Papers on Hasidism:* New York Univ. Press, 1971, p. 38. However, see also Omeljan Pitsak, "Ukraine as the Setting for the Emergence of Hasidism," in *Israel and the Nations:* The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, Jerusalem, 1987, p. 67-83, in which it is proposed that at times the Baal Shem Tov enjoyed good relations with some Haidamaks.

72. Lola,Aleksander, 1965, *Gaidamatskoe Dvizhenie na Ukraine v 20-60kh godakh XVIII st*, Naukova Dumka, Kiev, 1965, p. 92.

73. The rebel Polish forces led by Pulaski were finally defeated in 1772.

74. *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar*, St. Petersburg, 1896, vol. 17, col. 606.

75. Weinryb, Bernard, 1973, *The Jews of Poland:* Philadelphia; Zenon Kohut, "Myths Old and New: The Haidamak Movement and the Koliivshchyna in Recent Historiography," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, Sept. 1977, p. 359-378.

76. Zamoyski, Adam, 1988, *The Polish Way:* Franklin Watts.

77. *Arkhiv Yugo Zapadnai Rossia*, Kiev, 1869, Chast 5, Tom 1, p. 590-591.

78. *Registi i Nadpisi,* vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1899, entry #2391. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

79. Russian State Historical Archive, St. Petersburg, Russia, Fond 1374, "Chancellary of the General Public Prosecutor of the Senate," Inventory 1, File 188, p. 55-56. Translated from Russian by Elena Tsvetkova.

80. Lord Eversley,1973, *The Partitions of Podolia*, Howard Fertig, New York, p. 117-118.

81. Shaul Stampfer, "The 1764 Census of Polish Jewry," *Bar-Ilan*, XXIV-XXV, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, 1989, p. 41-139.

82. Clem, Ralph, editor, 1986, *Research Guide to the Russian and Soviet Censuses*, Cornell University Press, p. 50-52.

83. Ibid, p. 53-56.

84. *Encyclopedia Judaica,* 1972, "Podolia", v. 13, cols. 667-670; and "Medzhibozh", v. 11, cols. 1220.

85. Based upon Weinryb, Bernard, 1973, *The Jews of Poland:* Philadelphia.

86. Our estimate, based upon the Polish figure of 975 Jews in 1662, and the Turkish figure of 1,500 Jews in 1681.

87. Based upon the 1681 Turkish census. See Koldzijczuk, Darius, 1994, *Podole pod panowaniem turckim: Ejalet Kamieniecki 1872-1699:* Polczek, Warszawa, p. 142.

88. Based upon the 1766 Jewish Head Tax in the Territories of August Aleksander Czartoryski (see: Rosman, M.J., 1990, *The Lords's Jews:* Cambridge, p. 213-214, and "The 1764 Census of Polish Jewry," by Shaul Stampfer, in *Bar-Ilan*, XXIV-XXV, Ramat-Gan, 1989, p. 41-139) plus the estimated 26% of the recorded figure to compensate for under-reporting by Jews, and to factor in children younger than one year (recommended by historian Mahler, quoted by Rosman, p. 214). These figures include the towns and the surrounding villages, as well as those powiates of Braclaw province that were later incorporated into the Tsarist *guberniya* of Podolia. Another source states that there were 75 Jews in Letichev in 1769 (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1934, Germany). For some of the other towns which are included in our study, the estimates are as follows: Mikhalpol, 340 Jews; Snitovka, 160; Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, 10; Novy Meidan, 10. No figures are available for Volkovincy and other towns.

89. Roughly based on the 1784 Polish census. See *Registi i Nadpisi,* entry # 2320.

90. In 1840, there were approximately 115,000 Jews in Podolia, according to the annual report of Governor-General D.G. Bibikov of 1840, quoted by Daniel Beauvois, "Polish-Jewish relations in the territories annexed by the Russian Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century", *The Jews in Poland,* edited by Chimen Abramsky, Maciej Jachimczyk, and Antony Polonsky, 1986, Basil Blackwell Publishers, p. 79; in the 1847 Russian census the Jewish population was vastly under-reported (we have added approximately 20% to compensate for this). See also: *Evreiskaya Entsiklopediya,* St. Petersburg, 1906-1911, volume 10, columns 181-182 "Letichev".

91. Based on the fairly accurate 1897 All-Russia census. No corrections have been factored in to these numbers. There were approximately 24,500 Jews living in the entire Letichev District in 1897. *Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia,* "Letichev".

92. *Encyclopedia Judaica* The Macmillan Company, Jerusalem, 1972, v. 11, col. 53.

93. Computed by adding 9% of the 1926 figures for population growth. See Shmuel Spector, The Holocaust of the Jews of Volhynia, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1990, p. 10.

94. Figures include: ghetto survivors plus those who survived by escaping to Transnistria, or to the Far East plus those who served in the military and survived. For details, see chapter 16 "Holocaust". At the time of the 1944 liberation of Transnistria, there were 60,000 Jews there; however, 45,000 of them were from Rumania, Bukovina, etc., only 15,000 from Podolia (*Encyclopedia Judaica,* "Podolia"). We have arrived at the figure of 30,000 by assuming that 15,000 Jews of Podolia survived by escaping to the Far East and/or survived the military, and adding them to the number of Podolian-born survivors of Transnistria.

95. See report by David Chapin on his 1995 visit to these towns, Chapter 17

2

The Rabbis

By David A. Chapin

Introduction

The Road From Letichev was the trailhead for some of the most brilliant rabbis ever to walk in the Jewish world. At one moment in time, it became the major center of the religious Jewish world and founding site of the Chasidic movement, the most fundamental changing force to Judaism from the middle ages until the twentieth century.

It was no accident that the Chasidic movement developed in the Letichev District. Podolia Guberniya was ripe for change and adopted the new philosophy with open arms. It could happen no other place in the world. Here, the embryonic ideas could be tested. Only here were all the right ingredients present to begin new revolutions in Jewish thinking. Podolia was the frontier...the ragged edge of the Eastern European Jewish world. It was stressed by the ruthless Khmelnitsky massacres. It was then invaded by the Turks, bringing with them Sephardic ideas. Finally, it was retaken by the Polish lords who initiated a golden age of economic revitalization and religious tolerance. Here, the Chasidic movement could develop, branching out from a solid root. The rabbis along The Road From Letichev paved the way for the rest of the Jewish spiritual world to follow.

EARLY RABBINIC LEADERSHIP

Rabbi Joel Sirkes (1561-1640)

Rabbi Joel Sirkes was born in Lublin, Poland and was one of the greatest talmudic scholars of his day. From the family named Jaffe, R. Joel apparently took on the name Sirkes in honor of his mother Sarah. The Jaffe family was one of renown and scholarship and R. Joel became perhaps the most famous. Similar to many of his contemporaries, R. Joel moved from community to community in different official capacities. Between the years 1605 and 1612, R. Joel served as *Av Bet Din* (head of the Jewish Court) in Medzhibozh. The fact that a noted rabbi of the day served in Medzhibozh was an indication of the size and importance of the Jewish community of Medzhibozh at that time.

Most of what is known about R. Joel Sirkes comes from his own writings. R. Joel was known as a great scholar of independent judgement. For instance, he allowed the sale of leavened food to non-Jews before Passover to include not just the food, but the room which contains the food. This practice is still performed today by religious Jews. R. Joel once performed a marriage on the Sabbath because the future of an orphan was at stake. He permitted men to hear women sing (which at the custom of the day was forbidden), and he even permitted church melodies to be sung in the synagogue as long as they had universal appeal. In spite of his liberal talmudic rulings, he was very strict on other issues of Jewish law. An adherent of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), he did not agree to many kabbalistic practices that were contrary to traditional Jewish law.[1]

Other interesting rulings by R. Joel reflect his sophisticated understanding of the social environment in which Jews lived within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For instance, he ruled that it was permissible for a Jew to dress similar to non-Jews, if that dress is used to avoid embarrassment and increase respect from them. He ruled that it was permissible for Jews to erect structures (including synagogues) patterned after gentile meeting halls and courthouses. This ruling opened the door for creative synagogue architecture which copied the style of the local non-Jewish population.[2] Examples can be seen in the elaborate Zinkov and Mikhalpol synagogues shown elsewhere in this book.

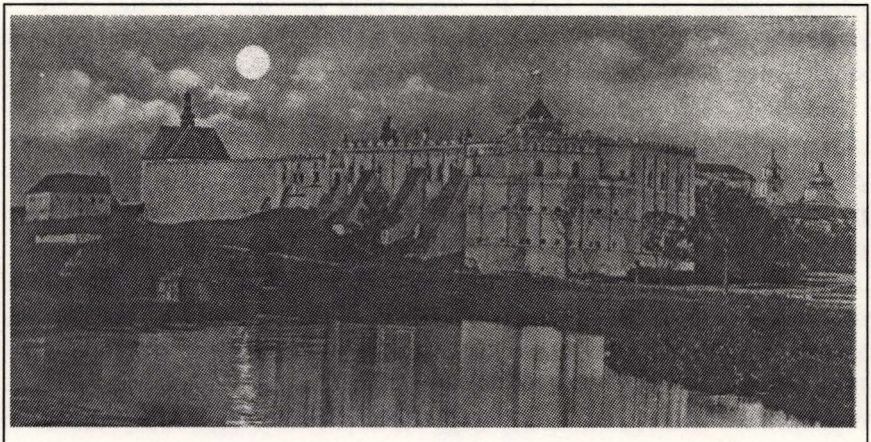
R. Joel was a staunch protector of the Synagogue as a sacred institution. For instance, R. Joel put a stop to idle chatting by congregants during services in one synagogue. He banned the use of the synagogue as a place of lodging for itinerants. He also tightened up the rules by which synagogues could accept donations, thus producing a fairer system where the privileges of the wealthy donors did not get out of hand.[3]

While in Medzhibozh, R. Joel dealt with several cases of *agunot*. These were women for which a ruling had to be made whether or not their husbands

abandoned them. Since travel was treacherous and Jewish merchants were often on the road, it was a difficult matter to determine whether tragedy befell the husband, or if it was in fact a true case of abandonment. The difference between abandonment or widowhood could determine whether the woman could remarry.[4]

R. Joel Sirkes was the author of *She'elot u-Tesuvot Bayit Khadash* and *She'elot u-Tesuvot Bayit Khadash ha-Khadoshot*, a two-volume set of Responsa (Talmudic law rulings in question and answer format). He is known by the acronym "BaKH" for *Bayit Khadash*, the shortened name of his literary legacy.[5] He had at least five children. Two sons, Judah Leib and Samuel Tsvi became important rabbis in their own right. All three daughters either married or fathered important rabbis who continued in the family tradition.[6]

Rabbi Joel Sirkes was typical of many of the wealthy rabbinic leaders of his time. High scholarship and elite family connections were the keys to his great success.



Medzhibozh Castle.
This fortified town was one of Poland's most important frontier outposts in Podolia during the time of Rabbi Joel Sirkes. Photo from a century-old postcard.

THE FALSE MESSIAHS

During the late 1600's through the early 1700's a series of personality cults took hold throughout the Podolian Jewish community. They were perhaps an expression of the frustration of the grass-roots Jews with their leadership governed by wealthy scholar-rabbis, who perhaps were disconnected with the plight of the ordinary Jew. These new cults provided a means for simple Jews to participate in their religious experience at a more personal level. While later discredited, these cults demonstrate a spiritual vacuum that existed at the time, and they set the stage for the emergence of the Chasidic movement.

This period brought changes to the community. It instigated the popularization of the Kabbalah among everyday Jews. Up until that time, Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) was an obscure practice. Along with the popularization of mysticism came the development of ascetic individuals who roamed around the countryside. Many of these individuals practiced spiritual healing, the mainstream medicine of the day. This movement paralleled other types of mysticism practiced amongst the Christians of Poland during the same period. During the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Podolia, being a relatively unpopulated border state, became a place of exile for several of these strange mystical sects, Jewish and Christian alike.[7]

The mystical Jewish sects took advantage of the adverse conditions which prevailed in Podolia. In 1648, the Khmelnitsky massacres wiped out a large percentage of the Jewish population. Supposedly, the date of this event was predicted by a passage in *Sefer haZohar*, the foundation of the Kabbalah.[8] This prediction enhanced the reputation of the *Zohar* as a fundamental Jewish text. The Jews remaining after the Khmelnitsky massacres in their despair and oppression were susceptable to hopeful signs of a better messianic age. A second condition in Podolia was its occupation by the Turks between 1672 and 1699. This opened the lines of communication with the well-established and less oppressed Sephardic communities within the Ottoman Empire. The Sephardic-influenced mystical sects which sprang up were generally well-received in Podolia.

Sabbatai Tsvi (1626-1676)

Born in Smyrna, Greece (then under Ottoman Rule), Sabbatai Tsvi perpetrated a false-messiah hoax[9] which was perhaps the largest such hoax in the Diaspora. While Sabbatai Tsvi never set foot in Podolia, his influence had profound implications for the future of the religious life and culture of the region.

Taking advantage of the turmoil in the Polish Jewish community after the Khmelnitsky Massacres in 1648, Sabbatai Tsvi proclaimed himself the Messiah,

after the Messiah supposedly visited him in the guise of a Cossack-murdered Polish Jew. The Sabbateanism movement was embraced by many Sephardic Jewish communities and made some inroads into the Polish Jewish communities. It is estimated that nearly one-half of the Jewish world embraced the Sabbatean movement at its height. The movement collapsed when Sabbatai Tsvi was arrested by Turkish authorities in Constantinople in 1666. Charged as a rebel, Sabbatai Tsvi was given the choice of facing execution or converting to Islam. Much to the disdain of his followers, Sabbatai Tsvi chose the latter path, thus proving he was not the Messiah.[10]

Sabbatai Tsvi.
Sketched in Smyrna by an eyewitness in 1666.

Sabbatai Tsvi's wife, Sarah, had Podolian roots. She was born in Podolia where her parents were murdered during the Khmelnitsky massacres in 1648. She was then raised by nuns in a Polish convent (or by a Polish nobleman, according to other sources). She spent time living in Amsterdam and Mantua, but eventually became a prostitute in Egypt where she met and married Sabbatai Tsvi. At the height of the Sabbatean movement Sarah held considerable power.[11]

The disappointment of the Sabbateanism Movement had a profound effect on Polish Jewry. This effect was even felt outside the Jewish community. For example, in 1666 the Polish king Jan Casimir decreed that the anti-Jewish repressions —aroused by the proclamations about the advent of the Jewish Messiah—were to be immediately halted.[12] A conference of rabbis of Podolia took place in Yaroslav in 1722. Sabbateans were banned in an official ceremony, marked by *shofar* blasts and black candles. The proclamation read:[13]

> We order that our decree of excommunication shall be proclaimed in all the synagogues in the entire land of Podolia... and the heads, officers, potentates and chiefs of the land give authority and a rod and lash to the heads of the districts and the theads of the communities that they may persecute these people

> and punish them with disgrace and fines and imprisonment, even with the laws of the nations. And these people shall be separated all their days. Even when misfortune shall befall them, they shall not be given aid but be isolated from the community of the exile.

The disillusionment caused by the false hopes generated through the Sabbatean movement, provoked ordinary Jews to became more skeptical of their leadership. At the same time, it caused wide exposure of kabbalistic thought into Polish Jewish communities, elevating Jewish mysticism to a more important role in their religious practices.

Khaim ben Solomon Malakh (ca. 1650- ca. 1716)

During the 27 year occupation of Podolia by the Turks the door was opened for exposure of the Podolian Jews to the various post-Sabbatean cultists of the Ottoman Empire. One such Sabbatean was Khaim ben Solomon Malakh. Malakh, which means "angel,"[14] was considered by his followers to be Sabbatai Tsvi incarnate. A gifted orator and highly knowledgeable in kabbalah, Malakh traveled widely among the Jewish communities of the day. In public, Malakh's denied any Sabbatean connections. He was widely denounced as an underground Sabbatean by rabbinical authorities of the day, most notably R. Tsvi Ashkenazi. Unlike his predecessor, Malakh spent considerable time in Poland, notably from 1692-94 and from 1710 until his death. Expelled from Poland, Germany, Israel, and the Hapsburg Empire during various times in his life, Malakh spread his philosophy widely, though his followers considered themselves an underground sect. In his later life, he established a branch of his sect in Podolia. It is from these Malakh's followers that the Frankist movement sprang.[15]

Jacob Frank (1726-1791)

Jacob ben Judah Leib, born in Korolevka (near Mikhalpol), was leader of a Jewish false messiah movement. He later adopted the appelation "Frank" and his followers became known as "Frankists." Jacob Frank was described by contemporaries and opponents as a mixture of despotic ruler, popular prophet, cunning imposter, mystic, and miracle worker. The Frankist movement was considered the last stage of the Sabbatean movement. In Frank's early life, he had connections with the Sabbatean followers of Malakh.[16] After spending 25 years in the Ottoman Empire, Frank returned to Podolia in 1755.[17] There he spent time in Korolevka and other communities which had underground Sabbatean cells. Frank saw himself as the incarnation of Sabbatai Tsvi, but his new movement was a corrupted version of Judaism. This radical sect believed

in doctrines akin to some in Christianity. Mystic worship included sexual orgies and other perversions.

In 1756 near Kamenets-Podolsky, Frank and some followers were discovered conducting Sabbatean rituals in a locked house. It was claimed that a religious orgy took place there and this led to a great scandal within the Jewish community. An inquiry by the rabbinic court in Satanov, the most influential Jewish court in Podolia at the time, uncovered the extent of the secret sect. The Frankists were officially excommunicated from Judaism and this provoked a wave of persecution against Frankists in Podolia. Jacob Frank was forced to flee Podolia for the relative safety of Turkey.

Jacob Frank.

In 1757, Jacob Frank officially converted to Islam, but he continued to maintain contacts with his followers in Podolia. Frank appealed to Catholic ecclesiastical authorities in Kamenets-Podolsky seeking protection for his followers from Jewish persecution. This was a bold move, as the Catholic Bishop Dembowski saw an opportunity for mass conversion of Jews into Catholicism. Bishop Dembowski held a public debate between Frankists and their rabbinic opponents in Kamenets-Podolsky in late 1757. Dembowski urged the *starostas* (village leaders) of all the cities and towns in his eparchy to deliver *kahal* leaders and rabbis to Kamenets-Podolsky on June 20. Faced with this ultimatum, the leaders of the Jewish community had no choice and some 26 representatives arrived from Medzhibozh, Satanov, Lanzkorun, Bar, Husyatin, and other localities.[18] In that debate, R. Israel Baal Shem Tov supposedly had some influence, though it seems clear that he did not directly participate.[19] Through the debate, the Frankists were forced to divulge their religious principles. This doctrine was formulated in an ambiguous manner; the Catholic authorities interpreted it to refer to Jesus rather than Sabbatai Tsvi. After the debate, Bishop Dembowski decided in favor of the Frankists, condemning the Talmud as worthless and inspiring a series of Talmud burnings throughout Podolia. The book burnings ended in November 1757 upon the sudden death of Bishop Dembowski, an event which was hailed by Jewish

tradi tioalists as the hand of God. Persecutions of the Frankists resumed which caused many of them to flee back to Turkey.

In 1759 under the protection of the Polish king, Frankists were granted refuge in Iwanie, near Khotin, Bessarabia. Shortly thereafter, Jacob Frank and many of his Frankist followers converted to Christianity.[20] However, the Christian authorities did not truly believe the Frank's intentions were sincere, as the Frankists continued to practice some Jewish rituals. In 1759, another public debate took place between the "Talmudists" and the Frankists. This time, it took place in the L'vov cathedral. The chief spokesman for the Jewish side was R. Khaim haKohen Rapoport, the leading rabbi of Lvov and a highly respected scholar (see the history of the Bick family in this chapter). The result of this debate was that the Frankists succeeded in essentially separating themselves with Jewish tradition and adopting more mainstream Christian values.

The Frankists continued to be an odd sect of Christianity after that time, but were no longer a serious threat to Judaism.[21] However, they continued their activities well into the 1800s. For example, in the year 1800 the descendents of Jacob Frank wrote an appeal to the Jews of Europe, urging Jews "to embrace the religion of Edom [i.e. Christianity] as a stepping stone to the true Messianic faith, in the spirit of Frankism." Twenty-four copies of this appeal were confiscated by the Governor-General of Podolia and forwarded to the Tsar with a warning about being on guard for the development of clandestine propoganda amongst the Jews.[22]

Kamenets-Podolsky.
This heavily-fortified city is one of the best-preserved medieval towns remaining in Podolia. It was the scene of a climactic debate between the Frankists and the Talmudist, sponsored by the Catholic Church. Photo from a century-old postcard.

BAAL SHEM TOV AND THE RISE OF THE CHASIDIC MOVEMENT

Rabbi Israel ben Eliezar: Baal Shem Tov (circa 1698-1760)

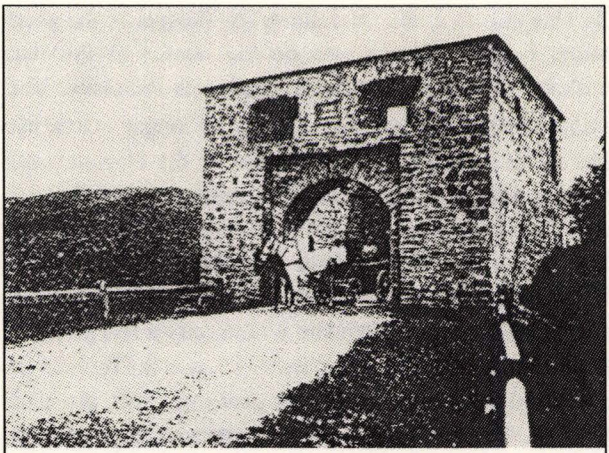
Rabbi Israel ben Eliezar, also known as the Baal Shem Tov (keeper of the good name), was born in Okupy, Podolia. Okupy was on the border of Podolia, Bessarabia and Galicia, about 15 km southeast of Kamenets-Podolsky. The location of his birth was once shrouded in mystery. Okupy no longer exists, but the town site was recently rediscovered at the confluence of the Dniester and Zbruch Rivers.[23] At the time of his birth, Okupy was apparently a newly-formed military fortress town on the frontier with Turkey.[24] The time of his birth is equally mysterious, quoted to be as early as 1698. One thing seems certain: according to contemporary accounts,[25] he was born into a period of Turkish occupation (1672-1699), which narrows his birthdate within only a few years.

The Baal Shem Tov, also known by the acronym "BeSHT", was the founder of the Chasidic movement. From about 1742 through his death in 1760, the Baal Shem Tov lived in Medzhibozh, where he had many disciples and spent the bulk of his public career. The Baal Shem Tov is buried in the old Medzhibozh Jewish cemetery, where is grave can still be found; alongside are many of those of his followers, relatives and spiritual descendants.

The Baal Shem Tov's legacy cannot be understated in terms of the major impact it had upon the entire Eastern European Jewish community. The Baal Shem Tov's contributions to the development of this new type of religious thinking has been compared with the revolutions in religious thought brought by Jesus and Paul for Christians and Mohammed for Moslems. Along with the Vilna Gaon and Moses Mendelssohn, the Baal Shem Tov is regarded as one of the key eighteenth century Jewish personalities who shaped Judaism into what it is today. The Baal Shem Tov's success was due to his unique ability to connect the common Jew with mystical Jewish thinking reflected in the kabbalistic practices. The Baal Shem Tov was able to explain the Kabbalah in terms that the common Jew could understand. Previous to the Baal Shem Tov, kabbalistic thought was reserved for the elite scholars or ascetic hermits, and was considered too complex for the average man to begin to comprehend.

There are two key elements to understand the Baal Shem Tov's legacy—the themes of kabbalistic thought and the Baal Shem Tov's context in the society of the day. Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) arose in Safed, Israel in the late sixteenth century from Isaac Luria (1534-1572) and his disciples. Luria and his followers developed the discipline by interpreting the book *Sefer HaZohar,* an ancient work of disputed authorship. The early practices of kabbalah included numerology (finding the hidden meaning in words by converting the words to numbers) and asceticism. By and large, the rabbinic authorities of the day in Poland accepted some types of kabbalistic practices as long as they did not conflict with

traditional Talmudic law (c.f. R. Joel Sirkes). The kabbalah was often regarded as a difficult secret code which only few could ever understand or master.



Gateway to Okupy.
This fortress gateway is all that is left of the town which is the presumed birthplace of the Baal Shem Tov. The town was a small fortified outpost on the Turkish-Polish border built in the late 1600s. Photo courtesy of Jakob Bialoblocki.

In the seventeenth century, there arose a number of *baal shemei*, who wandered the countryside, practiced ascetic ways, and in many cases were scholars of the kabbalah. Baal shem, loosely defined as a spiritual healer, literally means "master of the name" referring their ability to invoke the correct words and names to channel the power of God through spoken prayers and written amulets. They were the doctors of their era -- healing the sick, praying for rain, and performing other wonders. Apparently, R. Israel was one such baal shem, who earlier in his career roamed around the countryside in absolute poverty. According to legend (and typical of hero-mythologies around the world), he was an ascetic spending many years in seclusion in the Carpathian mountains. However in other tales, he was at various times a claydigger, a butcher, and a *behalfer*. In the last stage of his life, he settled in Medzhibozh where he renounced asceticism and devoted his life toward making mysticism accessible to the common Jew. However, R. Israel Baal Shem Tov was apparently never very far from his roots as a mystical healer. Even today, the Baal Shem Tov is remembered by the indigenous Ukrainian population as a healer of Jews and non-Jews alike.

R. Israel's move to Medzhibozh and his renouncement of asceticism was perhaps the single most important factor in the development and popularity of the Chasidic movement.[26] This was a key innovation which resulted in popularizing mysticism as a layer over top traditional Jewish practices. Ascetics and hermits by their very nature are too involved in themselves to pass on their ways or to become popular leaders. But by becoming an accessible spokesman of mysticism in the heart of the Podolian Jewish community, the Baal Shem Tov was able to

provide the catalyst for the development of the Chasidic movement. Mysticism could then become available to everyday Jews who could continue to conduct their lives in a more conventional manner.

Recently, scholar Moshe Rosman made major contributions to the historical context about which we need to understand the role of the Baal Shem Tov in eighteenth century Medzhibozh.[27] For example, Rosman has discovered that the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples were important and accepted members of society, not outcasts as had been previously portrayed. R. Israel was essentially adopted by the Jewish community as the resident professional Kabbalist who was paid a stipend and granted by Christian authorities to live tax-free. Rosman has discovered that the Medzhibozh of the Baal Shem Tov was one of the most important and prosperous towns in Podolia, not a small backwards hamlet as was often portrayed. He concludes that the Baal Shem Tov was an accepted, contributing member of one of the most important Jewish communities of the day. Rosman also claims that the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples were not considered by their contemporaries as leaders of a separatist or popularist movement. He was not alienated by the political and rabbinic establishment, as others have suggested. Instead, the established leaders often consulted the Baal Shem Tov in matters of rabbinic judgement. As a valued member of Jewish society, the Baal Shem Tov was given a house, free of taxes, and a stipend by the local Jewish leadership. As Rosman puts it, the Baal Shem Tov was "someone who filled a conventional role in an unconventional and impressive manner."[28] In short, the Baal Shem Tov was a product of his generation; only in the next generation was he diefied by his disciples or villified by opponents.

Little of the Baal Shem Tov's own writings remain. Stories of his life were compiled in the book *Shivhei haBesht* ("In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov"), first published in 1814. The publication of *Shivhei haBesht* is itself a fascinating story.The printer, Israel Yofeh of Kopys compiled the stories from Rabbi Dov Ber, the son-in-law of Rabbi Alexander the *Shokhet*, the Besht's personal scribe. There are two groupings of stories in *Shivhei haBesht*: those of R. Alexander provided through R. Dov Ber, and those miscellaneous stories heard by Israel Yofeh from other sources.[29] Here are some examples of these stories:

Sounding Out the Nature of the Besht[30]

I heard from the Rabbi of our community, Rabbi Gedaliah, God bless his memory, that the Chasid, Rabbi Jehiel, the head of the court of the holy community of Kovel, sent a certain person, a scholar and a wise man, to sound out the nature of the Besht. He became ill on the way. When he came to the inn in the holy community of Medzhibozh, he lay down on the oven, and he felt very warm. The Besht sent Rabbi Gershon, his brother-in-law, to him. Afterwards, Rabbi Gershon said to him: "Come with me to the afternoon prayer."

On the way the man felt that he had recovered from his illness and he thought that Rabbi Gershon was the Besht. He asked him: "Are you the Besht?"

Rabbi Gershon answered him "Ay! Ay! Ay! I am the rabbi. I wish I would have the portion of the next world that the Besht gains from smoking one pipeful of tobacco."

Rabbi Jehiel became an adherent of the Besht.

The Dismissed Arrendator[31]

I heard that there was an arrendator[32] who lived near the holy community of Medzhibozh. Another man came and paid more for the arrendeh and the first arrendator was dismissed from the village. He was in debt to the master of that village, but he did not have sufficient money to pay the debt. Both the master and the new arrendator forbade the people to let the man leave the village to go anywhere. In spite of that, the former arrendator traveled to see the Besht. When the new arrendator learned about it he reported it to the master, saying, "The former arrendator went to a sorcerer to enchant you."

The master was angry with him and placed his son in prison.

The arrendator did not find the Besht at home because he was in the holy community of Kamenka. He followed him to that town, but he did not find him there because the Besht had gone home. He followed after him and caught up with him on the road.

The Besht said to him: "What can I possibly do for you while I am traveling? Follow me to my home."

On their way the Besht perceived that the master had placed the arrendator's son in prison. He said: "We do not have time to waste."

They came to a river, and the Besht immersed himself in it. Coming out from the river he said to him: "Return home, and immediately upon your arrival in the village go to the manor house."

And so he did. When the master saw him through the window he was frightened lest he be hurt by this magic, and he chased the son away from the prison. He sent his servant to drive the arrendator and his family away from the village. And so it was. Then the master sent a letter to the governor of the holy community of Medzhibozh containing a serious complaint about the Besht in these words: "There is a sorcerer in your town."

The governor answered him: "See to it that you make the utmost effort to appease the Besht because he is not a sorcerer. If you do not appease him, heaven will punish you."

The master immediately sent a wagon with chickens and all sorts of flour to appease the Besht.

A Combat in Magic[33]

I heard that there was a priest, associated with the governor of the holy community of Medzhibozh, who caused great trouble to the Jews of that town. The people of the city always urged the Besht to pray for his banishment from the city, and he used to say: "I do not want to provoke him because he is a great sorcerer: He will sense it the moment that I begin to deal with him." And he did nothing about him at all.

Once the priest severely oppressed the people of the city, and they went to the Besht with a great outcry and complained.

He answered them: "What can I do with you? I will begin to deal with him slowly and carefully so that he will not notice it."

He started with prayers, but the priest sensed it immediately. Once while ascending a mountain in a wagon, the Besht encountered the priest coming down the mountain. The Besht said that he would have a downfall. "If it were the other way around, God forbid, it would not have been good for me."

And so it was. Officials came from the governor of the city and confiscated all of the priest's property and fortune. He was dismissed from his post, and he had to pay the claims of every Jew in the town until he was ruined. He left the town in a broken-down wagon harnessed to a single horse.

The Delayed Homecoming: A Second Version[34]

There was a cloth merchant in the holy community of Medzhibozh whose son went to Breslau and remained there for a long time. His mother was very worried, and she told her husband to go and ask the Besht where he was. Her husband did not think very highly of the Besht and he refused, but his wife nagged him so much that he had to go. He came to the Besht and said with a smile: "My wife said that you know certain things, and so I came to ask you to tell me where my son is."

The Besht answered: "To see such things I go to the synagogue." He took his pipe, and went to the synagogue. Then he returned and said: "I saw that his is still in Breslau and he is wearing a German hat." That was the custom there. When they completed their business they exchanged hats. That was a sign of the conclusion of the transaction.

The father marked the day in order to recall when the business transaction took place. When his son returned from the trip, his father asked him: "On what day did you conclude your business?"

He told him the day, and it was the same day that he had written down, the day when they had exchanged hats.

He asked him: "Why didn't you send me a letter from time to time?"

He said to him: "Because I came across a good customer on the road and I sold him merchandise, I had to deliver it to the merchant's house, and so I had to leave

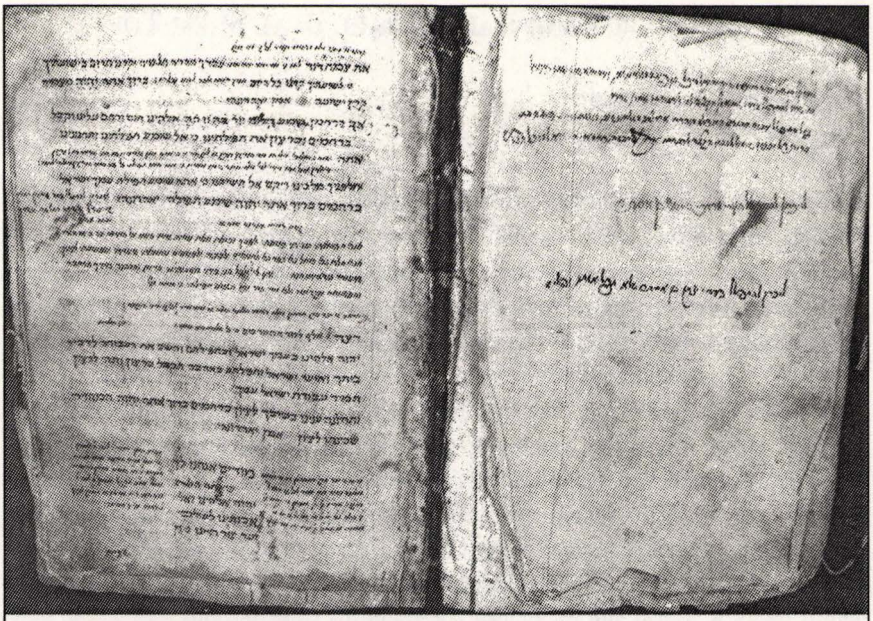
the road on which the mail travels. Then I bought other merchandise and went to Breslau, and because of that, I was late returning home."

ASSOCIATES OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV

Two key associates of the Baal Shem Tov played an important role in the Besht's residence in Medzhibozh. Unfortunately, little is known about these two people: R. Zev Wolf Kitces and R. David Purkes. Both seemed to hold similar functions in the Besht's household. Both seemed to be longtime Medzhibozh residences who were initial skeptics of the Baal Shem Tov. Rosman suggests that both Kitces and Purkes were Chasidim in the old style before the Besht arrived in Medzhibozh. Apparently, their acceptance of the Baal Shem Tov played a key role in the local Jewish community. Rosman postulates that Kitces and Purkes were the organizers of the local *Bes Hamidrash* (house of study), supported by the community. This is assumed due to the fact that they received a weekly stipend, even though at least one of them was wealthy. It is perhaps the institution of the *Bes Hamidrash* that ultimately adopted the ways of the Besht upon his arrival in Medzhibozh.[35]

Rabbi Zev Wolf Kitces (Kitses, Kitsis, Kitzes) (circa 1698-1765)

Wolf Kitces was a close personal colleague of the Baal Shem Tov. It is said that he often ate with him, and he also possibly served as a personal scribe for him. Wolf Kitces is mentioned in eight different stories in *Shivhei haBesht.* In one story, Wolf Kitces is mentioned as an initial skeptic when the Besht first arrives in Medzhibozh.[36] In another story, Wolf Kitces is involved in adopting an orphan son and arranging his marriage to another orphan adopted by the Besht.[37] His name appears in a 1743 tax list and the 1764 census of Polish Jewry, both as a resident of Medzhibozh. The Polish records show that Wolf Kitces owned his own house, next door to the rabbi's house, on the main street between the castle and the marketplace. It must have been a large house, since the records show that he was able to take in poor people. His son, Faybish, is noted to have owned a store in the marketplace. Rosman suggests that since Polish taxing authorities already knew him by his patronymic in 1743, Kitces may have been a longtime resident of Medzhibozh before the Baal Shem Tov arrived. Rosman further suggests that Kitces was educated, articulate and a respected figure in Medzhibozh. Even though it is recorded that he received a weekly stipend from the Jewish community, Rosman reasons that Kitces was not poor. He owned a large house in a prime location and his son owned a store in the marketplace. Therefore, his stipend was not an indication of poverty, but had some other purpose.[38] Wolf Kitces was buried in a grave next to his famous teacher in the old Medzhibozh cemetery.



The Baal Shem Tov's personal prayer book.
It contains handwritten prayers in the margins. Courtesy of the Agudas Chabad Library.

Rabbi David Purkes (Purkow, Folkes, or Furkes) (d. 1772)

Less is known about David Purkes than Wolf Kitces. He was together with Wolf Kitces in his initial skepticism of the Besht.[39] He was listed in the same Polish records as Wolf Kitces, and both he and Kitces received a weekly stipend from the Jewish community. *Shivhei haBesht* suggests that along with Kitces, David Purkes was a longtime resident of Medzhibozh before the Baal Shem Tov arrived. In *Shivhei haBesht,* Purkes is portrayed as a devoted follower of Besht often traveling with him. It is suggested that Purkes served as an intermediary between the Besht and R. Dov Ber of Mezerich. In one story, it says that his grandson was R. David the Maggid of Tulchin.[40] In another story, Purkes apparently maintained a higher standard of *kashrut* than does the Besht.[41] David Purkes died while traveling to Polonoye and was buried next to R. Moses of Polonoye.[42]

Rabbi Zelig of Letichev

Little is known about this figure other than what is written in *Shivhei haBesht.* Three stories are attributed to being heard by R. Zelig,[43] who apparently served as a reporter for R. Dov Ber ben Samuel, the source of most of the stories in *Shivhei haBesht.* Two of the stories are not about the Besht himself, but are apparently more contemporary accounts in the Besht's style. Based on the references to other people in these three stories, R. Zelig was active in the years of 1795-1814 and may not have been a direct associate of the Baal Shem Tov.

MIEDZYBOZ AND RABBI ISRAEL BAAL SHEM TOV

by Murray (Moshe) Jay Rosman[44]
Jerusalem, Israel

Few topics in Jewish history or Jewish thought have received the attention that scholars have devoted to Chasidism — especially its early phases. Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov and the movement that arose in his wake have been studied and discussed dozens of times, from varying perspectives and a variety of methodological approaches.[45] Yet, in this entire scholarly corpus one element is virtually absent: the perspective on the Besht that non-Jewish sources provide.

This lacuna is keenly felt. For one thing, we know from *Shivhei haBesht*[46] that the Baal Shem Tov had dealings with Christians in his capacity as healer, wonder-worker, competitor, and employer.[47] It is not impossible, therefore, that some aspect of his life left a lasting impression on someone who may have recorded the particular instance or experience. There is no intrinsic reason why such sources ought to be considered less valuable than any other. Second, tangible details about R. Israel and his coterie, or about the time and place in which they lived, are hard to come by in the known Jewish sources. Therefore, information from any other source either about them or their milieu would assist us to better understand the Jewish sources.[48]

One may illustrate the potential value of Polish sources in this regard with just a few simple examples. *Shivhei haBesht* twice mentions a person by the name of R. Yosef, the Preacher, of Miedzyboz, for whom the Baal Shem Tov apparently retained an abiding respect, even after his death.[49] According to Polish sources (which I will describe presently), the salaried preacher of Miedzyboz in 1743 was a certain Jos Jampolski[50] that is, Josef/Yosef of Yampol. It is quite plausible that this person and R. Yosef, the Preacher, are one and the same. The stories in *Shivhei haBesht* in which he is mentioned (both time, dealing with the period after his death) thus provide independent corroboration of the man's existence and, in addition, a terminus a quo for the events described.

A second example relates to the tale in which it is stated: "And he had a singer, who is called 'Bas,' who was a great fornicator, and his songs were aimed at pleasing the womenfolk."[51] According to the financial records of the Jewish communal board of Miedzyboz, there was a Basista, of bass singer, who was paid three *zloty* a week by the *kahal*.[52] Thus, the historicity of another individual character is confirmed.

In addition to details of identification and dating, information from Polish sources furnishes the tools with which we can evaluate material containing monetary data. *Shivhei haBesht* mentions, for example, that a certain Polish

nobleman owed the Besht 200 zloty, and in order to repay the debt, he gave the Besht's assistant, R. Leyb, eleven *czerwone zloty*,[53] "and told R. Leyb that he owed the Besht another two zloty." That is, eleven *czerwone zloty* equaled 190 *zloty*, or eighteen *zloty* apiece. Now, we know from Polish sources that in 1702 the rate of conversion for these coins had been set at eighteen *zloty*, and that this rate obtained in most parts of the country until at least the 1740s.[54] This realistic detail allows us to surmise that the story records an actual event, and permits us to date it as well. Moreover, it attests to the accurate attention to detail with which such stories of the Besht were handed down.

This is but one small sample of how the juxtaposition of Polish and Jewish sources can help establish the veracity of such stories, help pin down the date of their occurrence, and flesh out our knowledge of the material culture of Polish-Jewish society.[55] Indeed, apart from the corroboration of details and an amplified comprehension of the Jewish source material, Polish sources sometimes furnish new data which can sharpen or even alter our image of the Besht and his associates.

A collection of documents from Miedzyboz — the city where the Besht lived for most of the period from 1740 (after emerging publicly in 1736) until his death in 1760 — can shed some light on important issues in the study of Chasidism. Such topics include the social and economic situation in Miedzyboz and the nature of the Besht's activities there. The collection is now in the Biblioteka Czartoryskich in Cracow, which houses the archives of the Czartoryski family, the magnates who owned Miedzyboz at the time. Much of the material relates to the eighteenth century, particularly to the 1730s and 1740s. Among the documents are financial records, such as income and expenditure reports of the Miedzyboz *kahal*, the local tax rolls, and contracts. In addition, there are petitions submitted by individuals and institutions to the estate owners and their agents, correspondence between these agents, and some Polish translations of entries from the minute-book (*pinkas*) of the Jewish communal board (which is no longer extant). I also found three documents in the original Hebrew or Yiddish.

The Besht's Signature.

A number of scholars have stressed the importance of examining the socioeconomic context in which Chasidism arose, and in describing that context have focused on conditions in Poland generally, and in Podolia in particular.[56] However fruitful this approach has been, one question has not been raised that ought to be central to our understanding of the socioeconomic background underlying the birth and growth of Chasidism: namely, the situation in

Miedzyboz itself, where the Besht lived. Was Miedzyboz a backwoods hamlet, and average town, or a city? What was the size of its population and what percentage was Jewish? When the Besht settled there, was there a stable, a declining, or a growing populace? What was its economic base? What was the security situation like?

Answers to these questions may furnish significant data with which we can determine what changes took place in Miedzyboz during the Besht's time and which may help us to judge the extent of his impact. One theory, for example, posits that the Besht was rather successful because his teachings offered religious support to the masses of poor Jews who were oppressed by prevailing conditions in the declining Polish economy and by increasing Polish hostility.[57] This theory —together with evidence of *Shivhei haBesht*, in which people from Miedzyboz are said to have identified themselves as coming from the nearby city of Bar[58]— has fostered the impression that Miedzyboz was a small, insignificant town, mired in poverty until the advent of the Besht began to attract large numbers of Jews. Here, we must turn to the Polish sources for a convincing answer.

Even more crucial to research on the Besht and his entourage is the need to understand the dynamics in the Jewish community of Miedzyboz when the Baal Shem Tov settled there. Who had the financial means and who had the say-so, and what was their attitude toward the Besht? How was the community organized, and did the Besht have a formal role in any communal institutions? What sort of problems faced the Jews in Miedzyboz and what part did the Besht play in attempts to find solutions?

My research to date does not allow me to answer all of these questions conclusively, but I would like to make some interim remarks that will, nevertheless, indicate the general trend of the evidence. Contrary to the implication of the *Shivhei haBesht* material referring to Bar, Miedzyboz was the larger community—by almost 50 percent—and was in fact one of the largest and most important cities in the Ukraine.[59] Merchants from western Poland came there to buy merchandise and to arrange caravans (for safety's sake) for the onward journey through Volhynia to Kiev.[60] The city had a fortress and a garrison to protect it and the main trade routes, which made possible a lively commercial life.[61] Miedzyboz merchants, especially the Jews among them, maintained close ties to Kiev to the east and with Silesian and German cities to the west. They were active in the export of livestock and other produce to the west, and imported luxury goods such as French cloth and silk. Some of them traveled to Germany four times a year, spending up to 20,000 *zloty* each time.[62] At the beginning of the 1740s, restoration work gave Miedzyboz a new Catholic church, and the foundations were laid for a new Orthodox church. Likewise, the old Jewish study hall (*beit midrash*) underwent restoration and a new study hall (or second

synagogue)was built.[63] These facts seem to indicate a rather flourishing community, an impression that is borne out by demographic data.

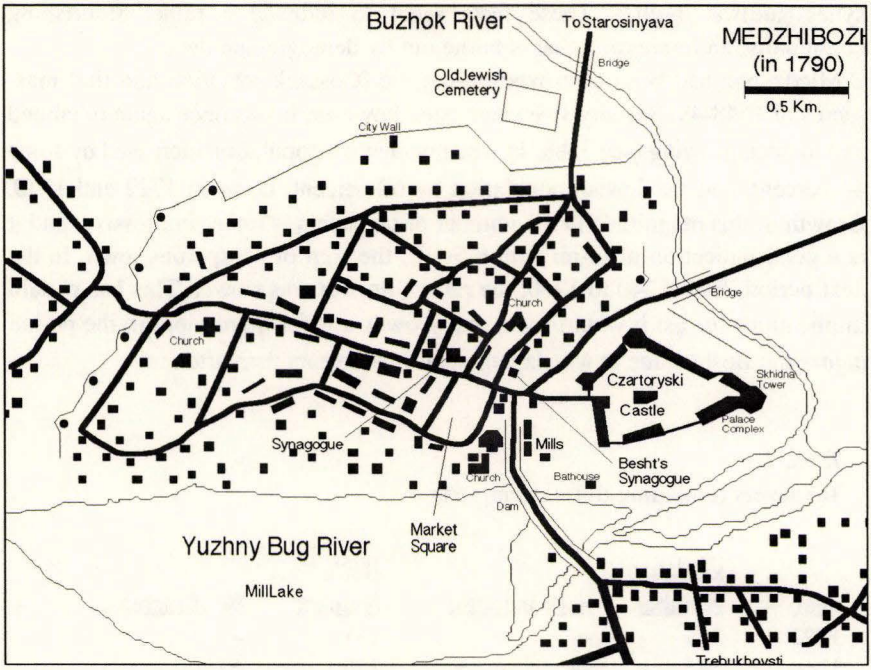
Miedzyboz had been destroyed during the [Cossack rebellion and the] massacres of 1648-49. Seventy-five years later, however, it was once again inhabited and, in fact, growing (see Table 1). The non-Jewish population increased by some 44 percent, and the Jewish population by 67 percent, between 1722 and 1740. Growth of this magnitude in the number of taxpayers is rather impressive, and it is a good indication of in-migration, itself, the sign of prosperous town. In the next period, from 1740 to 1760, the rate of growth was slower. This has certain implications for us: it would seem that growth was far more rapid in the period *before* the Besht came to Miedzyboz than in the years thereafter.

Table 1
Taxpayers (including those exempted)

	Christians:		Jews:	
Year	Number	% of increase	Number	% of increase
1722	379	—	131	—
1740	545	44	219	67
1760	565	4	282	29

Sources: Biblioteka Czartoryskich 4039 (1722); Biblioteka Czartoryskich 4078 (1740); Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Gospodarczne 308 (1760).

As for the Jewish community, not only did it experience rapid growth, but it was also considered a relatively large community for that time and place. The census of 1765 listed a Jewish population of 2,039 persons.[64] That would put Miedzyboz among the top fifteen Jewish communities in all of Poland-Lithuania.[65] From the economic standpoint (as already mentioned), there were quite a number of well-to-do merchants. Apart from that, the community was able, during the 1740s, to afford salaries for a rabbi, a cantor and cantor's assistant, a beadle, a bath attendant, a preacher, and meat-slaughterers. The number of livestock slaughtered for meat consumption in 1743, for example, averaged two heavy animals per family or about four kilograms of meat a week, not counting fowl. In addition, we know that the community supported quite a number of scholars as well as unemployed and destitute individuals, and was visited by an endless stream of cantors, preachers, and *Betteljuden.*[66] Contrary to the stereotypical image of Podolian towns that emerges from the historical literature,[67] the Jews of Miedzyboz did not labor under an unbearable burden of



communal debt. According to the expenditures listed by the Jewish tax lessee in 1743, representing funds paid out in the name of the Jewish community, the *kahal* paid 2,100 *zloty* in capitation tax to the royal treasury, 1,206 *zloty* in salary to its own employees, and only 850 *zloty* in interest for various loans.[68]

Jewish affairs in Miedzyboz were handled by the *kahal*, composed of chairmen, secretaries, trustees, and electors, as in any other Polish-Jewish community. A small group of families dominated public life as well as economic affairs.[69] But not everything in Miedzyboz was under the control of the *kahal*. There was another entity, known in Polish as *pospólstwo* (a literal translation of the Hebrew term *hamon*, "the people"). One Hebrew document uses the term *yehidei segulah* (select individuals), a better translation of *pospólstwo*.[70] This term appears in other Jewish communities, too, and Israel Halpern defined it as, "prominent members of the community who held no *kahal* office." In his description, these were in fact a small number of individuals who, at times, were co-opted by the communal leaders as a way of reinforcing their important decisions.[71]

However, the Miedzyboz documents indicate that these *yehidei segulah* or *pospólstwo* actually constituted an organized body that existed alongside—at times, in opposition to—the *kahal*. For example, in 1715 thirty-six members of the *pospólstwo* filed a complaint against "the new *kahal*" for alleged mismanagement. Among other charges, it was stated that, "they do not invite us, as

pospólstwo, to the general assembly to help choose the officers."[72] In a Hebrew-Yiddish document of 1716, forty-four *yehidei segulah* warned the "chiefs and leaders"—that is, the *kahal*—not to impose new taxes or contract new debts. Should the *kahal* fail to heed this demand, they would take their complaint to the overload.[73] In 1726 the overlord decided that, to protect the *pospólstwo* from excessive taxation, *kahal* officials were thenceforth forbidden to serve two consecutive terms of office. It was noted, in passing, that disputes between the *pospólstwo* and the *kahal* sometimes led to instability in the community.[74]

In a later period, we find delegates of the *pospólstwo* taking part in important communal decisions alongside the *kahal*, not as a mere rubber stamp, but in the role of independent examiners. for example, the contract drawn up in 1740 between the community and its tax lessees is signed by eight representatives of the *kahal* and seven representatives of the *pospólstwo*.[75] In the 1740s, when these lessees were issued receipts on payment of their debt to the community, the release was signed by two *kahal* board men, one trustee, and one member of the *pospólstwo*.[76] A fine imposed by the *kahal* court on any individual had to be decided upon by a bench made up of the rabbi and an equal number of *kahal* and *pospólstwo* members.[77]

These joint actions are significant in terms of the Jewish communal structure in Poland. Under the voting system used by the Jewish communities—a combination of a lottery system and appointment by a small committee—public offices remained the preserve of a select group.[78] But this oligarchy was not allowed to rule in Miedzyboz with a completely free hand. The *pospólstwo*, the *yehidei segulah*, possessed the necessary prestige, in the estimation of both Jews and Poles, to act as a watchdog committee, to prevent the *kahal* from acting arbitrarily, and to ensure that it would act in the wider public interest. I think we are entitled to see in this group the "congregation [*'edah*]" or the "assembly [*asefah*]"—words that best express the true meaning of *pospólstwo*—terms known to us from other communities.[79] If this identification is correct, then the group was composed of well-to-do taxpayers ("men of means") who were in principle eligible to participate in the political process (voting and holding elective office), but who were not in the dominant office-holding group.[80] The archival material from Miedzyboz demonstrates the kind of rights and limited functions that they, as a group, were able to have.

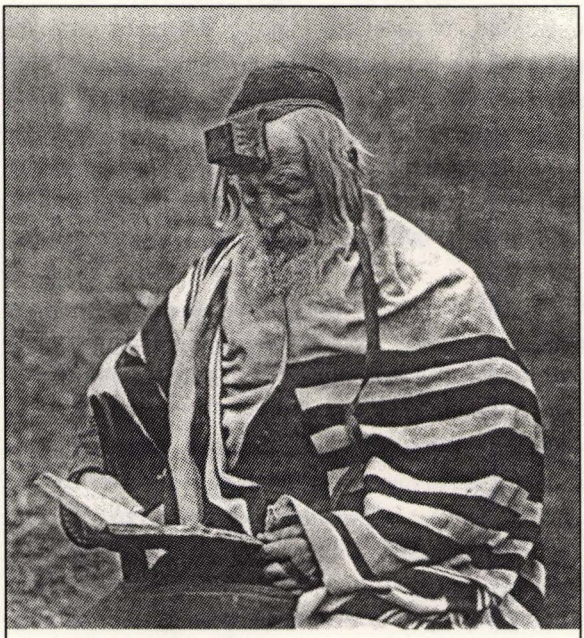
Disputes between the *kahal* and the *pospólstwo* were not the only source of social tension:

There were a number of trades association [*hevrot*] in the community. In 1741 the strongest and most influential of them, the butchers' association, lodged a complaint against the *kahal* chairmen, accusing them of discriminatory practices in the fixing of tax assessments and other imposts. This arbitrary behavior, then

charged, had been taken to an extreme when the *kahal* had seized possession of their synagogue.[81]

The rabbi of Miedzyboz in the early 1740s was Hirsh Leibowicz. When, in 1744, the *kahal* attempted to oust him from his post, he appealed for support to the Polish overlord against the *kahal*.[82]

In 1743, Czartoryski's representative ordered the *kahal* to establish a committee to solve, once and for all, the vexing problem of newcomers having grabbed the older residents' assigned spots in the synagogue. The committee was to draw up a list of people with established residence rights in the community; anyone not on the list would be subject to expulsion from the city.[83]



A pious Jew.
A Jew from Podolia. Photo by Ivan Pyotrovich Raoult, Odessa, 1870-1880. From RHSA, St. Petersburg.

In 1742 the lessee of the Czartoryskis' income from Miedzyboz demanded (among other things) an exclusive license to sell liquor in the city on Saturdays. The *kahal* and the *pospólstwo* responded with a petition stating that without the right to continue selling liquor on Saturdays, small taverns [run by Jews] would not earn sufficient income, and the revenues of the *kahal* and of the overlord would suffer in consequence.[84]

In 1741 a Jew by the name of Asher ben Moshe began assembling a private prayer quorum in his home. He faced resistance from the *kahal* as well as from non-Jews.[85] Further instances of social friction might be cited from the history of Miedzyboz in the 1730s and 1740s.[86]

Some of these conflicts are typical of what previous historians have identified as the breeding ground for an emergent, new (Chasidic) leadership, an antiestablishment opposition that took up the cause of Jewish society's weakest strata.[87] From the documents that have come to light from Miedzyboz,

however, it does not appear that R. Israel Baal Shem Tov was involved in any of the local disputes; nor was anyone else known to belong to his entourage involved, either as a direct party to a dispute, as a go-between, or as a defender of one side against the other. The important actors in the public arena were: the *kahal*, the *pospólstwo*, the major *arrendators*, the *faktor*—Wolf Abramowicz (who was connected with the Czartoryskis' estate management)—the rabbi, and the trades associations. There is no indication at all of the Baal Shem Tov's involvement.[88] (It should be noted, however, that the relevant material in the Czartoryski archive only goes up to about 1746.) Interestingly, none of the local conflicts in Miedzyboz figures in *Shivhei haBesht*, either. Immanuel Etkes has pointed out[89] that the activities of the Besht in Miedzyboz that are described in *Shivhei haBesht* are those dealing with the problems of individuals; he evidently did not take a position on social issues. Chone Shmeruk, too, has argued against the proposition that "the explicit goal of Chasidism was to defend the masses against the exploitation of the *kahal*."[90]

If the Besht did not emerge here, in a community that in many ways typified eighteenth-century Polish-Jewish society, in the role of a social or political activist (and that is the conclusion indicated by both Jewish and Polish sources, at least for the first six years he spent in Miedzyboz), what exactly was his role? Where did his party fit in socially? On this, the Polish sources are not nearly as helpful to us as they are regarding the general social patterns in Miedzyboz and in its Jewish community. The material relating to the Besht and his entourage is rather "dry" and technical: tax lists and budget records. What, nevertheless, can be gleaned from them?

In Miedzyboz, as in every city, the householders (Jews and Christians alike) had to pay the *czynsz*—a kind of municipal tax —for their property. For the period that interests us, the Czartoryski archive contains records of taxpayers in Miedzyboz in the following years: 1739-42, 1744, 1752-53, 1755, 1758, 1760, and 1763.[91] Generally, Jews and Christians were listed separately. The tax officials noted the name of the property owner along with the amount of tax paid, in sequence according to the houses' location along each street. They sometimes added a note about the type of dwelling or about the presence of a tenant other than the owner.

The *kahal* owned a house in the vicinity of the synagogue. Because of the *kahal's* ownership, the tenant was exempt from paying the *czynsz*, and the tax officials did not always bother to register the name of the tenant or include the house on their list. In the documentation available for our period, the tenants' names were noted on six occasions:

1739 — Dom kahalski wnim Moszko duchowny;[92]
1740 — Dom kahalski seu kantorski wnim kabalista;[93]
1742 — Balsem w domu kahalskim;[94]
1758 — Basam;[95]
1760 — Baszam Doktor liber;[96]
1763 — Herszko w domie kahalnym;[97]

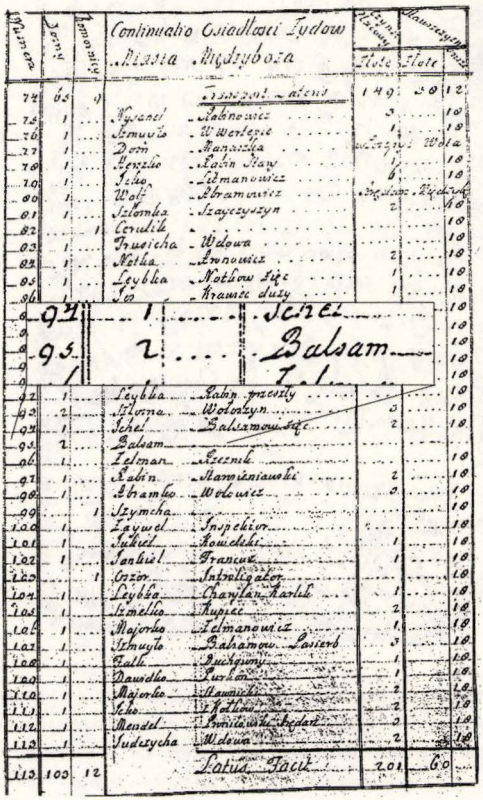
While the tenant of the *kahal's* house was not always registered, his neighbors certainly were. In the 1750s and 1760s the following people are identified: Ichel ziec Balszema (Yehiel Ashkenazi, the Baal Shem's son-in-law);[98] Herszko Pisarz Balszema Pargaminnik (Sevi Hirsh, the Baal Shem's scribe, and parchment-maker);[99] Szmuylo Pasierb Balszemów (Shmuel, stepson of the Baal Shem).[100]

These scant details do tell us something about the Baal Shem Tov's status in Miedzyboz. In 1739, the *kahal's* house was occupied by a certain "Moszko duchowny"—that is, "a man of religion." This term is equivalent to the English, "clergyman," and the Polish official evidently used it to identify someone who was some sort of scholar of kabbalist but who held no official title (rabbi, cantor, teacher, or preacher). He was supported by the community in that he was given a place to live. It is well known that Polish-Jewish communities did this sort of thing, supporting scholars or mystics "in residence."[101] The financial records of Miedzyboz from 1739 also include an item relating to payment for "our poor scholar."[102] Perhaps we may view this person as the type of "servant of God," referred to by Yaaqov Hisdai, common in the generation of the founders of Chasidism.[103]

In 1740, for whatever reason, Moszko vacated the *kahal* house and in his place was installed a man whom the tax official did not know by name, but whose occupation was "kabbalist"—a mystic. A year later the registrar already knew to refer to him as the local Jews did: "the Baal Shem." In 1760 this name was supplemented by the title, "Doktor,"[104] possibly because, after twenty years in the city, the Baal Shem had acquired a measure of respect and standing in Polish eyes. They already knew that, in addition to being a kabbalist (and probably, as they must have believed, *because* he was a mystic), he was also a healer, someone to whom even Christians went for his services—as we know from *Shivhei haBesht*.[105] His reputation, at least among Poles, was based on his medicinal work, rather than on any other facet of his public activity. Finally, in 1763 the tenant of the *kahal* house behind the synagogue is listed as Hersz (Tsvi).

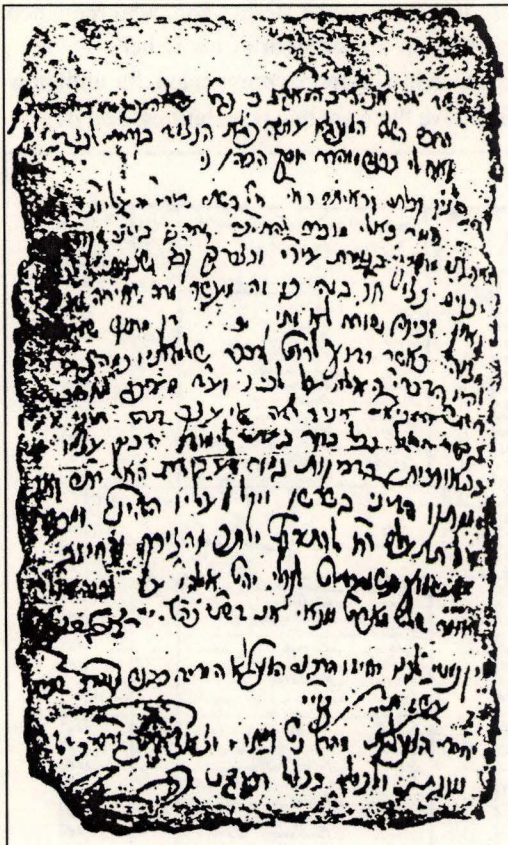
The presence of the names of the Besht's son-in-law and his scribe, known to us from Jewish sources, permits us to confirm that the kabbalist who arrived in Miedzyboz and moved into the *kahal* house in 1740, staying there until 1760, was none other than Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. Likewise, it is very likely that

the Herszko who lived in that house in 1763 was the Besht's son, who remained there after his father's death, apparently on the strength of his father's status in the community. The matter of the stepson is a bit more complicated, for until now we did not know of his existence. I believe there are two possibilities. The Besht's wife may have been a divorcee, and Shmuel, then, would be her son from her first marriage. Alternatively, there is a story in *Shivhei haBesht* about Tsvi Kitces, a Chasid of the Besht, who raised an orphan boy in his home; the Besht, for his part, raised an orphan girl. When the time came, a match was made between the two. Perhaps Shmuel, the Baal Shem Tov's Stepson, was that orphan lad—or even a different orphan altogether—who came to live with the Besht.[106] If our interpretation of the documents is correct, then what we have before us is the first external testimony regarding the life and career of R. Israel Baal Shem Tov,[107] and it appears to suggest certain conclusions.



Medzhibozh Tax List 1758.
The Baal Shem Tov's entry is highlighted.

First, it would seem clear that those historians were correct who dated the Besht's period in Miedzyboz, on the basis of Jewish sources, from 1740 to 1760.[108] Similarly, the Polish terms "kabbalista" and "doktor" imply that the Besht's main activity focused on *kabbalah* and on healing. The implication, then, is that the *kahal* of Miedzyboz did regard the Besht as an uneducated, course man of "the masses." On the contrary, when the Besht arrived in Miedzyboz from Tluste he



Letter from the Besht.
One of the very few known manuscripts from Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. In this letter to R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoye, the Besht implores his disciple to avoid ascetic behavior.[109]

"From the community of Medzhibozh to the great community of Nemirov, these words in a letter going about looking like a flash, the look of the Kohen, the rabbi of the aforementioned holy community, a stronghold and tower, the wonderful rabbi who works wonders, the great sage, our teacher, Joseph the Kohen of the aforesaid holy community, the head of the court. This is the content of the letter to the hand of my beloved of my soul, the rabbi, the great light, the righthand pillar, the powerful hammer, famous in hasidism, the complete sage, the wondrous one who does wonders, who is attached to the walls of my heart closer than a borther, our teacher Joseph the Kohen; behold the form of his holy hand I received and I was a sight in the two upper lines, and there it said that his highness says that it is supposedly mandatory to fast. My stomach was agitated by this declaration, and I hereby react: by the decrees of the angels and together with the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Presence, you should not put yourself in danger like this. For this is an act of melancholy and of sorrow, and God's Presence will not inspire out of sorrow, but only out of the joy of performing the commandments, as his highness knows the things I taught several times; and these things should be on your heart. As for the subjects of your thoughts which bring you to this state, I will advise you: God is with you, mighty warrior; every single morning when you study, attach yourself to the letters with total devotion to the service of your Creator, blessed be He and blessed be His Name, and then they will soften the verdicts with their root and lift the verdicts from you. And do not deny your flesh, God forbid, to fast more than is required or is necessary. If you heed my voice, God will be with you. With this I will be brief and say *shalom* from myself, who seeks your welfare constantly. Signed, Israel Besht."

was sufficiently respected to war rant giving him a place to live at the community's expense. This would tend to reinforce M. Piekarz's argument, that the Baal Shem Tov was not necessarily categorized as a member of the lowest strata of the social and intellectual order.[110] Moreover, he was clearly not perceived as a threat to the establishment. He did not represent a new type of

leadership; rather, he fit right into the existing communal structure. There was a place in Miedzyboz for him: he enjoyed the patronage of the establishment until the end of his life, and his privileges were passed on to his son.

Not only the Besht, but others close to him, too, benefitted from the community's largesse. The list of expenditures of the Miedzyboz *kahal* in 1743, as ratified by the Polish lord, Wilenski, records the names of "five poor Jews living in Miedzyboz who have received the recognition of the *kahal* and are approved for this year only." Three of them received one *zloty* per week from the community, and two received a sum of two *zloty* per week. We cannot determine the names of the first three from Jewish documentation, but the second two were: "Wulff Kucego Ziec"—that is, Ze'ev, the son-in-law of Kutz, or perhaps Kucz, known in *Shivhei haBesht* by the name Tsvi Kitces; and "Dawidko Purków"—that is, David Purkes.[111] Both of them were among the Besht's leading followers in Miedzyboz. This information about them tells us that the leaders of the Miedzyboz community were prepared to give their support to people who, according to *Shivhei haBesht*, called themselves "Chasidim" and were devotees of *kabbalah*.[112]

We should perhaps reemphasize one point: that this group was not active on the social front. Its role seems to have been to study Torah or kabbala. In that it would have resembled —on a smaller scale—the coterie of kabbalist in Brody who used to gather at the study hall, founded no later than 1736 (as Elhanan Reiner has established in an as yet unpublished article). They, too, were supported by the local community and they, too, kept mainly to themselves. It is likely that the leaders of Miedzyboz, like those in Brody, saw their support of such groups as a matter of obligation and added prestige for their community. It should be recalled that the Besht had high regard for those "great Chasidim" of the Brody circle,[113] and it is not implausible that he originally intended to establish his own local equivalent or to join a similar group.

The Polish documentation contains one more item that, perhaps, relates to the beginnings of Chasidism. I referred earlier to the problem of newcomers to Miedzyboz in the early 1740s, because of whom disputes broke out in the synagogue and who were subsequently expelled from the city. The list of those slated to be expelled includes thirty names, in addition to some people called *sasiedzi*—that is, neighbors or tenants in someone else's house—but who were not identified by name. The list of names also includes "tenants in the house of Tsvi Kitces."[114] It is possible that these tenants (by definition, a small group) arrived in Miedzyboz in order to make their own assessment of the Baal Shem, and stayed at the home of the leading Chasid of the Besht at the time, Tsvi Kitzes. However, even if this were the case, it is impossible to say whether these people had come to benefit from the mystical and medicinal powers of the Besht or to join his circle.

In any event, the material I have presented confirms what Etkes has already demonstrated on the basis of Jewish sources: namely, that one cannot speak of an actual movement led by the Baal Shem Tov in Miedzyboz—at least in the 1740s. Neither can it be assumed that he appealed to the *hamon* (the masses), as so many historians have argued. From the numerical standpoint, the Besht's circle was rather small. We find no evidence of a wide-ranging social activity, apart from healing the sick. As Shmuel Ettinger has contended, the Baal Shem Tov did not attempt to form a unified opposition against the establishment.[115] The opposite is actually the case: the establishment supported him.

As to Miedzyboz itself, it is not true that the Besht put it on the map, as it were, and used it as a base from which to rally the oppressed Jews of Poland, The city was flourishing for years before he arrived there, and the pace of growth actually declined during the years he lived there.[116] The Besht moved to Miedzyboz, the largest community in the area, from Tluste, a small town. Probably he, like so many others, was attracted to a central location that offered economic opportunities—a form of employment by the community, and a large population in need of his medicinal and kabbalistic services; and spiritual opportunities—the company of men such as Tsvi Kitces and David,who were willing to join him in his spiritual quest as he embarked upon the attempt to formulate a new religious path."

In his book, *The Birth of Hasidism*, Piekarz states:

> Our knowledge of the genesis of Beshtian Hasidism is meager indeed, and we turn to legendary materials in an almost vain attempt to extract historical facts, particularly from that hagiographic collection, *Shivhei haBesht*, a book which, in my humble opinion, contains a number of pitfalls for the historian, both with respect to the life and activity of the main character and with respect to his party and his milieu.[117]

From the findings presented here, we see how Polish documentation can enable us to wean ourselves from an exclusive reliance on legend in our attempts to examine the history of the Besht, his immediate circle, and his milieu; and to avoid some of the pitfalls that await the historical interpreter of the traditional sources.

I would like to thank Professors Shmuel Ettinger, Chone Shmeruk, Immanuel Etkes, Dr. Israel Bartal, and Dr. Shaul Stampfer for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

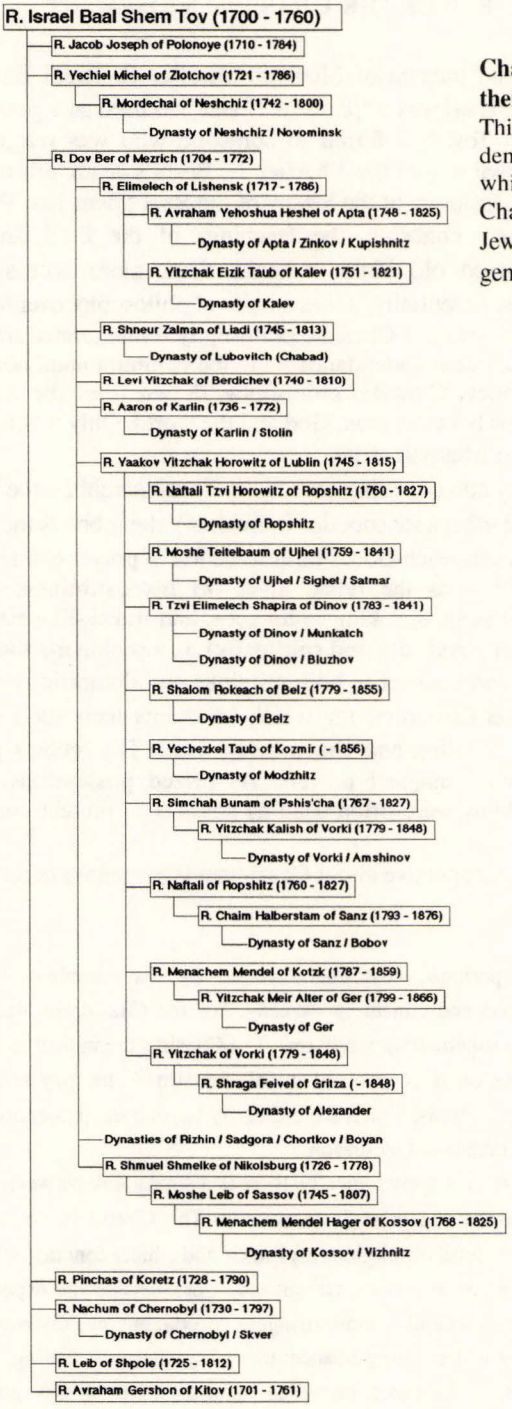
THE SPREAD OF THE CHASIDIC MOVEMENT

Chasidic thought spread outside of Medzhibozh after R. Israel Baal Shem Tov's death in 1760. A *Chasid* was a "pious one" and was used as a generic term prior to the Baal Shem Tov. It referred to someone who was religious and followed an ethical spiritual way of life.[118] After the Besht's death, this term took on specific meaning as a follower of the legacy of the Baal Shem Tov. While not introducing radically new concepts, the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov reinforced and transformed old ideas to make them more accessible and meaningful to the masses. Essentially, it was a layer of philosophy over top of the traditional Jewish way of life. The Chasidic philosophy reinvigorated traditional Jewish principles, making them understandable to the common man, not just the religious elite. For instance, Chasidic philosophy, drawn from the Kabbalah, speaks of the relationships between man, God and the world. Only when all three are balanced will the next Messiah arrive.

It involves a personality cult centering around the Chasidic rabbi—the "rebbe". A *tsadik* (a righteous and otherwise superior individual), the rebbe is the channel through which Chasidim can reach God. The ecstatic joy of prayer eminates from the rebbe to his Chasidim as the rebbe gives off his earthliness to God. Sometimes, this involves song, speaking in tongues, and trance-like states. The rebbe heals the sick (both physically and spiritually), is a problem-solver and is looked upon for advice and counsel in both religious and domestic issues. The rebbe exudes love for his Chasidim, for which he shares their successes and disappointments, often exhorting and encouraging them. The rebbe's personal blessing is held as having magical powers. As prized possessions, written blessings from noted rebbes were often used as amulets to protect against the "evil eye".

An interesting general perspective about Chasidism is presented in the following passage:[119]

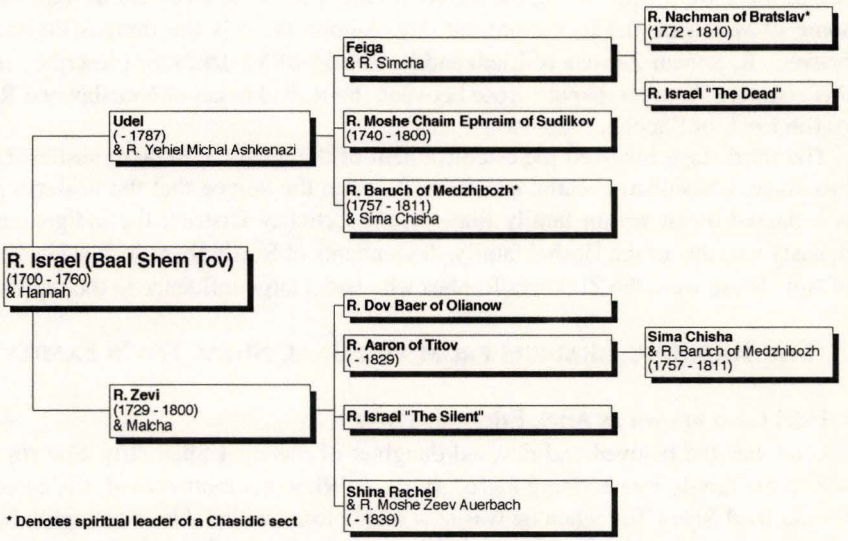
> The Chasid is, perhaps, best characterized by his combination of spirituality and religious and ethical spontaneity. For the Chasid, spirituality makes contact with the supernatural world real. The Chasid's theoretical as well as his practical orientation is determined mainly by stimuli he may receive through dreams and apparitions, which are ordinarily beyond the perception of the senses and are not controlled by reason.
>
> Historically, as well as psychologically, there is a strong link between this trait and that of religious and ethical spontaneity. The Chasid is not fully statisfied by the ordinary level of religious aspiration and ethical conduct, which is based on the precepts of the Torah. He not only goes beyond the expected standards of behaviour in accepting more stringent criteria, but also discovers a new source of religious and ethical guidance: that of spontaneous feeling. The immediate promptings of the heart are relied upon as a trustworthy guide.



Chasidic Masters and their Disciples.
This chart shows the student-teacher relationships which helped spread Chasidic thought to the Jewish world. It is not a genealogy,

> Unlike the halkhists, the Chasid does not feel obliged to find for his decisions a formal justification in tradition. The Chasid's mind is, of course, moulded to a very gret extent by the normal sources of Jewish tradition. His actual expositions, however, are not presented as the interpretation of tradition, but are proffered as the fruits of the Chasid's religious impulse....
>
> The precepts of the Chasid differ from those of the Talmud and of his contemporary halakhists not only in their strictness and bigotry: even the method and motive of the Chasid are different from those of the *halakhists*.[120] The Chasid seldom bases his decisions on literary sources, and hardly ever elaborates them on rational lines. His decisions are the expression of spontaneous emotion.

According to historians, the spread of the Chasidic movement occured in three distinct stages: 1) the direct disciples of Baal Shem Tov (1760-1780), 2) consolidation and regeneration period (1780-1850), and 3) period of the great Chasidic dynasties (1850-present). At each stage, spiritual leaders of the movement made their own uniques marks on Chasidic thought.[121]



The Baal Shem Tov's Family Tree.
This abridged tree shows some of the rabbis in the first few generations after the Baal Shem Tov.

The first stage involved the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov, most of whom lived for a time in Medzhibozh. This included R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoye (d. 1782) and R. Dov Ber "the Great Maggid" of Mezerich (1704-1772). The Great Maggid, perhaps more than any other person, influenced the spread of Chasidism in Eastern Europe. A prolific writer, he became an enclave of Chasidic learning, with numerous disciples. These disciples became the Chasidic leaders of the next generation, ultimately leading to the great Chasidic dynasties.

The second stage was a time of turmoil. Chasidic rabbis of this period include R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1813) -- the founder of the Chabad/Lubavich movement, two of the Baal Shem Tov's grandsons -- R. Borukh of Medzhibozh (1753-1811) and R. Moshe Khaim Ephraim of Sudilkov (1748-1800), R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt (1748-1825), and R. Nakhman of Bratslav (1772-1810) -- the Baal Shem Tov's great-grandson. During this period, Chasidic thought was challenged from both outside and within. Led by Elijah the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797), perhaps the greatest Jewish thinker of the day, the Lithuanian-based *Mitnagdim* were the harshest opponents of Chasidism and the supporters of tradition. For example, R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi was jailed by Russian authorities in St. Petersburg, at the instigation of the *mitnagdim*, during the year 1798 and again in 1800-1.[122] The Chasidic leadership of this period were tough-minded individuals who responded by codifying Chasidic thought. As a result, there were rifts among the different branches of the Chasidic movement, some of which persist to the present day. Among them is the famous dispute between R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi and R. Borukh of Medzhibozh (described in this chapter). Another dispute arose between the R. Nakhman of Bratslav and R. Aryeh Loeb of Shpole (1725-1811).

The third stage involved the establishment of the great Chasidic dynasties. In this stage, Chasidism became institutionalized to the degree that the leadership was passed down within family lines. In the Letichev District, the indigenous dynasty was that of the Heshel family, descendants of R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt. These were the Zinkover Rebbes who had a large influence in the region.

THE RABBINIC LEADERS FROM THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S FAMILY

Udel (also known as Adel, Edel) (d. 1787)

Udel was the beloved and devoted daughter of the Baal Shem Tov. She supported the family by operating a grocery store. When her mother died, she cared for the Baal Shem Tov when he was sick just before he died. She was said to be charming and outgoing, a close confidant of the Besht. She was honored by Chasidim as if she were a rabbi herself. Her joyful personality far outshined her brother, the retiring and sad R. Tsvi. Udel was said to participate and was near her father during prayers, celebrations and gathering.[123] The following story shows how she met her husband, the mysterious R. Yehiel Michal Ashkenazi:[124]

When Udel was grown she asked her father when she would marry and whether she would have any children. The Baal Shem Tov told her: "Your husband is hidden among the scholars who come here. You must wait until a sign points him out to you."

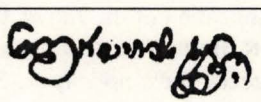
Udel waited until Simchat Torah, the celebration of the Law. The Baal Shem's students were all dancing wildly around the Torah. During the dancing, the shoe of one of the students flew off his foot. Seeing this, he sang out a popular song:

A maiden will put the shoe on my foot
A mother will rock the babe in her cradle.

Udel's father, seeing this, called to his daughter. She, in turn, became so confused that she could not find the student's shoe. Instead, she sat down, removed both her own slippers, and offered them to the student. It was this same student who became her husband. Together they had three children.

Rabbi Moshe Khaim Ephraim of Sudilkov (1748-1800)

Rabbi Moshe Khaim was one of two sons of Udel, the beloved daughter of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. Brought up in the household of the Baal Shem Tov until the age of 12, it was said that the Baal Shem Tov dearly loved R. Moshe Chaim. After the Besht's death, R. Moshe Chaim was taken in by R. Abraham Gershon, the brother-in-law of the Besht. He studied under R. Dov Ber the Maggid of Mezerich and under R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoye. Afterwards, he settled in Sudilkov where he served as Maggid. In many ways, R. Moshe Khaim was opposite of his brother, R. Borukh of Medzhibozh. He was a quiet, studious and reflective person who lived his life in utter poverty. In the last year of his life he returned to Medzhibozh, his birthplace. There he died and is buried next to the Besht in the old Medzhibozh cemetery.



R. Moshe Khaim's Signature.

ספר

דגל מחנה אפרים

ואת התורה רעק"ס פסוס אירי רבי עילאי הי"ה אפ"ה הרב הגאון
הגדול המפורסם בדורנא קדישא נר ישראל אש
אלקים קדוש סרה משה חיים אפרים זונקל שהיה אב"ד
דק"ק סרילקאב נכד של הרב האלקי אשר שמי הטוב הולך מפוף
השולם ועד סיגו כהוי"ר ישראל בעש"ם ומקליה ממעזבוז,
ובתי יעמוד לנו ולכל ישראל הרש הידושין בני עירין קדישין
והורת משה היה שכתן ותתם באוצרותיו באוצר החיים בכתב עם
ספר כהיר בבלאבתו בכלאבת הקודש וכל נחלי הזהר הטה
משתקקים וחשדים לשקום שם עריכות ומחיקות דבריו שיצא מפי
הקדוש להוציא לאור עולם. וקם בן אפרים נושקי רוסי קשת
ואור חלציו האיש אשר נתן לו שכל במרומים ועמו קשורה הוא
שמלתו לקודו וכי האיש החסך לכצוא לנפשו דברי חפץ יסנא
ברברי הקדוש מפשוטו. עד אין חקר יקר מד ומפנינים. וחכות
המחבר יעמוד לנו ולכל ישראל אמן:

Degel Mahanei Efraim Title Page. Contains R. Moshe Ephraim's comments on the Torah. Published in Korets in 1810.

His work *Degel Mahanei Efraim* (Banner of the Camp of Ephriam) was published by his son in 1810. A classic of Chasidic literature, it contains discussions about each of the weekly Torah portions. In it, he craftly weaved his ideas with that of his grandfather and that of R. Abraham Gershon. *Degel Mahanei Efraim* is considered a primary source in the understanding of the ideology of the Baal Shem Tov.[125]

Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh (1753-1811)

Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh was the younger son of Udel. The other notable grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, R. Borukh was an enigmatic figure. He was strong-willed, uncompromising and had a fiery temper.

R. Borukh studied under R. Dov Ber and R. Pinkhas Shapira of Korets. He married the daughter of the wealthy R. Tuvia of Ostova and settled in Tulchin. When his first wife died, he married his cousin and returned to Medzhibozh in 1788 amid growing opposition to his brand of Chasidism in Tulchin. He was the first Chasidic rabbi to stress the concept of *malkhut* (royalty). He also attached mystical significance to the practice of giving *pidyonot* (gifts) to rabbis in exchange for the rabbi's blessing. With his inherited wealth, he built a spacious house and lived a luxurious life in Medzhibozh. There, he had a coach, a coachman, and a team of horses, which was considered highly extravagant at the time. In spite of his luxurious lifestyle, he preached asceticism to others. He firmly supported and helped fund the emigration of Chasidim to Israel.

Because of his descendency, R. Borukh considered himself the true heir to the Baal Shem Tov's legacy. He fervently defended the teachings of the Besht with any deviation causing his bitter antagonism. He had a low regard Chasidic leaders that were his contemporaries. He was especially insensed with the publication of the *Tanya*, the writings of R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi.

R. Borukh's autocratic behavior aroused opposition to him from other Chasidic leaders, most notably R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi. In 1808, R. Shneur Zalman traveled to Podolia to raise funds for Jews who had been evicted from their homes. While in Podolia, he meet with R. Borukh in order to settle their differences. In that famous meeting, R. Borukh expressed his view that R. Shneur Zalman was trespassing upon his territory. R. Borukh was opposed to R. Shneur Zalman's methods of collecting funds for the holy land and he effectively restricted R. Shneur Zalman activities on Podolian soil.

Interesting folk stories about some of R. Borukh's conflicts with R. Shneur Zalman were recorded by the An-sky Expeditions in Podolia the early 20th century.[126]

> Once R. Shneur Zalman was informed by reliable sources that a decree was about to be issued...His sources told him that with a bribe it might still be possible to stop the enactment and cancel the decree. The rabbi knew that without the support of R. Borukh...he would be unable to collect such a large sum of money. So he sent a messenger to R. Borukh with a sealed letter. R. Borukh answered R. Shneur Zalman with a sealed letter...He said that the heavens had not given him a sign. The answer made R. Shneur Zalman's Litvak blood boil...so he sent a second messenger. But R. Borukh would not move an inch and repeated his answer... The Litvak was even more enraged with this haughty

A poor Jew praying with his talis and tefillin.
From the An-sky Collection, 1911-15, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

answer. He left everthing behind him, took to the road and after a couple of days arrived in Medzhibozh to confront R. Borukh.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman entered Rabbi Borukh's room, saluted the rabbi like a soldier, and said: "Rabbi Borukh, I must inform you that the crown is preparing an anti-Jewish decree according to which Jewish boys will be kidnapped and conscripted into the army. It is clear as daylight that with a bribe we may still

be able to cancel the decree. So, I come to you and ask your help in collecting the sum of money we need to cancel the decree."

R. Borukh turned to the rabbi and answered stiffly: "I have received no personal sign from the heavens that Jewish children are to be taken into the army."

The rabbi from Liadi cut his salute abruptly. His hot Litvak blood began to boil and suddenly, with the force of a bullet, the rabbi let fly: "Rabbi Borukh! You will surely pay for this. I warn you!"

R. Borukh leaped up from his chair and, standing face to face with the rabbi, he shouted in his ear: "You impudent Litvak! Do you know who you are talking to? You are talking to Borukh, a grandson of the Besht. I pray with my holy grandfather's *tefillin*!"

But the rabbi was a Litvak through and through, and his blood began to boil even more; his anger flared up. The rabbi turned away for R. Borukh, walked to the door, broke the handle off it and, throwing it to the floor, snapped at R. Borukh: "So what if the *tefillin* belonged to the Besht, does that mean they can't be defective?" And kicking the door open with his foot, he stormed out without another word.

R. Borukh was dumb-struck. This was astonishing. He was panic-stricken. Defective *tefillin*? Had he been praying with defective *tefillin*? His head began to pound with pain and, as if he had been bitten by a snake, he shouted: "Call Reb Hershl the scribe at once!" And when the scribe opened the *tefillin* they discovered that one letter in the text was indeed missing; one letter Yud was missing. R. Borukh felt as if he had been cut by a red-hot blade, he rose from his chair and in a strange, very different voice he cried out: "What! the Litvak took a Yud from my *tefillin*? I shall take the letter Yud from his children!" [Yud is the first letter of the Hebrew word for children, *Yeladim*].

Alas, the rabbi's dour words soon turned out to be true. One of R. Shneur Zalman's children strayed from the straight and narrow. Some people even say that he changed religion, but this is pure fiction. After a short while he repented. But he used to torture himself in terrible ways: he used to tie his feet with a rope and hang upside down every night until dawn.

* * * * *

The morning after the confrontation between the two rabbis, R. Shneur Zalman decided to pay his tribute and visit the Besht's grave. But R. Borukh gave orders to shut the cemetery gate and not to let him in.

* * * * *

After a couple of days, a Jew from one of the nearby villages came to R. Borukh and invited him to be the godfather at his son's circumcision. R. Borukh told him that there was an important visitor in town and that he should also be invited to the feast. So naturally the Jew went to R. Shneur Zalman and , total innocent that he was, said that R. Borukh had asked him to invite the rabbi tot he feast as well. The rabbi answered that if he would fetch R. Borukh he would gladly join them. And so it was. The rabbi climbed into the carriage and sat beside R. Borukh. They did not look at each other and neither uttered a word.

As they were on their way, R. Shneur Zalman suddenly called the coachman and said: "Turn to the right, there is a dep hole in the snow and, God forbid, we may overturn." When he heard this, R. Borukh remarked angrily: "The Litvak wants to prove that he has studied the map. Well, we know the way here too!" The rabbi, his Litvak blood beginning to boil, reached out of the carriage, grabbed a handful of snow and turning to R. Borukh he said: "If you like I can show all four elements on your skin with this snow -- fire, earth, wind and water." Suddenly frightened, R. Borukh caught his hand and shouted: "No, no, there's no need." Later, R. Borukh commented that he had definitely seen the element fire.

Later in life R. Borukh was described as being overcome by an overwelming melancholy. His followers introduced Hershel Ostropoler as a "court jester" to cheer up the aging rebbe. At first, Hershel Ostropoler was successful in humoring the rebbe. But after a time, R. Borukh grew bored with Hershel. Legend has it that in a fit of rage, R. Borukh accidently caused Hershel Ostropoler's death.

R. Borukh died in Medzhibozh and is buried next to his grandfather. His writings were included in *Amarot Tehorot* published in 1865 and in *Buzino Dinhora* published in 1880.[127]

Hershel Ostropoler

While not strictly a rabbi, Hershel Ostropoler was an important figure in Medzhibozh during the time of Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh. As mentioned previously, Hershel served as a court jester and clown in the court of R. Borukh to help him overcome his melancholy. During this time, many interesting folk tales evolved around him. He became a popular folk hero among the poor in both the Jewish and Ukrainian population. In the early twentieth century, a very popular Yiddish play was called "Hershel Ostropoler" which portrayed many of these folk stories.

Not much about the historic Hershel Ostropoler is known. He was named "Ostropoler" because he was descended from the famous 17th century kabbalist Shimon of Ostropol who was martyred during the Khmelnitsky massacres. Hershel was born in Balta, worked for a time as a butcher, and was recruited by R. Borukh's Chasids to come to Medzhibozh. There he spent the rest of his life in poverty as a member of R. Borukh's Chasidic court. He is known to have had

a wife and a family. He is buried in a now-unmarked grave in the Old Medzhibozh Cemetery. It was rumored that R. Borukh himself caused Hershel's death. In a fit of rage it was said that R. Borukh pushed Hershel backwards, where he fell down some stairs. He lingered for several days after the accident before he died.

Hershel Ostropoler was known for his wry wit, which was, in a way, a social commentary of the day. He almost always sided with the poor, which may have been the secret to his notoriety.[128] Rose Pesotta from turn-of-the-century Derazhnia wrote of Hershel Ostropoler:[129]

> Almost invariably, too, a voice would crop up with "As Hershel Ostropoler once said..." and would proceed with some yarn about the legendary jester of bygone years that we had heard before, but usually with new embellishments.
>
> Nowadays, humor, quips, tall tales, anecdotes, and even ad libs, voiced with apparent spontaneity by leading comedians, are the result of grinding labor by anonymous factory toilers called gag-writers, who often dip into the treasure-house of immigrant grandparents' memories for the mirthful wisdom of Hershel and his contemporaries. In modern dress and with new names, their engaging stories steadily crop up on our air-waves, screen, and stage. It is doubtful whether the current entertainers, who are ready to do almost anything for a laugh, will be remembered a hundred years hence, but the fame of Hershel Ostropoler of the Jewish Pale, like that of Will Rogers, and his humor and fun-poking at the overweening and vainglorious will live for ages.

Here are a few Hershel Ostropoler stories:

> *Hershel as Tranquilizer*
>
> As Hershel's fame in Ostropol grew, he found that the burden of feeding his growing family grew heavy upon him. But his fortunes mended when he was appointed the official jester to the "court" of Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh. The rabbi suffered from melancholy; the plight of his people and the poverty and persecution that afflicted them, robbed him of the cheerfulness which, as a *tsadik*, was his duty to cultivate. It was Hershel's role to divert and soothe him.
>
> He made an excellent start. On the day of his arrival in Medzhibozh, the rabbi was gloomier than usual. He shut himself up in his tudy, paced up and down and refused to see anyone. But Hershel managed to slip past the attendant at the door and entered the study. In his hand he carried a lantern in which burned a candle.
>
> The rabbi scowled at him. "What are you doing here?" he demanded.
>
> "They told me," he murmured meekly, "that the rabbi's face had fallen. I have come here to look for it, and if you will permit me, perhaps I'll find it."

If the rabbi didn't laugh, at least he smiled and gave orders that Hershel should not be denied his presences and even be allowed to eat with him. But the first meal began poorly. The rabbi was so depressed he was unable to eat. So Hershel took a silver teaspoon and slipped it obviously into his pocket.

"What are you doing?" the rabbi asked. "Thou shalt not steal!"

"The doctor prescribed for me and told me to take a teaspoon with every meal," Hershel answered demurely. "I am only following doctor's orders."

At once, the rabbi's appetite was restored.[130]

Hershel as Coachman

Hershel's wife clamored: "Money! Money!"

"I have no money," he pleaded.

"You can tell that to your grandmother!" she retorted. "All I know is that the children are hungry."

When Hershel heard this he became serious and arose from his chair. "Go to our next-door neighbor and borrow a whip," he said sternly to his oldest boy.

Hearing this, his wife began to tremble. "God have mercy!" she thought with dismay. "Now he's going to give me a whipping!"

But this was farthest from Hershel's mind. When the boy brought him the whip he went into the market square and cracked it loudly in the air. "I'm taking people to Letichev for half fare!" he shouted.

"What a bargain!" people thought, and in a wink there were eager customers. Hershel collect money from them and gave it to his boy.

"Run home and give it to your mother," he said.

"Where are the horses?" inquired his passengers as they followed him down the road.

Continuity of Chasidic Leadership in Medzhibozh

1742-1760	R. Israel Baal Shem Tov
1760-1788	*various Baal Shem Tov disciples including* R. Issachar Dov-Ber haLevi Landa
1788-1811	R. Borukh of Medzhibozh
1813-1825	R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt
1825-?	R. Isaac Meir of Zinkov
?-1864	*controlled by the Zinkover Rebbes:* R. Isaac Meir of Zinkov and his son R. Meshulam Zusia of Zinkov
1864-1880	R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Medzhibozh
1881-1911	R. Israel Shalom Joseph of Medzhibozh
1911-1925	R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Medzhibozh / Tarnopol
1925-1931	R. Yitzhak Meir Heschel of Medzhibozh / Haifa

"Come along and don't worry!" Hershel told them. "I'll take you right into Letichev."

So they followed him without further questions.

They had already left Medzhibozh, but still no horses. In the distance they saw the bridge. "No doubt the horses are at the bridge," they thought. But when they reached the bridge there were still no horses. By this time they had already covered half the distance to Letichev. So they thought to themselves, "Very well, this man is a swindler, but what good will it do us to turn back now?"

Finally they reached Letichev. "Return us our money, you thief!" they demanded of Hershel. "You fooled us!"

"I fooled you?" laughed Hershel scornfully. "Answer me, did I or did I not promise to take you to Letichev?"

"Yes, but ride there, not walk!"

"Pfui!" snorted Hershel. "Did I ever say a word about horses?"

The passengers looked at one another dumbfounded, and since there was nothing they could do about it they spat out in contempt and went away.

When Hershel got home his wife met him at the door, beaming. "I can't understand, Hershel," she said. "You had a whip, but where on earth did you get the horses?"

"Don't ask foolish questions!" Hershel laughed. "What do I need horses for? You know the saying: 'If you crack a whip you can always find some horses!'"[131]

Reciprocity

Hershel Ostropoler was once asked, "Is it true, Hershel, what people say - that you beat your wife with a stick and she clubs you over the head with a rolling pin?"

"That's not entirely true," answered Hershel. "Sometimes we switch."[132]

Once, when Hershel was walking near the river, he saw his wife doing the laundry. She was banging his shirt with a wooden paddle on a flat stone. "It's a good thing I'm not in it," he remarked, with a sigh of relief.[133]

Hershel's Revenge on the Women

As soon as Hershel Ostropoler went to serve Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh as his jester, he met with a hostile stare from the rabbi's wife. She found all sorts of petty reasons to abuse him. Once, when he tried to defend himself, she turned her back on him insultingly and shut him up with the retort, "Your excuses are making me deaf - you're raising such a racket with them!"

Hershel smarted under the abuse and lay low. Someday, he vowed, he would get even.

Soon after, the rabbi's wife said to Hershel, "Send your wife to me; it's time we get to know each other."

"With pleasure," answered Hershel eagerly. "She'll regard it as a very great honor. But I must warn you - she's as deaf as the wall! If you want her to hear you, you've got to shout."

"I understand," The rabbi's wife assured him. "Never fear, I'll manage. Just have her come to see me."

When Hershel came home he said to his wife, "The rabbi's wife told me she would like to get to meet you. But, I've got to warn you: she's stone deaf. If you want her to hear you, you've got to shout."

"I understand," said Hershel's wife, and she went to see the rabbi's wife.

When the two women met they both began to shout and scream at each other ever louder. Their cries even reached into the rabbi's study where he was closeted with his Chasidim. Frightened out of his mind, the rabbi dashed into his wife's room, his Chasidim close at his heels. What the rabbi saw was incredible. Both women were at the point of collapse. Their voices were hoarse, and their cries sounded like croaks.

"What is the meaning of this?" the rabbi demanded. "Why are you shouting this way?"

"Hershel's wife is deaf," gasped his wife. "I had to yell so that she could hear me.'

"And why do you shout?" asked the rabbi of Hershel's wife.

"What else should I do - your wife is stone deaf!" croaked Hershel's wife.

"My wife stone deaf? You're crazy, woman!" shouted the rabbi, beside himself with rage. "Who told you that?"

"Why Hershel did!"

All this while, Hershel stood near the rabbi enjoying himself tremendously.

"Impudent fellow!" roared the rabbi. "Explain yourself now. What kind of prank is this?"

"I am innocent, Rabbi," pleaded Hershel.

"All right, so it's my fault?" asked the rabbi sarcastically.

"Blame your wife, Rabbi," said Hershel. "The other day she was angry at me for some reason. I was entirely innocent."

Then addressing the rabbi's wife, Hershel continued, "Do you remember that when I tried to explain, you turned your back on me and said: ''You're raising such a racket with your excuses they're making me deaf!' Well, what did you expect - that I shouldn't believe you? Why should I have doubted you? Also was it wrong of me to give due warning to my wife? If she spoke in a low voice you

wouldn't have heard a thing. Besides, wouldn't it have been highly inconsiderate of her to do so?"

"But why did you tell me your wife was deaf?" rasped the rabbi's wife in a hoarse voice.

"What a foolish question!" retorted Hershel. "Imagine, if after only a few months I made you deaf with my excuses, how deaf do you think I've made my wife after twenty years of marriage? Don't either of you say I didn't warn you!"[134]

Hershel on his deathbed

Hershel Ostropoler, the famous jester, died as he had lived-with a joke on his lips.

When Rabbi Borukh and his Chasidim stood around Hershel's bed and listened to him making sport of everything and everybody, they were filled with wonder.

"Haven't you done enough ridiculing in your life without having to do so on your deathbed?" the rabbi rebuked him sternly. "Aren't you afraid of Hell?"

"Never fear," replied the dying Hershel, "I'll joke myself out of there, too!"

"For instance?" asked the rabbi.

"If the Angel of Death asks me whether I devoted my days and nights to the study of Torah, I'll answer: 'If you think I'm not a scholar don't make me your son-in-law.' If he asks me what my name is—I'll tell him: '"Getsel." Naturally, he'll get angry. 'What's the idea, your name is Hershel!' So I'll tell him: ''Since you know, why do you ask?' And if he asks me: 'What have you accomplished in life? Have you mended anything that was wrong in the world?' I'll answer: ''Mended? Surely I mended—I mended my socks, my shirt, my pants...'"

A little later, when the members of the Burial Society arrived, Hershel said to them with his dying breath, "Remember, my friends, when you lift me up to lay me in my coffin be sure not to hold me under the arm-pits. I've always been very ticklish there!"

And so, with a smile on his lips, Hershel breathed his last.[135]

Rabbi Nakhman of Bratslav (1772-1810)

Rabbi Nakhman was born in Medzhibozh, the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov. On his mother's side, his lineage can be traced back to Rashi, who was said to be a direct descendent of King David. He married at age 13, then for a number of years lived a secluded lifestyle in the footsteps of his great-grandfather. He settled in Medvedovka, where he remained until 1798 when he visited the land of Israel. He returned to Russia in 1800 and lived in Zlatopol, near Shpole where R. Aryeh Loeb was active. There a bitter feud developed R. Nakhman and R. Aryeh Loeb. R. Nakhman was staunchly defended in this dispute by the great R. Levi Yitshak of Berdichev. In 1802, R. Nakhman moved to Bratslav, Podolia (southeast of Vinnitsa) which he developed into a principle center of early Chasidism. In the last few months of his life, R. Nakhman moved to Uman where he died of tuberculosis and was buried there.

ספר

ליקוטי מוהרן

באוסטרהא

Title page of Likutei Moharon.
A collection of R. Nakhman's commentaries, it was published in 1808 in Ostrog.

R. Nakhman was a major innovator in Chasidic practices. He believed in a simpler, more gutteral approach toward experiencing God's joy. R. Nakhman practiced an exuberant ecstatic style of worship that embraced the whole of his emotions. His ascetic teachings involve fasting and temporarily giving way of the body for the soul. More so than any other Chasidic sect, he believed that song, and in particular the wordless *nigun*, had a special connection between God and man. R. Nakhman eschewed deep philosophical speculation, instead counselling his followers to serve God with simple, naive, unlimited joy. He claimed that God is beyond explanation, therefore the only true answer is faith. A great story teller, R. Nakhman would weave complex tales to a moral conclusion. These stories were understood on many levels: simple people understood them on a purely narrative way, while the more scholarly understood allusions to more profound truths.

R. Nakhman was perhaps the first follower of the Baal Shem Tov to develop a loyal, long-lasting separatist group of Chasidic devotees. His movement, perhaps the largest of its day, continued to follow his teachings after his death. Known affectionately as the *toite* (dead) Chasidim, the movement is arguably the first

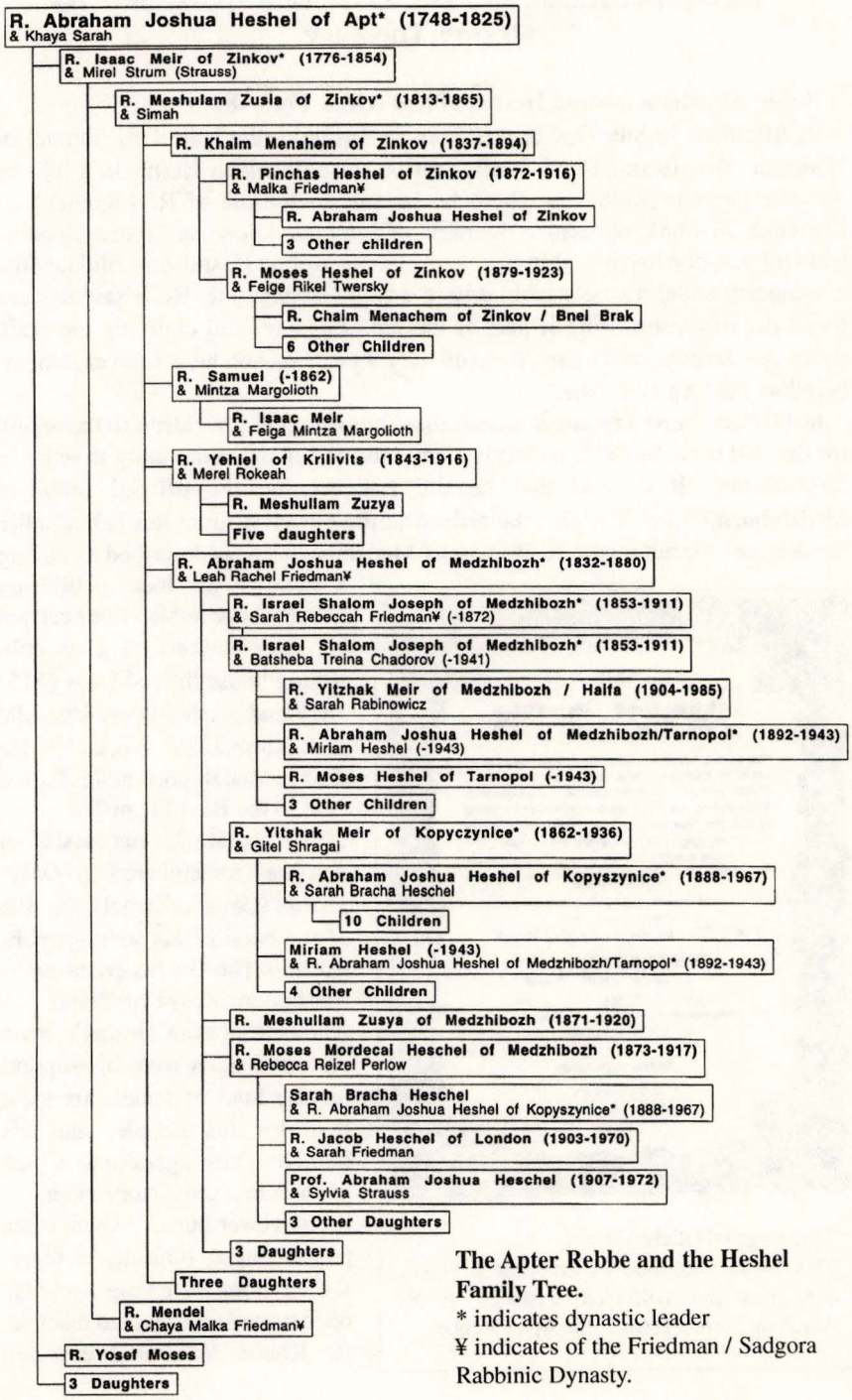
dynastic sect, even though no successor rebbes followed R. Nakhman in the Bratslaver movement.

Other than the Chabad movement, the Bratslaver movement is the only Chasidic sect which stressed the central importance of studying the discourses of their leader. At one point before his death, R. Nakhman instructed his followers to destroy his writings, but many of his books survive. This was due in a large measure to his loyal disciple and scribe R. Nathan of Nemirov. Beginning 1808, R. Nathan published *Likutei Moharon*, a collection of R. Nakhman's moral teachings. R. Nathan published *Sipurei Maasiyot*, a collection of R. Nakhman's stories, in 1816. Since this time, numerous other works of R. Nakhman's have been published.[136]

Other Besht Decendents

Rose Pesotta, who wrote about turn of the century shtetl life in Derazhnia, recorded this vignette:[137]

> In my own time the last of the Baal Shem Tov's descendants, a great-great grandson of the Rabbi, a youth of my age, was brought to Derazhnya from Medzhibozh periodically with all the pomp that would attend an heir-apparent to a royal throne, to preside on the Sabbath at gatherings of the Hasidim. Dozens of his follwers would escort him to and from the various houses of prayer. A sumptuous repast would be served in the Community Hall at the Zinkover shul, and those present would sing and dance in ecstasy for their leader and for the glory of God. Their garb was still that of the Middle Ages, and it remains so to the present day.



The Apter Rebbe and the Heshel Family Tree.

* indicates dynastic leader

¥ indicates of the Friedman / Sadgora Rabbinic Dynasty.

THE APTER REBBE AND THE ZINKOVER-MEDZHIBOZHER HESHEL DYNASTY

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt (circa 1748-1825)

R. Abraham Joshua Heshel was born in Zmigrod, the son of R. Shmuel of Neustadt. His distinguished family can be traced back to Rashi. In 1788, he was the rabbi in Kolbusov where he became a disciple of R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk. In 1800, he became the rabbi of Apt (also known as Optov, Opotow, and Opta). Upon his arrival in Apt, R. Abraham Joshua Heshel consolidated the community under a single rabbi within a single synagogue. He is said to have loved the town, declaring it part of the land of Israel and claiming the main street was Jerusalem. Though he lived only 9 years in Apt, he is forever remembered as the "Apter Rebbe."[138]

In 1809, he moved to Iasi in Bessarabia, thus bringing Chasidism to the region for the first time. In 1813, he left Iasi amid turmoil in the community to retire in Medzhibozh. It is said that he did not become the official rabbi in Medzhibozh,[139] but it is clear he arrived in the power vacuum left behind after the death of the autocratic R. Borukh of Medzhibozh. He is described as having a stake in the local publishing house whose publications carried his Approbations.[140] That publishing house thrived from 1815-1827 and printed many Chasidic and Kabbalistic works.[141] He died in Medzhibozh and is buried next to the Baal Shem Tov.

ספר
אוהב ישראל
אברהם יהושע העשיל
בזיטאמיר
אגרת
תרכג
לפ"ק
ОГЕВЪ ИЗРАИЛЪ
т. е.
Другъ израилевъ
ЖИТОМИРЪ
Въ типографіи Д. и Г. Шапировъ
1863

Title page of Oheiv Yisrael.
This book, published in Zhitomir in 1863, contained the collected writings of R. Abraham Joshua Heshel, the Apter Rebbe.

R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt was remembered as *Oheiv Yisrael* (Lover of Israel), the title of the book of his writings published in 1863 by his grandson R. Meshullam Zusya of Zinkov. R. Abraham Joshua Heshel's main character traits were his support for the land of Israel, his great love for his people, and his humorous exaggerations which made him a great story teller.

His clever humor, which often poked fun at himself, is represented in the following story: He once turned to a devoted disciple, R. Khaim Yekhiel Meir, and

asked "Why do your remain in hiding? It's high time that you became the leader of a Chasidic community." R. Khaim humbly replied, "How can a fraud like me take upon himself such a role?" The Apter Rebbe laughing responded, "We are both the same sort. If I can be a Chasidic master, so can you."[142]

Nearing death in Medzhibozh, he made prayed: "Lord of the Universe! I know that I have no merits that I be placed in Paradise among the pious, and You will place me in Hell among the wicked. But You know that I hate those who transgress Your will. So how will I be able to tolerate such people? Therefore, I beseech You to take the wicked out of Hell in order that You be able to put me there to stay in Hell by myself."[143]

The Apter Rebbe's exceptional personality attracted thousands of admirers including noteworthy rabbis of the day. He was the founding dynastic leader of the Heshel rabbinic family, whose descendents were active in Medzhibozh, Zinkov, Tarnopol, Kupshnitz, Odessa, Vienna, and Haifa. A descendent was one of the greatest twentieth-century Jewish philosophers, Prof. Abraham Joshua Heschel.[144]

פ"נ הרב אדמו"ר
אוהב ישראל מ"ה
אברהם יהושע
העשיל מק' אפטא
בהרב החסיד ועניו
שלשלת היוחסין מ'
שמואל ז"ל, נפ' ה' ניסן
תקפ"ה
ולעת זקנתו תקע
אהלו של תורה פ"ק
מעוזרו ולו דומי' תהל'
ובמקום גדולתו שם
ענותנותו אשר יצוה
את בניו שלא לכתוב
על מצבתו שבחות
תנצב"ה
... ויעמוד לקץ הימין לגורלו.

The Apter Rebbe's Epitaph.
In the old Medzhibozh cemetery.

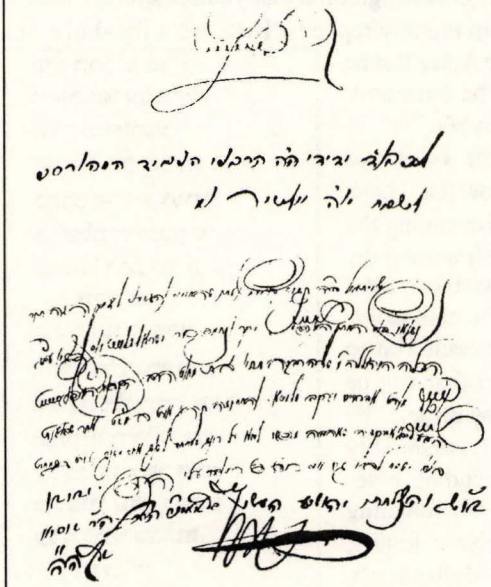
Rabbi Isaac Meir Heshel of Zinkov (1776-1855)

Son of R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt, in 1800 he succeeded his father as the rabbi of Kolbusov. Then he became the rabbi of Zmigrod Nowy and Zinkov. He eventually succeeded his father as the rabbi for Medzhibozh. Known as the Zinkover Rebbe, he loved Zinkov because it was the only village with no church.[145]

Rabbi Israel Shalom Joseph Heshel of Medzhibozh (1853-1911)

R. Israel Heshel, is described as succeeding his father R. Abraham Joshua Heshel as rebbe in Medzhibozh in the year 1881. He was married to Sarah Rebecca in 1866, the daughter of R. Abraham Jacob Friedman of Sadgora (1820-1883), who died 6 years later. He remarried to Batsheba Treina Chadorov.[146] His marriage into the Friedman Sadgora Dynasty is one of more than twelve marriages between the Heshel family and the Friedman family. Interesting articles in the anti-Chasidic newspaper *Russki Evrei* describe the turbulent times of his takeover as Rebbe in Medzhibozh:[147]

> It is rumored that our *tsadik* will abandon Medzhibozh and will leave for the more hospitable city of Sadgora, where his father-in-law lives, the famous



Letter from R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Medzhibozh.
This letter, ca. 1866, gives permission for his son, R. Israel Shalom Joseph Heshel to marry Sarah Rebecca Friedman, who was the daughter of R. Abraham Jacob Friedman, the Sadgora Rebbe.

Sadgora *tsadik*. This news saddened the Chasids of Medzhibozh. The *tsadik* wants to leave because of the poverty of the town. The Chasids have collected 1,000 rubles one time, and then 4,000 rubles, all in one year, from the Chasids of Derazhnia, Mikhalpol, and Letichev. This is very saddening, because on the one hand we have poor, cold, hungry, robbed Jews, and on the other hand we have the zealous agents of the *tsadik* who collect money for him with their fanatical ferver. The people don't know what will be with them tomorrow—maybe their last piece of bread will be taken away to take care of the *tsadik*, who wishes to be driven around with fine horses. Don't give! Unfortunately, many cultured people of Medzhibozh are two-faced. They give money for the *tsadik*, but money is not raised for a private library. It is said, 'whoever keeps company with a wolf will learn to howl.'

R. Israel Shalom Joseph Heshel of Mezhibozh.

Shortly thereafter, another article appeared:[148]

> Good news for the inhabitants of Medzhibozh. Our *tsadik* has decided to remain with us, even though we established a library with books which oppose God. In connection with the *tsadik's* decision to stay was a celebration in the *tsadik's* synagogue. Now he has undertaken a journey to the neighboring towns.

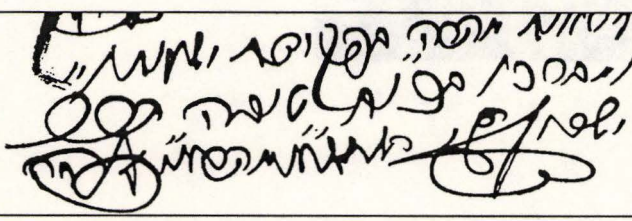
After his decision to remain in Medzhibozh, R. Israel apparently devoted his life to helping to feed the poor. In late 1882 the following article appeared:[149]

> The condition of poor men were extremely sad so far. Only lately, thanks to the *tsadik* (who could believe?) we have opened an inexpensive kitchen for poor men...Moreover, we have collected voluntary contributions for selling low-priced flour to poor people during the holidays. Many of our paupers have improved to a marked degree. But our Talmud-Torah and nursing homes are neglected for some reason—thanks to the *tsadik*.

The hostile journalism reaches its peak in the following article, written by "Misnagid" in 1883:[150]

> In [a previous article in *Russki Evrei*] we were informed about the inexpensive kitchen for the poor men, which was opened by the *tsadik*. I want you to know that the kitchen was not opened with the money of the *tsadik*. The money came from the orphans of Levenson, whom the funeral company refused to bury because of his great sins, namely that he wore a short coat and did not wear *peyas*. The *tsadik* decreed that in order for the children of the deceased to bury their father, they must pay including: 75 rubles to the funeral company, 300 rubles for the *eruv*, 50 rubles to the Mishna Society, and 200 rubles for a new wall around the cemetery. The kitchen was also opened from this money.

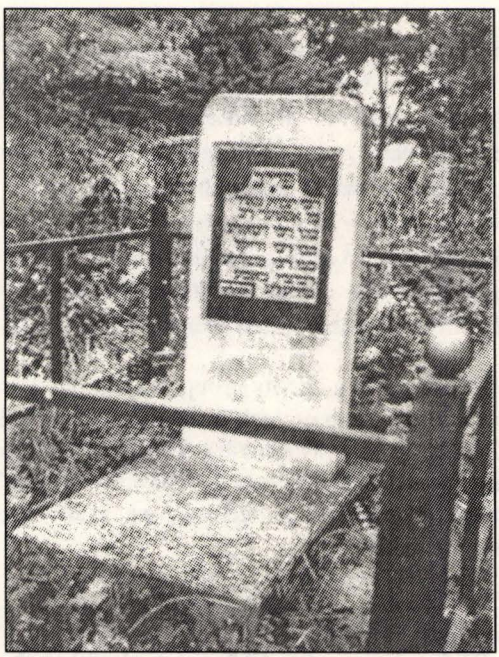
R. Israel Heshel is noted to have founded a charity group in 1884.[151] R. Israel is recorded as attempting to collect money to nourish over 600 Jewish soldiers stationed in Medzhibozh. He apparently was unsuccessful. This is recorded in an 1885 article in *HaMelits* written by one of the rebbe's disciples.[152] "R. Heshel" (probably the same R. Israel) in a later article is reported to have paid about 1,000 rubles of his own money to feed the soldiers.[153]



R. Israel Heshel's signature.

R. Meshullam Zusya Heshel of Medzhibozh.
Born 1871, died 1920.

R. Yitzhak Meir Heshel of Medzhibozh / Haifa.
Born 1904, died 1965. Seated on right. To the left is his cousin R. Sholoma Khaim of Sadgora.



Gravestone of Rabbi Isaac Meir Heshel.
Born 1776, died 1855, R. Isaac Meir brought Chasidism to Zinkov. This grave is located in the Zinkov cemetery. By its reference to his grandchildren, it appears that the stone was not the original. Photo taken in 1996 by B. Lukin.

The Chasidic Rabbis of Zinkov

The Zinkover Rebbes[154]

The Chasidic Dynasty of Zinkov is a branch of the Admorim. It was founded by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt:

1. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt, son of Rav Shmuel. Born in 1746, died in 1825. Son-in-law of Rabbi Jacob of Meturshteyn. One of the great students of Rabbi Elimelekh of Lizhensk. Served as rabbi and Admor in Kolbusov, Apt, Iasi, and Medzhibozh.

2. Rabbi Isaac Meir of Zinkov, son of R. Abraham Joshua Heshel of Apt. Born in Takla in 1755, died 1854. Moved to Zinkov from Medzhibozh, the last city of the rabbinate of his father. His life was a long chain of charitable deeds.

3. Rabbi Meshulam Zusia of Zinkov, son of R. Isaac Meir. Died 1865. He was the Admor of thousands. Published the book *Oheiv Yisrael* in honor of his grandfather from Apt.

4. Rabbi Khaim Menakhem of Zinkov, son of R. Meshulam Zusia. Died 1894. Son-in-law of Rabbi David of Tulna.

5a) Rabbi Pinkhas Heshel, son of R. Khaim Menakhem of Zinkov. Died 1916. Son-in-law of Rabbi Isaac of Bubosh.

5b) Rabbi Moses Heshel, son of R. Khaim Menakhem of Zinkov. Died 1923. Son-in-law of Rabbi Mordekhai of Korishtchov. Described as "Tall in stature, handsome, with a shining face."

After my father was engaged to my mother at the age of three, he visited frequently my grandfather of his wife-to-be, the father of Savta Gendil, Rabbi Itshak Leyb of Zinkov. Since the grandfather Itshak Leyb was the private *melamed* and instructor for the two sons of Rabbi Khaimel, the Chasidic rabbi of Zinkov, my father had the opportunity to become acquainted with the two sons of the "Rebbe" — Pinkhasel and Moishele, while they were still children.

When they grew up, my father was drawn to Moishele, the younger of the two sons of the Rebbe, developing feelings of love and friendship. According to my father, Moishele was consistent, sharp, a lover of mankind, and a man of *midot tovot.*[155] More that once he confided to my father that he was not interested in the

Rabbinate, that the 'yard' of the Rebbe was too confining to him and that he longed to go out into the world.

When Rebbe Khaimel died, his two sons Pinkhasel and Moishele were too young to take his place, so the rebbitsin, Rachel, who was in her own right a Torah scholar and educated woman, took the place of her husband. Her wish was to continue to manage the 'yard' of the Rebbe until her sons grew up. My grandfather, Yitshak Leyb, who was the melamed of her two sons, served also as the gabay for the rebbitsin Rachel, and they called him Itshak Leyb Rakheles.

The Zinkover Chasidim who were devoted to that dynasty continued to visit the 'yard' regularly and to present petitions to the rebbitsin who advised and counseled the Chasidim by virtue of her wisdom and knowledge. On Sabbath eves, the Chasidim would come to her table to hear words of Torah from her mouth. She enthralled them with her wisdom, charm, and beauty although they held their faces toward the ground and took care not to look at her face because of fear of foreign thoughts.

The reputation of the rebbitsin Rachel spread throughout the area (including residents who were not Jewish) as a wise woman, understanding of the ways of the world. She had influence also on the local authorities and many were the favors done for her Chasidim, or other Jews, because of her intervention.

It was only natural that among the visitors to the rebbitsin were those that came primarily because of her feminine attractions. One of those was a wealthy Chasid who during the life of Rabbi Khaimel *olav hashalom*,[156] kept away from his 'yard' but after his death the Chasid became a frequent visitor to the rebbitsin. He spent a fortune for the good of the 'yard.' It was told that he once stood before her with his face turned downward in modesty. The rebbitsin said, "Reb Levi, it doesn't matter where your face is turned as long as my words enter your heart."

The Division of the House of Zinkov

When the two sons grew up, the rebbitsin vacated her place for her elder son Rabbi Pinkhasel. But there were Chasidim who preferred Moishele over his elder brother and implored him to "spread his wings over them." When Rabbi Moishele refused to wear the *shtreimel*[157] of the rebbe, these Chasidim turned to his mother to intervene. The rebbitsin acceded to their request and influenced her son Rabbi Moishele, that for the benefit of the Chasidim who admired him and needed his direction, he should wear the *shtreimel* of the Admor.

Thus the dynasty of Zinkov was split into two houses. The Chasidim of Rabbi Moishele built for him a special house and 'yard' and so two rebbes ruled at the same time.

My grandfather, Yitshak Leyb, resigned from his service to the two sons and devoted himself to the study of Torah and Kabbalah.

In Proskurov, as in most towns of the area, the synagogue of the Zinkover Chasidim was split into two by the building of a wall down the middle. And so the Zinkover Chasidim were divided into two camps, the camp of Rabbi Pinkhasel and the camp of Rabbi Moishele.

A Visit of Rabbi Moishele to Our Town (Proskurov)

My father was one of Rabbi Moishele's Chasidim although his attitude toward the rebbe was different than that of the other Chasidim. He did not believe, as the others did, that the rebbe had supernatural powers and had the ability to perform miracles. He did not believe that the rebbe was a go-between for him before the Holy One Blessed be He. He simply admired him for his learning, his wisdom, his goodness, and *chesed*.[158]

Rabbi Moses Heshel of Zinkov. Born 1879, died 1923.

Once a year when Rabbi Moishele visited Proskurov, he stayed in the house of Faisy the weights man. Reb Faisy got this name from the weighing scales he had in his yard where buyers and sellers would come to weigh wagons loaded with goods. Reb Faisy was one of Rabbi Moishele's most devoted Chasidim and he would turn over his house for a full week to the rebbe as his house guest. The Chasidim would gather there to hear words of Torah from his mouth or to meet with him privately.

Always, when Rabbi Moishele was in the city, my father would go to see him and take me along. I remember the house of Reb Faisy the weights man, full of Chasidim from wall to wall. The rebbe would sit at the head of the table and speak before his Chasidim crowded around him, some sitting, some standing; all listening to his quiet words spoken in holiness and purity. Even during the pauses in the rebbe's speaking, the Chasidim did not take their eyes from his gentle and enlightening face, listening intently and impatiently to his full and long silence.

I, the only child in the room, would climb on to the pile of coats and furs in the corner and from there I would survey the scene before me. Once, when I fell asleep on the top of the pile of coats and when my father awoke me, the windows were already turning blue from the dawn.

Once my father sat privately with the rebbe in his room and only I was present besides them. My father did not give the rebbe a *petek*[159] as the rest

Rabbi Moses Heshel's House in Zinkov.
This house, which still exists, was the home and "yard" for the Zinkover Rebbe, R. Moses Heshel. Photo by. B. Lukin, 1996.

of the Chasidim usually did. The two sat as friends and discussed different issues. I remember a little of their conversation but more I understood from my father afterward.

The rebbe told my father that he saw bad days coming, days of revolution and rioting. The Jews, said the rebbe, must flee while they can to the United States and Israel. The rebbe added that it was his desire to send his household out of the hell that is called Russia but he himself could not leave his flock untended. Before we left his room he called me to come to him. He put me on his knees and asked that I sing to him. He asked me a few questions about what I had learned and finally put both his hands on my head and blessed me.

On Sabbath afternoon before *seudah shelishit*[160] the Chasidim would gather in Rabbi Moishele's *shul* and sing and dance with the rebbe himself. When the rebbe stood among his Chasidim he was a head taller than they and his face shone with holiness. When the rebbe walked in the street, many people stood on both sides of the street and watched the procession. The women especially could not take their eyes from his face, by their own confession.

The Relationship Between the Two Camps

On the days that Rabbi Moishele was in the city, the Chasidim of Rabbi Pinkhasel stayed off the streets so they would not be witnesses to the crowd that accompanied Rabbi Moishele wherever he went. The same thing happened when Rabbi Pinkhasel was in town but in the reverse order. Sometimes arguments broke out among the two groups and mutual insults never ceased.

The following incident I heard repeated a few times from Chasidim of Rabbi Moishele. I can't guarantee its factuality. Once an unstable fellow was brought before Rabbi Pinkhasel that he should heal him. The rebbe asked him different questions and the disturbed fellow answered in his own way. When the rebbe was finished with his questions the young fellow said, "Rebbe, may I ask you a question?" Said the rebbe, "Ask my son, ask." Said the *meshuginer*,[161] "I saw during your walks in the street Rabbi that a great crowd followed you. Also behind me walked many people in the street. What is the difference between you and me?" Said the rabbi, "I don't know." Answered the *meshuginer*, "Ask any man and he will tell you: sane men follow me whereas insane ones follow you!"

I never heard my father speak a bad word about Rabbi Pinkhasel. But he often spoke in praise of Rabbi Moishele because of his learning, honesty, and good-heartedness.

In the Rebbe's House in Zinkov

Once my father traveled with all his family to Zinkov to spend the High Holidays there. His purpose was twofold: To pray under one roof with Rabbi Moishele and to visit my grandfather Itshak Leyb who was already past ninety.

The prayers in the 'yard' of the rebbe were different from the service I was used to in the "Mizrahi" *minyan* in our city. The rebbe himself stood before the holy Ark for *Musaf* and *N'ila*.[162] His voice was clear and trembled slightly which shook the hears of the congregants. He enunciated every word carefully, not one was lost to the worshippers. Although he *davened*[163] in the accepted *nusach*[164] he seemed at times as if he were speaking directly with the Holy One Blessed Be He. One moment he was beseeching in a mourning voice, the next he was arguing and demanding on behalf of his community. He would also lapse into silence and deep thought for a few minutes. And the congregation would listen raptly to every word, including the silences. When the rebbe kneeled, the whole congregation fell with him. And when he suddenly sand a happy tune, the whole group broke into song with him. Before the *shofar* blasts of Rosh Hashana and the *Kol Nidre* service, the rebbe expounded at length and produced continuous sighs and tears. At the end of Yom Kippur, after the *Marive* service[165] when the Chasidim followed him outside to bless the new moon, one all felt cleaned and purified.

They danced in the moonlight in joy and relief as if they had unloaded the burden of their sins and they sang with every one of their organs.

Itshak Leyb the Grandfather

When we visited Zinkov, we stayed in grandfather's house, Itshak Leyb who also had his widowed daughter and her daughter's family living there. Together we were 11 souls in a 4-room house.

Grandfather Itshak Leyb had a beautiful long white beard. Most of the day he was dressed in his *talis* or robe. He was fastidious about cleanliness and never could a crumb or spot be found on his beard or clothing. He used to say that the Holy One Blessed Be He entrusted us with a pure body and it is our duty to keep it clean and pure. He ate as little as a bird, according to his daughter, Aunt Mirel, but was stronger than one would expect for his years. I saw him once, at age 90, standing one leg while he polished the shoe on the other foot.

He always spoke words of Torah and was careful to avoid *betul Torah*.[166] When he spoke he did so slowly without raising his voice. He never showed anger or lost his temper. Not without reason did Rebbe Khaimel choose him to be the *melamed* for his two sons.

I remember this incident: His great-grandson, about seven, was behaving wildly and as a result broke a dish. His mother became angry and raised her hand to strike him. Her grandfather stopped her short. "My daughter, before you chastise your son, it would be well to make a blessing." Asked his granddaughter, "And what blessing should I make, Grandfather?" He answered "'Blessed are you our Lord... and commanded us to educate our children.' And by the time you bless him, your anger will have abated."

Grandfather Itshak Leyb never hurried. As he spoke in moderation, he did everything in moderation. If he had to travel somewhere, and the wagon driver waited outside, he did not quicken but continued his preparations at his usual slow pace. And if his daughter, Aunt Mirel said, "Father maybe you could hurry a bit? The wagon driver might leave." He would answer, "If he should leave, that's a sign he's not my driver. Another will come in his place."

Grandfather Itshak Leyb spoke at length with my father about Chasidim. The true *Tsadik*, he would say his heart is at peace with the Creator and man. He has to be the symbol of righteousness and honesty because the Chasidim observed his behavior and model their actions on his. My father expressed his opposition to written requests (*kveitlakh*) that the rabbi would receive from his Chasidim. In his opinion the rebbe should not allow any excuse to believe that he has supernatural powers or the ability to perform miracles.

On this matter Grandfather answered him that he believes completely that first, the All Powerful One is aided by *Tsadikim* who do his will, and second, the belief of the Chasidim in their *Tsadik* strengthens their belief in the Creator bringing

them thus to *mitzvot* or good deeds. And regarding the *petakim* (written requests - *kveitlakh*), they help the rabbi come to know each and every one of his Chasidim — his personal situation and problems. Grandfather praised Father for his friendship with his former student Rabbi Moishele — who in his opinion was a true *Tsadik*, a man of pure soul.

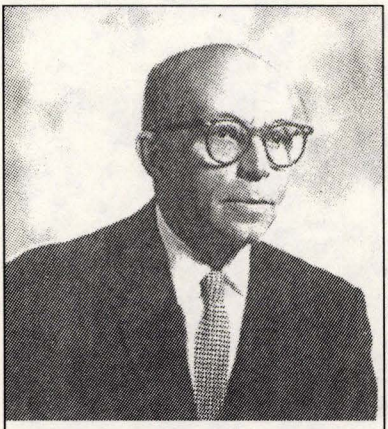
An old rabbi answering a request.
From the An-sky Expeditions in Podolia, 1912-14, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

Simkhas Torah in Zinkov

by Moishe Garber[167]

When the evening for Simkhas Torah arrive, the householders of the community went to Elyekhe's wine tavern and spent a few sociable hours over a glass of sour wine then snacked on nuts. And when there were up to "How good is the heart of the king when he drinks wine," and everyone felt really, really festive, they went in very happy moods, to do the *hakofos*.[168]

In Gad's *minyan*, there was one man, Peyse Sitchkornik, who always had the honor of saying "Ata Hareysa" and since Reb Peyse was already quite warmed by the wine and happiness, he screamed out in the highest octave, "Ata Hareysa L'das..."[169] Right after that, the circuit around the pulpit began. The children were already standing on the benches with their flags, decorated with red apples, and with candles in their hands. With shining faces, they kissed the Torah that was being carried past them, and with shrieking voices they screamed, "May you live to do it again next year! May you live to do it again next year!"



Morris Garber ca. 1964.
Morris Garber, who was born in Zinkov, was a principal in the U.S. Zinkover Landsmanshaftn societies, which together with Zinkovers in Israel, published the Zinkov Memorial Book (*Pinkas Zinkov*) in 1966.

For me this was only practice for the real festivities, which were to come only later, at the circuits of our two teachers, Rebbe Pinkhasl and Rebbe Moishele, may their memories be blessed.

Life in such a small town as Zinkov was gray and monotonous. The young people were instinctively drawn to more action and sought amusement and stimulation. That's why Simkhas Torah, and the circuits in the synagogue with the Torah, and leading the rabbi out of the *succah* were such joyous experiences for us.

We were not such fervent Chasidim, and to tell the truth, we were more interested in the party than the religious aspect of things.

Today, I am embarrassed to add that we looked forward to the *hakofos* as a kind of carnival.

At 12 o'clock, after Rebbe Pinkhasl had had a bit of a nap, the lights in the synagogue were turned on, and immediately the place was packed to the rafters with a noisy, happy, festive crowd. A great number of Chasidim from Zinkov as well as from the other towns and villages stood on both sides and made a swath for the rebbe. A while later came the rebbe's children with his wife, all dressed up in

clothes fit for royalty, really fit for a queen and her princes and princesses. Everyone looked at them with respect and awe.

Every minute I got happier and livelier. After each circuit with the Torah, the Chasidim made a circle and began to dance and sing with true Chasidic fervor, with heads thrown back and eyes turned to God in deeply religious ecstasy.

The rebbe danced in the middle. In one hand he held a small Torah scroll high above his head and in the other, there was a prayer belt, and this is how he moved to the rhythmic clapping of the Chasidim and all the other congregants.

People stood on tables and on chairs to see everything. With flushed faces, gleaming eyes, and fast-beating hearts, boys and girls eyed each other and flirted.

Present were also pranksters who liked to play tricks on the Chasidim. They would sprinkle the dance floor with sneezing or itching powder, or they would sticke a Chasid with a pin in the sensitive place where he sits. Sometimes they wouls let a bird loose in the synagogue. The poor bird would be scared to death of the noise and of the burning lights and would fly around from one end of the ceiling to the other. Everyone was very amused and rolled in the aisles with laughter.

When the din reached the height of festivity, a sigh would escape the rebbe's mouth and an "Oy!" The Chasidim immediately gook it up and repeated it louder and louder, like the reverberation of an echo in the Swiss Alps: oy, oy, oy, OY!

And when the rebbe asked for silence, his followers once again took up the call: SH, sh, sh, sh ...

The Jewish boys who had to present themselves for induction to the army, we called "twenty-oners," or "inductee." They would come to the Simkhas Torah celebration in the synagogue, line up and each one of them would place a bottle of wine on the table as they passed the rebbe, and the rebbe blessed each one individually that he be freed from military service.

That's how the night of Simkhas Torah passed, until on the horizon, the first bit of bluish light of the coming day could be seen.

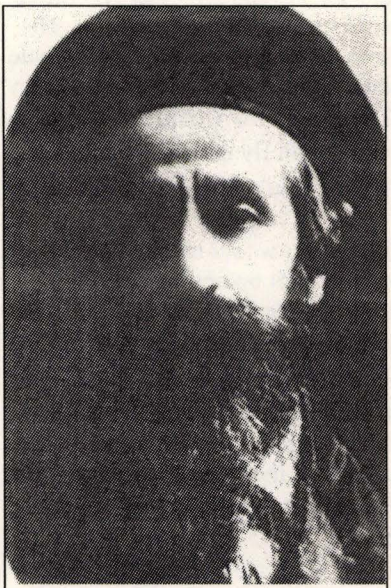
Everyone was tired already, sleepy and pale, and the noise level was nothing like it had been earlier. We went home to sleep a bit, to rest up, because later in the day, we would return again to do more circuits with the Torah and once again get the rebbe out of his *succah*.[170]

The crowding and the tumult and the gaiety on Simkhas Torah occurred, for the most part, in Rebbe Pinkhasl's synagogue. Sometimes, we would sneak away and see what was going on in Rebbe Moishele's synagogue. There, however, we found a completely different picture. There were much fewer people there. There was not as much noise, and people conducted themselves with more respect and decorum.

This is how we young folk revelled in the whole holiday. We could hardly wait for Succos, Simkhas Torah and *hakofos* to come around again next year. We believed that things would continue like this our whole lives. We little knew then that a war was waiting for us with its terrible consequences, and that an end would come to Jewish life in Zinkov.

Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972)

A direct descendant of the Apter Rebbe, Heschel was born in Warsaw, Poland, the son of R. Moses Mordecai, of Medzhibozh. Heschel spent two years studying in Vilna, then he moved to Berlin where he received a Ph.D. at the Univers of Berlin (one of the last Jews to do so prior to the Holocaust). In 1937, he succeeded Martin Buber as director of the Lehrhaus in Frankfurt. In 1938 he was deported from Germany to Poland. From there he made his way to Britain in 1939. He arrived in the U.S. in 1940 and taught at both the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Theological Seminary. A gifted scholar and rabbi, he was perhaps the foremost Jewish theologian of his day and the author of several important books, including *The Sabbath* and *God in Search of Man.* He took to heart his ancestor's nickname—*Oheiv Yisrael* (Lover of Israel). He was a gifted poet, that much more impressive since he began writing in English only after immigration to the U.S.



R. Moses Mordecai Heshel of Medzhibozh (1873-1917).
Father of Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel.

A political activist, Heschel was involved in many social issues. He was one of the first Jewish personalities to be involved in the civil rights movement. He walked arm-in-arm with Dr. Martin Luther King in the Selma to Montgomery March of 1965. He was among the first clergy to oppose the Vietnam War in 1967. He was among the first to speak out on behalf of Soviet Jews.

Heschel took a pioneering role in Jewish-Christian dialogue leading to the Vatican Council. This dramatically changed official Catholic Church policy towards Jews in several ways. It eliminated language on converting Jews, led to strong declarations by the Church against anti-Semitism, and led to a diplomatic pact with the State of Israel. Heschel was even granted an audience with Pope Paul IV, one of the first Jews in the modern era to meet face-to-face with the leader of the Catholic world.

An independent thinker, Heschel was an outspoken critic of all three Jewish denominations. He felt that Orthodox Judaism (his family's own background) had grown intransigent and rigid about Jewish law without regard for the authenticity of observance. He felt the Reform and Conservative tread on dangerous ground when they interpreted divine commandments as human creations. He served for a number of years at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the

Conservative movement's divinity school. There he was treated as a mystic representing Chasidic traditions, and he was not taken very seriously at the time.

Today, Professor Heschel is recognized by Jews and non-Jews alike for his forward-thinking contributions to American spiritual life.[171]

Professor and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.
An important American Jewish philosopher and political activist, Heschel never forgot his links to his namesake, the Apter Rebbe, and his own family's ties to Medzhibozh.

OTHER RABBIS OF LETICHEV DISTRICT

The term *rabbi* means "my master" and refers to religious leaders of the community. Sometimes the use of such a title was a sign of formality, other times it was a specific job-related title. Some local leaders of the synagogue were given the title without formal education. Other times the mere act of studying under a noted scholar conferred the title. For instance, Wolf Kitces is often referred to as a rabbi due to his close association with the Baal Shem Tov, even though there is no evidence he ever lead the community. Thus, there arose a class of rabbis that did not have *smikhas* (certification). The *melamed* or schoolteacher was an example. These were scholars of not as high a rank or learning as the certified rabbi of the community.

It should also be noted that the term rabbi had different meanings between the non-Chasidim and the Chasidim. The non-Chasidim, often called *Mitnagdim*, (or sometimes just *ashkenazim*) were not necessarily hostile to the Chasidim in the Letichev District, as *mitnagdim* were in other places. In Lithuania, for instance, Chasidim were so hated that they were officially excommunicated by the Vilna Gaon. No such hostility seems to have occurred in the Letichev District. Apart from occasional conflicts, all evidence seems to indicate that both sides tolerated each other, though they apparently kept themselves apart in religious matters.

However, sectarianism arose over the proliferation of rabbis in 19th century Podolia. In 1865, a writer from Proskurov observed: "...whereas in former years

all families had only one rabbi...Now they have separated into many cliques. The father supports one rabbi, while his son and in-laws supported another, whilst their rabbis quarrel all the time."[172]

The term "rabbi" among the non-Chasidim implied a level of scholarship and learning. Often this meant that the rabbi was in charge of a specific synagogue. The highest-ranking rabbis were part of the *Bet Din*—Jewish court who decided on legal/religious matters such as rules concerning *kashrut*, civil disputes, etc. These matters involved *halakha*, the entire body of Jewish laws, including the Talmud.

In contrast, Chasidic rabbis, often called "rebbes", "tsadikkim", "admorim", or "maggidim", were charismatic leaders of their sect. They had devoted followers who worshipped them as though they had a special channel directly to God. The devotion of their "courts" were based upon a spiritual connection to the personality cult of the rebbe.

The Chasidic rebbes were quite active recruiting new members and soliciting funds to keep their "courts" self-sufficient. For instance, R. Israel Friedman of Ruzhin (1797-1851) was an expert fundraiser. The funds he collected help sustain himself and his court in the style of royalty. Later, he was implicated in the Ushitsa murders and was imprisoned. He escaped to Sadgora, Austria-Hungary where he recreated his former glory.[173] There he established the Sadgora Dynasty which had muliple family connections with the Heshel Dynasty of Medzhibozh and Zinkov. R. Israel Friedman wrote the following letter in 1826 to solicit funds of Jews in Medzhibozh, Letichev, Vinkovtsy, Proskurov, Sinyava, & Novo Konstantinov:[174]

> Indeed, just as individuals have benefitted from the matter of the *ma'amad* [dues] that they collected from each and every one, to keep my seat secure and flourishing, and it is their earnest desire that I should write them a letter, I hereby comply with their will and inform them that I favor their wish and desire in this matter. May the Lord grant them courage for ever, and their heart may find trust that I shall not desist from my prayer for their sake at every opportune time, to entreat for them within the community of Israel, that they should enjoy every possible blessing. Let them be careful to ensure the matter of the *ma'amad* to deliver [the dues] to the commissioner in their locality at its appointed time, every half-year. The role of the commissioner is a permanent one. No one should send the *ma'mad* contribution of individuals here.[Instead], the commissioner shall deliver [the dues] to my most learned friend, our Master Rabbi Alter of Bar, may his light shine, who bears this letter, and via him [the dues] will reach me safely. And in order that the hearts of our breathren the children of Israel shall be secure that whatever they have sent has arrived safely and that they shall be favorably remembered, my aforementioned friend has been instructed to bring them a receipt from one of my subordinates here. Thereby their desire and mine shall be fulfilled.

In 1835 the Statute of Jews was issued in the Russian Empire. This created an institution of official "Crown Rabbis" (*Rabbin Kazennye*). While not rabbis in the true religious sense, these people were official liaisons between the Russian authorities and the Jewish community. There were several state-sponsored schools (*Yeshivot)* for Crown rabbis; the closest *Yeshiva* to Letichev District was in Zhitomir. Crown rabbis were often multi-lingual. They were responsible for keeping the books on the Jews in each community. They kept official birth, marriage, and death records, as well as recorded tax information for the government. These books, called *pinkas* (in this case, metrical books), were considered important community property. Poor maintainence of the *pinkas*, or incorrect information written into a *pinkas* could be grounds for severe punishment by Russian authorities. Every year, the crown rabbis had to file their *pinkas* with the governor's office in the Province.[175]

Rabbi Hersh Leybowish Aptekarz

R. Hersh was the community rabbi of Medzhibozh during the time of the Baal Shem Tov, as presented in Polish records. In 1745, he was involved in a dispute with Wolf Abramowicz, an elder in the Jewish community. In a petition to the ruling Czartoryskis, Wolf insisted that Rabbi Hersh's contract for the rabbinate not be renewed. It is not clear from the documentation what the final disposition of the petition was.[176]

It is possible that Rabbi Hersh was involved in either a second controversy or a continuation of the same dispute. An assistant to the community rabbi, Rabbi Falk, was asked to decide whether a cow with a lung lession was Kosher. R. Falk declared it Kosher, but it was apparently a controversial decision. The *Kahal* of Medzhibozh sought an opinion on the matter from Rabbi Meir of Konstantynow,[177] a reknown authority on this subject. The petition to R. Meir was signed by none other than R. Israel Baal Shem Tov and R. Joseph of Yampol, the preacher of Medzhibozh. In his answer, R. Meir agreed with the petitioners that the decision to declare the cow Kosher was in error. R. Meir further implied that the assistant rabbi and the community rabbi's job was in jeopardy unless they admit their mistake. The outcome of this decision was not recorded.[178]

Rabbis in 1765

Key leaders of the Jewish community were recorded by Polish officials in 1765. Included were: R. Isaak of Letichev, R. Leib of Medzhibozh, R. Gershon Itskovich of Zinkov, R. Maier Gershkovich of Derazhnia, and R. Gershon Shlemovich of Mikhalpol.[179]

Crown Rabbis in 1853-55

R. Nusim ben Hersh Burshteyn of Letichev was also the Crown Rabbi of Butsnevsty and Snitkovka. He continued to be the Crown Rabbi as of 1857. Also known were R. Wolf Kiperman of Makov, R. Yankel ben Hersh Kokoruza of

Volkovintsy, R. Yankel ben Moses Etelboym of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, R. Hersh ben Meir of Derazhnia, R. Mikhel Rabinshteyn of Zinkov and R. Wolf Spektar of Mikhalpol.[180]

Rabbi Joshua Heshel Rabinovitz of Monastrich (1860-1938)

Born in Zinkov the son of R. Yitshak Yoel Rabinovitz, he became the Chasidic Rebbe for Monastrich in 1885. In 1914 he settled in Uman and suffered numerous personal tragedies, including the death of his son in a pogrom. In 1924 he moved to New York where he was the author of a number of important works.[181]

Rabbi Israel of Letichev

R. Mendel reported in an 1885 article in *HaMelits* that a man posing as a collector of charity came to Letichev. The plot was uncovered by a certain Rabbi Israel.[182] It is possible that the events in this story took place in Medzhibozh, not Letichev. If so, than this R. Israel may in fact be R. Israel Shalom Joseph of Medzhibozh, the Chasidic Zinkover rebbe of the Heshel family.

Rabbi Joseph Veys of Medzhibozh

Mentioned in an 1888 petition to the Tradesman Society in which he asked for money to pay for his son's vocational education.[183]

Rabbi Lev Gardshmir of Medzhibozh,
Rabbi Mordechai ben Lev Gardshmir of Medzhibozh

Father and son were recorded in 1885 as having blessed the beloved Christian military doctor who was leaving town.[184]

Landa Family

R. Issachar Dov-Ber haLevi Landa is buried near the Baal Shem Tov in the old Medzhibozh cemetery. He was the first rabbi chosen by the Chasidim in Medzhibozh to lead the community after a dispute between R. Moshe Khaim Ephriam and R. Dov Berish Rapoport, at the time the sole leader of the community. After that dispute, the community was lead by two rabbis, one for the Chasidim and one for the non-Chasidim.[185] R. Issachar was the father of R. Benjamin haLevi Landa of Letichev. R. Benjamin Landa was the crown rabbi of Letichev for approximately 25 years from the 1880's to at least 1910. He was mentioned in 1889 Tradesman Society Minutes where he petitioned the society for a sewing machine for a seamstress in Letichev.[186] R. Benjamin Landa's son, Yosef, died in Letichev in 1902 at the age of 3, according to a tombstone in the Letichev cemetery. In 1904, R. Benjamin Landa was listed in a "memory" book for Podolia. In 1901, R. Benjamin Landa was listed in a petition to Russian officials as Crown Rabbi:[187]

Petition concerning pension for Benjamin Landa for his 13 year service according to the application of Jews from Letichev. The rabbi put the registering

of births, marriages, and deaths in good order. He does not burden the inhabitants by extortion for fulfillment. He has a wife and 4 children in Letichev. Huna Gorand was appointed to be commissioner from the Jewish community. A verdict of the Jewish community was ratified by signatures of its members

[signed by]
October 26, 1901

Gravestone of Yosef Landa.
Buried in the new Letichev cemetery in 1902, this is the gravestone for the 3 year old son of Crown Rabbi Benjamin Landa. This monument made of granite with a bronze plaque is extremely unusual for this region. It indicates the wealth and influence the Landa family had at the time. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

Shinder, Yoshua	Rubinshteyn, Nakhman
Rabinovich, Leiba	Goldshteyn (or Goldenshteyn), Gershko
Veksler, Khaim	Kurtsman, Mordko
Anshin, Nakhman	Rapoport, Shoel
Trakhtenberg, Ios	Averbukh, Shlema
Groysman, Leibish	Levits, Itskhak
Veitsman, Yankel	Iosefzon, Ios
Grebelsky, Shmuel	Reifman, Mordko
Gervits, Berish	Grebelsky, Gershka
Kravits, Mordko	Bleikhman, Mordko
Shenker, Moshko	Rubinshteyn, Naftal
Kravits, Berko	Kibrik, Berish
Broitman, Leibish	Malkiman, Aron
Rabinovich, Leiba	Rubinshteyn, Shlomo
Grunbarg, Ios	Shuster, Shura
Perelmiter, L.	Morgulis, Gershko
Osnis, Shoel	Grunbarg, Shoel
Tovbis, Volko	Tretyak, Ios
Ostrovsky, Zus	Fuks, Kiva
Burshteyn, Moshko	Zak, Ios
Vatover, Yankel	Perelmiter, Abram
Sheindelson, Usher Leib	Trakhtenberg, Nakhman

Kolomeisky, Iosif	Kolomeisky, Leiba
Gringolts, Khuna	Averbukh, Meier
Kurtsman, Sender	Khoil, Dovid
Rozental, Y.	Sumis, Yankel
Mosenzhnik, Ios	Kolomeisky, Yankel
Limits, Itskhak	Rukhlin, I.
Grebelsky, Gershko	Volk, Aron
Farber, Meier	Broitman, Srul
Ronimekh, Vigdor	

Rabbi Gedali Mordkovich Goldenberg of Derazhnia

Possibly related to the R. Goldenberg of Letichev. Listed as Crown Rabbi in the 1904 "memory" book of Podolia.[188]

Rabbi M. Puler of Letichev

An 1884 petition to the Tradesman Society asks for a sewing machine for a tailor in Letichev. This is probably the same "Emanuel Pulier" who was recorded by the Pulier family as the Crown Rabbi of Letichev, probably during the 1860s through the early 1880s. Emanuel Pulier was born in Grodno and appointed to Letichev by Tsarist officials.[189]

Rabbi Meir of Letichev

It is possible that this is the same person as Rabbi M. Puler of Letichev. In 1896, R. Meir was involved in a dispute over a *get* (a Jewish divorce) between a young man from Staro Zakrevsky Meidan who emigrated to New York, and his new wife who remained behind.[190]

Rabbi Mendel ben Tsvi Kesel of Letichev

An 1883 article in the newspaper *HaMelits* records his pleadings to raise money for a new hospital. He is also recorded to praise the community for collecting bread for the 200 Jewish soldiers stationed in Medzhibozh.[191] Later, R. Mendel Kesel signed his name as "from Staro Konstantinov" and served as a reporter for *HaMelits* for events in Letichev from 1884-5.

Rabbi Meir Shmuel Raysher

Was born in Staro Zakrevsky Meidan circa 1890. He studied in the yeshiva in Kishinev then became the rabbi in Lonovitz. He moved to Gorochov, where he succeeded Rabbi Ephraim Averbakh, one of whose daughters he married. He was killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust.[192]

Rabbi Samuil Burshteyn of Letichev

As Crown Rabbi, was elected to the Duma in 1906.[193]

Rabbi Alter Katsenelenbogen of Zinkov

Leader of a *kloiz* in Zinkov.[194]

Rabbi Yitskhak Khankis of Medzhibozh

Signed the *pinkas* of the Mishna Society of the Apter Rebbe as its leader and "religious teacher" (a *melamed*?) in 1904.

Rabbi Gersh Leyzorovich Tentserman of Derazhnia

Was listed in 1908 as a representative of the Jewish Colonization Association. Listed in the 1913 business directory under Crown Rabbi.[195]

Rabbi Moshe Mikhailovich Fishman of Medzhibozh

Fishman was not just the doctor of Medzhibozh, but apparently the Crown Rabbi, as well. He is listed in the "memory" book for Podolia in 1904 with the title of Crown rabbi.[196]

Rabbi Yuil Aronovich Malkiman of Letichev
Rabbi Yosef Leybovich Shvartsman of Medzhibozh

Listed in the 1913 business directory under Crown Rabbi.[197]

Rabbi Yoel Yehuda ben Moshe Glazer of Letichev (b. 1850)

A key rabbi in Kupil in 1912. Prior to this, he served in Letichev.[198]

Rabbi Israel Avraham ("Alter") ben Ephraim Gorenshteyn of Mikhalpol

Served as a rabbi in Mikhalpol prior to 1912.[199]

Rabbi Asher Zelig ben Shloim Muterperil of Mikhalpol (b. 1872)
Rabbi Pinchas ben Israel Melamed of Mikhalpol (b. 1871)

Served as rabbis in Mikhalpol in 1912.[200]

Rabbi Potechin of Medzhibozh
Rabbi D.B. haCohen Kordiner of Medzhibozh

Listed as donors to Eretz Israel colonists in 1886.[201]

Rabbi Menachem Nuchim ben Chaim Yosef Rud of Zinkov (b. 1870)

Born in Zinkov, in 1892 he became rabbi of Stanislavtchik. Later, he became the rabbi of Zinkov.[202] The Rud rabbinic family was related to the Goldenberg rabbinic family of Letichev.

Rabbi Shmuel Maranz of Medzhibozh

Was active as a Medzhibozh rabbi in the early 1900s; he died at age 38.[203]

Rabbi Minor of Letichev

Possibly a crown rabbi of Letichev Mentioned in Medzhbozh *pinkas* records. Mentioned as the person who composed a special prayer at a Torah dedication in Volkovintsy 1887.[204]

Rabbi Abrum of Medzhibozh (d. 1942)

A certain Rabbi Abrum is said to have perished in a Nazi mass killing at Medzhibozh in 1942.[205]

Rabbi Moshe Goldenberg of Letichev (d. 1942)

The rabbi during the 1930s and 1940s for Letichev who went to his death at the Nazi mass killing which took place in 1942 in Zaletichevka. His father and grandfather were rabbis in Letichev.

THE RAPOPORT—BICK DYNASTY OF MEDZHIBOZH

The most important of all the non-Chasidic rabbis in Letichev District were the Rapoport—Bick families, who were based in Medzhibozh. Both the Bicks and the Rapoports were descendents of a long line of notable rabbis going back to Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697-1776) who was involved in the Frankist debates, and his father Rabbi Tsvi Hirsh Ashkenazi known as the Khakham Tsvi (1660-1718), the key rabbinic opponent to Malakh. The Bicks and the Rapoports were related to each other through the marriage of R. Saul Issachar Berish Bick and Pessia Rapoport, the daughter of R. Tsvi Arieh Rapoport. The Rapoport—Bick families were the Head of the Court (*Ab Beit Din*) in Medzhibozh, a position of Talmudic authority which judged religious matters for the entire district. This was a position of great responsibility and required a high degree of scholarship.

Rapoport Family Crest.
This is one of the very few Jewish families to have one prior to the 18th century. Notice the hands in the form of the priestly blessing from the Temple days, a hallmark of the Kohen priestly caste.

The graves of R. Dov Berish Rapoport, R. Tsvi Arieh Rapoport, and R. Meir Menachem Bick can still be found, located in a prominant place near the Baal Shem Tov's grave in the old Medzhibozh cemetery.

The Bick family was much beloved by the Jews in the district. In particular, it was said that the emigration of R. Isaac Bick to New York in 1925 inspired a wave of Bick followers to do the same.

Rabbi Dov Berish Rapoport

A grandson of R. Khaim haCohen Rapoport of Lvov, he was the first Rapoport rabbi to make his home in Medzhibozh and became head of the court and leader of the community. Prior to 1800, R. Dov Berish had a dispute with R. Moshe Khaim Ephriam, the Baal Shem Tov's grandson. As a result, the Chasidim chose

Head of the Court (Ab Beit Din) in Medzhibozh

?–1803	R. Dov Berish Rapoport
1803–1840	R. Tsvi Arieh Rapoport
1840?–1854	R. Saul Issachar Berish Bick
1854?–1863	R. Yekhiel Mikhel Margolis
1863–1868	R. Simkha Bick
1868–1878	R. Tsvi Arieh Bick
?–1887	R. Khaim Yekhiel Bick
?–1902	R. Isaac Bick
1902–1911	R. Saul Issachar Bick
1911–1925	R. Khaim Yekhiel Mikhel Bick, the last ABD

their own rabbi to represent the community, R. Issachar Dov-Ber Landa. After this episode, the Chasidim and the non-Chasidim maintained separate leaders in Medzhibozh.[206] R. Dov Berish Rapoport is buried in the old Medzhibozh cemetery near the Baal Shem Tov.

Rabbi Tsvi Arieh Rapoport

Known as author of the book *Merkavat HaMishna*, he died in 1840 and is buried in the old Medzhibozh cemetery near the Besht.

Rabbi Khaim ben Dov Berish Rapoport

Published a responsa collection *Mayim Hayyim* in 1857.

Rabbi Isaac Bick

Perhaps the most renown of all the Bicks, R. Isaac was a scholarly and much beloved rabbi. Born in Medzhibozh in 1864, he was noteworthy in the community. In 1894 he was the local deputy for the Eretz Israel farmers and workers support organization. He became a member of the Duma in 1905, representing the Letichev District. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1925. After holding a rabbinical post in New York, he settled in Providence, Rhode Island. There he was the rabbi of Congregation Sons of Jacob.

Rabbi Isaac Bick.
Born 1864, died 1932.

Since male members of the Bick family seemed to die between their 68th and 69th birthdays as far back as can be remembered, R. Isaac thought that he could elude this fate by immigrating to Israel. In 1932 at the age of 68 he applied for a passport, but he died of a heart

attack before he could leave. When he died, the funeral was a major event in Providence. The public schools were closed, flags were flown at half mast, and police were called out to direct traffic. There were more than 1,000 cars in the funeral procession. The Mayor of Providence, the Governor of Rhode Island and a U.S. senator attended the funeral. The casket was carried by eight rabbis, including Rabbis Twersky and Perlow, both leaders of their respective Chasidic dynasties. Other rabbis came from New York, Boston, and elsewhere. The funeral attracted what was said to be the largest number of rabbis ever to assemble in Rhode Island.[207]

Rabbi Saul Issachar Bick

Born in Yampol in 1883, he married Pearl Perlow, connected to the famous Chasidic Perlow Rabbinic Dynasty. It was said this marriage stirred quite a controversy as it connected the non-Chasidic Bick family to a Chasidic family. R. Saul Issachar Bick emigrated from Mogilev to New York in 1926. Believing

Rabbi Khaim Bick and his family.
Seated is Rabbi Khaim Yekhiel Mikhel Bick and his wife Miriam. He is surrounded by his five children who are (from left to right): Anita [Berliner], Moshe Tsvi Bick, Beatrice (Batya) [Furst], Charles (Yeshayahu) Bick, and Shirley [Motechin]. Photo taken in New York in 1926 shortly after he moved from Medzhibozh. Courtesy of Beatrice Furst.

as his father did that he would die between his 68th and 69th birthday unless he lived in Israel, in 1948 he emigrated to Israel and died in Bnai Brak at the age of 88.[208]

Rabbi Khaim Yekhiel Mikhel Bick

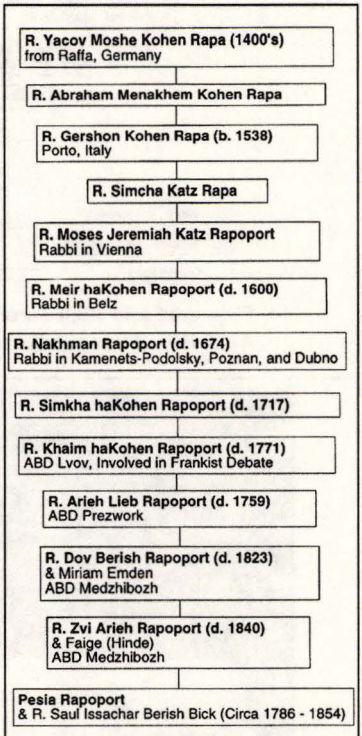
He emigrated from Medzhibozh to New York in 1925. He was the last rabbi to serve an official religious role in Medzhibozh. Everyone in the town of Medzhibozh accompanied the rabbi to the edge of town when he left for America.[209]

Rabbi Simkha Bick

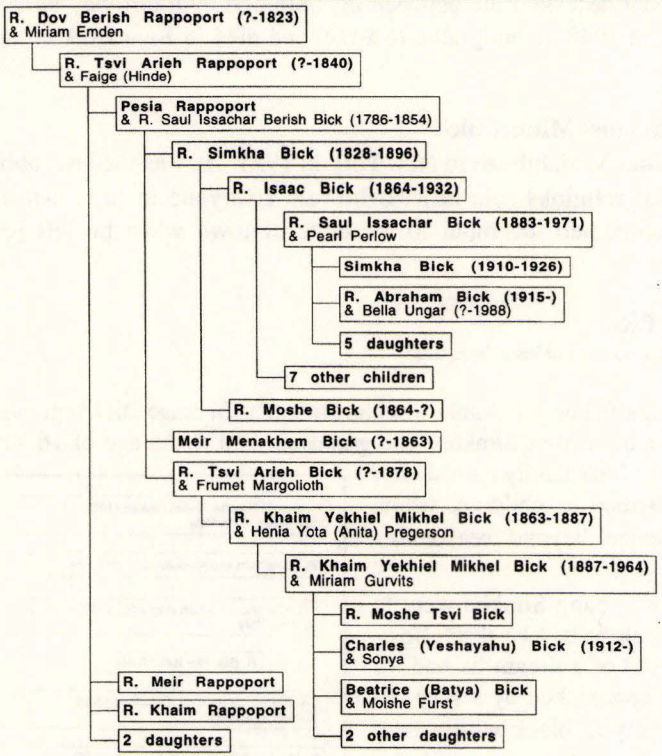
by Murray Rubenstein, descendent of Rabbi Isaac Bick

Rabbi Isaac Bick's father was Rabbi Simkha Bick. Rabbi Isaac Bick's grandson was named for the earlier Simkha. The grandson died at the age of 16. Of seven children in the Bick family named after Rabbi Simkha, all died as children, which stretches coincidence beyond reasonable bounds.

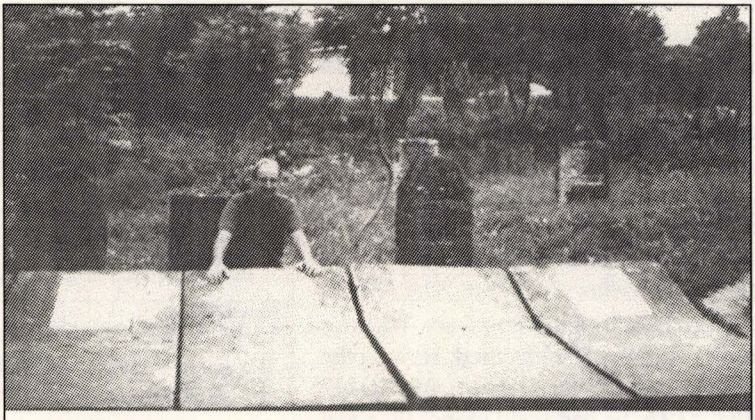
One Friday night, young Simkha went to sleep as usual. When he awoke the following morning, he told of a dream he had. In the dream he was approached by a very tall man, dressed entirely in black with a long red beard. The red-bearded man twirled a gold watch chain in his hand and, when he got close, touched Simcha on the shoulder. When he awoke in the morning, his arm was paralyzed. No pictures of Rabbi Simkha exist, but he did have a red beard and, when told of the dream, Rabbi Isaac and others remembered that Rabbi Simkha did, in fact, have a habit of twirling his pocket watch chain on his finger. The following Friday night, the younger Simkha again dreamed of this red bearded man in black, but now, in the dream, he beckoned to him. When Rabbi Isaac heard this, he burst into tears. Within a week, the younger Simkha died. He was the last Bick child ever named for Rabbi Simkha. At 16, he had lived longer than any other named for the great rabbi.



Rapoport Lineage through to the Middle Ages.



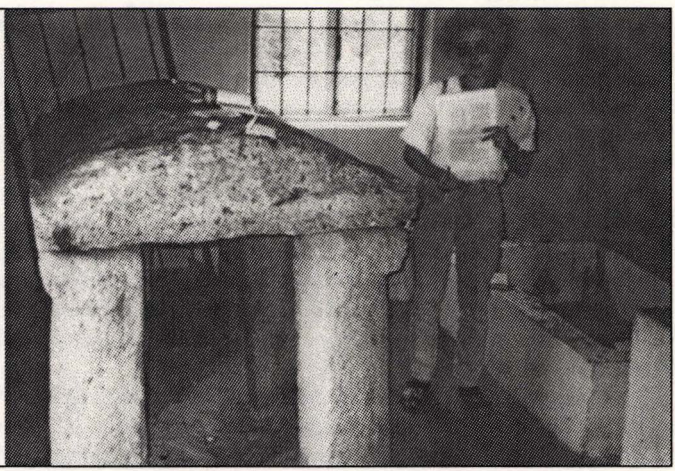
Rapoport and Bick Family Tree.
An abridged tree shows the rabbinic families who lived in Medzhibozh.



Gravestones of Rapoport-Bick rabbis.
These recumbent gravestones are in the old Medzhbozh cemetery. From left to right, the graves are: R. Dov Berish Rapoport; R. Tsvi Arieh Rapoport, son of Dov Berish; R. Meir Menachem Bick; and R. Issachar Dov Landa.

The Rapoport Family of Zinkov

Rabbi Eli haKohen Rapoport of Zinkov was a direct descendent of R. Khaim haKohen Rapoport of Lvov. It is not clear how he is related to R. Dov Berish, though, as not much is known about R. Eli. It was said that the Zinkover Rapoports had a *yiches brief* (a genealogical letter) which traced them back all the way to Moses. R. Eli had 12 children. The youngest was Abraham Joshua Heshel Rapoport, who married into the Giller family (twice).[210] It is likely that R. Eli married into the Zinkover Heshel family, and therefore named a son after the famous Apter Rebbe.



Apter Rebbe's Grave. Graves in the old Medzhibozh cemetery. On the left is the grave of the Apter Rebbe and on the right is the grave of R. Borukh of Medzhibozh. Photo by D. Chapin, 1995.

Chapter Notes

1. *Encyclopedia Judaica,* 1972, v. 14, cols. 1619-1620.

2. Schochet, E.J., 1971, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes: His Life, Works and Times:* Feldheim Publishers.

3. Ibid, p. 160-164.

4. Ibid, p. 207.

5. *Encyclopedia Judaica,* 1972, v. 14, cols. 1619-1620.

6. Schochet, E.J., 1971, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes: His Life, Works and Times:* Feldheim Publishers, p. 16-18.

7. Weinryb, B., 1976, *The Jews of Poland, 2nd Ed.:* Jewish Publ. Soc. of Amer., p. 238-239. Weinryb reports that the following 17th century Christian sects also found haven in Podolia: Khlysty (flagellants), Skoptsy (self-emasculators), Molokane (milk drinkers), Dukhobortsy (spirit wrestlers), and the Philipowcy (followers of Danilo Philopov).

8. Scholem, Gershom, 1973, *Sabbatai Sevi:* Bollingen Series 93, Princeton Univ. Press, p. 88. The specific passage in the *Zohar* is I 139b, where the numerical value of the Jewish year 408 (1648) is repeated several times.

9. Historian Scholem makes a point that Sabbatai Tsvi may have truly believed himself to be the messiah and his behavior could be explained if he were a schizophrenic.

10. Modified from Rabinowicz, Tz.M., 1996, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 443-444.

11. Scholem, Gershom, 1973, *Sabbatai Sevi:* Bollingen Series 93, Princeton Univ. Press. See also *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972.

12. Dubnow, Simon, 1971, *History of the Jews, v. 4:* Thomas Yoeloff, p. 414, attributed to work by historian Mayer Balaban.

13. Zinberg, Israel, 1975, *A History of Jewish Literature*: K'Tav Publishing, NY, vol. 9, p. 7.

14. According to Simon Dubnow, the name "Malakh" was a play on words. Originally, his name was "Mahalakh," which means journeyman (because he traveled widely), but was transformed in jest by his detractors or perhaps in seriousness by supporters. Dubnow, S.,1971, *History of the Jews, v. 4:* Thomas Yoseloff, p. 168.

15. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, v. 11, cols. 818-819.

16. For example, Scholem reports that Sabbatean emissaries from Podolia attended his wedding. Scholem, G., 1978, *Kabbalah:* Penguin Books, p. 287-288.

17. Scholem claims that his surname "Frank" is derived from a general Yiddish term referring to a Sephardic Jew. Thus, apparently the Ashkenazim in Podolia mistook him for a Sephardic Jew since he spend so much time in Turkey. Scholem, G., 1978, *Kabbalah:* Penguin Books, p. 288.

18. Dubnow, S.,1971, *History of the Jews, v. 4:* Thomas Yoseloff, p. 383.

19. See Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press. Rosman is skeptical of the Besht's direct participation in these debates. Mayer Balaban, an important early 20th century Polish Jewish historian was also skeptical of the Besht's participation in the Frankist controversy (see Biderman, I.M., 1976, *Mayer Balaban: Historian of Polish Jewry:* Dr. I.M. Biderman Book Committee, p. 204). The Besht is not specifically recorded among the representatives of the Jewish community who attended the debate. However, it is not clear how the representatives of Medzhibozh were related to the Besht's activities.

20. Modified from Rabinowicz, Tz.M., 1996, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 133.

21. Scholem, G., 1978, *Kabbalah:* Penguin Books, p. 287-300.

22. Dubnow, S.,1971, *History of the Jews, v. 4:* Thomas Yoseloff, p. 770-771.

23. Dymshits, V., pers. comm. 1995.

24. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press, p. 63-64.

25. *Shivhei haBesht,* stories 1,2, and 7 in the English edition: Ben-Amos, D., and Mintz, J.R., 1994, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Jason Aronson, Inc.

26. For example, in a letter from the Baal Shem Tov to R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoye, he scolds R. Jacob Joseph for excessively fasting, a common ascetic practice. Instead, he implores R. Jacob Joseph to attain spiritual results through alternative means. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press, p. 114-115.

27. Compiled in his book: Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press.

28. Ibid.

29. Ben-Amos, D., and Mintz, J.R., 1994, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. xv-xvi.

30. Story 80, p. 105. Attributed to Rabbi Gedaliah of Ilintsy. Page 12b of the 1815 edition of *Shivhei haBesht.*

31. Story 103, p. 128. Page 15b of the 1815 edition of *Shivhei ha-Besht.*

32. A concession owner under the special permission of the noble family. This person bid on and bought the concession — the arrenda — from the nobleman. He then had to promise a certain percentage of the profits to the nobleman. This was generally for land leases.

33. Story 125, p. 149. Page 18b of the 1815 edition of *Shivhei ha-Besht.*

34. Story 139, p. 164. Page 21a of the 1815 edition of *Shivhei ha-Besht.*

35. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press, p. 164-169.

36. *Shivhei haBesht,* story 152 in the English edition: Ben-Amos, D., and Mintz, J.R., 1994, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Indiana Univ. Press.

37. Ibid, story 123.

38. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press., p. 166-167.

39. *Shivhei haBesht,* story 152 in the English edition: Ben-Amos, D., and Mintz, J.R., 1994, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Indiana Univ. Press.

40. Ibid, story 136.

41. Ibid, story 178.

42. Ibid, story 216.

43. Ibid, stories 89, 90 and 176.

44. Reprinted by permission of the Historical Society of Israel from *Zion* vol. 52, no. 2 (1987), p. 177-89. Translated from Hebrew by Eli Lederhendler.

45. A select bibliography, correct up until the late 1960s, appears in Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971), vol. 7, cols. 1426-1427. A collection of basic essays on Hasidism was edited by A. Rubeinstein, *Peraquim be-toledot ha-hasidut u-ve-toledoteha* (Jerusalem, 1978).

46. *Shivhei haBesht* (Kapust, 1815)

47. *Shivhei haBesht,* for example, p. 3c-d: the Besht and the robbers; p. 5a: the Besht brings rain; p. 6a: the Besht employs a non-Jew; p. 15a: the Besht and the witch; p. 18d-19a: the Besht and the priest; p. 35c: a noblewoman recognizes the Besht's expertise as a healer.

48. I . Bartal has demonstrated this point in his analysis, based on new sources, of the story of Rabbi Elazar of Brody who appears in *Shivhei haBesht*: " 'Aliyat r. el'azar me-amsterdam le-eres yisrael bi-shnat 5501 (1740); "Mehqarim 'al toledot yahadut holand 4 (Jerusalem, 1985), p. 7-25.

49. *Shivhei haBesht*, p. 15c-27a.

50. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich Ewidencja* 41: record of expenses of the kahal paid by the tax lessee *(Akcyzniki)* in 1743. The payment to Jos, in the sum of 100 *zloty*, appears in a list of various payments to the rabbi, the cantor, the beadle, and other employees of the community. Jos is here called *przedpowiedacz* (seer). However, in similar records from 1737 (*Ewidencja* 40), 1740, and 1744 (*Ewidencja* 41), instead of *przedpowiedacz* we find *kaznodzieia* (preacher); and in *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4080 no. 86 the same Jos Jampolski is explicitly referred to as kaznodzieia. I assume that the terms are interchangeable and their significance is identical. Many preachers were students of kabbalah, and some of them gained reputations for possessing supernatural powers. See, e.g., the story of R. Ishaq Drobizer, a preacher, in *Shivhei ha-Besht*, pp. 9d-10a.

51. *Shivhei haBesht*, p. 12d.

52. *Ewidencja* 40, 41.

53. *Shivhei haBesht*, p. 18a-b

54. C. Kaminski and J. Zukowski, *Katalog monet polskich* (Warsaw, 1980), p. 18; A. Popiol-Szymanska, *Poglady monetarne w Polsce od XV do XVIII wieku* (Poznan, 1978), pp. 108-109.

55. I intend to deal with this issue in a separate essay.

56. See, e.g., S. Dubnow, *Toledot ha-hasidut* (Tel-Aviv, 1975), pp. 8-24; B.Z. Dinur, *Bemifne ha-dorot* (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 83-139; I. Halpern, *Yehudim ve-yahadut be-mizrah eiropa* (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 30-33; J. Katz, *Masoret u-mashber* (Jerusalem, 1958), pp. 266-269.

57. Dubnow, op. cit., p. 36; R.M. Seltzer, "The secular Appropriation of Hasidism by an East European Jewish Intellectual: Dubnow, Renan and the Besht," *Polin* 1 (1986), pp. 155-156.

58. *Shivhei haBesht*, p. 13c.

59. S. Stampfer, "The 1764 Census of Polish Jewry," *Bar-Ilan* 24-25 (1989), 135-136. According to the census, in 1764 there were 1,477 Jews in Bar and 2,039 in Miedzyboz.

60. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5881 1.23400 23412 13.5.1744, 14.2.1745; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5796 1.8515 10.5.1709; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5758 1.481 12.11.1745.

61. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5758 1.476 27.2.1745; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5795 1.8467 4.8.1735; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5796 1.8503 8.8.1708, 1.8566 17.6.1728; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5987 1.48200 19.7.1739; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5825 1.13517 (n.d.)

62. See the petitions of: Manaszko Dubienski, Józef Moskowicz, Newach Morduchowicz, Ela Leybowicz (*Ewidencja 87*); *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5825 1.13527 (n.d.).

63. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5775 1.4816 1.4818 11.4.1737, 11.1.1738, *Tygodnik Illustrowany*, Warsaw, vol. 15, no. 382 19.1.1867 str. 31; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5788 1.7170-73 22.4.1744, 15.12.1745, 3.1.1746, 12.12.1745. compare the letter of Dessier, expressing pride in the new buildings and the growth of the population: *Biblioteka* 5796 1.8495 1.8556 30.12.1730, 29.1.1731.

64. Stampfer, op. cit.

65. R. Mahler, *Toledot ha-yehudim be-polin* (Merhavia, 1946), p. 244.

66. See the records of the *kahal's* expenses in *Ewidencja* 40,41.

67. Halpern, p. 32; Mahler, pp. 324-327; M. Balaban, "Ma'amadam ha-homri shel qehillot yisrael," in I. Halpern (ed.), *Beit yisrael be-polin* (Jerusalem, 1948), vol. 1, pp. 98-99.

68. *Ewidencja* 41.

69. See the lists of those chosen for *kahal* positions, contained in *Ewidencja* 41, and compare the lists of taxpayers in the files noted below and the petitions in *Ewidencja* 41 and *Ewidencja* 87. In a book on Miedzyboz at the time of the Besht that I am writing, I intend to analyze these lists and describe the social and economic structure of the community. At the point it is possible to state that the following families figured among the elite of the community: Zalman, Moszko Haritun, Leyzer Monasterny, Wolf Abramowicz, and Baruch Czarny.

70. The term occurs in the declaration of the *pospólstwo* of 1716, in *Ewidencja* 41.

71. I. Halpern (ed.), *Pinqas Va'ad arb'a arasot* (Jerusalem, 1945), p. 542.

72. *Ewidencja* 87: "Nas iako pospólstwo do consilium geralnego nieproszona dla uchwaly panów kwartalnych."

73. *Ewidencja* 41.

74. "Wedlug zadania pospulstwa...", a constitution first promulgated in 1726 by Elzbieta Sieniawksa, owner of Miedzyboz, and renewed on 25.4.1737.

75. *Ewidencja* 41; the contract is dated: "23 Chesfin [Heshvan} alias po poska Novemb." Four people referred to as *kwartalny* (chairmen) signed in the name of the *kahal*: three are called *lawnik*, that is, member of the *kahal* board, and one is the *starszy* Ziemski, or chairman of the provincial council. The representatives of the *pospólstwo* are not described in terms of function or title.

76. *Ewidencja* 41: tax-lease contract of 1744.

77. *Ewidencja* 41.

78. See: H. H. Ben-Sasson, *Hagut ve-hanhagah* (Jerusalem, 1959), pp. 135-139; Halpern, pp. 55-58; and compare the voting system used in Cracow at the end of the sixteenth century, described by M. Balaban, "Die Krakauer Judengemeinde-Ordnung von 1595," *Jahrbuch der jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft* 10 (1912), pp. 314-318.

79. See: B. Weinryb, *Te'udot le-toledot ha-qehillot ha-yehudiyot be-polin* (New York, 1951), pp. 5-7 (*'edah*), 223, (*asefah*).

80. Compare: Weinryb (ibid), p. 186, doc. 10 (from the year 1728), which begins: "The leaders of this holy community of Cracow, the chiefs and appointed heads and the remaining *yehidei segula*..." (emphasis added). It would appear that the latter term refers to those who had voting rights but who held no office in the community. Likewise, it seems that in Miedzyboz the combined form, "the *kahal* and the *pospólstwo* (or *Yehidei segulah*)" is analogous to the Polish town's *urzad miejskie i pospólstwo*.

81. *Ewidencja* 41: "Punkta Cechu Rzezników..."

82. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5870 1.21168-69 2.4.1744, 21.12.1744.

83. *Ewidencja* 41: order of Wolinski dated 28.3.1743, and list of those subject of expulsion (Specifikatia...).

84. *Ewidencja* 87; compare, H. H. Ben-Sasson, "Taqannot isurei shabbat shel polin u-mashma'utan ha-hevratit ve-ha-kalkalit," *Zion* 21 (1955), pp. 188-190, 199-200.

85. Ewidencja 80/1 Dekret 1741: "prywatny nabozienstwo."

86. See my essay, "An Exploitative Regime and the Opposition to it in Miedzyboz ca. 1730," in S. Almot et al. (eds.), *Sefer ha-yovel likhvod profesor Shmuel Ettinger* (Jerusalem, 1987).

87. Dinur: on artisans' trade associations in opposition to the *kahal* and on separate prayer quorums (pp. 136-139); on rabbis appointed by Polish authorities (pp. 106-107); and on settlement of Jews without residence permits (pp. 113-116).

88. See petitions in *Ewidencja* 41, 87, and cf. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5905 1.28043 26.6.1745, *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5959 1.33449 (n.d.).

89. I. Etkes, "Hasidism as a Movement—The First Stage," in B. Safran (ed.), *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 1-26.

90. Chone Shmeruk, "Mashma'uta ha-hevratit shel ha-shehita ha-hasidit," *Zion* 20 (1955). p. 72.

91. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4067, 4078, 4080, 4085, 4101, 4111, 4114, 4117, 4121, 4127, *Biblioteka Czartoryskich Gospodarczne* 308.

92. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4067, p. 9a.

93. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4079, no. 81.

94. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4085, p. 12a.

95. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4121, no. 95.

96. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich Gospodarczne*, no. 93.

97. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4127, no. 110. Hyrszko Balszemowicz also appears in *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4131, no. 96 (1766), and as the owner of a shop, in no. 23 and in the census of 1764:*Archiwum Glówne Akt Dawnych* (Warszawa) Rewizya Miasta: Arch. Potockich z Lancuta 168 [Also on microfilm in Jerusalem, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, HM3660], Miedzyboz, December 25, 1764, P. 124, no. 96.

98. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4111 (1752), no. 88; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4114 (1753), no. 91; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4117 (1755), no. 92; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4121 (1758), no. 94; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich Gospodarczne* 308 (1760), no. 92; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4127 (1763), no. 109; he appears also in later lists, and in the 1764 census, op. cit., p. 124, no. 95.

99. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4114 (1753), no. 107; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4117 (1755), no. 107; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4121 (1758), no. 123; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich Gospodarczne* 308 (1760), no. 122; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4127, no. 139; in the census, op. cit., p. 125, no. 108.

100. *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4117 (1755), no. 101; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4121 (1758), no. 107; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich Gospodarczne* 308 (1760), no. 103; *Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 4127 (1763), no. 122; in the census op. cit., p. 123, no. 80. In sources dating from 1760 we find a person identified as Jankiel Balszamów Ayzykowicz.

101. Dinur, p. 170.

102. *Ewidencja* 41: "skolarz ubogi nasz."

103. *Zion* 47 (1982), pp. 258-272.

104. Both in correspondence of Polish officials (*Biblioteka Czartoryskich* 5965 1.42850) and in *Shivhei haBesht* (pp. 5c, 8c-d, 22d, and 35c) the sense of the words "dokter," "Doktor," is that of a medical doctor. In contrast, every rabbi mentioned in the Polish documents from Miedzyboz is referred to as "Rabin." Other Jewish clergy are referred to according to specific function: "szkolnik," "bakalarz,: "kantor," etc. "Men of the cloth" without specific function (including scholars who were not rabbis) are referred to as "duchowny" (see above, re: Moszko duchowny). There is even one document in which "doktor" appears together with "duchowny." The petition of a certain Sheyne, from ca. 1730 (Ewidencja 86), relates that she went to the "Doktor" to seek healing, while her adversary, Icko Oganisti, is said to have sworn "do duchownych kahalskich," that is, before the clergymen (judges of the *kahal* court?). See my essay.

105. *Shivhei haBesht*, pp. 15d, 35c.

106. Ibid., p. 18a.

107. Gershom Scholem, "Demuto ha-historit shel r. Israel baal shem tov," *Molad* 18 (1960), pp. 339-347.

108. Dubnow, pp. 51, 69; Scholem, op. cit., pp. 337, 342.

109. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press, p. 114-115.

110. M. Piekarz, *Bi-yemei semihat ha-hasidut* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 136-137.

111. *Ewidencja* 41: "Ubogim Zydom w Miedzybozu mieszkaiacym których kahal tuteyszy uznal y przezemnie na ten tylko rok sa approbowani..."

112. Compare: *Shivhei haBesht*, p. 22b.

113. Ibid, p. 24d.

114. *Ewidencja* 41: Specifikatia...; "Sasiedzi w domu Wolfa Kucego."

115. Shmuel Ettinger, "Ha-hanhaga ha-hasidit be-'isuvah," in *Dat ve-hevrah be-toledot yisrael ve-he-'amim* (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 122-123.

116. See Table 1.

117. Piekarz, p. 136.

118. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press, p. 27-41.

119. Katz, J., 1962, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile relations in medieval and modern times:* Schocken Books, p. 94-95.

120. Those who follow Jewish law. In other words, those who are traditionalists and non-Chasidic.

121. Finkel, A.Y., 1992, *The Great Chasidic Masters:* Jason Aronson, Inc.

122. Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *Encyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 457-459.

123. Henry, S. and Taitz, E., 1988, *Written Out of History: Our Jewish Foremothers:* Biblio Press, p. 177-178. See also: *Shivhei haBesht*, story 114 in the English edition: Ben-Amos, D., and Mintz, J.R., 1994, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Indiana Univ. Press.

124. Levin, M., 1932, *Hassidic Stories:* Greenfield Ltd., p. 113. See also: *Shivhei haBesht*, story 222 in the English edition: Ben-Amos, D., and Mintz, J.R., 1994, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Indiana Univ. Press.

125. Finkel, A.Y., 1992, *The Great Chasidic Masters:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 77; and Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 328.

126. Recorded by Abraham Rechtman, a member of the An-sky Expeditions, from an old man in Vinnitsa, Podolia who was a follower of R. Shneur Zalman's Chabad Chasidim. *Tracing An-sky:* Uitgeverij Waaders b.v., Zwolle, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg, Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, 1992.

127. General description of R. Borukh from Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 37-38, 458; and *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, v. 4, col. 279.

128. General description of Hershel Ostropoler taken from Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 353-354; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972, v. 12, col. 1516; Wiesel, Elie, 1978, *Four Hasidic masters and their struggle against melancholy:* Univ. of Notre Dame Press, p. 54-56; and Learsi, R., 1961, *Filled with Laughter: A Fiesta of Jewish Folk Humor:* Thomas Yoseloff, p. 159-160.

129. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 170-171.

130. Learsi, R., 1961, *Filled with Laughter: A Fiesta of Jewish Folk Humor:* Thomas Yoseloff, p. 183-184.

131. Ausubel, Nathan, ed., 1948, *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore:* Crown Publishers, p. 309-310.

132. Ibid, p. 307.

133. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 171.

134. Ausubel, Nathan, ed., 1948, *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore:* Crown Publishers, p. 306-307.

135. Ibid, p. 319.

136. Finkel, A.Y., 1992, *The Great Chasidic Masters:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 335-338; and Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 118-121.

137. Pesotta, R., 1958, Days of our Lives: Excelsior Publ., Boston, p. 135.

138. Hundert, G.D., 1993, *The Jews in a Polish private town: The case of Opatow in the eighteenth century:* Johns Hopkins Univ. Press., p. 84.

139. Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 7.

140. Perlis, J. (translated by Dov Taylor), 1997, *Revealer of Secrets: The first Hebrew novel:* Westview Press, p. 251.

141. Kaplan, Rabbi A., 1985, *Until the Mashiach: Rabbi Nachman's Biography, an annotated chronology:* The Breslov Research Institute, p. 273.

142. Aron, M., 1969, *Ideas and Ideals of Hassidim:* The Citadel Press, p. 183.

143. Ibid, p. 184-185.

144. Finkel, A.Y., 1992, *The Great Chasidic Masters:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 85-88; and Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 7-8.

145. Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 204.

146. Ibid., p. 135-136, 203, 422.

147. *Russki Evrei*, No. 51 (Dec. 1881), "Medzhibozh" article written by M. Aronsberg. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

148. *Russki Evrei*, (Jan. 1882), "Medzhibozh" article written by "B.L.". Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

149. *Russki Evrei,* No. 51 (Dec. 1882), "Medzhibozh" article by D. Dantsen. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

150. *Russki Evre*i, No. 9 (Feb. 1883), "Medzhibozh" article by "Misnagid". Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

151. *Russki Evrei*, Mar. 1884.

152. *HaMelits*, 24 May (5 June) 1885, p. 610-611. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

153. *HaMelits*, 31 May (12 June) 1885, p. 643-644. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

154. First part listing descendents of the Apter Rebbe come from Alfasi, Itzhak, 1961, *Sefer Ha-Admorim:* Ariel Publishing, the Library for Chasidic Research, Tel Aviv, p. 48. The stories about the Zinkover rebbes come from Cohen, Meyer S., 1972, *Hayah Ish Hayu Zmanim:* M. Neuman Ltd., Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, p. 134. Both parts translated from Hebrew by Eliav Bar-Hai and researched by Michael Gerver.

155. "Good Qualities" or "Good Character Traits"

156. "May he rest in peace"

157. A type of large fur or felt hat.

158. Piousness.

159. A piece of paper with a request.

160. Three o'clock.

161. A crazy person.

162. Two of the services on Yom Kippur.

163. Prayed.

164. Melody.

165. The afternoon service.

166. Disrespect for the laws of the Torah.

167. *Pinkas Zinkov* (Zinkov Memorial Book), Israel, 1966, p. 139-144. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

168. *hakofos* is the parade of the Torahs during the holiday of Simkhas Torah

169. "You have been shown to know..." The first line of the introduction to the *hakofos*.

170. It was the custom of some of the Chasidim to actually live in the *succah* during the Succos through Simkhas Torah holiday -- to sleep there, and to eat all their meals there.

171. General biography of Prof. Abraham Joshua Heschel from the following sources: Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 201-202; The Abraham Joshua Heschel School in NYC; Greenberg, Eric J., 1998, "Reclaiming Heschel," in *The Jewish Week*, Jan. 9, 1998, p. 1, 14-16; Heschel, Susannah, 1998, "The Loneliness of a Prophet," in *The Jewish Week*, Jan. 9, 1998, p. 14; Stutz, Christine, 1998, "A Passion for Justice" in *Baltimore Jewish Times*, Jan. 16, 1998, p. 42-47.

172. Levitants, Isaac, 1981, *The Jewish community in Russia 1844-1917*: Posner & Sons, Jerusalem, p. 91.

173. Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Enclyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 138.

174. Quoted by David Assaf, in "Money for Economic Expenses': Economic Aspects of the Hasidic Courts," in: *Studies in the history of the Jews in old Poland*, edited by Adam Teller, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1998, p. 39.

175. For the Letichev District, many of the metrical *pinkas* books containing vital records still exist in the Kamenets-Podolsky Archives. They are generally in very good condition, but are not filed in an organized manner. Some remain unopened with their wax seals still in place. The books typically record information in both Hebrew and Russian.

176. Rosman, M., 1996, *Founder of Hasidism:* Univ. of Calif. Press, p. 87.

177. Could either have been Novo Konstantinov or Staro Konstantinov, there is no indication.

178. Ibid, p. 116-117. Rosman uses this as an example to show the status of the Baal Shem Tov in his community. The official representatives of the *Kahal* in this matter were the Baal Shem Tov and R. Joseph of Yampol. Thus, the Baal Shem Tov was not a mere outcast in the community, as later Chasidic literature implies. Instead, he was a full-fledged member of the community, in fact employed by the *Kahal* as a member of the communal leadership to help resolve the dispute.

179. *Registi i Nadpisi*, entry #2124, Feb. 27, 1765. Translated from Russian by Ben Weinstock.

180. See the Synagogue Lists in Chapter 3.

181. Cohen, C.G., 1989, *Shtetl Finder:* Heritage Books, p. 127. Also see Rabinowicz, Tz. M., 1996, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism:* Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 391.

182. *HaMelits*, 29 Mar. (10 Apr.) 1885, p. 372. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn. See Chapter 11, Law and Order, for the complete text of this article.

183. *Protokol Zasidlnii Vremenago Komiteta do Obrazovaniyo Obschestvo Remeslennago i Zemledcheskago Truda Sredi Evreev v Rossii* -- Records of ORT, Issue 2, St. Petersburg, 1884, and Issue 3, St. Petersburg, 1889. Translated from Russian by Vladimir Goykher.

184. *HaMelits*, 19 Apr. (1 May) 1885, p. 468. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

185. Kaplan, Rabbi A., 1985, *Until the Mashiach: Rabbi Nachman's Biography, an annotated chronology:* The Breslov Research Institute, p. 273.

186. *Protokol Zasidlnii Vremenago Komiteta do Obrazovaniyo Obschestvo Remeslennago i Zemledcheskago Truda Sredi Evreev v Rossii* -- Records of ORT, Issue 2, St. Petersburg, 1884, and Issue 3, St. Petersburg, 1889. Translated from Russian by Vladimir Goykher.

187. TsGIA, St. Petersburg, fond 1287, opis 44, delo 278, l. 81-89. Translated from Russian and Hebrew by Ben Weinstock.

188. Personal correspondence, A. Chayesh, 1995.

189. Suzanne Pulier, pers. comm., 1997.

190. *HaMelits*, 14 (26) Jan. 1896, issue 11, p. 3. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

191. *HaMelits*, 20 June (2 July) 1883, p. 744. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

192. Personal communication, Morris Wachs, 1996.

193. Lukin, B., 1997, *100 Evreyskikh Mestichek Ukraini*, v. 1 Podolia, p. 118.

194. Ibid, p. 102.

195. Alcan, F., 1908, *Recueil de materiaux sur la situation economique des Israelites de Russic, d'apres L'enquete dela*: Jewish Colonization Association, Paris.; *Ves Yugo Zapadnai Krai*, 1914, p. 996.

196. Personal correspondence, A. Chayesh, 1995.

197. Ves Yugo Zapadnai Krai, 1914, p. 994, 998.

198. Cohen, C.G., 1989, *Shtetl Finder Gazetteer:* Heritage Books, Inc. p. 45.

199. Gottlieb, Sch. N., 1912, *Ohele-Schem*, Pinsk.

200. Cohen, C.G., 1989, *Shtetl Finder Gazetteer:* Heritage Books, Inc. p. 55.

201. Ibid.

202. Gottlieb, Sch. N., 1912, *Ohele-Schem*, Pinsk, p. 73.

203. Personal correspondence, Harvey Lisker, September 1998.

204. *HaMelits*, 22 June/4 July, 1887, issue 136, p. 3-4. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn. The reference to Rabbi Minor is confusing, to say the least. The exact wording is thus: "Then the government-appointed Rabbi of Letichev spoke from the pulpit and blessed the Tsar, the Tsarina, and the Prince according to a blessing composed by Rabbi Minor." From this description, it is unclear whether Rabbi Minor was himself the government-appointed (crown) Rabbi of Letichev. Or perhaps he was a different person. It is not even clear whether he was a third party unaffiliated with the events whose prayer happened to be chosen for the event. There is a reference to an individual named "Meiner" on p. 296 of the *Pinkas* Book of the Mishna Society of Medzhibozh. Perhaps it is the same person.

205. Lukin, B., 1997, *100 Evreyskikh Mestichek Ukraini*, v. 1 Podolia, p. 159.

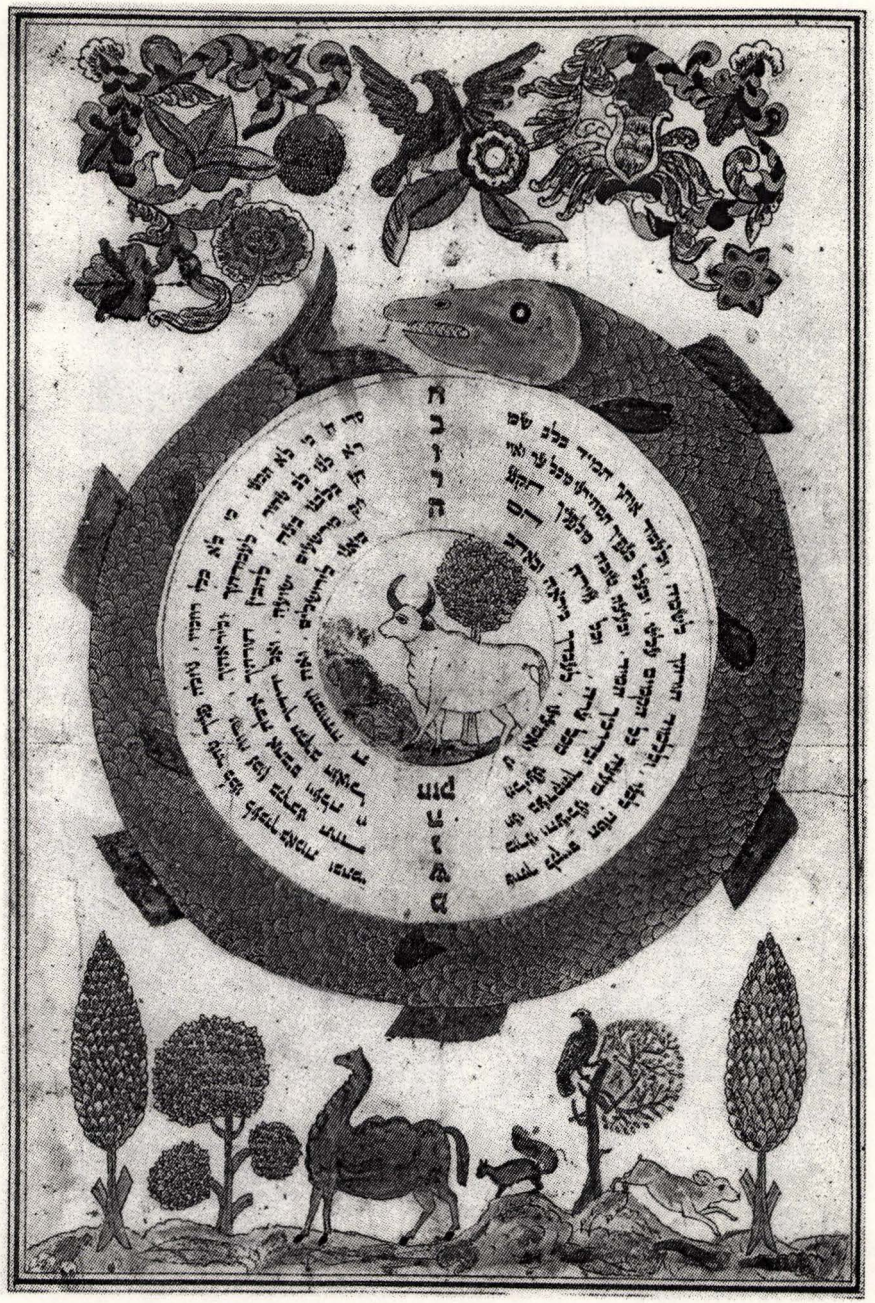
206. Kaplan, Rabbi A., 1985, *Until the Mashiach: Rabbi Nachman's Biography, an annotated chronology:* The Breslov Research Institute, p. 273.

207. Rosenstein, N., 1990, *The Unbroken Chain:* CIS, v. 2, p. 885; Cohen, C.G., 1989, *Shtetl Finder Gazetteer:* Heritage Books, Inc., p. 55; Obituary in the *Providence Evening Bulletin*, Dec. 6, 1932, article titled "Descendant of line of 31 generations of rabbis dies suddenly"; and personal correspondence from Murray Rubenstein.

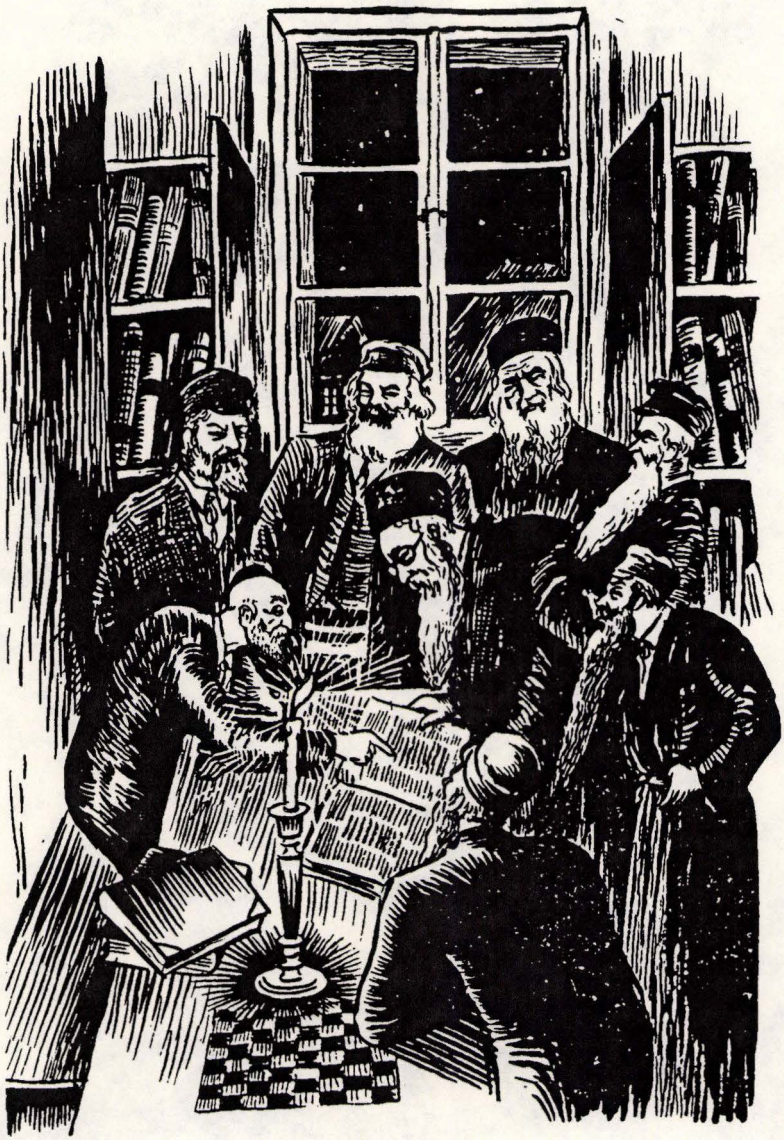
208. Rosenstein, N., 1990, *The Unbroken Chain:* CIS, v. 2, p. 885; and personal correspondence from Murray Rubenstein.

209. Personal communication with Batya (Beatrice) Furst, R. Khaim Bick's daughter.

210. From letters by Hyman Trachtenberg 1970-72.



Illuminated page from a Pinkas book.
From the Pinkas of the Mishnah Society of the Apter Rebbe, Medzhibozh, mid 19th to early 20th century. Courtesy of the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.



3

Religious Institutions

by David Chapin

Introduction

The synagogues and cemeteries along The Road from Letichev were the connections the Jews had with their God. The synagogues, while certainly not opulent, contained the best that the poor communities could offer. The beautiful artworks and woodwork inside attested to a level of Jewish culture that has since disappeared.

The cemeteries provide physical proof of the extent and vitality of the Jewish communities along The Road from Letichev. Here in death we can gauge the size of the communities by the number of individuals buried. Here we can see visual proof of the length of time the Jewish communities persisted in each community. Here we also get a feeling of the culture and superstition of a community that no longer exists.

Medal commemorating the Baal Shem Tov's Shul.
This medal was issued in the 1970s in Kiev to commemorate the Besht's shul in Medzhibozh.

SYNAGOGUES IN LETICHEV DISTRICT

It is not known precisely how many synagogues there were in Letichev District. The number almost certainly varied over time as there were many small *minyans* and *kloizim* scattered through the community.

An insight as to the number of synagogues comes from official documentation related to the communities' compliance with the 1835 Statute of the Jews:

> The Statute of the Jews, published in Russia in 1835, mandated specific organizational forms of religious life. For example, prayers were allowed only in special buildings designated for that purpose, such as synagogues and prayer houses. For each 30 Jewish homes, only one prayer house was allowed. For every 80 Jewish houses, one synagogue was allowed. Jews gathering in a single prayer house comprised a congregation.
>
> The board of directors of a congregation could appoint rabbis, cantors, lay readers and guards. A rabbi, according to the statute, was an observer and interpreter of the Jewish law. Educated, learned and respected Jews, elected by the urban and rural communities of their co-religionists, were appointed to this position. Furthermore, the elected persons were presented to the city government for approval. By accepting the position, the rabbi entered into an agreement with the congregation which defined his salary, compensation for rituals he performed, etc. The rabbi also was responsible for keeping the books of vital records. Rabbis of large congregations were entitled to seek assistance from several scholarly men.
>
> The new statute was introduced with great difficulty. In an inquiry of 1845, multiple deviations were discovered in membership of the boards elected by the Jews. In order to bring the law closer to reality, the czar ratified and signed into law on July 3, 1850, a motion of the state legislature "on appointment of supervision over Jewish synagogues and prayer houses." According to this law, rabbis were included as mandatory members of the congregational board. At the desire of the prayer society or congregation, the duties of a local rabbi could be combined with the duties of a scholar. Besides that, small congregations, with the approval of a local *guberniya* government, could limit the members of a board to a rabbi, a scholar and a chairman, but were not required to elect a treasurer. The duties of a treasurer were entrusted to the chairman.
>
> It is especially interesting to note that the duties of the chairman included maintenance of a bound book where records on all members of the congregation were maintained, with annotations on those who had left the congregation and those who had newly joined it. The bound and sealed book was issued by the local government or city hall. At the end of a year, the chairman was required to

return the book to the government or city hall for revision and storage in the local archives.

Even after 1850, however, the Jews continued to ignore the law. They prayed in unauthorized locations; they did not confirm members of the board in an approved manner; they ignored the rabbis appointed by the government, and so on...

...[A report noted that] "almost none of the prayer houses maintained books for recording the names of congregants as required by law." Some members of the congregational boards of directors had died or had left, but new elections had not been held.

The report noted that "there were rabbis approved by the government in all these cities, but they were elected only to fulfill the formal requirement and did not play a significant role in the life of the community. Other respected rabbis, not approved by the government, were consulted in all important matters."...

In order to obtain complete information about the situation and to bring violators to justice, the director of the Department of Spiritual Affairs for Foreign Religions sent a letter to all guberniyas in the Pale of Settlement on January 27, 1853. In this letter, he referred to an order of the Minister of Internal Affairs and requested that all military and civilian governors complete a form (which was enclosed with the letter) listing all Jewish buildings of prayer and officials working there. This was to be done no later than April 1, 1853.

This is the first letter in the record "on the compilation of a register of Jewish prayer houses and clergy officiating in them. The records comprise 246 pages, the latest of which is dated January 13, 1855, and is stored in the Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg. [1]

Russian Synagogue Lists of Letichev District, 1853-55

List 215 -- About the Jewish synagogues and meeting-houses and also about the service functionaries for Letichev district.[2]

Where the synagogue or meeting-house is located	*No. of congregants*	*Names of functionaries*	*Time of affirmation*	*Yearly Salary*
1. In **Letichev**	1037	Rabbi: Nusim Gershkov Burshteyn[5]	1852[3]	18 rubles[4]
1 Synagogue				
3 Meeting-houses		Gabay: Yankel Voliovich Malvich[6]	1852	none
(wood)		Treasurer: Srul Boltman[7]	1852	none
2. In **Butsnevtsy**	24	Letichev Rabbi	unaffirmed[8]	4 rubles
1 Meeting-house		Gabay: Shama Lakhmanov Rapoport[9]	unaffirmed	none
(wood)		Treasurer: Leyba Mikheliov Vaynberg[10]	unaffirmed	none
		Scholar: Shulim Norsolis(?)	unaffirmed	none

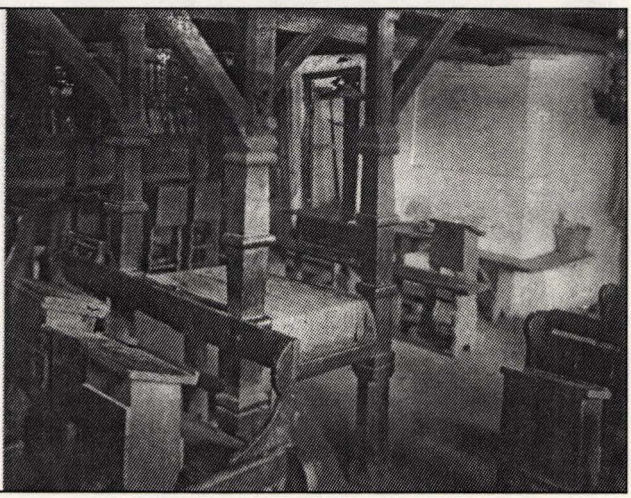
3.	In **Snitkovka** 1 Meeting-house (wood)	20	Letichev Rabbi Gabay: Duvid Zeylikov Doctor Treasurer: Khaim Kelmanov Bronolan[11]	 unaffirmed unaffirmed	3 rubles none none
3a.	In **Markov**[12]	32	Rabbi: Volka Kiperman	1850	15 rubles
4.	In **Volkovintsy** 1 Meeting-house (wood)	102	Rabbi: Yankel Gershkov Kokoruza Gabay: Abram Duvidov Grinberg Treasurer: Leyba Meerovich[13]	1842 1842 1842	Together they all get 15 rubles[14]
5.	In Colony **Staro-Zakrevsky Meidan** 1 Meeting-house	200	Rabbi: Yankel Moshkov Etelboym Gabay: Leybish Duvidov Ivankovetskiy Treasurer: Leyba Ayzikov Royzengurt	1847[15] unaffirmed unaffirmed	Together they all get 30 rubles
6.	In **Derazhnia** 1 Synagogue 1 Meeting-house (wood)	958	Rabbi: Gershko Meerovich Gabay: Froim Nukhimov Shcherba Gabay: Zelman Sruliovich Scholar: Ios. Shcherba	1842[16] 1848 1848 1849	Together they all get 150 rubles
7.	In **Zinkov** 1 Synagogue (stone) 3 Meeting-houses (wood)	2117	Rabbi: Mikhel Rabinshteyn Gabay: Abram Kopeliovich[17] Treasurer: Shulim Lonerman[18]	1842 1842 1842	Together they all get 300 rubles
8.	In **Mikhalpol** 1 Synagogue 1 Meeting-house	757	Carries out the post of Rabbi: Volko Spektar Gabay: Luzer Kreyzman[19] Treasurer: Girsh Gidelman[20]	unaffirmed 1849 1849	Together they all get 100 rubles

MEDZHIBOZH SYNAGOGUES

There are two synagogues in Medzhibozh where photographs and other records exist: the large stone fortress-style synagogue of Rabbi Sirkes and Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov's famous prayer house. The stone synagogue building still exists, but the Baal Shem Tov's shul was destroyed during the Holocaust. More synagogues existed in Medzhibozh, but are recorded only in the memory of the former residents. Dora Zichroni remembered: "There were a lot of shuls in Medzhibozh. The rich people had their own. The middle class people had their own. Then it came to the working class: there were shuls for the tailors and for the shoemakers. Then there was one shul for all the working people."[21]

The Baal Shem Tov's Shul, Medzhibozh. This photo was taken during the 1912-14 An-sky Expeditions. Courtesy of the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

The exterior of the Baal Shem Tov's Shul, Medzhibozh. This photo was taken during the 1912-14 An-sky Expeditions. Courtesy of the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.



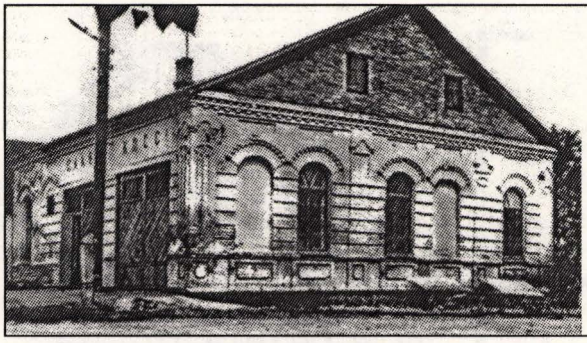
The interior of the Baal Shem Tov's Shul, Medzhibozh. Note the benches with convertable tables for studying. This photo was taken during the 1912-14 An-sky Expeditions. Courtesy of the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

Interior of the Medzhibozh Synagogue.
The pulpit of the large Medzhibozh synagogue. The man standing is Aaron Karetzky. To the left is the Aron HaKodesh where the Torahs are stored. Photo taken in 1930, courtesy of Beatrice Furst.

She also remembered this story about the Baal Shem Tov:[22]

> I heard a lot of things about the Baal Shem Tov... He lived by the synagogue.... The Jews made the house so holy that it was considered a sacred place — nobody could touch it and nobody could fix it. But they watched it. And it had a gate around it and nobody was allowed to enter or even touch it. They had people guarding it every day. We children (we were always looking for excitement) went and looked. Most of the time we were chased away, but sometimes we got a peek. I remember peeking through the window into that house. There was a long table with a few books on it. And there was a wine cup and a cane. That's all.

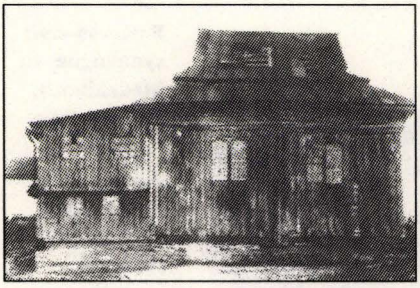
Fortress-style synagogue in Medzhibozh. This was originally the synagogue of Rabbi Sirkes. Photographed ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

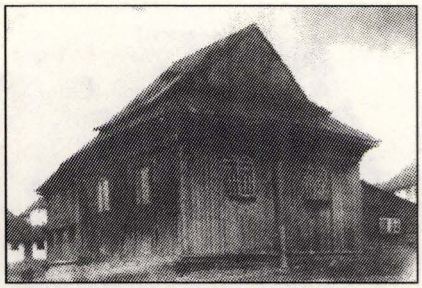


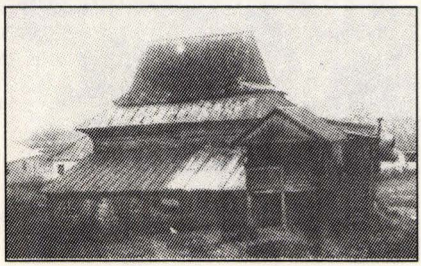
Probable Medzhibozh Jewish House of Study. Sign says "Glory to the Communist Party." Photograph courtesy of B. Lukin.

THE MIKHALPOL SYNAGOGUE

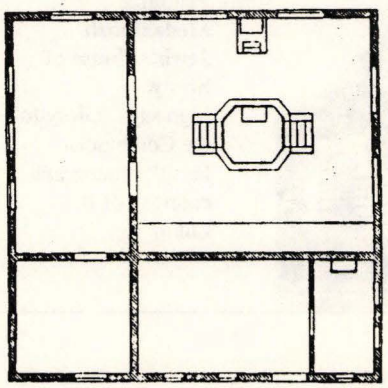
The Mikhalpol Synagogue, a wooden shul, was typical of a class of Jewish architecture in Eastern Europe that no longer exists. "Probably [built in the] 18th century. Over the main hall [was] a two-tiered roof; the upper tier gabled, the lower hipped. Along the north hall [was] a one-storey annex covered with a lean-to-roof. A two-storey corner pavilion [was] in the northwest corner...The walls of horizontal tibers [were] braced with 'vixens,' partly faced with vertical boarding. [The] twin windows [had] segmental arches."[23] We are fortunate to have a photographic record of this synagogue through the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits of the St. Petersburg Jewish University. These remarkable photographs were taken about 1935.

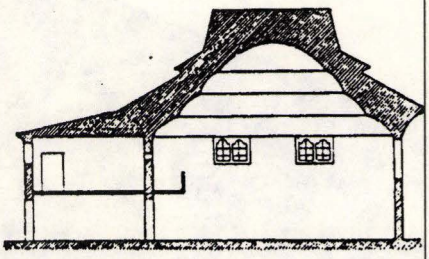




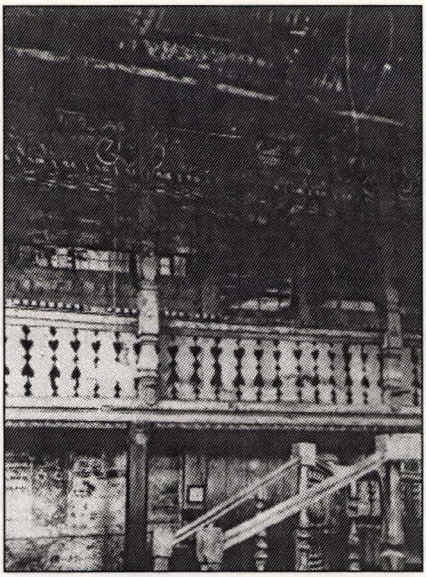


Exterior of the Mikhalpol Synagogue. The exterior was constructed from unfinished wood clapboards. Notice the Jewish Stars framed in the windows. In a relative state of disrepair, the roof needs patching, and it is mssing some clapboards. The exterior does not give a clue to the magnificent interior of this synagogue.

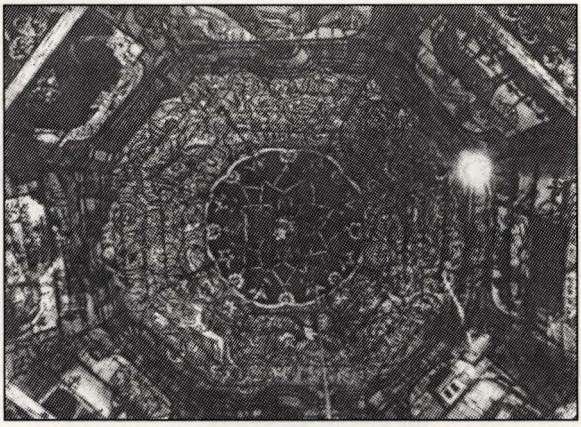




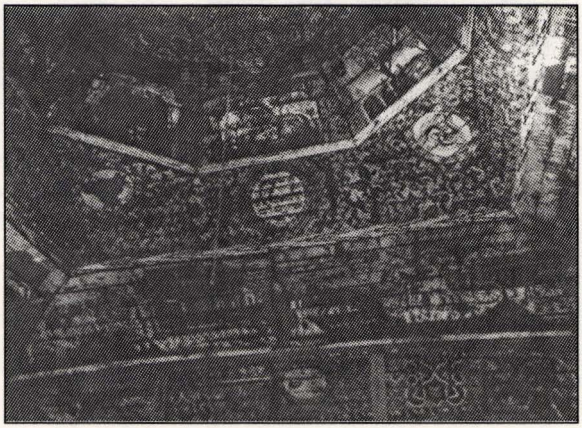
Layout of the Mikhalpol Synagogue. This synagogue was a "Type 1" wooden synagogue typical of those built in the late 1600s-early 1700s.[24]



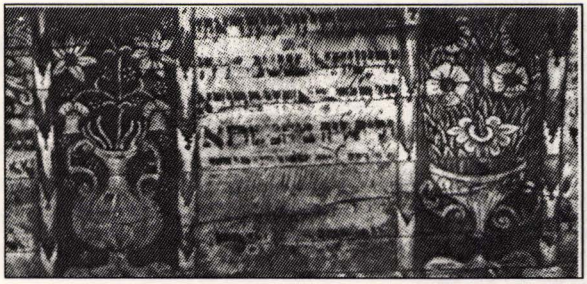
Women's gallery, Mikhalpol Synagogue.
The interior of the synagogue showing the stairway leading up to the women's gallery. Notice the beautiful woodwork. In traditional fashion, the men are separated from the women. The women were separated visually from the men on the second floor of the synagogue so as not to disturb their prayer.



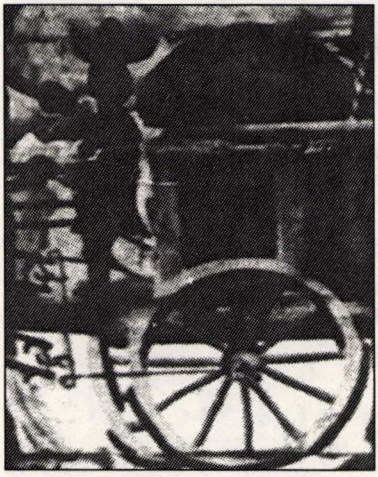
Mikhalpol Synagogue Cupola.
The fabulously ornate ceiling paintings inside the cupola are shown. One can only imagine what they might have looked like in color. These paintings show a sophisticated quality to the Jewish artwork. As the styles and motifs are reminiscent of what appears on Jewish tombstones during the period of 1760-1820, it is likely that this artwork dates from the same period.



There are several different themes represented in the artwork of the walls and ceiling of the Mikhalpol Synagogue.

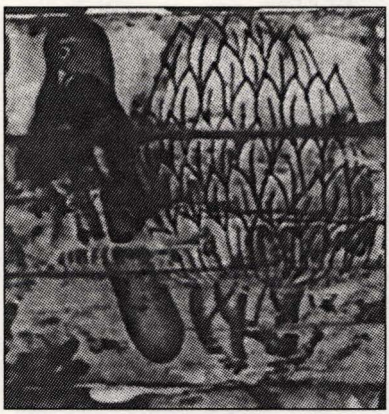


Michalpol Synagogue Religious Motifs.
The first theme are decorations glorifying religious elements. On the top we see floral arrangements in vases on either side of a biblical passage. On the right we see ornate symmetrical patterns of the style typical of tombstones from the period of 1760-1820.

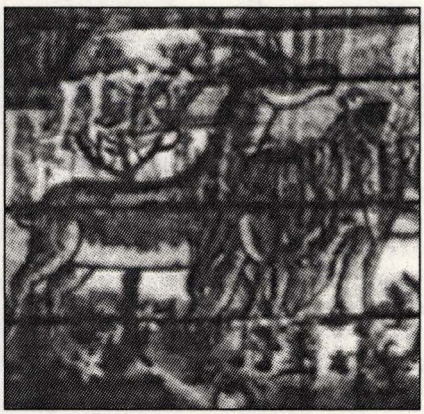


Mikhalpol Synagogue everyday life motif.
Here we see a team of horses hauling a large cargo wagon. A detail of the coachman is shown on the left. Because graven images of God are prohibited in Judaism, and because man was made in God's likeness, it was forbidden to show people in Jewish artwork. The artist got around this prohibition by only showing the coachman in silhouette. His face is not shown. Notice the man's unusual fur hat and his long coat. Also notice the detail in the wagon hitch.

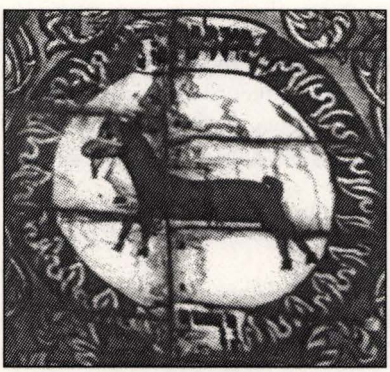
Mikhalpol Synagogue whimsical motif.
Here the artist has chosen to represent a series of animals.



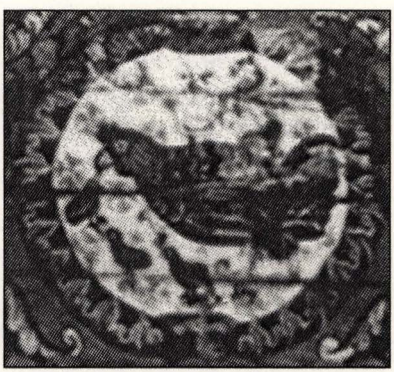
A crow in a poplar tree.



Deer.

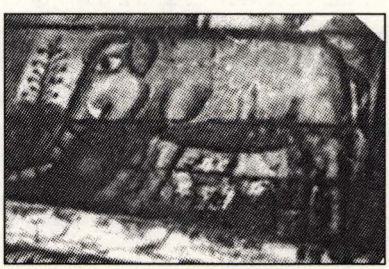


A calf.

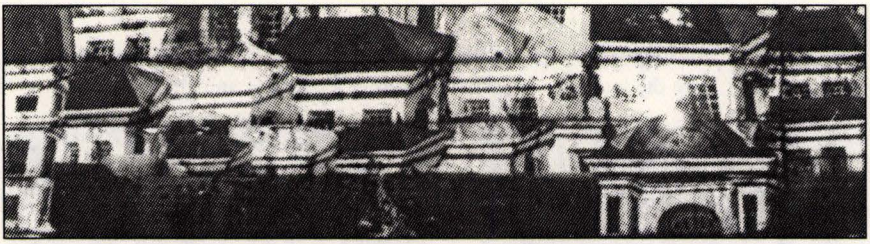


A hen and her chicks.

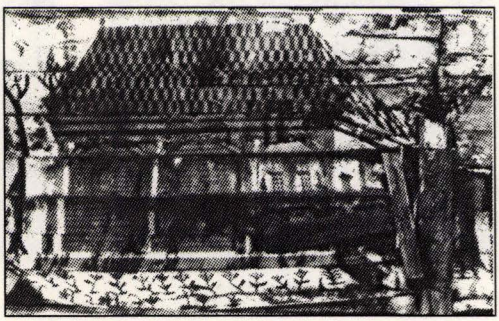
Dancing hares.



An elephant.



Above we see a medieval city, complete with opulent stone buildings and a wall around the city. Perhaps this represents a town in Eastern Europe, or more likely, it represents the artist's conception of Jerusalem. To the right we see a typical Eastern European house. At the right-hand corner is a wooden patch, made after the painting was complete, in order to patch the roof.



The Mikhalpol Synagogue is no more; it was burned to the ground by the Nazis during WWII. These pictures are all that is left to record the Jewish art and culture that once thrived in this town. The splendid scenes shown here gives only a glimpst into the vibrant Jewish life that once made Mikhalpol an important cultual center.

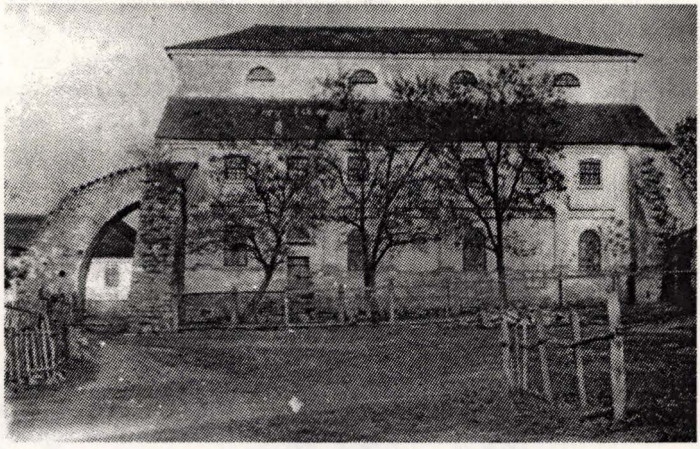
THE ZINKOV SYNAGOGUE

The Zinkov Synagogue was a massive stone structure. It became the homebase of the Zinkover Chasids, a major chasidic sect in Podolia. Fire seemed to be its nemesis. In the the 19th century, it was the scene of a tragic fire. The synagogue was completely destroyed by an accidental fire in the late 1930's after it had been closed during the Stalinist religious crackdown. Today, all that remains of this magnificent building is its cornerstone.[25]

Zinkov Synagogue Fire

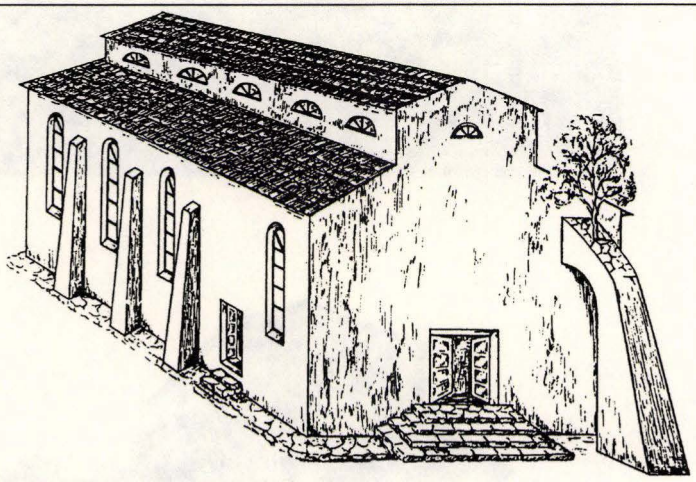
by Ben Weinstock

On Wednesday, September 28, 1883, on the eve of Yom Kippur, perhaps the holiest evening in the Jewish calendar, Zinkov was crowded with thousands of Jews. Residents and visitors poured into the main synagogue to hear the most solemn of Jewish hymns, the "Kol Nidre"—All the Vows. At approximately 6



Exterior of the Zinkov Synagogue.
Photos taken ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V. A. Dymshits.

p.m., desperate shouts of "Help!" and "Fire!" reverberated through the magnificent building from the women's gallery located on the third floor. Men in the lower sections interrupted their prayers and rushed up the stairs to help their loved ones. But the door to the top staircase was blocked by the bodies of frantic women who panicked and rushed into the stairwell, trying to escape the inferno. One woman jumped out a window and fell to the ground with a cry. Many worshippers had already run out of the synagogue onto the street screaming "Fire! The shul is on fire!" The townspeople flew into a frenzy. Jews and Christians alike ran to the synagogue but did not see any fire. They only saw a brightly illuminated building, dressed in holiday glory.



Drawing of the Zinkov Synagogue.
This amazing likeness was drawn completely from memory by immigrants from Zinkov. It was drawn in 1966, decades before the Taranushenko Archive was made available to researchers. From *Pinkas Zinkov,* (Zinkov Memorial Book).

The village policeman, identified in contemporary accounts only by the initial "D", ran to the synagogue and ordered that a rope ladder be made. He quickly climbed into the synagogue and convinced the frightened crowd that there was no danger. "D" knocked down the door leading to the third floor — revealing a ghastly sight. The entire staircase was a pile of hundreds of bodies. On the top of the pile were screaming women. On the bottom of the pile were dozens of corpses. As the agile policeman took charge of the situation, many women came to their senses and moved away from the mass of bodies.

When Dr. Vaskresenye arrived on the scene, the bodies were taken out. One woman gave birth to a premature baby which later died. Many women had multiple fractures. Dr. Vaskresenye carefully listened to every victim for a heartbeat.

When none could be detected, he declared them dead. All together, there were 34 women who died. Thousands of townspeople, Christian and Jew alike, wailed for those who lost their lives. All the dead were taken before the end of Yom Kippur to be buried. Avraham Berg, a correspondent for the newspaper *HaMelits* reported on the tragic fire and commented, "as I write this with trembling hands, may God be with their eternal souls and may we not have anymore events like this in our midst."[26]

Sadly, the actual cause of the "fire" and commotion was in reality a false alarm. The wick of one of the kerosene wall lamps was raised too high. The lamp smoked more than usual and the glass globe broke. This was taken for a fire and a panic ensued.[27]

Our Synagogue

by Borukh Laskin[28]

In our book of remembrance, the dreadful story has already been told about what happened in the women's section at the time of Kol Nidre, when 33 women of Zinkov died during the fire commotion.

I, myself, was not present at the time of this terrible tragedy, which occurred in my early childhood.

For years afterwards the story of this horrible event was repeated to the next generation with a shudder. So when I grew up and started to go to school I already knew about what had happened and I used to be afraid in those evenings that I had to pass the synagogue, especially those winter evenings that I used to walk home with my friends with whom I used to study "at night" at the Rabbi Yekl Moishe Yudels, who lived near the synagogue. When we would leave the kheder with lanterns in our hands, we would stick close to one another as we walked past the synagogue and sing the traditional song, "And in the Day of Our Joy," in order to allay the fear which hung over us.

When I got older, however, I was very proud of our Zinkov Synagogue for two reasons: first, because of the beautiful, prominent building and also because of the cantor of the synagogue, Itsik Cantor, of blessed memory.

The synagogue was the tallest building in the city and took up half a block in length and half of a smaller block in width. It was built of large, hewn stones and the outside looked like a fortress. Before coming into the synagogue, one had to traverse a large, wide corridor. Both sides of this corridor gave onto smaller sanctuaries, in which separate *minyans* would pray. One of these little sanctuaries was called the tailor's shul. There the craftsmen of the town would pray. I remember that during the day on Saturday, the craftsmen of the town would gather and my friend's father, Sanye, old Sanye, may he rest in peace, would come into the women's section of the little tailor's shul and teach *"Eyn Yakov."*[29]

I used to be very proud of our synagogue and of our cantor, especially when Christian officials used to come before *Kol Nidre*: the police commissioner, the precinct captain, and also the oldest of the guards with their wives and their

grown children, to hear how Itsik the Cantor, of blessed memory, would sing *Kol Nidre*, and they would always comment about how beautiful the synagogue was.

Across from the synagogue was the study hall and the little shul built on to it. There other notable members of the city prayed. Only a narrow passage separated the synagogue from the study hall, and the only thing missing was a sign saying: "This is the gate of God. The righteous will come through it."

I remember that when there used to be a funeral, the pall bearers would stop between the shul and the study hall in that narrow passageway that separated them and Itsik Cantor would sing "God full of compassion," so that his voice could be heard for quite a distance all around and so that the town folks who wanted to fulfill the *mitzvah* of following the deceased would immediately make for the shul and the narrow passageway became black with people.

After the cantor was finished with the eulogy, the procession would make its way to the cemetery, which was located at the edge of town but yet not overly far from the synagogue. One only had to pass the several small streets of the area called *abashubke* where the poor population of the town lived in small, low houses with straw covered roofs.

The synagogue was also a symbol of joy when there would be a wedding in town. The musicians would march in front, and after them would come the parents of the bride and groom with the happy couple and with all of the invited guests. The musicians would play happy tunes and the joyous procession would once again wend their way through the narrow corridor to the bridal canopy that had already previously been erected outside between the synagogue and the study hall. Many people of the town, even uninvited guests, could come to watch the marriage ceremony.

Now, people have told me, everything is wrecked having been destroyed the the Nazi murderers, may their names be erased. They killed all the Jews of Zinkov. They destroyed our synagogue and study hall. They plowed the ground over that place where the synagogue stood and changed it into a garden.

Let us etch all of this forever in our memories and in our hearts!

The Synagogue

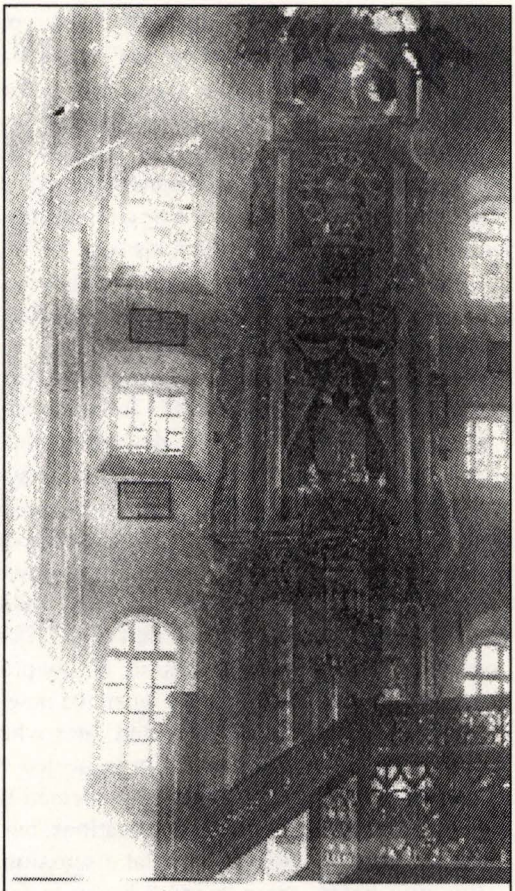
by Israel Sonis, Roytburd[30]

Friday night at sundown, all the streets became empty, quiet, Sabbath-like. The Sabbath candles could be seen burning in the windows, and soon the religious Jews appeared on the street going to synagogue to welcome the Sabbath. Bathed and dressed up in their Sabbath best, they make their way through the empty stillness. They walk sedately, not hurriedly. Their children walk slowly by their sides, and one after another, they disappear into the narrow street which leads to the synagogue, to the sanctuary and to the study house.

The street becomes silent, quiet, peaceful. Only a murmur like the burbling of a brook can be heard from there, from the illuminated house of worship. Voices issue forth in waves, now higher, now lower: Jews are welcoming the Sabbath.

One can't stand at the window any more. The sounds of welcoming the Sabbath make you feel guilty that you are here and not there. So how much time does it take for a little boy to run over there? After only brief deliberation, I skip over "*linas hatsedek*"[30] which hovers over our house (my father is praying there) and I'm right there at the synagogue.

The great, massive door opens easily. It seems that it was made that way. You run down the several broad steps and you are at the pulpit. It's round and tall, built like a stage, with carved sides. The front of the pulpit, right opposite the holy ark, leaning against the carved wood stands a long oak bench. Along the length of the bench are lecterns. Our traditionally inherited place was at the third lectern from the corner. This place belonged to my great-grandfather, who, the story goes, actually helped build the synagogue with his own hands. Uncle Yeshaya always sat in this place.



Interior of the Zinkov Synagogue.
The magnificent three-story wood Aron HaKodesh, which held the Torahs, is shown. Notice the clock at the top. Photograph was taken ca. 1935 from the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

The synagogue is large and quite empty. One can walk around quite freely behind the pulpit and in the side rooms with their vaulted ceilings. It was even possible to fool around with one's friends and no one in front would know.

There weren't even many people sitting along the long "eastern wall" which extended on either side of the holy ark. Every once in a while, it was good to sit there and see the face of the cantor as he stood at his pulpit. But I couldn't sit there for long. Our "family section" had its own magnetism. It had its own

qualities (not only ownership!). There everyone was seated in his own place. True, it was crowded, but that didn't make much of a difference. Jews crowd together a bit and are glad to make a place for a young boy. "Sit down, young man!" they say. But who can sit for long even there? The "Welcoming the Sabbath" prayer is practically over. Itsik the Cantor will soon make the *kiddush* over the wine for the whole congregation. After the blessing over the wine, he'll give those, (who are already sitting and waiting on the stairs near his pulpit which leads to the holy ark) a sip from his large goblet,—who would want to miss that?

First of all, where is there to be found such a sweet wine as the raisin wine of *kiddush?* Secondly, not every one merited the privilege of being among those favored by that sip of wine...

Later, other things caught my interest and captured my thoughts and imagination. Of course, everything was in this area with its special atmosphere.

I have spent so much time describing the synagogue itself and will now spend time only on significant highlights which involve the synagogue (as well as the sanctuary and study halls), because at that time it was the folk-inn, in the full sense of the word. People didn't only go there to pray. The events in the houses of worship were not exclusively connected to religiosity. Gathering there felt comfortable. The traditional ritual of praying was a natural thing. It was an organic part of the lifestyle, and in between the prayer, community matters were discussed, family problems, livelihood, news of what was going on in the world. And when the new winds of the Enlightenment and secular studies began to blow, and later when revolutionary ideas began to spread throughout the Jewish world, heated debates filled the air around the synagogue's pulpit. The synagogue teemed with common folk, who usually gathered together for various celebrations, but now also came to hear different points of view and heated political discussions.

But even before these "winds" began to fan the flames of the national and political sensibilites of the people in Zinkov, the foundation of all the political tendancies had already been laid. The Jew did not need explanations of the fact that he was oppressed. He could feel it quite well in his everyday life—actually with every step he took. As soon as he left the city and had to spend even one night in a nearby village, either the police commissioner or just an ordinary village constable drove him away. Even in the city itself, he would run into the "keepers of the law" everywhere he went if he was in business of any kind or even if he had brought something to market to sell that he himself had made.

In the people, there lived a strong sense of national inspiriation: 1. to free themselves from bitter poverty and oppression, and 2. to find the way to be redeemed from exile and return to the Zion and Jerusalem of which they dreamed and which they mentioned in their prayers three times a day.

When a Jew would come to the passage "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand lose its cunning," or "May our eyes behold your return to Zion in mercy," he felt it with his whole heart. It was difficult to believe that one night of

political turmoil would thoroughly alter the relationship of the local population to the Jews, and that the Jews would be able to continue living there peacefully. Every day, the Jew saw the malice of the people among whom he lived, and to our great regret, he was not wrong. Two whole decades after the revolution, the local population handed the Jews over to Hitler's destroyers, and they themselves stole whatever poor possessions the Jews had, to their great misfortune.

This is precisely why the Jews of Zinkov, like their brothers elsewhere, always celebrated the High Holidays with joyous exaltation and with a deep longing for their historical roots. They accompanied the elders of their people out of Egypt, and they hoped once again to go out of slavery into freedom. They lived with faith that the miracle of the exodus from Egypt would happen once again. On Shevuos they brought their first fruits into the sanctuary, and contenting themselves, for the time being, with decorating their houses with branches torn from trees not their own. They dreamt of having their own fields and an abundance of fruit with sorely limited funds.

On the holidays during which one takes accounting of one's soul, they tremblingly listened to the resounding call of the ancient ram's horn, which had already made itself heard during the whole month of Elul, in the very early morning hours, while the town was still half asleep and the grass still covered with cold dew. That's how it was during the other holidays as well and also during the sad days. And what about Yom Kippur? Of course, Yom Kippur is a truly religious day of judgement, but even in the religious aspect of this holiday, historical references are also interwoven: *Kol Nidre*—the Spanish Inquisition. The atmosphere of *N'ila*—the prayer for the city of Jerusalem, "who is debased to the depths of Sheol." And by the way, the city of Jerusalem with its delapidated huts is sent on a mission to God to ask for his mercy for those whose hearts are pained but have nevertheless not lost hope. The fine and exalted thing is this, that the prayers and entreaties are always collective, always for the community and not for the individual. And the paeans of praise to the Master of the Universe are not only because he has such precious Jewish qualities as mercy and fairness?!

I have digressed and have enthusiastically refelcted on the spiritual treasures of our people as a whole and their effect on the Jews of Zinkov as an organic part of the whole. We will yet return to and relate more details about Zinkov and its surrounding environs, which includes the fantastically beautiful building, which always left a deep impression on all Zinkovers and permanently etched itself in their memories—the synagogue.

Letichev Synagogues

LETICHEV (Podolia) Oct. 1884—On the last day of Succos, they closed the Jewish synagogues all over Podolia to check and see if they were up to official standards. The synagogues that are located less than 50 *sazhen*[31] from the nearest Christian church had to be closed. We are awaiting the opening of our

synagogues because we have no place to pray. We expect to get official permission to reopen in about a week.[32]

LETICHEV (Podolia) Nov. 1884—I was informed that all the Jewish synagogues in Podolia were closed by the authorities because most of the synagogues were not legally established and they were located within 50 *sazhen* of Christian churches. We were advised that all these illegal synagogues must close because the old law was to pay the Finance Ministry a tax of 3 rubles per year for each synagogue. Over the years, this law was forgotten and no one paid any attention to it. Only recently was this law remembered by the authorities. The decree came from the Governor in Kamenets to close all the Jewish synagogues in Podolia. And so it happened. But when the new Governor arrived in Kamenets and he heard what happened, he hurried and he issued a new official law to open the synagogues and collect the tax of 3 rubles for each year as prescribed in the law. It was not retroactive.[33]

The Gitman Kloiz in Letichev

by Anatoli Ilyich Chayesh[34]
St. Petersburg, Russia

An article of law provided for every eventuality of the distances between divine-services and churches. This was the center of a big and intricate case in 1882-86 about a prayer school in the house of Srul Gitman in Letichev.

On May 12, 1882, the charge d'affaires of the Letichev Jewish community, Khaim Perelmiter, petitioned the government of Podolia Province about opening in Gitman's house a divine-service. The Province government wrote for information to the district police officer in Letichev and asked him for a plan of the town. He transferred the request to the building department. The building department understood how to solve their problem and compared their plan with that which was approved for Letichev in 1839 by the Tsar. They reported that the Gitman house "Being on the street which goes to the Church and the distance from fences of the two is less than 50 *sazhens*. This distance is not enough in a case like this and furthermore, Gitman's house was not on another street from the Church." On Jan. 22, 1883, the Province government rejected Perelmiter's petition.

Perelmiter appealed the decision to the Senate. In his appeal, he claimed that the Province government did not survey the distances, that they used the distances between fences but not the buildings, and that Gitman's house was on a different street from the Church.

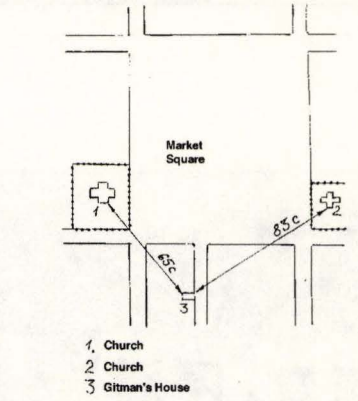
When the Senate received the complaint, it required the Province government to issue a detailed survey of the area. This was accomplished by the Letichev town surveyor. He ascertained that Gitman's house was on the marketplace street, in the middle of one side of the marketplace. Perpendicular to the side of the marketplace and along the border of this side of the marketplace is where the Church

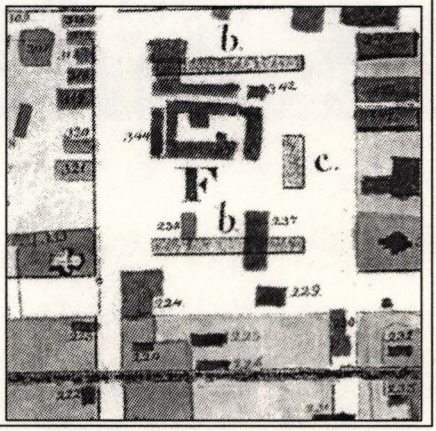
is. The distance from Gitman's house to the Church was more than 50 sazhens. One of the plans showed that the minimum distance was not to the fences of the Church, and that Gitman's house was not on the same street as the church.

The First Department of the Senate, with Senators A.A. Saburov, I.I. Shamshin, S.A. Mordvinov and A.D. Shumakher, sent a concluding report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs that contained an elaborate overruling decision that annulled the decree by the Podolia Province government.

Concerning the question about how to estimate distances—between the buildings or between the fences—the Minister argued that the Senate decision was illogical. He felt that the law stated that it was necessary that the distance from public houses to churches, monasteries or convents, cemeteries, chapels and so on were calculated to their fences. The Minister further argued that the distances between non-Christian meeting houses and orthodox churches must be calculated to the fences rather than calculated to the nearest church cross, icon, or chapel.

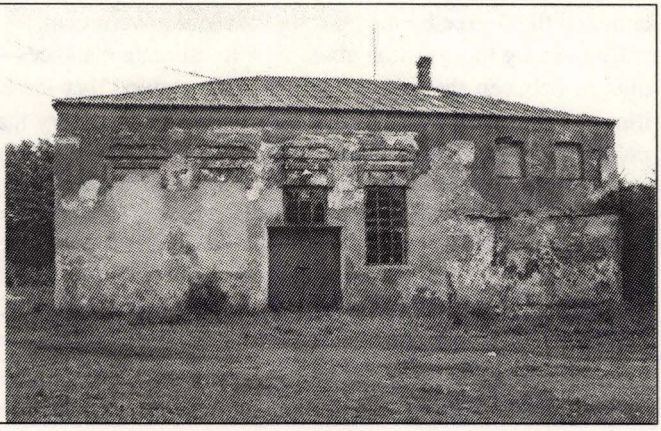
By opinion of the technical committee, the Minister didn't accept Gitman's house as being the minimum distance from the Orthodox Church. On Oct. 16, 1885 in a joint meeting between the Senators and the Ministry, both sides failed to come to a mutual agreement on the issues. By accordance of the legal



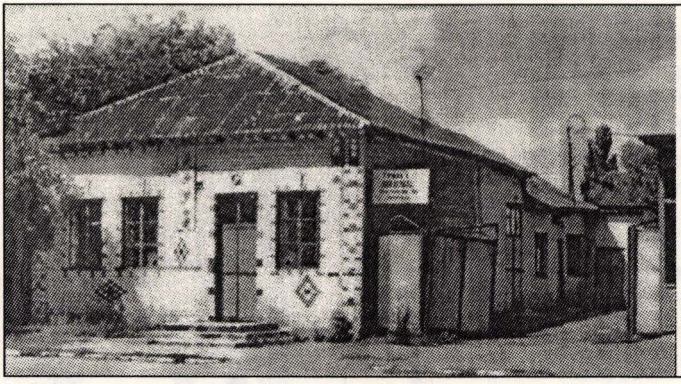


Map of Gitman's kloiz. The map on the top comes from court documents. The map on the bottom is from an 1835 map, for comparison. On this map, Gitman's house is shown as #225, the market square is labeled F.

procedures, the case then went for opinion to the First General Meeting of the Senate. Unfortunately, the decision from the full Senate is not in the archives, therefore we do not know the outcome of the case.



A synagogue building, Letichev. This modern photograph shows the remains of Letichev's large synagogue. Courtesy of Jakob Bialoblocki.



A synagogue building in Letichev. This modern photograph shows the remains of Letichev's small synagogue. Courtesy of B. Lukin.

JEWISH CEMETERIES IN LETICHEV DISTRICT

The following is an inventory of Jewish cemeteries in Letichev District, recorded during a visit by David Chapin in 1995. These exclude the Nazi mass killing sites listed later in Chapter 16, The Holocaust:

Town	*Cemetery*	*Approx. No. of Burials*	*Condition*
Letichev	Old	Destroyed ca. 1975	
Letichev	New	5,000	Fair
Medzhibozh	Old	2,500	Good
Medzhibozh	New	5,000	Good
Mikhalpol		500	Very Poor
Zinkov		5,000	Poor
Derazhnia		5,000	Good
Staro Zak. Meidan		500[35]	Very Poor
Volkovintsy	New	15	Good
Volkovintsy	Old	Not visited	

Every cemetery had similar styles to the gravestones. There were four major styles to the gravestones. The first was the oldest stones, probably pre-1700. These tended to be simple stones but quite massive. The stones had many lines of ornately carved Hebrew verses. These carvings were cut very deep. There was generally no other ornamentation on the stones.

The second style was from about 1750-1820. It represents the flowering of Jewish culture during that period. Very ornate designs adorn the stones with interesting symmetrical patterns and whimsical animals. The designs are

Gravestone from the destroyed Old Jewish Cemetery in Letichev.
This stone represents the second style of gravestone carvings showing whimsical animal characters carrying fruit. The unnamed person in this grave died in 1806. Photos taken ca. 1935, from the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V. A. Dymshits.

optimistic and flowing, with grape vines, crowns, unicorns and griffins, among other designs. These are beautifully artistic carvings that show an incredible degree of handiwork.

The third style was from about 1820 to about 1925. It was a simple style with very little ornamentation, other than simple geometric designs. The stones typically are vaulted, such that they are L-shaped and have a massive base which covers the grave. These bases serve a second purpose in keeping the inscription part of the stone upright without having to bury it. Since so many of these stone are the same style, it seems that an industry must have built up which mass-produced this particular type of stone. The graves seem to be in order by date of death. In other words, no family plots appear to be present. The grave sites seem to be filled in an orderly manner with no gaps.

The fourth and final style follows the Soviet gravestone style. In the 1930s, some of these stones were very crude. One stone seen in the Letichev cemetery was made from concrete. Another was flat with the inscriptions painted on. It is with these stones that surnames begin to appear because much of the inscriptions are now written in Cyrillic rather than in Hebrew. (Prior to about the 1930s it is extremely rare to see surnames engraved on the stones. Most of the stones list the Hebrew name—X son/daughter of Y. Only in the Derazhnia cemetery are a few of the surnames engraved; when they are, it was done in a crude way on the backs of the stones as if it was an afterthought.)

Gravestone in the Derazhnia Cemetery.
This shows the third style of stones, the vaulted L-shaped stones of the 1820-1925 era. The grave in the foreground was recently descecrated. Some of the gravestones in this cemetery have surnames carved in their backs, almost as an afterthought. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

Post WWII graves follow modern Russian practices. These stones are carved using modern sand-blasting techniques. Some have reliefs of the individual. Almost all cover the plot with dimension stone or concrete. A small fence usually encloses each gravesite.

The modern gravestones are exotic granites and other colorful dimension stone. However, most of the styles prior to WWII used the local sandstone. This was a fine-grained stone that was apparently easy to carve, yet hard. Unfortunately, it was also porous. Thus, the thinner stones succumbed to the freeze-thaw cycles of the Ukrainian winters. Eventually, many stones crumbled under the weather. When

one walks through some of the cemeteries, one gets the feeling that every square inch has a Jewish grave. Now, only the broken shards of gravestones felt underfoot bely the existence of these now anonymous graves.

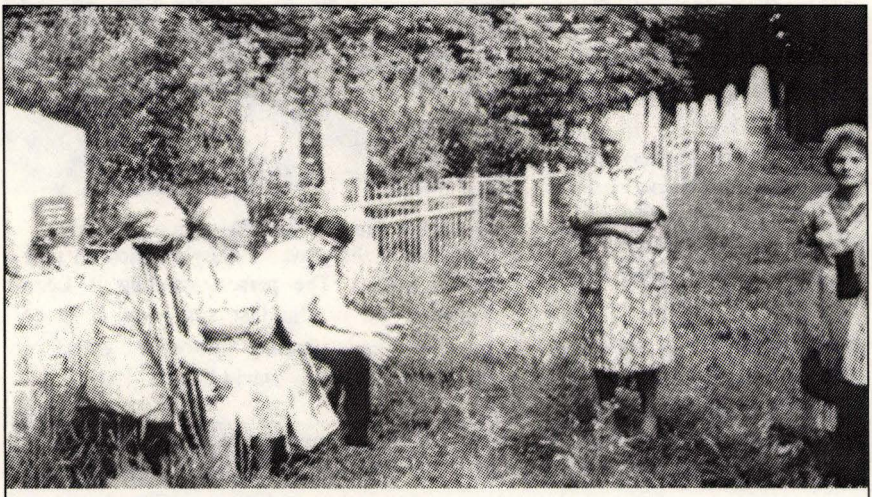
There was also some signs of vandalism. In the Mikhalpol and Zinkov cemeteries, the inscription parts of each vaulted stone seemed to have been purposely broken off. At Mikhalpol, not a single inscription remains, perhaps gone off to some building project. At Zinkov, only a few of the inscriptions remain. The stones from the Zinkov cemetery was used to pave connecting roads to THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV during World War II.[36] At Staro Meidan, at least one stone was recently turned over and diggings underneath could be seen. This happened within the year of observation, since no autumn leaves had a chance to cover the diggings. In spite of these obvious signs of vandalism, for the most part the cemeteries were simply showing years of neglect. Mother nature seems to be a very good vandal herself.

Graves in the new Letichev cemetery. These show the gravestone style typical of post WWII burials. The person standing is Lena Ronina, one of the last surviving Jews of Letichev. She is standing between the graves of her parents. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

List of Post WWII graves in the new Letichev Jewish cemetery

Left Side (from the entrance):		Right Side (from entrance):	
1. Shor, Shmul Ikhevich	1907-1962	1. Shterberg, Samuil Lazerovich	1922-1990
2. Tretyak, David Srulevich	1914-1958	2. Belostotskaya, Blyuma Bentsionovna	1904-1985
3. Fasman, Kh. B.	1888-1958	3. Medvedovskiy, Yuriy Ionovich	1901-1988
4. Beyner, M. P.	1898-1961	4. Medvedovskiy, Beyla Shylimovna	1904-1981
5. Zaydman, Yakov Emanuilovich	1900-1964	5. Birent, Elizabeta Markovna	1921-1986
5a. Pergament, Isaak Elevich	1885-1964	6. Kashcheva, Tatyana Markovna	1927-1977
6. Bresler, Moishe Shmuelevich	1896-1969	7. Shterberg, Viktorna Samulovich	1951-1974
6a. Bekerman, Moycey Isakovich	1906-1970	8. Shinder, E. E.	1916-1961
7. Grinshteyn, Isaak Moisevich	1903-1973	9. Shteyn, Froim	1920-1961
8. Shtilerman, Semen Abramovich	1894-1976	10. *covered* Burshteyn, mother of Sonia Kigil	
9. Shtilerman, Ruzya Semenovna	1903-1983	11. Milzon, Matvey Yakovlevich	1903-1981
10. *covered* Gomerman		12. Milzon, Sara Zakhrovna	1903-1974
11. Kigel, Ilya Markovich	1903-1980	13. Gurilina, Fira Aleksandrovna	1925-1995
12. Kigel, Sarra Iosifovna	1911-1990	14. Gurilina, Kharitovna	1952-1968
13. Langerman, Usher Evseevich	1904-1982	15. Gurilina, Klaviya Kharitovna	1948-1965
14. Langerman, Elizabeta Borisovna	1910-1982	16. Shtulboym, Leya Khaimovna	1927-1966
15. Azvolinskiy, David Naymovich	1909-1983	17. Malkiman, Tayma Yosefomna	1885-1966
16. Kigel, Lev Smulevich	1901-1986	18. Langerman, Larisa Efrimovna	1966-1967
17. Kigel, Sofya Yakovlevna	1914-1991	19. Shteyn, Ruven D.	1901-1969
18. Tsirulnik, Pyotr Yevseevich	1903-1994	20. Portnaya, Pesya Isakovna	1893-1979
		21. Yblochnik, Anna Iosifov	1889-1975
		22. Bresler, Elizabeta Grigorbevna	1917-1975
		23. Shapiro, Riba Mordkhovna	1892-1975

24. Loshak, Liza Shlemovna	1912-1976	27. 3 week old infant Fleysher (no marker)	
25. Dorman, Fanya Solomonovna	1898-1977	28. Ronina, Basya Solomoniya	1906-1993
26. Sher, Riba Ididiuna	1914-1978	29. Ronin, Abram Yosefich	1903-1985



Graves in the new Letichev cemetery.
In the background are post-WWII era graves along the left side of the cemetery. The people in the foreground are five of the seven Jews remaining in the Letichev. Behind this row of graves are literally hundreds of neglected graves scattered in the forest underbrush. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

List of Post WWII graves in the new Medzhibozh Jewish cemetery

Left Path (from the entrance):

1. Shnayder, Isaak Shaevich	1918-1988
2. Kneple, Yakov Efimovich	1913-1984
3. Goldenberg, Gersh Khaimovich	1900-1970
4. Cherniy, Rafail Abramovich	1896-1976
5. Shkolyar, Shlema Khaimovich	1905-1976
6. Mandel, Shulim Yankelevich	1904-1974
7. Zak, Mindlya Isaakovna	1883-1971
8. Shifman, Raisa Samoylovna	1909-1989
9. Sapozhnikov, Mikhail Davidovich	1947-1974
10. Sapozhnikov, Boris Davidovich	1939-1972
11. Naerman, Aron Yakovlevich	1901-1972
12. Gorinshteyn, David Bentsionovich	1909-1968
13. Kvasha, Vladimir Naumovich	1892-1968
14. Mandel, Froim Yankelevich	1880-1967
15. Froynovich(?), R(?) Simkha(?)	1880-1961
16. Kvasha, Polina Isakovna	1910-1987
17. Lyolinetskiy, Boris Semenovich	1913-1980
18. Lyolineyskaya, Sheyntsya Pinkhisovna	1911-1987
19. Naerman, Sura Shlemovna	1899-1972
20. Zeltser, F. B.	1895-1979

Right Path (from the entrance):

1. Portnoy, Ruvim Lvovich	1903-1968
2. Yarmulnik, Khana Yankelevna	1903-1968
3. Alekhina, Anna Isaevna	1914-1963
4. Dilman, Lidiya Efimovna	1920-1956
5. Kvasha, Piza Pinkhasovna	1898-1959
6. Koptinyok, Manya	1887-1955

Near Gate:

1. Melamud, Izrail Efremovich	1903-1968

Graves in the new Medzhibozh cemetery.
Scattered through the woods are hundreds of neglected gravestones, mostly of the third style. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

List of Post WWII graves in the new Volkovintsy cemetery

First Row:

1. Myrilo, Manya Peysevna	1913-1971
2. Gershgorina, Enya Khaimovna	1908-1974
3. *covered*, Sima Davidovna	1905-1973
4. Gervits, Grigoriy Yakovevich	1904-1971
5. Sokolyanskiy, Lev Abramovich	1898-1981
6. Nebrat, Mikhail Iosifovich	1906-1982
7. Nebrat, Rakhil Yakovlevna	

Second Row:

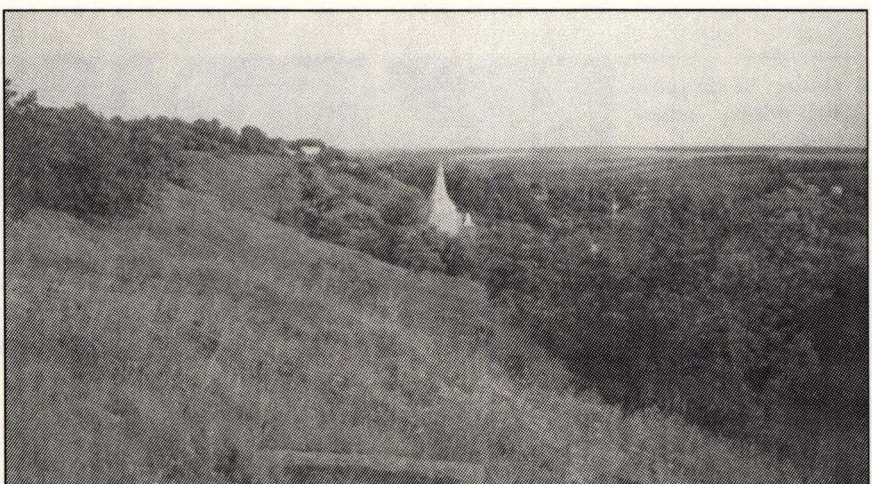
1. Zeyger, Lev Khaimovich	1903-1970
2. *unreadable*	
3. *unreadable*	
4. Tkach, Klara Moyseevna	1896-1970
5. Tsiperman, Charna Davidovna	1913-1971
6. Lapshun, Riba Davidovna	1895-1974
7. Lapshun, Isaak Davidovich	1892-1977

Third Row:

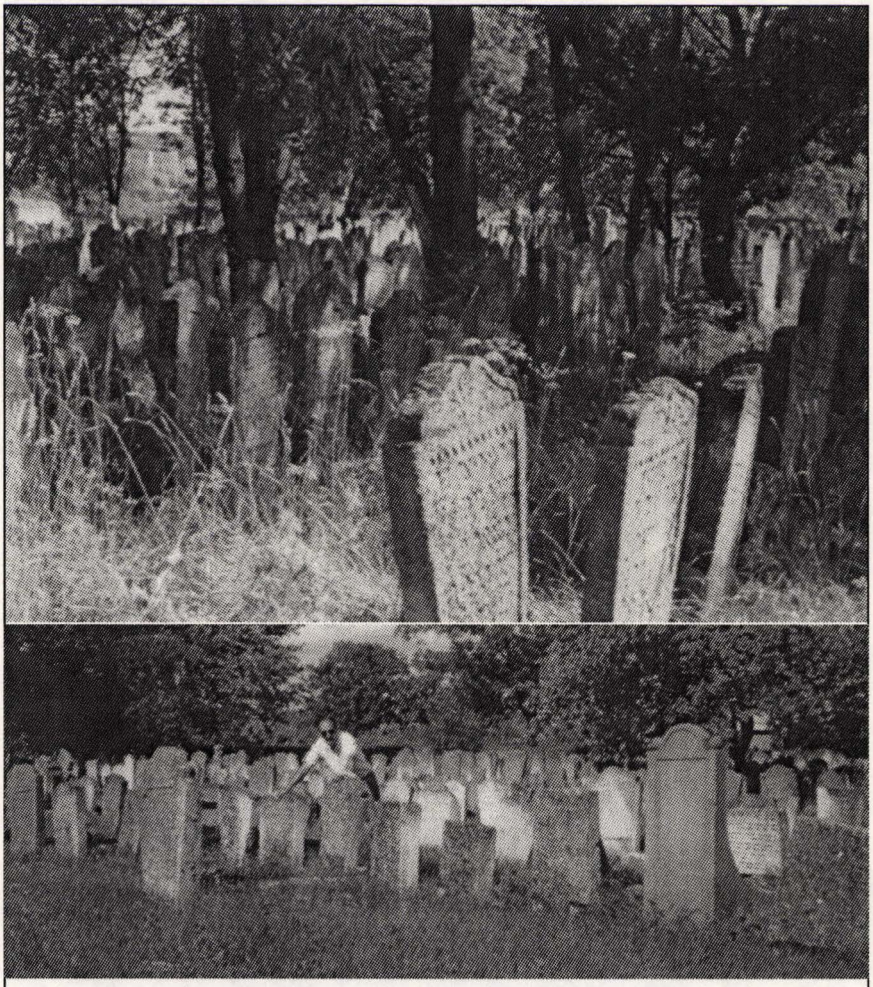
1. Falikovich, Fira Isaakovna	1903-1973

Graves in the new Volkovintsy cemetery.
These few modern post-WWII graves are all that are in this cemetery. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

Descecrated Mikhalpol Cemetery.
Inscriptions no longer exist for these graves as they have been removed from each gravestone. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

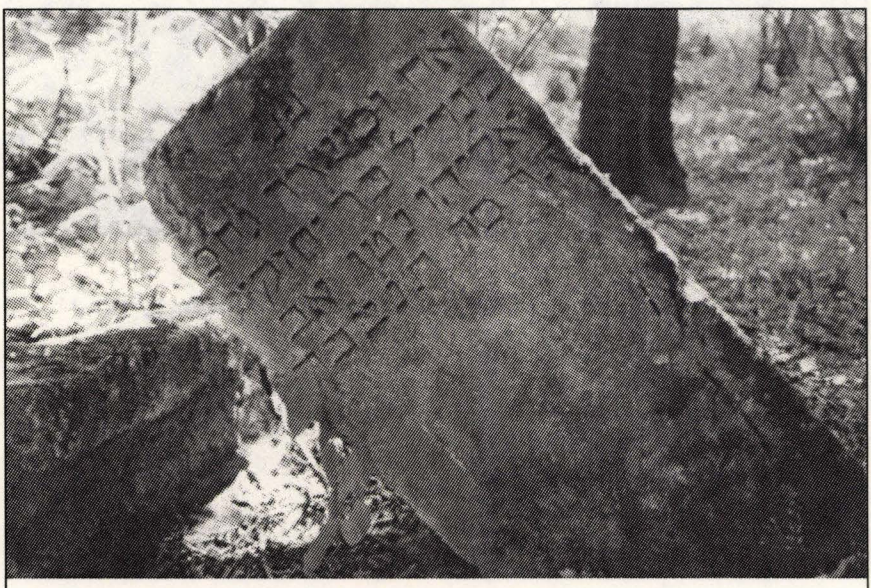


Zinkov Cemetery.
This hillside overlooking the picturesque Ushitsa River valley contains all that is left of the Zinkov Jewish cemetery. So many broken gravestones litter the hillside that nothing but grass grows on it. Notice the broken gravestone of the vaulted style in the foreground. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.



Derazhnia Cemetery.
One of the best preserved cemeteries in Letichev District. Photos by David Chapin, 1995.

Jewish Cemetery at Staro Zakrevsky Meidan.
Most of the stones were eroded and toppled. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.



Jewish Cemetery at Staro Zakrevsky Meidan.
One of the few gravestones that is still legible. The grave is that of Nakham Mendel son of Yekhokiel Eliahu Natan, who died in 1905. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

The Old Jewish Cemetery in Medzhibozh

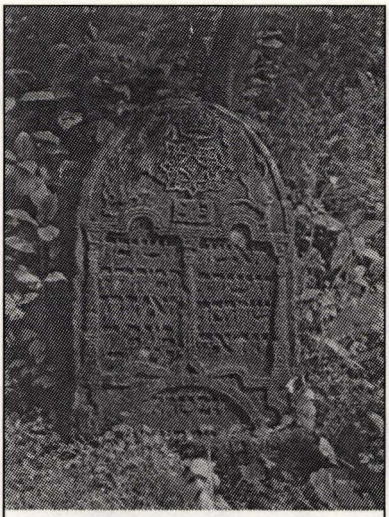
Gravestones in the old Medzhibozh Cemetery.
The four upright stones are grave nos. 19-22. Photo by Moshe Furst, 1989.

The old Jewish cemetery in Medzhibozh is perhaps the most important and best preserved Jewish cemetery in Ukraine. Not only are the grave markers of famous Jewish personalities of the 18th and 19th centuries preserved, but an important artistic legacy in tombstone art is also preserved. Because the cemetery preserves the grave of the Baal Shem Tov (Besht) and his followers, it serves as a mystical place with presumed magical powers. Abraham Rechtman, from the An-sky Expeditions, has documented two of these stories. During bad times, the old Jewish cemetery served as a protective talisman for the Jewish community. For example, it was thought that because of the protective power of the Besht's resident spirit, Petliura bypassed Medzhibozh in a string of 1919 pogroms that ended with the bloody Proskurov Pogrom. The Jews in the Medzhibozh Ghetto during Nazi occupation thought that they would be ultimately redeemed by the Besht's spirit, though this proved to be an exercise in futility. Even after WWII when virtually no Jews were left in Medzhibozh, the Ukrainian townspeople look after the cemetery in remembrance of the good deeds the Besht did for the non-Jews of the area. Today, the cemetery is an important tourist attraction, there is a local Ukrainian caretaker and a parking lot has been built near the cemetery to serve tourists.

The old Jewish cemetery is not the only Jewish cemetery in Medzhibozh. The new Jewish cemetery, a few hundred meters away, is larger and served the community from the late 1800s through WWII. Tragically, outside of Medzhibozh is the mass killing site where over 3,000 Jews were ruthlessly slaughtered and buried by the Nazis in 1942. However, only the old Jewish cemetery preserves the vibrant sense that the community and its leadership once served in the Jewish world.

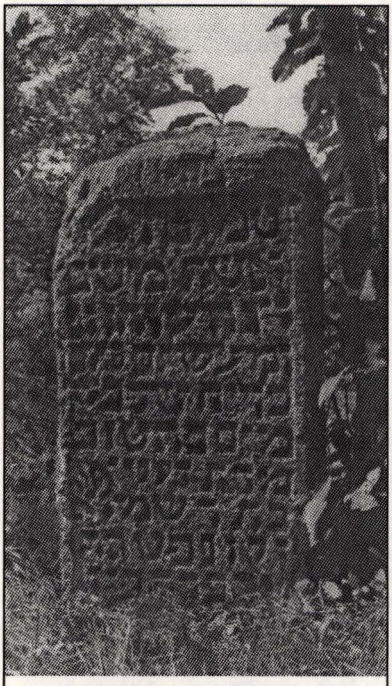
The rich artistic legacy preserved in the cemetery is impressive. Gravestones carved from the mid-1700s through the early 1800s show the flowering of Jewish culture during that era. The carvings are professional, with detailed themes on each stone. Apparently, even the lower eschelons in the community had beautifully carved designs. The designs were fanciful, symmetric, and full of optimism. Mythical characters such as unicorns and griffins are common, as are traditional Jewish artistic themes such as crowns and lions. Just by viewing these stones, one walks away with the impression that death was a celebration of life, rather than a sad event. The stones were made out of local grey sandstone, which apparently carves easily but weathers the savage Ukrainian winters poorly. It is a testament to the stone carver's work that their artistry survives today. Because they tended to use thicker stones and their carvings were deep, the stones can still be read viewed today in all their glory.

Medzhibozh gravestones 21 and 22.
No. 21 shows a double-headed eagle and storks. The sides are decorated with grapevines. No. 22 is of Eliah, son of Yekhiah Mikhal, d. 1751, showing lions. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.

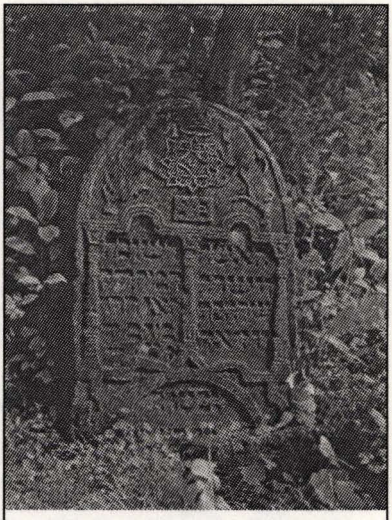


Medzhibozh gravestone.
Gravestone with lions and a crown. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.

Medzhibozh gravestone.
Grave of Adel Feiga d. 1809, daughter of Shmuel Ariah showing a crown, a unicorn and a lion. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.

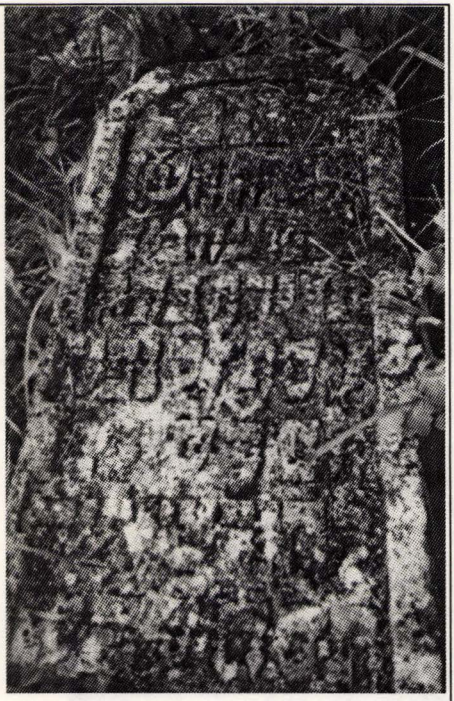


Early Medzhibozh gravestone.
The earliest style gravestone. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.



Medzhibozh gravestone.
Gravestone with unicorns and lions. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.

Medzhibozh gravestone.
Gravestone with griffins, lions, grapevines and a crown. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.



Oldest Medzhibozh gravestone.
The oldest dated gravestone in the old Jewish cemetery of Medzhibozh. This barely legible stone, no. 97, was that of Gilah, daughter of Shmuel. She died in 1555 before Medzhibozh suffered the devastating Khmelnitsky massacres. This stone is among the only evidence we have of a thriving Jewish community here prior to the massacres in the middle 1600s. Where once this stone stood upright, it is now lying flat on the ground and is threatened to be reclaimed by the soil. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

Best preserved Medzhibozh gravestones.
Four stones from the 18th century, nos. 19-21. Photo by D. Guberman, 1993.

Rabbi Israel "The Dead" of Medzhibozh

by Abraham Rechtman[37]

Not far from the Baal Shem Tov's (Besht) monument in Medzhibozh we found a tombstone from 1865[38] with the inscription:

Here Lies Rabbi Israel Mes who died while still alive

The following tale is told about this inscription: Udel, the Besht's daughter, had three children: Moish Khaim Ephraim Sudilkover, Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh, and a daughter, Feiga, the mother of Nakhman Bratzlaver.

After Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov passed in the other world, it became customary for the Jews of Medzhibozh not to name a newborn son Israel, because of the sanctity of the Besht's name. A child who was given the name Israel did not live out his years.[39]

And it came to pass that Feiga, the Besht's granddaughter, gave birth to a male child. Soon thereafter the Besht appeared before his daughter Udel in a dream and asked that the newborn child be named Israel.

But Feiga, the child's mother, refused. She did not want to risk his life. Udel, however, was determined to fulfill her father's request and on the day of the *Brith*, when the *Khazan* called out: "And his name shall be called in Israe..." Udel promptly stood up and called out: "ISRAEL" The *Khazan* repeated the name after her and so it remained, against the mother's wishes.

Three days later the child died. Poor Feiga took her dead child and brought it to her mother. She placed the child in front of Udel and said tearfully: "Mother! You are to blame for my child's death! Here's the child. Do with him as you please!"

Abraham Rechtman. As a member of the An-sky expeditions of 1912-14, Rechtman recorded many stories throughout Podolia. Here he is interviewing his grandfather in Brailov, near Vinnitsa. Courtesy of the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

Udel picked up the child and took it to the cemetery and put it down on the Besht's grave saying: "Father! You ordered me to name the child after you and now it is dead. Take him back—he's yours!" She stood there crying for a while and then returned home.

It snowed all night through. In the morning, when the undertaker went outside, he heard a baby's cry coming from the cemetery. He followed the voice until he reached the Besht's grave. There he found the crying infant.

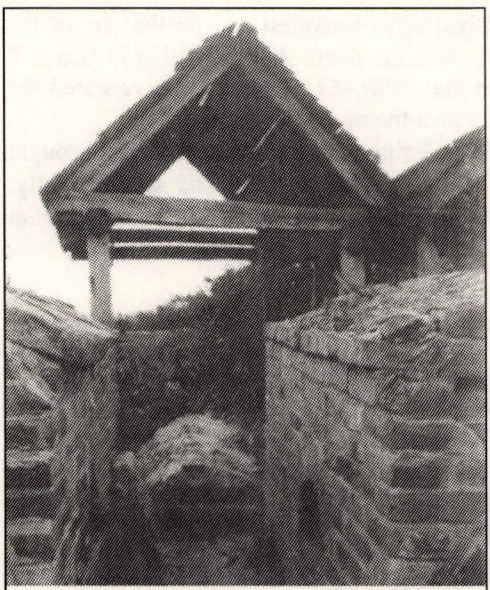
The town was in an uproar. Feiga, the child's mother came running as fast as could be and took back her child who was healthy and unharmed.

For this reason the child Israel was called "Israel Mes"—Israel "The Dead"—for the rest of his life. He lived to the age of 100 and was buried not far from his great-grandfather.

The Roof Over the Baal Shem Tov's Grave

by Abraham Rechtman[40]

In practically every little Ukrainian town, especially in the old cemeteries, one can find the grave of the *tsadik* who lived there and was buried there. On top of such holy graves, according to Rov, there were built little stone houses that are called either "mortuary," "Zion," or just plain "little house." These graves are considered very holy. They are visited very often, especially in, God forbid, times of trouble— at such times the men and women of the village converge on the grave of their *tsadik* to pray and to leave little notes in his "mortuary."



The roof over the Besht's grave.
As described by this story, the wooden roof over the Baal Shem Tov's grave was photographed by Louis Meyer in 1929. Courtesy of Peter Myers.

When the expedition came to Medzhibozh— the city in which the Baal Shem Tov had lived and worked his wonders—and we visited the old cemetery, we were astounded when we saw that on the grave of the father and creator of Chasidism, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, that on his grave

there was built no "little house" of brick or stone. There were only four poles at the sides of his grave, and over them a little roof of boards—nothing more.

Later we discovered that there was a reason for this. Old men told us that right after the death of the Besht, his students said that great care should be taken with his grave because, his students warned, the ground around the grave was holy, and the grave itself was the holy of holies, as was everthing concerning his death. Anyone who would touch or disturb his grave would be taking his life in his hands.

So it passed down to us, that several times during different periods of time, there were individuals, Chasidim, who took it upon themselves to build a "Zion" over their rebbe's grave—but every time, the people who participated in this effort, were injored right at the beginning and could not continue.

Concerning the four poles and the little roof that were somehow erected and remain standing until today, the Jews of Medzhibozh pass down this wonder story:

A carpenter, a simple craftsman, a hard worker and a devoted follower of the Baal Shem Tov, could not stand to see how the rain dripped into the grave, destroying his holy rebbe's grave. So he decided, on his own, that he would at least put up a roof, which would cover the grave a bit and protect it from the rain. And although he knew full well that some before him had already tried to do this and that their lives had been cut short, he was nevertheless not deterred. To sanctify God, he continued with zeal and compassion in his efforts to erect a protective hut over the exposed grave of his holy rebbe.

So that he wouldn't be injured right at the beginning, like all the others before him, he came up with this plan. First he would finish the whole "Zion" at home, and then when it was finished, he would bring it to the cemetery and place it over the grave of the Besht. Before the carpenter began his work, he purified and cleansed himself for a whole month by fasting every Monday and Thursday, by going to the mikvah every morning, by saying the whole book of Psalms every day and by praying with deep devotion.

When the four weeks had passed, he cleaned and washed all of his tools and dipped them in the *mikvah*. Then one fine morning, he went into the woods and with his own hands chopped down four straight trees. He cut off the branches, cleaned them on all sides, and made four square beams of the same height and brought them home. At home, he also prepared a little roof of boards. He finished whatever else he had to do to prepare the "little house" and made ready to erect the little protective hut the next morning.

At night, the Besht appeared to him in a dream and said that he shouldn't dare do it. He warned him that his life would be in great danger. The carpenter, however, was not frightened. He was prepared to give up his soul, to honor his holy rebbe, the Besht.

He arose the next morning at dawn. He took the four poles and nailed on the ready-made little roof. He painted it all and let it dry in the sun. Then he prayed with great devotion and went out to the marketplace, where he hired three

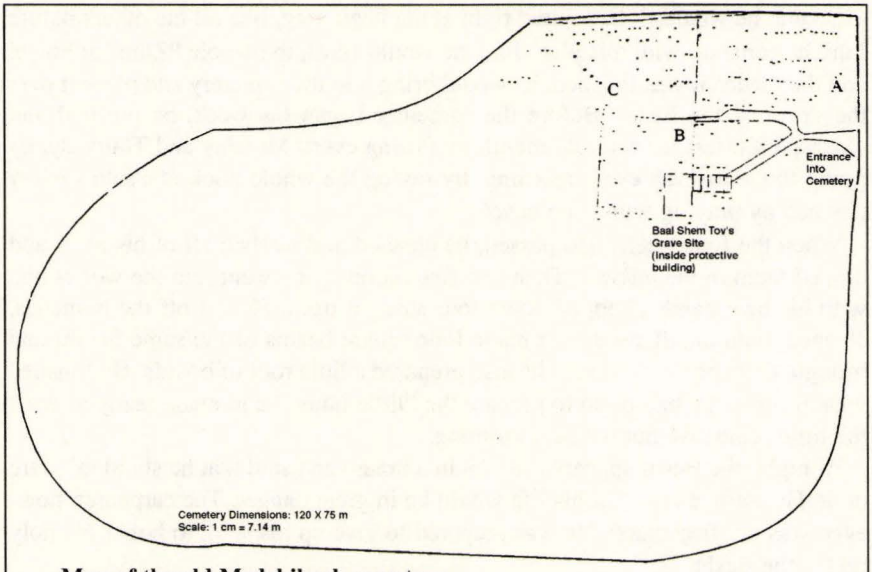
peasants. He and the peasants carried the completed little hut to the four poles at the site of the Baal Shem Tov's grave. There they quickly stuck the sharp-pointed poles into the soft earth over the grave.

When the carpenter had wiped the sweat from his face, lifted his head and saw the freashly painted roof hanging over the grave covering and protecting it, he was filled with great joy. He felt a warmth spread throughout his body. Glowing and beaming, he slowly stepped carefully backwards not taking his eyes off the Besht's grave for a minute, until he was completely outside of the fence surrounding the cemetery.

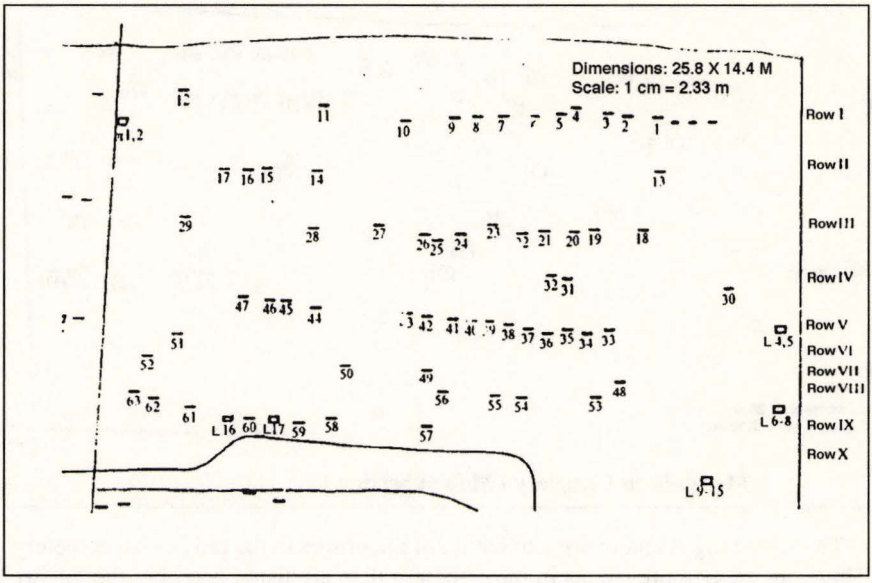
As tradition tells us, he felt a weakening in all his limbs the moment he stepped over the threshold of his house. He knew and understood what this meant. So he washed his hands and put on his shrouds and lay down on his bed. He called his wife and children over to him and with great joy announced that his end was near. He told them not to cry over him, not to mourn, and with great ecstacy began to say his confession. He turned his face to the wall and his soul departed from him in holiness and purity.

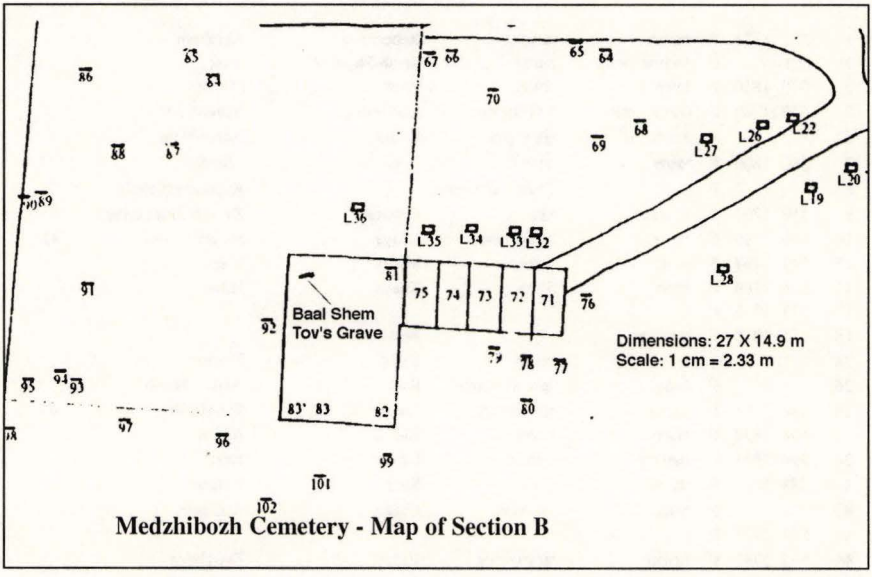
Inventory of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Medzhibozh

by I. Dvorkin[41]
St. Petersburg, Russia

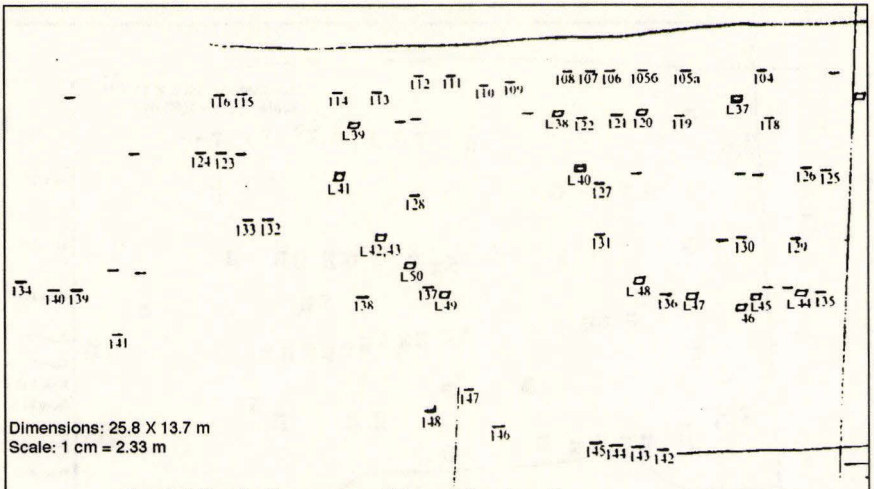


Map of the old Medzhibozh cemetery.





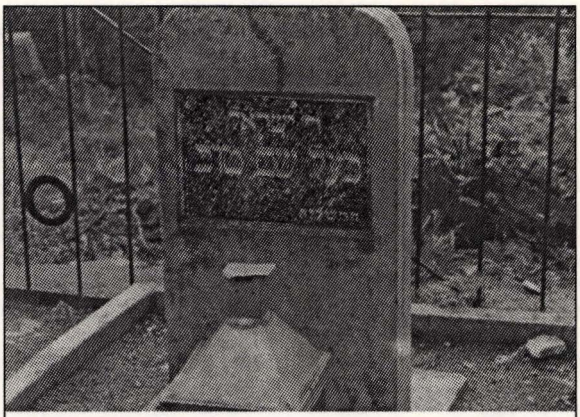
Medzhibozh Cemetery - Map of Section B



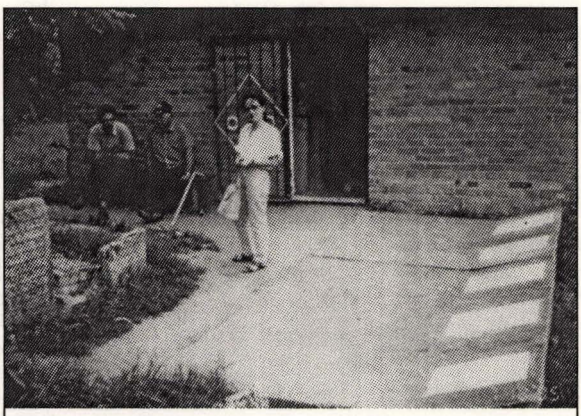
Medzhibozh Cemetery - Map of Section C

The following is an incomplete listing of the graves in the old Jewish cemetery. There are many more stones in the cemetery than are listed here, but the majority of them are crumbled or illegible.

No.	Year Heb./	Year Engl.	Sex	Name Heb.	Father's Name Heb.	Name Engl.	Father's Name Engl.	Notes
L11			M	אהרן	שמואל	Aaron	Shmuel	
1	531	1771	F	רבקה	אברהם	Rebecca	Abraham	
2	5?1		F	שרה-שיינדל	יצחק	Sarah-Shyndel	Isaac	
3	570	1810	F	פערל	מאיר	Pearl	Meyer	
5	569	1809	F	אדל-פייגא	שמואל-ארי	Edel-Feyga	Samuel-Ari	
6			F	ריסל	נחן-נטע	Reisel	Natan-Nuta	
7	560	1800	F	חעני	עזור?	Heni	Eliezer?	
8			F		(סגל) אברהם		Abraham (Segal)	
9	559	1799	F	דבורה	צבי	Devorah	Zvi (Besht's Scribe)	
10	559	1799	F	חייה	מאיר-משה	Chaya	Meyer-Moses	42
15	547	1787	F	מידל	מאניה	Midal	Manus	
16	548	1786	F	חייה	חילל	Chaya	Hillel	
17	579	1819	F					
18	576	1816	F	ברייגה		Brayna		
24			F	ביילה	משה	Beila	Moses	
26			F	עסיל	נפתלי-הירש	Esel	Naftali-Hersh	
28	548	1788	F	סומא	צבי-הירש	Soma	Zvi-Hersh	43
33	598	1838	F	חנה	אהרן	Chana	Aaron	
34	594	1834	F	דוואסי	ישראל	Devasi	Israel	
35	583	1823	F	סימי	אהרן	Simi	Aaron	
42			F	חנה	אברהם	Chana	Abraham	
43	553	1793	F					
46	548	1789	F	אסתר	צבי-הירש	Esther	Zvi-Hersh	
47	547	1787	F	פרייידא	(ליפמן) אליעזר	Freyda	Eliezer (Lipman)	
53	573	1813	M	יעקב	פייוש משולם	Jacob	Meshulem Feyvish	44
54	550	1790	F	רבקה	בנימין	Rebecca	Benjamin	
55			F	ריכל	יצחק	Richel	Isaac	



The Baal Shem Tov's Grave in 1989.
he Baal Shem Tov's grave prior to the construction of a building to protect the site. Photo by Moshe Furst.



House over the Baal Shem Tov's grave.
The building which houses the Besht's grave was built under the direction of Chasidim from Israel in 1989. The five graves to the right (nos. 71-75) are notable rabbis from the Medzhibozh area. From top to bottom they are: Rabbi Menakhem Manish Yizal; Rabbi Dov Berish haCohen Rapoport, d. 1823; Rabbi Tsvi Ariah haCohen Rapoport, d. 1840; Rabbi Meir Menachem Bick, d. 1863; Rabbi Issachar Dov Landa. Photo taken in 1995 by David Chapin.

No.	Year Heb./ Engl.		Sex	Name Heb.	Father's Name Heb.	Name Engl.	Father's Name Engl.	Notes
L18			M	מרדכי	צבי	Mordechai	Zvi	45
L23			M	יעקב	משה-ברוך	Jacob	Moses-Baruch	
L26			F	חנה	יהודא-ליב	Chana	Judah-Leib	
L27	553	1793	M	שמואל	אליקום-געצל	Samuel	Elikom-Gezel	
L28			F		יוסף		Joseph	
L29			M	משה	נחמן	Moses	Nachman	
L32	550	1790	M	אברהם	שמעון	Abraham	Shimon	
L33	567	1807	M					
L34	565	1805	M	יצחק	שלום	Isaac	Shalom	
L36	566	1806	F	שרה-חדס	אליקום	Sarah-Hadas	Elikom	
64	527	1767	M	יעקוב	משה	Jacob	Moses	
68	526	1766	M	אברהם	ישכר בעב (שפירא)	Abraham	Issachar Beer (Shfera)	
71			M	ישכר דוב (לאנדא)		Issachar Dov (Landa)		
72	623	1863	M	מאיר מנחם	שאול ישכר בעריש	Meir Manakhem	Saul Issachar Berish	46
73	600	1840	M	צבי-אריה	דוב בעריש (חכהן) (רפופארט)	Zvi-Ariah	Dov Berish (HaCohen) (Rapoport)	47
74	583	1823	M	דוב בעריש	אריה ליבוש חכהן (רפופארט)	Dov Berish	Ariah Leibish HaCohen (Rapoport)	48
75			M	מנחם מאניש יצייל		Menachem Manish Yizal		49
76			M					50
77	591	1831	M	יהודא	יצחק	Judah	Isaac	
78	608	1848	M	ישששכר	ישראל דוב	Issachar	Israel Dov	51
80			M		שמעון		Shimon	52
Next to 80			M	ישראל (בעל שם טוב)	אליעזר	Israel (Baal Shem Tov)	Eliezar	53
81			M	זאב וויולף (קיצעס)			Zev Wolf (Kitces)	54
82	585	1825	M	אברהם יהושע השל מאפטא			Abraham Joshua Heshel from Apta	55
83			M	רי ברוך ממי			R. Boruch from Medzhibozh	56
83'			M	רי משה חיים מסודי			R. Moses Chaim from Sodi	57
84	530	1770	M	צבי הירש		Zvi Hersh?		58
85	608	1848			מנצם		Minzam	
86	542	1782						
87	529	1769	M	בנימין-זאב	מאיר	Benjamin-Zev	Meir	
88	520	1760	M	מאיר	משה-יקותיאל זלמן-	Meir	Moses Yekotiel Zalman	
89	520	1760	M					
91	498	1738	M	דוד	נפתלי	David	Naphtali	
93	514	1764	M					
94			M	שמאל		Samuel		
96	571	1811	M	אפרים	ארי-יהודא ליב	Ephraim	Ari-Judah Leib	
97	315	1555	F	גילה	שמואל	Gilah	Samuel	59
98			M			Gershom Ostropoler		60
99	520	1760	M	יהושע	דוב בער (סגל)	Joshua	Dov Ber (Segal)	

No.	Year Heb./	Year Engl.	Sex	Name Heb.	Father's Name Heb.	Name Engl.	Father's Name Engl.	Notes
101			M	פנחס זעליג	אפרים	Pinchas Zelig	Ephraim Snetin	61
102	512	1752	M	נסע	יהודא-ליב קיץ	Nathan	Judah-Leib Katz	62
103			M	שלמה	ישראל	Solomon	Israel	
L40	520	1760	F					
L41			M	מאיר	יוסף-יהודא	Meir	Joseph-Judah	
104	553	1793	F	קרניץ	מאיר	Kariniyots	Meir	
106	575	1815	F		יצחק		Isaac	
107	566	1806	F	צבי	חיים	Zvi	Chaim	
108	550	1790	F	העני	יונתן (הכהן)	Heni	Jonathan (haCohen)	
109	568	1808						
110	568	1808	F	אסתר	משה	Esther	Moses	
111	574	1814	F	פעס	זאב	Pes	Zev	
112	573	1813	F	דאברישׁ	אברהם	Davrish	Abraham	
113	557	1797	F	קילא		Kilah		
114			F	יונא	אברהם	Yona	Abraham	
117	562	1802	F	שפרצו		Shpritsa		
119	568	1808	F	רחל	יוסף	Rachel	Joseph	
126	536	1776	F		יוסף		Joseph	
129	592	1821	F		שלום		Shalom	
130	528	1768	F	חענה	זאסואל	Hena	Zusual	
132			M	יקותי אל (זיסקנד)	כתריאל	Yekoti El (Ziskind)	Katriel	
139	555	1795	F	יסע-רווה	רפאל	Yeta-Rosa	Raphael	
142	523	1763	M	יוסף-אליעזר	משה	Joseph-Eliezar	Moses	
143	513	1753	M	ברוך	יהודא-ליב	Boruch	Judah-Leib	
144	511	1751	M	יהודא	גרשון	Judah	Gershon	
145	511	1751	M	אליה	יחיאל-מיכל	Eliya	Yechiel-Michal	
146	511	1751	M	יצחק	יהודא-ליב	Isaac	Judah-Leib	63
147			F	שרה		Sarah		
148			M	משה-יעקב	אברהם	Moses-Jacob	Abraham	64

The Baal Shem Tov's Grave today. The Baal Shem Tov's grave as it looks today. The dark stains on the stone are due to candlewax from various candles burned in memorial atop the stone. Photo by David Chapin, 1995.

Chapter Notes:

1. Anatoliy Ilyich Chayesh, *Avotaynu: The International Review of Jewish Genealogy*, vol. 9, no. 2, (Spring 1993, p. 25-27.

2. Provided by Anatoli Ilyich Chayesh, pers. comm. from the Russian State Historical Archives, fond 821, record 8, document 1. Translated by Vladimir Goykher. Variations from an alternate list of the same names by Genreich Deych are footnoted—Deych, Genreich, 1992, *Archivnii Materiali Po Istorii i Genealogii Evreev b Rossii:* New York, p. 175.

3. Listed at "all affirmed in 1850," by Deych.

4. Listed as 15 rubles, by Deych.

5. Listed as Nusin Burakovski, by Deych.

6. Listed as Yankel Manevich, by Deych.

7. Listed as Srul Roitman, by Deych.

8. Listed as "all affirmed in 1852," by Deych.

9. Deych omits the name Rapoport.

10. Listed as Leyba Vinover, by Deych.

11. Listed as Khaim Bronkman, by Deych.

12. This item is only found in Deych's list. Probably the town of Markovtsy.

13. Listed as Leyba Yazin, by Deych.

14. According to Deych's list, only the Rabbi gets 18 rubles.

15. Listed as "all affirmed in 1847," by Deych.

16. Listed as "all affirmed in 1842," by Deych.

17. Listed as Abram Kaganovitsky, by Deych.

18. Listed as Shulim Lenerman, by Deych.

19. Listed as Leyzer Reyzelman, by Deych.

20. Listed as Gershko Ridelman, by Deych.

21. Interview with Dora Zichroni, 1994, by Asher Fischman and Sara Tarsish. Also, according to Rabbi Moishe Bick (interviewed by Michael Gerver), there were 14 synagogues in Medzhibozh when he emigrated in 1925. Two of them, his father's and one other one, were *nusach Ashkenaz*, while the rest were *nusach Sephard* (used by Ashkenazic Chasidim).

22. Ibid.

23. Maria and Kazmierz Piechotka, *Wooden Synagogues*, Arkady Publishers, Warsaw, 1959, p. 202.

24. Types of synagogues are defined by Z. Yargina, 1993, *Wooden Synagogues*, Masterpieces of Jewish Art, Image Publishing, Jerusalem, p. 26. Plans of the Mikhalpol Synagogue from George Loukomsky, 1947, Jewish Art in European Syangogues, London-New York-Melbourne-Sidney-Capetown, p. 203; and G.G. Pavluski, "*Starinnie dierievanne synagogi v malorussii*," in Igor Grabar, 1910, *Istoriya russkogo iskustva*, t. II, Moscow, p. 377-382.

25. Interview with Semyon Gluzman, a former Zinkov resident,, July 20, 1998.

26. *HaMelits,* 10 (22) October, 1883, column 1239: "Zinkov, Podolia, 11 Tishre".

27. Sources for this article include: (a) *HaMelits,* 10 (22) October, 1883, column 1239: "Zinkov, Podolia, 11 Tishre", article by Abraham Berg, translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg; (b) *Russki Evrei,* Oct. 1883, columns 12-13, "Catastrophe in Synagogue"; (c) *Elisavetgradskii Vestnik,* No. 112, 12 Oct. 1883, "The catastrophe in a

synagogue in the borough of Zinkov"; (d) *Elisavetgradskii Vestnik,* No. 112, 14 Oct. 1883, "The catastrophe in the synagogue"; (e) *Pinkas Zinkov* (Zinkov Memorial Book), Israel, 1966—several references to the fire.

28. *Pinkas Zinkov* (Zinkov Memorial Book), Tel Aviv, 1966, p. 58-59. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

29. "Jacob's Eye": A simple book about Jewish law.

30. *Pinkas Zinkov* (Zinkov Memorial Book), Tel Aviv, 1966, p. 60-63. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

31. Approximately 350 feet or 100 meters.

32. *HaMelits*, 26 Oct (7 Nov) 1884, by Mendel Kesel from Staro-Konstantinov. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

33. *HaMelits*, 10 (28) Nov 1884, by Mendel Kesel from Staro Konstantinov. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

34. Excerpted from Chayesh, Anatoli, "Jews of Podolia and the Fight for the Right of Public Divine-Service", in Dymshitz, V., ed., 1994, *The History of the Jews in the Ukraine and Byelorussia, Expeditions, Monuments, and Finds:* Petersburg Jewish University History and Ethnography Series No. 2, p. 135-151. Translated from Russian by Vladimir Goykher.

35. At the Staro Meidan Jewish cemetery, there were only 46 visible stones of which perhaps only 6 had readable Hebrew on them.

36. Interview with Semyon Gluzman, a former Zinkov resident, July 20, 1998.

37. Rechtman, Abraham, 1958, *Yidishe etnografye un folklor* [Jewish ethnography and folklore]: YIVO, Buenos Aries, p. 123-124; translated version from Roskies, D. K. and Roskies, D. G., 1979, *The Shtetl Book*: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., p. 260-262.

38. Unfortunately, as of 1995 this tombstone can no longer be found.

39. Naming protocol, as practiced in Jewish Eastern Europe requires further explanation to better understand this story. It was common to name newborn children after the closest relative who has died. If that name was taken by another recent newborn, sometimes the parents chose a name from a more distant deceased relative. It was considered an honor to carry on the name of the deceased through a newborn. As Israel was a very common name used by other males besides the Baal Shem Tov, it must have been a great problem not to be able to name children Israel. The deceased were not being honored or remembered by this age-old tradition.

One possible explanation why this tradition came about naming children after deceased relatives was that it was dangerous to name them after living relatives. If the angel of death came to take away the older relative, he might be confused by the name and accidently take the younger innocent child instead.

40. Rechtman, Abraham, 1958, *Yidishe etnografye un folklor* [Jewish ethnography and folklore]: YIVO, Buenos Aries, p. 115-117; translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtlefaub.

41. Excerpted from "The Old Jewish Cemetery of the Town of Medzhibozh", in Dimshitz, V., ed., 1994, *The History of the Jews in the Ukraine and Byelorussia, Expeditions, Monuments, and Finds:* Petersburg Jewish University History and Ethnography Series No. 2, p. 185-213.

42. From Shargorod.

43. From Rashkov.

44. From Felshtin.

45. Possibly a descendent of the famous rabbi.

46. Leader of the Jewish court, a Bick.

47. Leader of the Jewish court, a prominant person of the community.

48. Leader of the Jewish court, a prominant person of the community, world famous.

49. Judge and student of the Besht.
50. Descendent of Rabbi Nakhman of Horodenka, a disciple of the Besht.
51. Descendent of the Besht.
52. Father of the Besht's Scribe.
53. Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (the Besht). Founder of Chasidism.
54. Disciple and companion to the Besht.
55. Founder of the Heshel Rabbinic Dynasty, which dominated Zinkov and Medzhibozh in the 1800's.
56. Gravestone is missing. Rabbi Borukh was the grandson of the Besht and leader of a prominant Chasidic group.
57. Gravestone is missing. Rabbi Moshe Khaim Ephraim of Sudilkov, the Besht's grandson and brother to Rabbi Barukh.
58. From Medzhibozh.
59. Oldest known grave in the Medzhibozh cemetery.
60. Famous Jewish folk hero and comic. Gravestone is missing.
61. Leader of the Jewish court.
62. Father was a descendent of R. Zalman Velitish Ostra.
63. From Snitkov.
64. Leader of the Jewish court in Letichev.

Derazhnia cemetery.
Photograph by David Chapin, 1995.

4

Health and Welfare in the Shtetl

by Ben Weinstock

Introduction

The Road from Letichev saw the passage of countless epidemics sweeping through Europe in the course of the last five hundred years, claiming millions of lives. Average life expectancy in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries was less than thirty years for the general population, and only slightly more for Jews.[1] This was a time when witchcraft, evil spirits, and superstitions played a prominent part of the popular understanding of how diseases spread.[2] The spread of Kabbalistic works along The Road from Letichev and into Europe became an excuse by gentiles to blame Jewish "sorcerers" for diseases and epidemics.[3] This chapter describes various diseases and other hazards which commonly afflicted the Jews along The Road from Letichev. It discusses healers, remedies and superstitions, and various institutions and aid societies that grew up along The Road from Letichev.

A valuable early health manual, *Avis peuple sur la sante,* written in 1760 by the famous Swiss physician Simon Andre Tissot, was translated into German as *Moda Lebina* in 1789, and then into Hebrew as *Refuat Haam* in 1794, by the *maskil* Mendel Lefin of Satanov. Lefin's work was sponsored by the Czartoryskis of Medzhibozh.[4] This highly progressive work emphasized the establishment of appropriate public health guidelines, the training of local paramedics, and, among other recommendations, the transformation of hospitals into places for

healing instead of places of dying.[5] Unfortunately, Lefin's translations probably reached very few of the Jews of Podolia as the printing presses were under the tight control of the Chasidim, who refused to print copies of any book written by the anti-Chasidic Lefin. The folk beliefs became fodder for satire by *maskilim* in the nineteeth century.[6]

This ignorance, combined with the lack of sanitation and poor nutrition,[7] quickly led to early and additional cases of morbidity and mortality whenever the populace had to endure changes in their socioeconomic status--as in the times of wars, pogroms or climatic changes, such as droughts.[8] Food spoilage was a constant problem (especially in the warm weather) as food was stored in dug outs or cellars usually without the benefits of ice.[9] There were also widely accepted beliefs by enlightened people which we look upon today as being ludicrous; for example, the idea that marrying early prevented the loss of physical strength as one aged[10] and children with measles should be kept in a dark room to prevent blindness.[11] Writers of contemporary Russian business directories attempted to provide people with basic medical knowledge; however, it is unlikely that this information became widely distributed in the small backward towns of Podolia. It should also be noted that the diseases of "overcrowding" did not only affect the Jewish population. Outbreaks also occured in military barracks.[12] The overcrowding of the Jews in Derazhnia in the 1920s led to the observation that approximately 60% of the Jewish schoolchildren were sick, worse than 30-40% of the Ukrainian schoolchildren.[13]

What follows is a nonexhaustive discussion of the types of disorders that plagued the Jews of the Letichev District over the past several centuries:

EPIDEMICS, DISEASES, AND OTHER CAUSES OF DEATH OR DISABILITY

Bubonic plague: Bubonic plague is a bacterial disease which occurs as an internal parasite of rodents, spread primarily by fleas.[14] Infected patients suffer from numerous symptoms such as hallucinations, severe headaches, and vomiting. Death from heart failure usually occurs within five days.

The Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 appears to have been the springboard for the spread of the bacteria due to movements of soldiers and civilians into crowded quarters. The plague was first noted in Moldavia in March of 1770. General Count Peter Rumiantsev, headquartered in Letichev in 1770, gathered intelligence reports not only on troop movements and the progress of the war, but also on the spread of the plague. Because the plague was spread by rats and fleas which took refuge in raw textiles and in grain shipments, major towns along popular trade routes were quickly devastated by the disease. As mass death spread across Moldavia, Poland, and Russia, Jewish merchants were suspected of

spreading the plague due to their involvement in the rag and cloth trades. Some folk healers were exiled or killed by local peasants in different areas of the Ukraine due to their failure to ward off the "spirits" that caused the disease. Medzhibozh was hit by the plague by May. Hundreds of Jews quickly died, especially in in the larger, more crowded towns (including Bar, Vinnitsa, and Brailov). It was not until strict public health measures were enforced that the plague abated. In total, there were hundreds of thousands of people who died in Poland during the plague years.[15]

Cholera: The first major cholera epidemic broke out in 1830. Characterized by anxiety, violent diarrhea, and intense muscular seizures, the cholera was usually spread via fecally-contaminated water. Sweeping across Russia from Asia, cholera hit Podolia in November of 1830. It lasted approximately nine months. Over two hundred and fifty thousand people died in Russia during this major epidemic; Jews were particularly hard hit due to overcrowding in their *shtetlach.* Moreover, it was noted that unlike the enlightened Jews of Western Europe who obeyed government recommendations concerning quarantines and other public health measures, the backward Jews of the Ukraine were non-compliant with the governmental health recommendations. "The Jewish community drew in upon itself, hid its troubles from the world, and died of the cholera in terrible profusion."[16] Hundreds of Jews died in each of the major towns of Podolia. In addition to the tragedies of losing loved ones in these epidemics, many Jews were also forced to deal with Russian bureaucracrats who excus the deceased person's poll tax of 3 rubles and 30 kopeks only upon proper documentation from the local police.[17]

The report of the "First Conference of Doctors from Podolia Province", held in Kamenets-Podolsky, February 15-24, 1895, provides us with an overview of the effects of cholera epidemics of Podolia. Doctor Tanevski of Medzhibozh represented the Letichev District at the conference. Cholera epidemics were noted to be especially deadly in the Letichev District during the years 1830-1831, 1847-1848, 1853, 1855 (brought from Kherson Province), 1865-1866, 1871-1872 (during this epidemic 81% of those diagnosed in the Letichev District died), 1893, and 1894.[18] It is possible that the railroads, built in the 1860s and 1870s, helped to spread the disease throughout the Ukraine and to other parts of the Russian Empire.[19] After 1904 money was allocated by the Ministry of Finances for the paving of the muddy roads of the District of Letichev in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease.[20] Outbreaks of cholera claimed many victims during the years of political upheaval (1914-1921).

Lice and typhus: Lice infestation was an ever-present problem. It was not uncommon for children to develop such severe cases of head lice that their scalps became covered with helmet-like scabs. Salves made from quicksilver, and rinses with kerosene or vinegar, did little to control the scourge of *plica polonicas,* matted hair in which vermin is embedded.[21] Spread by human body lice and

characterized by progressive neurologic involvement, severe typhus epidemics occured during times of social and economic change in which people were forced to live in crowded, unhygienic quarters as refugees. Tens of thousands died in the Ukraine from 1917-1921. Although the literature is scarce on this subject, probably the epidemics following the seventeenth-century Khmelnitsky massacres were due to typhus.

Typhoid: Typhoid is caused by bacterial colonization in food or water supplies; as with the other diseases, the overcrowding and poor sanitation of the Jewish towns facilitated outbreaks.

Tuberculosis: It was noted that Jewish craftsmen and tailors were prone to tuberculosis (and other chronic respiratory diseases) probably due to overcrowding in their shops.[22] Unfortunately, Jews in Tsarist Russia who had tuberculosis were barred from health resorts. This led to an artificial concentration of cases of TB in the *shtetlach* of the Pale (usually fatal), as compared to other ethnic groups.[23]

Dysentery: Characterized by bloody diarrhea and caused by a variety of organisims which attach themselves to the food supply, dysentery was avoided by abstaining from eating excessive amounts of fruits and vegetables in the summer months, especially during July.[24] It was a particularly common childhood disease that could be fatal to the very young due to dehydration. Parents particularly dreaded the summer of the first and second years of life for their babies. It was often during this time that dysentery fatalities would strike.[25]

Malaria: Malaria and other types of insect-caused fevers were widespread in and around Letichev due to the local swamps. Numerous cases occurred from April until January.[26] Popular remedies for fevers (in fact, for just about every ailment) was a large daily dose of castor oil, and quinine.[27]

Worms: Tapeworms, some as long as six inches, resided in many Jews of the *shtetlach*. A common belief was that worms could be eradicated, especially in children, by having them eat large amounts of cabbage. At times children had to be bribed to eat, so the cabbage would be mixed with relish or other delicacies.[28]

Wounds: In an age without antibiotics, even small wounds resulted in death if left untreated. A variety of agents were applied to wounds to promote healing by creating a barrier, preventing infection, and decreasing excessive scar formation. A box of spider webs were usually kept in one's house for the time when one needed covering of an open wound. Boils would be treated with warm applications of *honik-teigel* (honey-dough), which consisted of dough kneaded with honey and oil. The heat would gently weaken the boil; when it opened, it would

be "sealed" by the dough. An alternative paste would be made by mixing soap, oil, and raisins. In emergency situations, soft bread mixed with water and salt would be used. Small boils were treated with lead-based *Yakhne* plaster (the term derived from the Greek word for lead, *deakhilin*). Large boils were dried out with the application of heated flax seeds, wrapped in cloth. Non-healing wounds with scabs would be treated with applications of alum, which would burn away the scabs. Deep, chronic, draining wounds were treated with the insertion of a braided wick deep into the wound to help draw out fluids. As the wound healed from within and the depth of the wound decreased, treatment would then shift towards the application of superficial wound coverings, such as the above mentioned doughs or pastes. It was not uncommon for botanical remedies to be utilized as well in wound care.[29]

Fungal diseases: The variety of grains grown in the Ukraine were prone to fungal infestations. Grain stored in damp enclosures easily led to cases of fungal growth. These fungi, if ingested, caused compromise of the cardiorespiratory system, paralysis, vomiting, confusion, and many other reactions, including hallucinations.[30] It is possible that "mystics" who claimed to have had "visions" and exhibited bizarre behaviors were in fact suffering from fungal poisoning.[31]

Disorders of the eye: By 1900 a specialized eye clinic accepted patients in the town of Pikov in Vinnitsa District. Approximately one-third of the patients seen were Jews from many parts of Podolia Province. Disease of the eyelid, cornea, and iris were the most commonly diagnosed disorders. Forty percent of the patients with conjunctivitis were Jewish. The facility was run by one doctor, a medical student, and a nurse, and had enough space for 108 patients.[32]

Headaches: Many poor Jews suffered from headaches, usually due to hunger. On the Sabbath headaches were due to excessive smoke inhalation, as chimneys were stuffed to keep Sabbath foods, such as cholent, warm. Treatments consisted of applying cold slices of potatoes, or pieces of ice, to the head, to be tied down with a big kerchief. Pharmacists of Podolia prepared plasters made from a local types of fireflies nicknamed "Spanish flies" for headaches. Interestingly, an alcohol-based preparation of these insects was used as a hair tonic.[33]

Mental disease: In the early 1800s, the only facility in Podolia for patients with mental disorders was in Kamenets-Podolsky. Like the other "madhouses" of Europe, the primary goal was to keep patients locked up so that they could not harm themselves or others. Treatments were harsh. Kept in chains, patients were lashed when they became unruly. By the 1860s these practices were abolished. Bloodletting was the only therapeutic option. By the early 1900s other facilities were available, such as the one in Vinnitsa, which offered more advanced treatments as well as providing food and shelter. Some of the early treatments attempted to temporarily raise the patients' body temperature by

means of intra muscular injections of sulfur, bromide or other agents. Following a period of profuse sweating the patients hopefully had improved relaxation and a "clear head".[34] By the early twentieth-century some political prisoners were imprisoned in mental institutions, a practice which was continued under Soviet rule.[35] No doubt there were many unfortunate souls with a variety of mental diseases who remained in their towns and villages cared for by their families. Others begged on the streets. The mentally handicapped were sometimes labeled as being the "fools" of the town; see the description below of those chosen for "black weddings".

"Sudden mortal cases", i.e. fires, accidents, etc.: As would be expected in a rural atmosphere, there were many cases of people dying due to incidents such as drownings,[36] being gored by bulls,[37] being crushed by wagons which accidently overturned,[38] being kicked by horses,[39] or perishing in fires which could not be readily controlled. Although some fires were due to lightning, many fires occured on the Sabbath or on holidays when candles were not safely lit, or closely watched. We have the dates of only a few of these conflagrations. Large fires occured in Medzhibozh in 1826, in Letichev in 1835 (see sidebar) and again in 1836 in Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan some time in the late 1840's , in Letichev on April 9, 1854,[41] again in Letichev in 1861 (see sidebar), and Staro Zakrevsky Meidan in 1872. A small fire that burned itself out with minimal damage in the synagogue of the Baal Shem Tov was believed to have been extinguished by angels.[42] A Rabbi blessed Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan after the early large fire there, promising the colonists that no other uncontrollable fires would occur.[43] A tragedy occured in 1883 in the Zinkov synagogue when a kerosene lantern in the womens balcony fell during Kol Nidre services, causing fear of a fire and resulting in a major panic where more than 30 women were trampled to death.[44] In 1887 there were 56 fires in the District of Letichev, resulting in over 45,000 rubles worth of damage.[45]

List of 1835 Letichev Fire Victims (those people who petitioned authorities for relief):[40]

1. Nekhama Lez....
2. Khaim Kigel
3. Alter Geler
4. Aron Leib Kigel
5. Froim Efruil
6. Khaim Rozenblit
7. Eydelyima Shenkdava
8. Gudy Labirova
9. Shmerko Veitsman
10. Leizar Broytman
11. Abrashko Broytman
12. Noil Enkel Malvitch
13. Vol Kurtsman
14. Itsko Bart
15. Binyamin Shvimon Zaltsman
16. David Brind
17. Ios Malkiman
18. Sol Lkenis
19. Eyetil Meir Fefiruint
20. Vol Knut

The business of fire insurance grew in many towns, including Letichev. It was an occupation in which it was acceptable for Jews to be employed.[46]

Jews who suffered damages in a 1861 Letichev fire[47]

Jew Froim Rodnichier	Froim Bonshtrom	Aiga Shtivelman
Itsko Morgulis	Volko Verina	Alter Viltsis
Abrashko Perelmiter	Shmul Shirman	Shmul Galperin
Srul Shamis	Duvid Yankeliovich	Meer Kytsman
Srul Sonets	Giy Katsmanov	Gitya Svigal
Duvid Zudelman	Volvko Reznik	Leya Gyatmanova
Ruvim Palsh	Itsko Mokh	Khait Kuz
Moshko Bainer	Leib Nudelman	Zisla Shlachikha
Udko Chik	Leib Malamud	Shmul Galperin
Metus Khmelnitskiy	Leib Kurtsman	Motya Zilberman
Abrashko Toitur	Srul Kurtsman	Nus Roikhman
Shap Shaiovich	Gershko Kurtsman	Khaim Zildis
Abram Ber Malamud	Itsko Khait	Ios Minkhis
Leib Zusman	Gdal Volkovinek	Shmul Sheldren
Gershko Levishteyn	Khana Bor	Ios Konstanitanov
Moshko Rozentul	Moshko Shamys	Modrye Tvin
Ios Kozovyi	Avner Grimberg	Leizor Bokserboim
Volko Tokar	Volka Benderov	Udko Rozenblig
Kalman Sechan	Sheivakh Benderov	Gershko Piesko
Abrashko Zilderman	Volka Shnaiderman	Aron Shpikman
Borukh Shvartsbroit	Ios Pinis	Gershko Melamud
Abrashko Roikhman	Shmul Kupikes	Srul Liberman
Abrashko Knur	Itsko Toiberman	Srul Baitman
Itsko Voloshin	Khaim Oratovskiy	Srul Biletskiy
Moshko Lubman	Idka Lechechevoi	Udko Gerts
Yankel Shar	Alter Reipis	Rakhlis
Tsudyk Tsudychkin	Riva Shapira	Kivolich
Ekhil Gorfinkel	Mendel Kichel	Abrashko Shtivelman
Nakhman Goldshteyn	Gliy Gluzman	Nusen Bershteyn
Moshka Letel	Udko Kurtsman	Aba Mendeliovich
Ios Krys	Leib Tsidulk	Itsko Oikhbarg
Moshka Leptin	Meilakh Vakeman	Broitman

TYPES OF HEALERS

• *Yiddishe Mamas:* It would be unfair to begin this section without recognizing the women who were usually the first ones to attempt to treat sick family members: the Jewish mothers. Devoted to their families, they were the ones who tried to utilize the wide varieties of remedies described in this chapter, especially in the smaller, poorer towns, where medical help was not available.

• *Doctors:* Little is known of the early Jewish licensed medical doctors in our geographic area of study. Dr. Mojzesz Fortis was not only the physician of the Elzbieta Sieniawska (of the Sieniawski/Czartoryski family, which owned much of the land in northern Podolia), but was also her agent in many economic negotiations from 1710 to the 1720s. Although most of his time was spent in Jaroslaw and in Wroclaw, it is possible that Dr. Fortis traveled into Podolia to treat members and officials of the Sieniawskis.[48] Jewish doctors in Poland in the seventeeth

and eighteenth centuries were socially isolated, as they did not fall under the intellectual restrictions of the Orthodox rabbis and their congregations.[49]

In contrast, the Jewish doctors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were socially accepted but were faced with many governmental restrictions. Not eligible for official positions, many were forced to work at unsalaried positions (as in private practices) in the Pale of Settlement.[50] A Jewish physician named Vaintsbarg was a military doctor in Medzhibozh.[51] It was not uncommon for military doctors to accept patients from the general poulation as well; in 1885 a departing Christian military doctor named Nositsky was blessed by the leaders of Medzhibozh: Yitskhak Veys, Leyb Shvartsman, Moshe-Yitskhak Feldman, Tsvi Feldbum, L. Gleyzer, Rabbi Lev Gardshmir and his son Mordekhai. It was recorded in the Hebrew language newspaper *HaMelits* that "he was handed a letter of thanks and blessing on his good deeds for the people of the town. Never had he turned away the poor people that came to him to ask him for his advice. Rain, storm, and bad weather never stopped him from going to the sick. He never took any money from them and gave them medicines for free. Aside from the elders of the town, he was escorted by an entourage of the townspeople until he left the edge of town."[52] Replacements for doctors were rare: in 1883 the doctor of Zinkov had died, which forced Zinkovers to go 18 *versts* to Yarmolintsy if they needed professional health care even as late as 1885.[53]

The doctor of Letichev from the late 1890s until the 1930s was Dr. Solomon Gabay. Although in private practice, he was temporarily the head of the small hospital. He, like other doctors of the District, is remembered for his devotion to his patients. Edith Rappoport Wachsman recalled that "he was a wonderful doctor, even though he had little to work with. Medicine was quite primitive in those days. But he also had a good sense of humor. If you were running a fever and felt cold, he would say 'Cover yourself up with the blanket. But if you get warm, take the blanket off!' "[54] He also supported the local Zionist group.[55] In tribute to his devotion to the people of the Letichev District, a marble monument was placed on Dr. Gabay's grave. Unfortunately, it was later stolen (possibly during the war).[56]

Moshe Mikhailovich Fishman was not only the doctor of Medzhibozh, but he also served as the Crown Rabbi. Dora Zichroni fondly remembered him: "He was a personality in the town. He had a horse and buggy and went house to house to help the sick. In Medzhibozh there was a steep hill to go down to the poor section. He couldn't go down with his horse and wagon, so he would leave it up on the hill and walk down. Boys would watch the horse for him. They would play with the horse; it was a big deal. The poor people would say to Dr. Fishman, 'I have no money to pay you.' He would reply, 'Don't worry. When your husband comes back from America, he will bring a lot of money and then you will pay me.' He dedicated himself to doing good things." On another occasion, " a young man in the town, I don't remember his name, had a problem. He couldn't talk. The only thing that he could say was 'khe-be-khe, khe-be-khe'. Nobody paid attention

as to why he talked like that. I don't know if he had family or not. We children thought it was very funny and we used to chase after him. He would get angry and yell 'Khe-be-khe, khe-be-khe', but we didn't care. One day this man was on the outskirts of Medzhibozh selling apples. A few soldiers came through on horses and asked him which of the three bridges was the best way to enter the town. And he answered, 'Khe-be-khe'. The soldiers kept asking him, and he kept answering the same way. The soldiers thought that he was making fun of them, so they beat him up until he was bleeding. Luckily, one of the Ukrainian peasants passed by who knew him. The peasant picked him up and took him to Dr. Fishman. The doctor put something in to examine his throat. Believe it or not, something fell out of his throat and he started to talk just like nothing had happened. That I remember. In Medzhibozh, everything that happened was a miracle because of the Baal Shem Tov. They said that if we believed in the Baal Shem Tov, nothing bad will ever come to us."[57]

Of the "old doctor of Derazhnia"[58] it was remembered by Rose Pesotta that "he was devoted to the ideals of Hippocrates and always ready, at any hour, to aid the suffering. One winter day in my infancy I lay choking for hours and steadily becoming weaker. The old doctor was there; he had exerted all of his skill, and all available medicine, in my behalf, in vain. He knew of a certain other medicine which had been effective in such cases, but it could not be had nearer than Zhmerinka, three hours away by train...so with anxious heart dad went to Zhmerinka, and was back by daybreak. Meanwhile, the old doctor watched by my bedside through the night. The new medicine eased my tightened throat, the choking stopped, and in another day I was out of danger."[59]

It is difficult to ascertain why some people immediately went to doctors and others did not. Decisions were probably based upon economic factors, level of education, and past experiences. Dovid Slutsky noted in Zinkov in 1883 that a woman became sick, and went into a coma. Inexplicably, the doctor was not called for fourteen days. Unfortunately the patient could not be helped and died the next day.[60]

• *Feldshers (barber-surgeons):* The feldsher was a common medical practitioner in Eastern Europe,with a history going back hundreds of years. The term is derived from the German *feldscherer*, which means "military field-man with shears". The feldsher was a regular part of military groups, having the responsibility of not only cutting hair, but also of performing minor surgeries, applying leeches, bleeding, cupping, and other paremedic-like functions.[61] Within time, this profession became so widely recognized that virtually every town in Europe had some kind of a feldsher. The Jewish towns of the Letichev District were of no exception in this regard, as Letichev had two in 1896[62] and other towns had at least one. It was not uncommon for a feldsher to be called *royfe* by the local Jews (from the Hebrew word for "doctor"). Dinah Shulman Dinitz remembered such a person in Satanov: "We called him Itsileh Royfeleh because he was so short. If you had a headache, he tied a kerchief around your head. If you had a sore

throat, he would swab your throat with iodine and tell you to gargle. If you had whooping cough, he gave you an ice candy called *kundelsika.*"[63]

Sometimes the feldsher would attend school to learn this trade;[64] other times the skills would be acquired during military service. However, Moshe Garber remembered how this profession was acquired in Zinkov:

> The whole world knows that studying to become a doctor takes years and years and a world of effort and hard work. A systematic education is necessary from elementary school through university, in addition to which one must complete medical school... By us in Zinkov, the process was a lot easier and simpler. The profession of doctor was inherited. If your grandfather was a doctor, and your father was a doctor, well then, the son, as a matter of course, was also a doctor. And wonder of wonders, not only didn't they study in universities or in medical facilities, very often they had not even crossed the threshold of an elementary school.
>
> Nevertheless, they became doctors, healed the townsfolk's illnesses and wrote prescription, in Latin no less. The poor of the town believed in them and sought their help (the rich used to go to licensed doctors). We had a doctor named Moishele. I barely remember his face; it's as if I see it through a distant dream. He was a short, pock-marked man, with curly earlocks and a bald spot. He wore a black fitted hat and thick glasses. He wore boots with galoshes over them in order to walk through the mud and a woman's shawl over his shoulders in winter.
>
> Moishele the Doctor had several sons. It goes without saying that they all became doctors. I want, however, to dwell a bit on only one of them: "Shmuel, Moishe the Doctors." He was our family's doctor. He innoculated us against chicken pox, cured us of the croup and whooping cough, or at least he tried to cure us. He also pulled our teeth when the pain became unbearable.
>
> I had very bad tonsils. We also called them "plums". Every winter, they would become infected and swollen. Shmuel, Moishe the Doctor's would come to our house every day and make steam from a small vaporizer, swab my throat with iodine and glycerine, and tell me to wrap my throat with a grease-smeared sock.
>
> I really liked him, and when I grew up, we became good friends. But Shmuel was not only a doctor. He was also a barber, and an apothecary as well. He had a small pharmacy and his wife, Miriam Freyda Ronye's, was his assistant pharmacist. When one opened the door to his house, a little bell rang, and across from the entrance hung the Tsar's portrait. When a peasant would come to his house and hear the sound of the bell and see the Tsar's picture, out of respect, he would remove his hat and in a quiet, humble voice make his request.

Let's pay a visit to Moishe's barber shop on a Friday. Outside under the eaves, a long pole stuck out, from which there hung a round, red, plate. At the entrance there was a sign, on which there was a man sitting in a chair with a white sheet draped around him. Behind him stood the barber with scissors in his hand. Both of them, the man and the barber, were equally stiff, with thick , stiff hair on their heads and large, curled mustaches. Above them was Russian inscription , "French Barber--A Salon for Cutting and Shaving." Just that, no more, no less. Now let's go in and see what's going on inside this "Salon." Several people are already sitting and waiting, but Shmuel is not there yet. Influenza has been going around the town, and Shmuel can only do so much . In the meantime, his assistant is doing whatever he can. I think that this was either one of Mordkhe Bukis' sons or Shmuel Stoller's son. Soon Shmuel runs in bustling, panting. He quickly takes out of his pockets quite a lot of ten and forty kopek pieces and turns them over to his wife, Miriam. Besides us, a male peasant and female peasant are waiting. He take them into the kitchen and immediately diagnoses their ailments, and before I have time to look around, the female peasant is already lying down with a great number cups on her back, and the male peasant is sitting with a host of leeches on his back. The leeches are contentedly sucking his blood.

Once he's finished his doctorly duties, he takes up cutting hair and shaving. As he's working, he talks and talks and jokes and tells all kinds of stories. Every time that too much soap has collected on his razor, he wipes it off with his finger and flings it onto the wall near him. The soap, which has collected on the wall all this time, dries up and resembles a geographic model of the Himalayas in Asia.

While doing this, Shmuel remembers that he needs a prescription for a sick patient and since he is very busy, he calls his assistant, who is sweating over the stove in the kitchen, and he says to her: "Miriam, darling, please make up this mixture for me." And he begins to explain the ingredients to her, what and how much. All this is done aloud, so that everyone should hear it and it should make the appropriate impression. Everything is in Latin, for example: "*Atsidum Salitsilicum,*" "*Atsidum Tsenzaicum,*" or something else that sounds very, very mysterious and scholarly. In the medical profession, when one is making a medicine and a certain amount of water is needed, distilled water is used. In Latin, this is called "*Acva Distilatum.*" But Shmuel doesn't believe in such foolishness as distilled water. So he tells it to Miriam like this: "Have you weighed everything already? Now mix it all up and add six ounces of "*Acva Dishkalyas.*" In plain Yiddish, this means the water from the kneading trough.

More than anything else, Shmuel etched himself into my memory during the time that the terrible typhus epidemic raged in Zinkov in 1919. It took hundreds of lives. My father, may he ascend in peace, died then, and I myself

hovered between life and death. It was only by a miracle that I remained alive. The whole time, Shmuel watched over me like a devoted brother. The young people in town at that time organized a charitable system, whereby every one of them spent the night with a sick person at least one night a week. There were homes in which the whole family lay ill, and there wasn't even anyone to give them a bit of water to drink, and Shmuel worked indefatigably, day and night. He ran from house to house and did everything he could possibly do. He didn't eat meals at the right time. He didn't sleep. Pale and exhausted, he could barely stand on his feet. How he himself didn't contract that terrible illness is a puzzle to me to this day, unless God Himself protected him.

Dora Nesler, 1929.
Dora is seated in the middle. She returned to Letichev from New York to give birth to her baby. Courtesy of Doug Seidman.

This is how Shmuel, Moishe the Doctor's, in his own way, served the poor population of our old town, which is no more. Honor to your memory, Doctor Shmuel![65]

The local healers of Derazhnia also treated a wide range of conditions. Their repertoire of modalities usually included "a plentiful dose of castor oil as a prophylactic measure, and then utilized one or more of the other medical items in their kits—mint drop or *valerian-oviya kaplee* (spirits of ammonia) on a lump of sugar, placed on the tongue; a wad of cotton dipped in medicated alcohol; a bandage of clean gauze" and a variety of salves and disinfectants. When it was decided that the patient required the applicaton of cups or leeches, the "specialist", Israel the barber, was called. Encouraging the patients to rest, to eat well, and to keep their injuries as clean as possible, the local healers often met with successful outcomes. It was not uncommon for them to be paid with gifts of eggs, apples, or other types of farm products.[66]

• *Midwives:* The death of either the child or the mother, or both, during childbirth was a common scenario in the shtetl. However, some women were so confident in the childbearing process in the shtetl that they returned to their towns to deliver even after coming to America. Dora Nesler of Letichev arrived in New York in 1900 with her two children. She returned to Letichev in 1902 to give birth to her third child, Lena, in the home of her parents.[67] This may have been due to her confidence in the local midwife, Sarah Gershenzwit Pulier.

Born in Kamenets-Podolsky, Sarah Gershenzwit attended the Kharkov Midwife Institute which was part of the Kharkov Medical School. After completing the two year course, she became a certified midwife; this enabled her to practice independently in and out of the Pale of Settlement. She came to Letichev in the late 1890s, where she married Samuel Pulier, raised a family, and practiced midwifery for over twenty years. It was not uncommon for her to leave town to attend to the births of local landowners.[68] In towns which did not have midwives, women in labor were helped by older women who were knowledgeable about childbirth. Once the baby was born it would be wrapped in swaddling clothes with its arms and legs bound close to the body, as this was believed to prevent spinal deformities.[69]

Sarah Gershenzwit Pulier, 1921.
Sarah was a trained midwife who lived in Letichev. Courtesy of Suzanne Pulier.

If a baby was born premature, it was touch and go whether it would survive. Elizabeth Zimmerman Weinreb was born two months premature on a cold March day in Letichev. Her grandmother, Chana Giller Singer made a small box for the infant and lined it with goose-down so that only the face was exposed. She then placed the box in the warmer alcove of the stove. The infant was kept like this for several weeks and survived. It was considered a miracle, considering the poor chances of survival that premature infants had in the shtetl. Elizabeth Zimmerman Weinreb, though sickly all her life, lived to be 77 years old.[70]

Statistics compiled in the 1860s showed that Jews in Podolia had, on the average, one illegitimate birth for every 619 legitimate, whereas Slavs had one for every 50 legitimate. There was one death per 8.1 births among Slavs, and one death per 10.5 births among Jews. A reason given for the difference in fatalities is that pregnant Jewish women had better overall health during their pregnancies, as they generally did less work during the second half of their pregnancies as compared to their Slavic counterparts, who worked in the fields or in factories almost until the day of their giving birth. The statisticians noted, however, that almost fifty percent of deaths in Podolia were those of children between the ages of one to five years.[71] It has been theorized that one of the reasons for the explosive population growth among the Jews of Podolia in the seventeenth to

nineteenth centuries was due to the fact that Jewish children had a better chance of surviving into their early reproductive years than their gentile counterparts. Many weddings took place when the bride and groom were barely more than thirteen years old; this, combined with the fact that many of these matches resulted in very large families, resulted in a large population growth.[72]

Dora Zichroni, born in Medzhibozh, recalled a popular story about a woman who was having a difficult labor: "A man came to the Baal Shem Tov and he said, 'Rebbe, help me, my wife is in labor and she has been suffering more than a day now. She cannot have the baby. The midwife has sent me to you. 'The Baal Shem Tov said, 'Bring your wife here.' When she came in, the Baal Shem Tov gave her his big walking stick and told her to walk back and forth repeatedly. He then sent her back to the midwife, and she had the baby right away."[73] It is possible that this remedy was passed down to the Baal Shem Tov from his mother, who was a midwife.[74]

• *Dentists:*Nineteenth century dentists competed with many others in the care of teeth: feldshers, doctors, midwives, and sometimes with folk-healers as well.[75] The state of dental health was evidently very poor, as the formation of black, hornlike projections on rye due to fungal growth was nicknamed *babii zub* -- woman's tooth.[76] Another folk reference to dental care comes from a Chasidic tale, in which Apter Rebbe mentions the use of straw for cleansing one's teeth after a large meal.[77]

• *Oculists:* Unfortunately, little is known about this type of practitioner. Some travelled from town to town selling "cures" for blindness at exorbitant prices . However, some were actually very skilled; they performed successful surgeries and provided corrective lenses.[78] The title of "oculist" is among the Jewish professions of Medzhibozh in 1758.[79]

• *Folk healers:* The term "folk healer" in this discussion refers to those individuals who "healed" by means of prayers, "spells", amulets and charms. In the seventeenth and eighteen centuries, they were often generically called *baal shem* (Master of the Name). There were many such folk healers in the Letichev District.The most famous of these, Rabbi Israel ben Eliezar—the Baal Shem Tov (the Master of the Good Name), earned his reputation as a healer by means of prayers, amulets, and other forms of folk medicine. The true meaning of "the Master of the Good Name" is not in the context that he possessed a "good reputation"; rather, it referred to his ability to act as a channel between men and God, calling upon God's power to heal by using the proper Kabbalistic combinations of names and words. A legend concerning the Baal Shem Tov's ability to prepare amulets placed the actual power on the phrase "Israel, son of Sarah, Ba'al Shem Tov."[80] The spiritual and kabbalistic remedies of the Besht[810] were attractions to the masses. However, contemporary reports by anti-Chasids

depict him as a charlatan, "an empty cistern, without a drop of learning in him....the common people, easily swayed by such empty words, came in large numbers to seek cures from him, but found only deception. Yet, the number of his disciples grew. [He and his close associates] perceived that with the power they held by virtue of the people's faith in them, it was possible for them to do a great deal for their own personal good as well as for the general welfare. So they wanted to enlighten the people with their knowledge as well as to hold sway over them with the power of that knowledge."[82]

The stories of his cures, although shrouded in ambiguity and recorded years after his death in the book *Shivhei haBesht,* tend to follow a common pattern: medical doctors are portrayed as being ignoramuses, and their treatments as being ineffective; the Besht utilized his abilities to see catastrophic events not only at a great distance, but also at times, before they occurred; or, the sick individuals were healed by the magic of the Besht if they believed in him and were not sinful. For example:

> There was a sick man whom a great Jewish doctor could not cure, and the sick person could no longer speak. The Besht came to that place, and they called upon him to see the sick man. The Besht told them to cook meat soup for the sick person and that then he would start talking immediately. They gave him soup to eat and the Besht treated him until he recovered.
>
> The doctor asked the Besht how he cured him: "I know that his veins were bad, and it is impossible to provide any remedy for such veins."
>
> The Besht said to him:"You approached the sick man corporeally and I approached him spiritually. A man has 248 members in his body and 365 veins. Corresponding to them are 248 positive and 365 negative commandments. If a man commits one crime, God forbid, the corresponding member or vein becomes ill. If he does not observe many negative commandments, many veins become ill. The blood no longer flows in them and the person is in danger. I urged the soul to accept repentence and it did so. In this way all his members and veins were repaired and I could cure him.[83]

Several folk healers were encountered by the members of the An-sky expedition to Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia Provinces in 1912-1914. Folklorist Abraham Rechtman remembered that "a woman of Letichev, named Genendl, was known throughout the region for her charm amulets ...she was very old, being barely able to stand. She belonged to a respected family of rabbis and righteous men, so she did what she did for charity." Rechtman pretended to be sick and the woman was summoned to come to his aid. Genendl promptly ordered all guests out and proceeded to fill the room with incense. She then produced a penknife, which she passed over the incense and then placed it under Rechtman's pillow. As Rechtman later commented, "To this day I still cannot imagine how I managed to endure the whole procedure--it went on and on forever." Alternating between washing her hands seven times, breaking boxes, pulling her patient's hair and

wiping his forehead, she finally pulled a penknife from under the pillow and cut the fingernails on Rechtman's left hand. The pieces of nail were inserted into a piece of bread. Rechtman was ordered to "feed this to a male black dog (not a bitch--that would only help women!). This ceremony of cutting the nails with this penknife, putting it in bread and giving it to a black dog was to be repeated three consecutive days."

Another elderly folk healer in Letichev was Reb Zalman Shlomovitz. He possessed an ancient manuscript, consisting of a hundred and twenty pages, entitled The Book of Solomon's Wisdom. Each page had a drawing of an evil demon, the type of trouble caused by the demon, and a listing of the types of amulets and/or incantations used to either summon its appearance or to send it away. Rechtman said that "it is interesting to note that several of the spirits and demons look innocous, kind , and even have a loving smile. But the majority of them are drawn with angry faces, wild eyes, and hairy paws which are ready to tear one apart." Reb Zalman claimed that the manuscript had been passed down from each succeeding generation from King Solomon, from father to son, until he received it from his father. Furthermore, Reb Zalman offered proof that this was so, as the family name of Shlomovitz meant "of Solomon". In Derazhnia a similar type of manuscript was seen in the house of the Talmud teacher Rabbi Yisrael Shreibman. There were incantations to protect oneself from a wide variety of illnesses, demons, and stressful events. For example, one could prevent a dog bite by saying, " Dog, dog, I am the son of Jacob. You are Esau's dog. If you bite me, foxes will tear you apart. "[84]

Many gentiles also believed in the healing powers of the Jewish folkhealers. In Derazhnia An-sky met "an elderly peasant who was employed as a *shul goy*[85] for thirty-odd years and even lived in a room adjacent to the synagogue. Not only did he speak a good Yiddish but also told me many Chasidic tales about tsadikim in whom he had absolute faith. He referred to the Besht as 'the saintly Baal Shem' and was proud of the fact that the Besht's wagon driver was a peasant named Alexei."[86] The members of the expedition encountered an elderly peasant, who exclaimed that "The rabbis of yesteryear were not like the rabbis of today." With these words, the old peasant began his story, shaking his long gray beard from right to left.

> No! They were entirely different. When I was a lad, my father, who is now in heaven, told me that in our town of Medzhibozh, there lived a great rabbi, a holy rabbi. Srul was his name. This rabbi, Srul, was a very clever rabbi and was able to do wonders. His clothes were not made of satin but of coarse linen. He prayed under the open sky in the broad fields and in dense woods. His voice was also holy. While he was praying, he would burst into song, and a flock of birds gathered above his head and sang along with him. The farmers watched over him and saw that no one would disturb him. Once, a rascal wanted to frighten him, but his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth and he became mute. Another

wanted to throw a stone at him. His arm became stiff and remained outstretched. My father himself once saw Srul roll in the snow and dip himself, naked, into a hole cut into the ice. When Srul needed water, he would stick his staff into the ground, give it a turn, and water would appear!"[87]

Protection from the evil eye *(ein hore)* was a constant thought. It was believed that he air was filled with spirits; one could unexpectedly be possessed by devils *(dybbuks)*; and that the dead would come to the synagogues at night to pray.[88] Velvel Vaynshtok took advantage of this belief in Staro Zakrevsky Meidan in the 1890s to play a practical joke on an old man praying alone in the shul: Vaynshtok took a white bedsheet to the synagogue, placed it over his body, and ran through the building screaming. The frightened old man ran out into the street, exclaiming that a spirit haunted the shul.[89] If a child was believed to be sick due an evil eye, hot wax was poured onto a surface and the resulting shape would be interpreted. If the shape resembled a horse, for example, then an amulet would be made which protected one against horse-demons. If the evil eye was believed to come from a person, then the treatment was to burn either threads of a garment of that person, or hairs from their head, to neutralize the curse.[90]

There are numerous examples of other folk remedies which were utilized not only in Letichev District but in many parts of Eastern Europe. Some of these remedies have actually been shown to produce a physiologic effect (such as some of the botanical medicines, and the use of leeches). Other remedies had undoubtedly a psychologic effect, and hopefully a resulting physiologic effect, for the patient who was a believer. It is difficult to explain the origins of these folk remedies . Some are rooted in ancient Jewish law; others were borrowed from local Poles, Ukrainians, or gypsies. It is very interesting that there were "cures" for every type of condition, as well as ways to prevent disease. An example of the latter is the belief that one should chew on a piece of thread if one is wearing a garment which is being repaired. If the thread was not chewed, dementia would result.[91] What follows are examples of folk remedies seen in the Letichev District, some of which were practiced well into the 1930s.[92]

FOLK REMEDIES

• *Amulets and Charms:* Amulets were "prescriptions" written by specified individuals, who were believed to possess the knowledge of which combination of words, pictures, and/or numbers could summon the power of God to prevent illness and promote health and safety. These cameos (from the Hebrew *kamea*) were to then be worn around the neck, attached to one's pillow, or to one's house. The *mezuzah* is an example of an amulet from ancient times which is still in practice today.[93] Folklorist Raphael Patai commented that amulets and charms " are found among both Middle Eastern and European, especially east European, Jews. This would lead one to conclude that these charms are part of a common Jewish heritage going back to ancient times when the ancestors of all Diaspora

communities lived in Palestine.... the close similarity between many Jewish charms and those found among gentiles in whose midst the Jews lived...point to mutual influences and to a readiness on the part of the Jews to adopt charms used by the gentiles, and vice-versa."[94] Generally, written amulets were of several different formats. Some were composed such that the name of the disease, tragedy, or demon was rewritten successively, each time with one letter of the entity missing until it "disappeared." Interestingly, an extanct amulet from Eastern Europe, written in Yiddish, has the spell *Abracatabra* written successively as *Abracatabr*, *Abracatab*, *Abracata*, *Abracat*, *Abraca*, *Abrac*, *Abra*, *Abr*, *Ab*, *A*. This was to be recited by the possessor of the amulet to cause the spirit which caused the illness to continuously diminish itself.[95] At times, a drawing of the demon was also included. Other common formats included the "mirror" image of the spell, written to "reflect" the offending demon away[96] and magic squares, in which patterns of Hebrew letters (each of which represents a number) would add up to a phrase which, when recited, would speed healing.

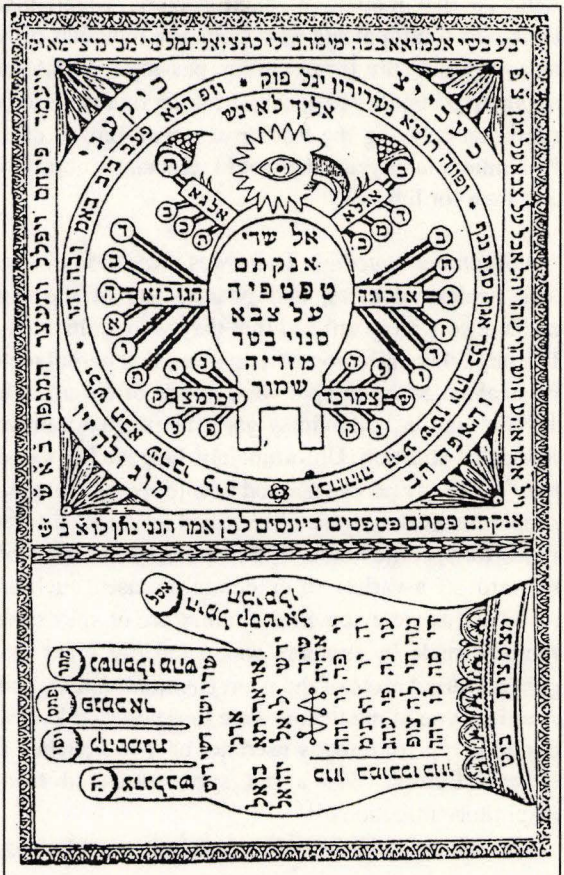
Certain objects were also recognized as possessing healing properties. Teeth from different animals, especially wolves, were thought to protect children.[97] The *pinkas* of a community, if placed under the pillow of a pregnant woman, was believed to ensure a successful birth.[98] Stones from the graves of *tsadikkim* were

Amulet for Childbirth from Podolia.

also thought to have magical qualities. Yosef Kantorshtik of Letichev described the strange journey of a visitor to Letichev in August of 1894,[99] identified only as "the Maggid of K...l."[100]:

> He was headed to the Holy Land, but not from any desire of his own, but rather to save himself (as will be described) as he was there once before. The reason why the Maggid was heading so far away despite his desire not to go was as I heard it from the Maggid himself: when the Maggid was in the Holy Land several years ago, he visited the burial sites of our holy sages. At one of these gravesites, there was a huge pile of stones, large and small ones. These stones

have the tremendous power for protecting travelers. Those traveling by ship would be protected from storms and rough waves if one had such a stone with him. Hence, the Maggid took one of these stones and kept it in his pocket. But the populace told the Maggid that the holy tsaddik lying under the pile of stones will not give rest to anyone who is so brazen as to take even the smallest stone from this burial site, unless that person returns the stone to the tsaddik's grave. The Maggid did not pay any attention to these warnings. Truthfully, he crossed the sea without any bad occurrences, and returned peacefully to his home. However, he soon became very sick, as no one has ever suffered in their lives. The Maggid began to die but to his good fortune he remembered the stone and all that had been told to him about it. He made an oath in his heart that if he recovers he will return to the Holy Land to replace the stone. Once he resigned to do this, he recovered from his illness and within a few days arose from his bed, and was healthy. Now he was fulfilling his oath and in the course of his travels he helps others repent with words of reproach.



Amulet to ward off plagues from Podolia.

Another type of a healing object was encountered by the members of the Ansky expedition. In Derazhnia, the treatment for a fever was prescribed by Rabbi Shreibman: "...catch a live spider, place it inside the two empty halves of a walnut. Seal the walnut up using tar or sealing wax, so that the walnut appears like an unopened nut. This is to be sewn inside a piece of white linen with black thread and then worn around the neck for seven days."[101] It is interesting to note that the shell of a walnut is a kabbalistic metaphor for an evil spirit.[102] Religious objects and objects of nature were believed by Rabbi Nakhman of Bratslav, the

great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, to have recuperative powers. He stated that "A person is best off when he relies upon nothing but God Himself." Nakhman believed that modern medical doctors, which their secular educations, were unable to communicate with God. The remedies of Nakhman included looking at an *esrog* as a cure for eyestrain; passing the knife of the *shokhet* over one's lips to cure the inability to speak; drinking rainwater to cure impotence; and drinking rainwater carrying the feather of a wild bird to cure lung diseases. However, in Nakhman's later years, he would reluctantly consult medical doctors for his wife, and then for himself.[103]

• *Botanical remedies:* There was a vast array of herbs and spices used by local folk healers, doctors, and pharmacists of the region. Some Podolian herbs became so widely utilized that they were cultivated in a systematic manner, just like any other cash crop.[104] It appears that herbal medicine was practiced not only by healers. Many people were aware of common herbs and their usages.[105] In 1888 a man in Volkovintsy gave his pregnant, unwed daughter a preparation to induce an abortion. Unfortunately, he gave her too strong a dose, thereby killing her.[106] Usually people learned how to recognize which botanicals had therapeutic properties as they were often asked as children to help the healers to search the fields for specific herbs.[107] The wearing of cloves of garlic around the neck was to ward off a variety of epidemic diseases, such as scarlet fever.[108] Prescribed medications were sometimes a mixture of spices, herbs, and wine.[109] A popular remedy made by mothers was a terribly bitter drink, a mixture of red wine, gentian (dried roots of the plant *Gentiana lutea*), and *kvass*, fermented raisins.[110] Another type of medicines were those created by boiling fruits and vegetables. A common type of remedy used not only in Letichev District, but in many parts of Eastern Europe, was a hot syrup prepared from boiled berries for upper respiratory infections.[111]

The following herbs were commonly used by the healers in Podolia:[112]

Valeriana officinalis (valerian): used for sedation
Hypericum perforatum (St. John's wort): used for skin irritations
Matricaria chamomilla (German/Hungarian chamomile): used as a sedative and for digestive disorders
Mentha piperita (peppermint): used to alleviate nausea
Artemisia absinthium (wormwood): a stong narcotic poison
Artemisia vulgaris(mugwort): used to alleviate menstrual disorders
Plantago major (plantain): used for boils, wounds, bee stings, and other sores
Achillea millefolium (yarrow): used to reduce inflammation
Equisetum arvense (shave grass):used to promote urination
Juniperus communis (savin):used for skin disorders and also to induce abortion
Cichorium intybus (chicory): used as a laxative

Rosa canina (rose): used for coughs

Tussilago farfara (coltsfoot): used for coughs

Althaea officinalis (marshmallow):used for sore throats , toothaches, upset stomachs, and burns

Verbascum thapsiforme schard (mullein):used for coughs,hemorrhoids, warts, burns

Viola tricolor (wild pansy): used for coughs, palpitations

Symphytum officinale (comfrey): used for skin disorders

Chrysanthemum balsamita (feverfew): used to reduce fevers

Datura stramonium (jimson weed): highly poisonous; mild doses useful in asthma

Hyoscyamus niger (henbane): highly poisonous; mild doses useful for sedation

Name changing/early betrothals: It was not uncommon for children to be named, or even renamed, with appellations which were appropriate for an older person. This usually occured in families which saw the deaths of many of their children. By giving the children different names, the parents hoped to "confuse" the Angel of Death. (Perhaps one reason proposed as to why children could only be named after deceased relatives was as follows: if the relative was still living, and the Angel of Death comes for the older relative, He might get confused by the two names and take the young child instead.) Girls could be called Bubbe ("grandmother"), boys could be called Zayde ("grandfather"), and there were variations on the names Khaim ("life") and Altar ("older"). Moreover, some of these children were betrothed as children. The following example was provided by the Zimmerman family:[113]

> Chana Giller Singer and her husband Israel Singer wanted desperately to bear a daughter. Chana was pregnant many times and was successful in delivering two healthy sons. On eight different occasions, she gave birth to a daughter. But each daughter died shortly after the next child was born. None of the daughters lived older than 5 years.
>
> On Chana's eleventh pregnancy, she gave birth to a healthy daughter named Freyda. Then she became pregnant again. Fearful that Freyda would die -- as did all her eight previous daughters -- Chana, Israel, and three-year-old Freyda traveled to a distant city to seek help from a noted Rabbi.
>
> It just so happened that at the same time, another couple from a far-off village came to consult with the Rabbi about a similar problem—only their problem was with boys. The Rabbi resolved the problem in both families by writing a *ketuba* (marriage contract) between the two children who were 3 and 4 at the time. The Rabbi also instructed Chana and Israel that Freyda's name should be changed to Altar (the older one) from that point on. Chana delivered the next baby, Dena, and Altar stayed healthy and thrived.

Postscript to the story: When Altar was 15, her betrothed came driving into town with a beautiful horse and fancy carriage. The boy, Boris, was now 16. He was handsome and overindulged by his wealthy parents. Boris came to find the woman he had to marry in order to fulfill the marriage contract made 12 years earlier. Chana quickly dressed Altar and fixed up her hair. She was very pretty. When they met, they fell in love. Within the year, they were formally married under the wedding canopy.

After the wedding in Letichev, Boris brought Altar to his home in a far-away town. Altar was miserable because she was so distant from her family and because Boris had many affairs with other women and he gambled. She begged her father, Israel, to allow her to get a divorce. He adamantly refused her requests because marriages were not dissolved on such frivolous causes. Moreover, this marriage was made with the blessing of God.

However, one time when Altar and Boris were visiting Letichev, Israel caught Boris smoking on the Sabbath. Furious because of the violation, Israel instantly started divorce proceedings.

Altar remarried and had many children. Dena, Chana Singer's last daughter, survived and lived a full life as well.

• *Leeches, bleeding , cupping ("bankes"), and other forms of counterirritaton:* The physical modalities used to temporarily relieve pain and speed healing in the Letichev District were not unlike those utilized in communities worldwide for thousands of years. A variety of heating mechanisms have been described by former Letichevers, ranging from a heated brick to a heated mustard plaster. No doubt there were other ingenious methods used to retain heat. Massage was also practiced. Cupping, called *bankes* in Yiddish, involved heating the inside of a glass container (such as a *kiddush* cup) to deplete the oxygen; this created a vacuum. Promptly applying this to the involved body part created a suction effect. From a physiological point of view, the heat and suction help to relieve pain and to speed up localized circulation. From a "spiritual" point of view, bankes was thought by some as being a means to "suck" the "deep-seated matter to the surface."[114] This type of cupping was called "*dry bankes*," as opposed to "*gehakte bankes*," literally "chopped-up cupping," or bloodletting. By the early twentieth century, bloodletting was a practice which was popular primarily by the elderly Jews of the communities, leading us to think that its practice was widespread in the mid 1800s, and earlier. However, the use of *piavkes*, leeches, remained common well into the twentieth century, for sucking out blood from injured body parts.[115]

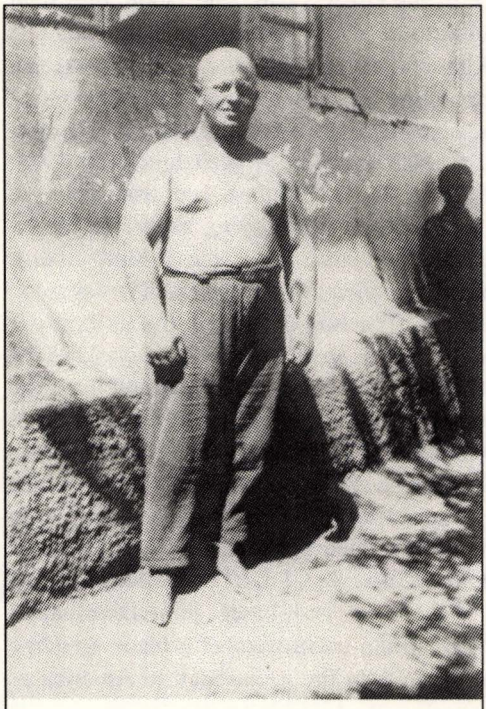
• *Black weddings* ("*shvartse khupah*"): Black weddings were marriage ceremonies which were performed during epidemics. The people chosen as the bride and groom were usually two unfortunate souls, such as orphans or those

handicapped by physical or mental disease. It is surprising that such people were considered to be less deserving of life than other townspeople, as the goal of the black wedding was to end the epidemic by sacrificing the bride and groom to "the evil eye." The ceremony would take place in or near the cemetery of the town under a black canopy (*shvartse khupah*) and they would be solemn, rather than joyous, events. Sometimes the ceremony would take place at the conclusion of an actual funeral; the *khupah* being place directly on top of the fresh grave. Once the ceremony was completed it was hoped that the disease would be solely borne by the newlyweds, who would soon die, thereby taking the disease with them into their graves. It is possible that this practice arose in the Middle Ages. Various Yiddish ballads from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries mention a black wedding canopy in songs about death.[116]

Israel Savouray, born in Medzhibozh, was an eighth generation descendant of the Baal Shem Tov. He remembered that "in olden times, a severe epidemic broke out in Medzhibozh. People died in the hundreds, like flies. No medical remedy helped. There remained the only last remedy-a 'black wedding'. For this purpose there were found a young boy and a young girl, both orphans. Their wedding was performed in the back of the Great Synagogue. Soon after their wedding, the young couple died. As a result of this, the epidemic stopped and everything returned to normal."[117] Although we can only guess what was meant by the term "olden times", this ceremony appears to have been performed repeatedly during the epidemics that swept across the Ukraine after the Russian Revolution. Dora Zichroni recalled a black wedding in Medzhibozh in 1921: "There was a major epidemic in our town. Doctor Fishman went from house to house trying to help the sick, but many people were dying everyday. So the Rabbis got together and they decided that there must be a curse on Medzhibozh. They had to do something highly spiritual to wipe away the curse. They decided to marry a couple with a black *khupah.* The boy chosen as the groom was Shmuel. He was short and fat; he might have been an orphan. He worked in the town carrying bundles for people and always had ropes tied all around him. The girl chosen as the bride came from a very nice family. However, there was something wrong with her. She had a face like an animal, and she never spoke. We children used to make fun of her. People ran to the cemetery for the black wedding. The bride and groom did not die after the ceremony. The community provided them with a little house and the women made decorations and some furniture for them. What happened to them after that, I don't know because I left Medzhibozh."[118] A representative of the New York-based Joint Distribution Committee reported from Yarmolinitsy on the occurrence of a black wedding there in 1921, even forwarding photographs of the event back to America as additional documentation.[119]

HEALTH INSTITUTIONS AND CHARITABLE SOCIETIES

• *Hospitals:* In the 1860s the only hospitals for Jews in Podolia were in Balta, Mogilev-Podolsky, and in Kamenets-Podolsky. More hospitals for Jews were erected within the next two decades. The larger towns in the District (Derazhnia, Zinkov, Medzhibozh) each had one hospital, and Letichev had two hospitals. These facilities are remembered as being places to go to die rather than to be cured. An article in Russian-language Jewish newspaper *Russki Evrei,* March 1880, reported that "the Jewish hospital in Medzhibozh is in ruins. Dr. Goldshmit nicknamed this hospital 'the slaughterhouse'. Sick people were afraid of this hospital, more than death. They say that the wealthy men of the town, Lukashevich and Shvartsman, will rebuild the hospital but probably nothing will be done."[120] Rabbi Mendel Kesel of Letichev reported in *HaMelits* in 1883[121] that despite collecting 500,000 rubles, the Letichev community still had not built a new hospital. Patients suffering from serious conditions usually went to larger, more modern hospitals such as those in Kamenets-Podolsky, Vinnitsa (famous for the excellent physician and educator, Doctor Nikolai Pirogov), or Kiev. There were no specialized hospitals in Podolia for the treatment of children.



Cook at Letichev Jewish Ophanage, 1929. From an expedition by Louis Meyer. Courtesy of Peter Myers.

• *Orphanages:* Considering the fact that many women died in childbirth, and that the overall life expectancy of adults was not high, there were probably countless orphans in the *shtetlach* of Eastern Europe. It was not uncommon for relatives or neighbors to take in the orphans; however, some were sent to orphanages in the larger towns. Abandoned children (some of whom were probably illegitimate) were usually sent there as well. An interesting event occured in Derazhnia in August of 1898: a five month old circumsized baby boy, described as being "exceptionally bright and charming," was found in the train station. The director of the station

wanted to send the boy to an orphanage in Kamenets-Podolsky, but the director was contacted by a wealthy gentile man who wished to adopt the boy. One hundred silver rubles were offered to the station director for the baby. However, once word spread that a Jewish child was to be adopted by a Christian, a large group of Jews gathered and prevented the "transaction." One resident of Derazhnia, Mr. Aron Bruda, took in the child.[122]

Pogrom Orphans at the Letichev Jewish Ophanage, 1929. From an expedition by Louis Meyer. Courtesy of Peter Myers.

There were many children orphaned as a result of the pogroms and epidemics during and after the Russian Revolution. An orphanage was built in Letichev for the Jewish orphans of the District in the early 1920s. In 1925 there were 216 children there. After World War II, the caretaker of the Letichev orphanage was Pesach ("Pyotr") Tsirulnik.

Some of the orphans of Podolia became the charges of the Joint Distribution Committee. These children were sent to live in many different countries, such as Argentina, Palestine, and Poland, where they were cared for by Jewish organizations.[123]

• *Wells, Bathhouses, Mikvahs, and Cleanliness:* The "healing" properties of water were believed by the many followers of the Baal Shem Tov, who supposedly blessed a well. Jewish and non-Jewish believers bathed in and drank water from the well, treating its water as a medicine (especially in cases of infertility) and capable of performing miracles.[124] Going to the bathhouse on Friday afternoons was a ritual of great importance. Joseph Stein of Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan remembered how some men of the village would take turns in telling Biblical stories on the way to the bathhouse, creating the respectful mood deemed necessary for the Sabbath.[125] Rabbi Nakhman, the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, regularly visited the grave of his holy ancestor. After leaving the gravesite, he would immerse himself in the *mikvah*. Although Medzhibozh had two *mikvahs*, one inside the bathhouse and the other in the outside courtyard, Nakhman always chose the outside one, even on the coldest days. This ritual of visiting the gravesite and then cleansing himself in the outside *mikvah* helped Nakhman "to gain total self-mastery" despite the frost.[126]

However, the bathhouses and *mikvahs* were probably an additional vector for the spread of disease as large groups of people bathed in the pools simultaneously each week. On weekdays cleanliness was a constant battle. For some, severe poverty limited the acquistion of soap. The washing of clothes was a difficult household chore, as described by Rose Pesotta of Derazhnia:[127]

The Oystachers, who operated the Letichev bathhouse.
Courtesy of Stephen Silverman.

Every two weeks, a peasant woman named Parasha and her daughter Dunya, a buxom girl of my own age, would come from the *kritche*, the peasant working-class section of town, to do the washing and to calcimine the walls in the kitchen, especially the part adjacent to the hearth near the bench, where we warmed ourselves during the long winter days. They would arrive early in the morning, when we children were still seated around the samovar, and would have breakfast with us.

If the weather was good the pair would take the soiled linen into the back yard and wash it in wooden tubs. In winter they would do this in the kitchen. When the clothes had been painstakingly soaped and soaked and rubbed on a washboard with white lime, I would accompany the two down to the river, three or four hundred feet away, and we would rinse each piece thoroughly, a slow and arduous process. We knelt at the river's edge and dipped each piece into the water, beating it with a wooden paddle on a flat stone, then dipped it in again and wrung it out with our hands. Aches and large areas of chapped skin were the result.

The next step was to bring the linen back, give it a sudsy bath, and put it into a *zelnitsya,* an improvised sterilizer, made of a large hollowed-out tree-stump about four feet high, with a wooden lattice fitted into the bottom. On this lattice the clothes were placed and covered with clean sifted wood ashes.

Then we would pour in several samovars of boiling water, using our extra large samovar, designed for special occasions. The water would trickle down through the compact mass of bedding, towels, table cloths, napkins, underwear, and other articles, and would flow through the lattice-work at the base of the stump. Then we would put a wooden cover on top of the sterilizer, and let the hot steam and wet ashes do their work overnight.

Returning the next morning, mother and daughter would pull the plugs, remove a layer of soft, warm lava-like substance into which the ashes had turned, and take out the clothes, by this time sterilized and bleached. To the river

again for another thorough rinsing, and then home once more, to blue and starch the white pices and hang the whole wash outdoors to dry.

This part of the process had its vicissitudes. Wind would blow dust from the street, rain would fall.

Or a sudden cry might come from a neighbor: "Rachelle! Marishka! Look! A big dirty pig is in your yard!"

Running out, we would find a long-snouted stray from a nearby swamp rubbing its hide against our choicest table cloth or nightgown. Often these unwelcome intruders would take issue with us, even when chased with a broom, squealing wildly, yet persistently remaining. in the yar until thoroughly beaten. From the hour we began washing until next day, and sometimes the third day, when all the pieces were finally ironed and put on the shelves in the linen commode, we were never certain of the outcome of our joint labors.

In winter, the washing involved severe hardship. A hole had to be chopped in the river and we almost got our hands frozen dipping the clothes into the water and wringing them out by twisting. This was an ordeal! We had to dress in sheepskins, which had no cloth facings; and we wore large kerchiefs around our heads and necks, and the heavy boots called *valenki*. And we carried with us an earthen pot filled with burning charcoal covered with ashes, at which we frequently warmed our hands and feet, blowing lustily on our half-frozen fingers. It never occurred to us to rinse the linen at home, probably because it would have meant lugging countless pails of water from the river. Hanging the linen outdoors in winter involved the risk that it would freeze stiff before it could dry out.

When we had no maid, it fell to my lot also to do the ironing with a large, bulky iron containing burning charcoal, a heavy and cumbersome device that had an exasperating tendency to burn out and go cold. Then the ashes had to be emptied and a new fire built. Kerosene was poured on the charcoal so that it would be ignited with matches. Yes, ironing was tiresome labor, and unhealthful in winter, when doors and windows were kept closed. We got headaches from the gas fumes, and occasionally one of us fainted.

• *Care of the Needy:* Many organizations were established to help the poor, but unfortunately there were also numerous reports of misappropriation of funds, especially in Medzhibozh. In 1881 M. Aronsberg reported in *Russki Evrei*[128] that Rabbi Israel Shalom Joseph Heshel's Chasids were rumored to take off with over 5,000 rubles collected in the Letichev District and earmarked for the poor. The entire Chasidic court was rumored to move to Sadgora, away from the poverty in Medzhibozh. Apparently, Rabbi Israel Shalom Joseph changed his mind and decided to stay, but troubles with money collected for the poor by his group continued. In 1882, D. Dantsen reported[129] that a soup kitchen which was opened for the poor of Medzhibozh by "the *tsaddik*" (probably referring to the same rabbi),

it was later discovered (as reported in the same newspaper in 1883 by "Misnagid") how the funds were raised:[130] "I want you to know that that the kitchen was not opened with the money of the *tsaddik*. The money was given by the orphans of Levenson, whom the funeral company refused to bury because of his great sins, namely: he wore a short coat, and did not wear hairlocks.[131] The tsaddik decreed that in order for the children of the deceased to bury their father, they must pay, including 75 rubles to the funeral company, 300 rubles for the *eruv*,[132] 50 rubles to the Mishna Society, and 200 rubles for a new wall around the cemetery. The soup kitchen was also opened from this money."

The frustration over the lack of attention paid to the needy of Medzhibozh was further reported in *Russki Evrei* later in 1883:[133] "Although we have many rich men, we do not have a single philanthropic society, which could be used to support our large class of paupers. A pitiful society, *Bikhur Kholim*, exists, but does not have money and cannot help the poor. This institution is absolutely useless—no medical or financial aid is provided for the needy. We do not have a Talmud-Torah where the children of the poor could get an elementary education. But our town is rich in Rabbis. We have three Rabbis who receive a maintenance from the tax of 2 kopecks put on poor men when they buy kosher meat."[134]

However, there were individual acts of charity. Gelman and Shvartsman of Medzhibozh, owners of the tobacco processing factory which employed more than 100 people, gave firewood to the poor of the town in November 1896.[135] The unidentified manager of a honey factory twelve *versts* away from Letichev donated 100 wagonloads of firewood to the poor during the winter of 1895-96, and gave 100 silver rubles to be distributed among those who could not afford to buy all of the necessities for Passover. His deeds were very well received by the townspeople, leading the "prestigious citizens of the community to prepare an official letter of appreciation."[136] Yitshak Zeydman and Shmuel Helman started a charitable society in Zinkov in February 1883,[137] and another society with the goal of providing food and housing was initiated there in June of the same year.[138] A society for the care of invalids existed in Letichev until the Russian Revolution.[139] Eighty Letichevers pledged donations, and twenty one people donated ten rubles each, to help the poor of the town in 1883.[140] However, in 1886 the lack of organized care and shelter of paupers in Letichev resulted in the death of a sick pauper who slept on a bench in the synagogue without a pillow.[141] Moshe Berlyand of Zinkov reported in 1898 that "the officer in charge of this area, Gobturevski, who through his efforts, opened a hot-food kitchen and a Russian reading room for any and all to frequent. Whenever he speaks, his words encourage others to treat each other with peace and love, no matter who one is dealing with and no matter what their religion is. This is a miracle!"[142]

• *ORT*: The *Obshchestvo Remeslennago i Zemledcheskago Truda Sredi Evreev v Rossii* (Society for the Promotion of Handicrafts and Agricultural Work among

Jews in Russia—and now known as the Organization for Rehabilitation and Training in the U.S.), known by the acronym ORT, was formed in St. Petersburg in 1880. Some of the impoverished Jews of Letichev District, like Jews in other parts of the Pale, applied for help. In February of 1884 the Letichev Crown Rabbi M. Pulier informed ORT that the tailor Abram Isaak Malkiman needed a sewing machine to help him to provide for himself and his large family. A sewing machine was promptly sent to Malkiman. Several months later tailor Abram Zilberman of Derazhnia also applied for a sewing machine. At this time the applicant had to submit testimonies from the Rabbi, the *Starosta*, and ten other people from Derazhnia which corroborated Zilberman' s testimony of poverty in order to receive the machine. In 1888 Rabbi Ios Veys of Medzhibozh requested, and received, money to pay for his son's schooling as a lathe operator. Seamstress S. Kats received a sewing machine from ORT in 1889 after half of its cost was provided by a Letichev philanthropist.[143]

Tens of families of the agricultural colony Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, who lived in extreme poverty "like Greek peasants" received "an enlivining dew upon their dry bones" in the form of ORT money for the purchase of seeds in 1897.[144] An ORT technical school was established in Medzhibozh in the 1880s.[145]

• *Jewish Colonization Association:* The Jewish Colonization Association was formed in the 1880s by the philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch. Although the goals of the organization were to promote farm and trade schools and to resettle Russian Jews to Argentina, by the turn of the century its greatest success was the establishment of savings and loan associations in over 600 towns within the Pale of Settlement. Thousands of rubles were lent to artisans and tradesmen at low interest.[146] In 1908, the following people were representatives of the JCA in the District of Letichev:[147]

Letichev: N. Perelmiter
Derazhnia: Rabbi G. Tentserman
Zinkov: S. I. Brodsky
Medzhibozh: M. Shvartsman
Snitovka: N.M. Fikh

• *Care of Travelers*: Caring for travelers was evidently of great importance, as societies were set up and rules were established. The "Ordinances of the Society for Sheltering Travelers" (*Mi- Taqqanot Hevrah Hakhnasat Orahim*) of Letichev dates from the second half of the eighteenth century.[148] Travelers were given food and shelter and were treated with the utmost respect. They were also given enough food to continue on their journeys. An 1881 article from *HaMelits*,[149] written by Galiyon Tehor of Medzhibozh, reported that a certain traveler by the name of Rabbi Israel had boarded with a Medzhibozh family and died unexpectantly in their home. This was considered a great honor and exemplified the mitzvah of taking in guests.

Fire watch tower, Proskurov. This century-old fire watch tower and adjoining fire station was the tallest structure in Proskurov. It has been converted to a theater. Courtesy of D. Chapin, 1995.

• *Firefighters and watchtowers:* A seventeenth century reference to the Jews of Medzhibozh states that they required to participate in extinguishing fires.[150] In an 1898 *HaMelits* article,[151] Moshe Berlyand reported on the success of the newly formed volunteer fire department of Zinkov. Tools and machinery, which had been purchased for 400 rubles, enabled the firefighters to prevent the certain spread of a house fire on a very windy day in July. Further funds for the fire department were raised by the production of Yiddish plays.[152]

Fire watchtowers, usually two stories high, were built in the larger towns. Aaron Kuptsov of Letichev donated funds for the construction of the Letichev fire watchtower.[153]

• *Burial Societies*: According to Rose Pesotta of Derazhnia, "funerals were a community affair. When a man died, whether rich or poor, no pregnant woman was allowed inside the room where the body reposed. The corpse, in a white shroud covered with black, would be placed on the floor with the feet toward the door and with candles at the head, and a prescribed hymn-prayer would be chanted by a man designated for that purpose. He would be a sort of one-man honor guard, staying through the night. Men who died were wrapped in their prayer shawls--talisim--which would accompany them into eternity...The deceased was laid on a carrier made of two long poles with a network of rope between. Hurriedly the body would be carried through the streets to the front of the shul. After a brief prayer, it would be taken to the cemetery and lowered into the prepared grave. Women were not allowed at the grave during the burial, but could visit it afterward." Pesotta also recalled an elderly woman of Derazhnia, remembered only as "Judith", who "had among her cherished possessions three things: a small sack of earth from Jerusalem, obtained no one knew how, to be placed with her in her grave, a tombstone, with her name and date of birth engraved thereon, and a shroud of India linen. These were made ready ahead of her expected death and ascent to the Kingdom of God. But she lived on, hale and hearty, year after year. In summertime she would give her shroud an airing in the sun; even more often she would sit on the doorstep making a new one. This she

Jewish Firefighting Brigade, Dunaevtsy Podolia.

had to do because, invariably, when a sudden death occurred before the Sabbath Eve she would lend her shroud for the burial. That was her way of doing a mitzvah--a good deed. In the following week, reimbursed for its cost, she would buy another piece of India linen and sew another with the regulation stitch, spinning stories to us during her work. At her own funeral, the town's population attended the services, with the question on everybody's lips: 'Who will be ready with a shroud when someone passes away on Friday ?' "[154]

Jewish funerals were handled by the *Khevrah Kadisha*—the community burial society of each town. This group of people participated in the ultimate Jewish *mitzvah*, that of respecting the dead, since the dead could not thank them for the *mitzvah*. The *Khevrah Kadisha* would prepare the body by washing it a special dignified way. They would make sure the body was never left alone until buried. According to Jewish practice, the body was supposed to be buried as soon as possible, usually the next day, or if a Sabbath or holiday intervened, the following day after the holiday.

The *Khevrah Kadisha* were supposed to uphold some of the most solemn and respected Jewish traditions. Although funerals should have been consistently carried out in a respectful and solemn manner, Dantsen from Medzhibozh reported in *Russki Evrei*:[155]

> I feel sad to see the scandalous treatment of the deceased by the *Khevrah Kadisha*. I was an eyewitness to this case, which made a painful impression. On June 15 a young man, 26 years old, died. Some of the members of the funeral brotherhood were so drunk they couldn't stand on their own feet. The stretcher consisted of two long thin poles and rotten cords. One man said that

> the cords were rotten, and might break; in response to this a member of the *Khevrah Kadisha* began to swear, using very foul language. As soon as the funeral procession began to move away from the home of the deceased, some of the cords broke and the deceased fell through to the ground. Many people cried. Two or three men picked up the deceased. His shroud was dirty and torn, and his body could be seen. He had to be held for half an hour until new cords were brought to mend the stretcher. Then the funeral procession finally moved away. When will our people pay attention to such scandalous practices? When will they decide to make a hearse? When will they understand that we must replace the representatives of the *Khevrah Kadisha*? One of them is a funeral servant, bathhouse attendant on Fridays, and a teacher in the Talmud-Torah. The income of the *Khevrah Kadisha* is 1,000 rubles per year. The funeral workers (we have three) get paid with big bank notes. The other expense is the salary of the guard of the cemetery. Some bookkeeping is absent. Where does all the money go? If the family of the deceased is poor, collections are taken up for a shroud and funeral.

Dov Kardaner of Medzhibozh reported in 1883 that a boy died in the town. The members of the *Khevrah Kadisha* forgot to bring the ropes necessary to lower the casket into the grave, so they improvised and took off their belts, connected them together, and were able to bury the child. It was noted that "when the Christians saw this, they were puzzled and thought it was a strange new Jewish custom."[156]

"Ben Moshe" of Medzhibozh reported about a boy who was almost buried while still alive.[157] The boy had been sick, and was cared for by his mother. In her eagerness to make the child well, the mother accidentally overdosed her son with the medicine prescribed by the doctor. The boy went into a coma. This was mistaken by the mother as being the death of her child after she was unable to wake him. As Shavuos was the next day, the mother wanted her child to be buried on the same day that he died to avoid delay. The sexton of the *Khevrah Kadisha* was notified. Fortunately he was delayed several hours until he received a permit from the Rabbi. As the sexton was preparing the body for a funeral, the boy opened his eyes and he started to move. He soon made a full recovery from his illness. The correspondent commented that "stubborn people cling to the custom that they should bury the person when they are still warm. How many people have been buried alive because of this custom? Maybe it's time to reconsider." Interestingly , a similar story about the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov was recorded by folklorist Abraham Rechtman during the An-sky expedition of 1912-1914. The eight day old child was thought by his mother and grandmother to be dead and was left overnight on top of the grave of the Baal Shem Tov in Medzhibozh. The cries of the child were heard by the undertaker in the morning. The child was found to be healthy, presumably brought back to life by the power of his grandfather's grave. He became known as "Israel Mes"--Israel the Dead.

Ironically, this child who was almost "buried while still alive" died in 1865 at the age of 100.[158]

In contrast, funeral practices of non-Jews were quite different, but sometimes they involved participation of Jews, especially when the gentile had some influence over the Jewish community. A fascinating description of the funeral of the wife of a rich Ukrainian landowner in Letichev was remembered by Dena Singer Zimmerman, who came to America in 1906: "He had a manor-style house that overlooked the town. He had a beautiful wife who died in childbirth. The landowner was grief stricken and arranged for an elaborate, public funeral. Jews of the town watched the procession. The townspeople had never witnessed such pagaentry. The landowner had his wife's body dressed in her wedding dress. She was put in a glass coffin, which was placed on a special horsedrawn carriage for the funeral procession through the town. The horses were black, dressed with large, black plumes. A foreign substance was placed in the horses' eyes so they would cry. When the funeral procession reached the elaborate musoleum of the landowner, the glass coffin was hung vertically so that passersby could view the body."[159] An interesting report from Yishak Zeydman of Zinkov appeared in *HaMelits* in 1883[160] about the death of the Christian doctor (whose name is not mentioned in the article): "A great sorrow befell our town when the doctor died. He gave his services free of charge to the poor of the town. The poor of the town escorted the casket at the funeral and the Khazan sang *El Male Rachamim* (the Jewish prayer for the dead)."

Chapter Notes:

1. This might have been due to Jewish dietery laws, which decreased (but did not eliminate) food -borne diseases. Salo Wittmayer Baron, 1976, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, Volume 16 : Poland-Lithuania 1500-1650*: Columbia University Press, p. 200-204.

2. For more information on this subject, see: Katz, Steven, 1976, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, volume 1: New York, Oxford University Press, pages 401-507.

3. See: Trachtenberg, Joshua, 1943, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern anti-Semitism:* Yale University Press.

4. Levine, Hillel, 1991, *Economic Origins of Antisemitism:* Yale University Press, pages 192-193.

5. Bonner, Thomas Neville, 1995, *Becoming a Physician:* Oxford University Press, p. 30.

6. Verses, Shmuel, 1995, "Magical and Demonological Phenomena as Treated Satirically by Maskilim of Galicia," *Jerusalem Studies in Folklore,* volume XVII, Jerusalem , The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

7. Interestingly enough, scurvy was not a common problem among the Jews of Podolia as their onion and garlic -enriched diet evidently provided adequate amounts of ascorbic acid to prevent the disease. Source: V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi*

topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk),1866. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

8. In addition to ruining crops, droughts also resulted in the turning of the banks and beds of rivers into large repositories of dead and decaying fish and rodents. Source: Rose Pesotta, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 114.

9. Joseph Stein, interview, 1985.

10. V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii*, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk),1866, footnote 10. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

11. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

12. V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii*, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk),1866. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

13. Veitzblit, *Derazhnia: Sovremennoe Evreiskoe Mestechko*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

14. The name is derived from the Latin word *bubo*, referring to a regional swelling of lymph glands.

15. Alexander, John T., 1980, *Bubonic Plague in Early Modern Russia:* The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 103-107; Borodii, N.K., "The History of the Plague Epidemic in the Ukraine in 1770-74", *Soviet Studies in History,* Spring 1987/vol. 25, no. 4, p. 33-43.

16. McGrew, Roderick E., 1965, *Russia and the Cholera*: The University of Wisconsin Press, Milwaukee,p. 99-100.

17. Chayesh, Anatoliy Ilyich, 1997, "Dead Souls of Satanov."

18. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova; personal communication, July 1, 1996.

19. Reichman, Henry, 1987, *Railwaymen and Revolution: Russia, 1905:* University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 103.

20. Russian State Historical Archives (RSHA), St. Petersburg, fond 573, inventory 16, file 222338. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova; personal communication, April 24, 1996.

21. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

22. V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii*, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk),1866. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

23. Nancy Mandelker Frieden, Nancy Mandelker,1981, *Russian Physicians in an Era of Reform and Revolution, 1856-1905:* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, p. .252.

24. V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii*, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk),1866. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

25. As told to Pauline Zimmerman Chapin by her mother Dena Singer Zimmerman of Letichev.

26. V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii*, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk),1866. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

27. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Matossian, Mary Kilbourne, 1989, *Poisons of the Past:* Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 11-12.

31. See also: Camporesi, Piero, 1989, *Bread of Dreams:* The Chicago of University Press, Chicago.

32. *Vestnik Oftal'mologii,* Kiev, 1900; researched by Elena Tsvetkova; personal communication, July, 1, 1996

33. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

34. Leonid Rapoport, interview, 1996.

35. Brown, Julie V., "Social Influences on Psychiatric Theory and Practices in Late Imperial Russia," in Solomon and Hutchinson, eds., 1990, *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia*: Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington, p. 27-44.

36. RSHA, St. Petersburg, fond 383, file 857, inventory 29, contains a report dated August 7, 1826, "Concerning the drowned Jew Iankel Triger".Iankel Triger, aged 15, of Derazhnia, had been traveling to Kherson when he was knocked off his horse, which he was bathing in the Ingulets River. Triger drowned. His body was taken out of the river and his passport was located. Triger's body was quickly "committed to the earth by the reason of the fierce heat." Researched by Elena Tsvetkova; personal communication, December 30,1996.

37. One of Israel and Chana Giller Singer's young girls was gored to death by a normally tame cow as it was coming home from pasture at the end of the day. Many families in Letichev kept milk cows behind their houses. At the beginning of the day, a gentile would come through the town, collect the cows, and herd them to the meadows. At the end of the day, the gentile would herd the cows back to town. The cows were so docile and well-trained that they usually knew exactly which house to return to. For some reason, the Singer's cow got agitated and gored the young girl on the way to the house. Story told by Pauline Zimmerman Chapin from her mother Dena Singer Zimmerman.

38. Ekheel Zinshteyn of Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan met his death in the early 1890s while trying to use his shoulder to steady a wagonload of lumber which he was transporting on the slippery, muddy road from Derazhnia. The wagon overturned, crushing him to death. Source: interview with Joseph Stein, 1982.

39. *HaMelits*, 6/18, August, 1897, #176, p.2 reported about a fifty year old honey merchant of Derazhnia who was kicked in the thigh by his horse, causing the man to pass out. He was taken home to Derazhnia where he died the next day. Translated from Hebrew by J. Michoel Ronn.

40. RSHA, St. Petersburg, fond 442, inventory 1, file 2026. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

41. The date of the Letichev fire is noted repeatedly in the following record group from RSHA, St. Petersburg: fond 386, inventory 1, file 263, "The Interim Administrative Committee on the Arrangememnt of Southern Settlements," as many deeds of purchase in Medzhibozh were destroyed in the fire. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova; personal correspondence, July 18, 1996.

42. Letter from Israel Savouray to Harry Pregerson, 1989.

43. Joseph Stein, interview, 1982.

44. See Chapter 3 for a fuller description of the tragedy.

45. Guldman, V.K., 1889, *Podolskaya Guberniya:* Kamenets-Podolsky, p. 262.

46. Anatoliy Chayesh, pers. comm.

47. Kamenets-Podolsky archive, F.28, inv.1, f.442, 1861. In addition the records also mentions that the tile roof of a Jewish school (constructed of stone) was also burned.

48. Rosman, M.J., 1990, *The Lords' Jews:* Cambridge, p. 147-153.

49. Ruderman, David B., 1995, *Jewish Thought and Discovery in Early Modern Europe:* Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 142.

50. Frieden, Nancy Mandelker, 1981, *Russian Physicians in an Era of Reform and Revolution, 1856-1902:* Princeton University Press,p. 16. See also the article by I. Gessen, "K sud'be evreev -vrachei v Rossii," *Evreiskaya Starina,* no. 4, 1910, p.612-623, in which mention is made of several doctors of Podolia {but not of the District of Letichev}: Litin —Isaak Bernshtam, Leib Konson; Proskurov—Solomon Freid, Leib Furks; Mogilev-Podolski—Moshko Viner; Gaisin—Leib Nosvetski; Balta—Berko Zbrizhski; Vinnitsa—Ikheel Bershkovich.

51. See Chapter 12, "Pogroms", footnote 5.

52. *HaMelits*, April 19 (May 1), 1885, p. 468. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

53. Reported by Dov Ber Bakhor, Yitskhak Zeydman, Yekel Rozentul, Yitskhak Rokhman, S. Kornblit, and Yakov Yosef Bakhor in *HaMelits,* July 11 (23) 1883, p. 850. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

54. Personal communication, July, 1995.

55. See Chapter 14, "Zionism"

56. Letter from Evgenia Tretyak to David Chapin, 1994. Another interesting fact about Dr. Gabay is that his son Genrikh, born in 1923, became a well known film producer in St. Petersburg. He left the USSR in 1971. Unfortunately, efforts to locate him have been unsuccessful.

57. Interview with Dora Zichroni to Asher Fischman, 1994.

58. Probably Dr. Gdal-Gersh Leibovich Goldenberg. Personal communcation, Anatoly Chayesh to David Chapin, July 1995.

59. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 95-96.

60. *HaMelits,* April 15(27), 1883, p. 464. Translated from Hebrew by M.Meiberg.

61. Kossoy, Edward and Ohry, Abraham, 1992, *The Feldshers:* The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1992, p. 9-10.

62. *Bolshoya Entsiklopedia,* 1896, Volume 17, p. 606-609. Translated from Russian by Kate Shubova.

63. Interview with Dinah Dinitz, January 1996.

64. In 1909 there where 32 feldsher schools in Russia; 262 Jews, or 8 % of the student body, attended. *Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia,* St. Petersburg, 1906-1911, Volume XV, p. 209.

65. *Pinkas Zinkov,* 1966, Israel, p. 139-144. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

66. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 96-97.

67. Douglas Seidman, personal communication, 1996.

68. Memories of Benjamin and Emanuel Pulier, unpublished manuscript; courtesy of Suzanne Pulier.

69. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

70. Told by Pauline Zimmerman Chapin from her mother Dena Singer Zimmerman.

71. V. Farengoltz and I. Rolle, *Materialy k Meditsinkoi topografii i gigiene Podol'skoi gubernii*, (Materials on Medical Topography and Hygiene in the province of Podolsk), 1866. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

72. Baron, Salo, 1976, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, Volume XVI:* Columbia University Press, New York, p. .201-204.

73. Interview with Dora Zichroni to Asher Fischman, 1994.

74. Ben-Amos, Dan and Mintz, Jerome, 1993, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, p. xxvii.

75. Kanner, Leo, 1936, *Folklore of the Teeth:* The Macmillan Company, New York, p. 198-200.

76. Matossian, Mary Kilbourne, 1989, *Poisons of the Past:* Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 23.

77. Aron, Dr. Milton, 1969, *Ideas and Ideals of the Hassidim:* The Citadel Press, New York, 1969, p. 183.

78. Lindemann, Mary, 1996, *Health and Healing in Eighteenth -Century Germany:* The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 153.

79. See 1758 Medzhibozh census, Chapter 1, "Early History" and in Chapter 8, "Trade."

80. Idel, Moshe, 1995, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic:* SUNY Press, Albany, 1995, p. 75-77.

81. Nicknamed "BeSHT" after the first letters of the Baal Shem Tov.

82. Dubnow, Simon, 1991, "The Beginnings: The Baal Shem Tov (Besht) and the Center in Podolia," in *Essential Papers on Hasidism,* edited by Gershon David Hundert, NYU Press, New York, p. 45-50.

83. Ben-Amos, Dan and Mintz, Jerome, 1993, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, p. 177-178., story # 157, "The Spiritual Cure".

84. *Tracing An-sky*, 1992, Jewish Collections from the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg: Waanders Uitgevers, Zwolle, Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg, p. 112.

85. A *goy* is a gentile, a non-Jew. A *shul goy* is someone who acts as a caretaker for the *shul*; someone who does not violate Jewish laws with his actions. For example, he is the one who lights the synagogue lanterns on the Sabbath, while it is forbidden for a Jew to do so.

86. Roskies, Diane K and David G., *The Shtetl Book:* Ktav Publishing, p. 78.

87. Rechtman, Abraham, 1958, *Yidishe etnografye un folklo*r: YIVO, Buenos Aires.

88. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

89. Personal correspondence, Rachel Weinstock, 1989.

90. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

91. This was told by many members of the author's family who have roots in the Letichev District. However, this superstition was well known in many parts of Eastern Europe, and can be traced back to *Makhzor Vitry*, a 12th century work written by Simkha of Vitry, France, who was a student to Rashi. Source: correspondence, Morris Roitman, June 2, 1996, on East European Jewish History internet mailing list.

92. Simyon Bik, personal interview, 1996.

93. See Joshua Trachtenberg's classic, *Jewish Magic and Superstition:* Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939, for lengthy discussions on this topic.

94. Patai, Raphael, 1983, *On Jewish Folklore:* Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1983, p. 413.

95. Levy, B. Barry, 1990, *Planets, Potions and Parchments:* McGill-Queens University Library, p. 87-90.

96. Ibid, p. 89.

97. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

98. *Tracing An-sky*, 1992, Jewish Collections from the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg: Waanders Uitgevers, Zwolle, Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg, p. 112.

99. *HaMelits*, 19/31, 1894, #188, p.4, translated from Hebrew by J. Michoel Ronn,

100. Probably the Chasidic town of Kupil, 20 miles northwest of Proskurov.

101. *Tracing An-sky*, 1992, Jewish Collections from the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg: Waanders Uitgevers, Zwolle, Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg, p. 112.

102. Ben-Amos, Dan and Mintz, Jerome, 1993, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, p. 315.

103. Green, Arthur, 1992, *Tormented Master:* Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, p. 235.

104. Conroy, Mary Schaeffer, 1994, *In Health and Sickness:* East European Monographs, Boulder, p. 339. This book is highly recommended for those wishing to learn more about the history of pharmacy in Russia.

105. In the author's family there is the story of a girl of the extended Zilberman-Parness family of southern Podolia and northern Bessarabia. She was bitten by a rabid dog and became deathly ill. In order to take the girl out of her misery, her father gave her a drink prepared from a lethal herb.

106. *HaMelits*, January 6/ February 7, issue 21, p.6 ; see also, Chapter 11 "Law and Order".

107. This story has been told in the Weinstock family; verified by Vladimir Goykher, 1996.

108. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 114-115.

109. *HaMelits*, May 31/June 12, 1885, p. 643-644.

110. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

111. Family stories, from many different branches of the author's family--not only from Podolia, but from Galicia as well.

112. *Podillya*: Akademiya Nauk Ukraine, Kiev, 1994, p. 328-331.

113. Told to David Chapin by Pauline Zimmerman Chapin and Annette Zimmerman Singer. This was a well-known family story recited many times by both Altar.Singer Cohen and Dena Singer Zimmerman.

114. Nevins, Michael, 1996, *The Jewish Doctor:* Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, 1996, p. 130.

115. Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

116. Mlotek, Eleanor Gordon, 1965, "Traces of Ballad Motifs in Yiddish Folk Song", *The Field of Yiddish, II*: The Hague, p. 238.

117. Letter, Israel Savouray to Harry Pregerson, 1989.

118. Interview with Dora Zichroni to Ascher Fischman, 1994.

119. JDC records, RG 1919-July 1921, file #261, "Yarmolinitz "

120. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

121. June 20/July 2, p. 700. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

122. *HaMelits*, August 30 (September 11), 1898, #198, p. 3. Translated from Hebrew by J. Michoel Ronn.

123.Dr. J. Kling, "Mothers' Unwritten Book of Remedies," in *Felshtin*, First Felshteener Benevolent Association, 1937, p. 547-562, translated from Yiddish by J.Michoel Ronn.

124. Cala, Alina, 1995, "The Cult of Tzaddikim Among Non-Jews in Poland", *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review*, vol. 17, no. 1-2, p. 19.

125. Joe Stein, interview, 1983.

126. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, translator, 1972, *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom:* Breslov Publishers, p. 21.

127. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 154-156.

128. *Russki Evrei*, December 1881, no. 51. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

129. *Russki Evrei,* December 1882, no. 51. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

130. *Russki Evrei,* February 1883, no. 9. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

131. In other words, he didn't wear the traditional dress of a Chasid.

132. An *eruv* is a fenced enclosure which enable some Jews to carry on the Sabbath.

133. *Russki Evrei*, June 1883, no. 29. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

134.See Chapter 5, "Food" for a discussion of korobka, or meat tax.

135. *HaMelits*, 8/20 November, 1896, #246, p. 3.

136. *HaMelits*, 31 March/12 April 1896, #72, p. 2.

137. *HaMelits*, February 1883, p. 202.

138. *HaMelits*, June 1883, p. 700.

139. Oslikovskaya, E.S., 1978, *Bolshie Sobytiya v Malenkoe Gorod,* Kiev. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

140. *HaMelits*, December 12/24 1883 ,p. 1530.

141. Reported in *HaMelits* by Rabbi Yosef Raditsky, June 6/18, p. 674.

142. *HaMelits*, 15/27 July, #156, p. 3.

143. *Protokol Zasidlnii Vremenago Komiteta do Obrazovaniyo Obschestvo Remeslennago i Zemledcheskago Truda Sredi Evreev v Rossii* -- Records of ORT, Issue 2, St. Petersburg, 1884, and Issue 3, St. Petersburg, 1889. Translated from Russian by Vladimir Goykher.

144. *HaMelits*, 14 (26) December, 1897, no. 272, p. 5, translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

145. Shapiro, Leon, 1980, *The History of ORT*: Schocken Books, p. 48.

146. Trotsky, Ilya, 1966, "Jewish Institutions of Social Welfare, Education, and Mutual Assistance," in *Russian Jewry 1860-1917*, edited by Jacob Frumkin, Thomas Yoseloff, New Jersey, 1966, p. 428-432.

147. Alcan, F., 1908, *Recueil de materiaux sur la situation economique des Israelites de Russic, d'apres L'enquete dela*: Jewish Colonization Association, Paris.

148. These published rules are now at the Vernadsky Library in Kiev.

149. *HaMelits*, December 29 , 1881 /January 10, 1882, p. 781. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

150. Rosman, M.J., 1990, *The Lords' Jews:* Cambridge, p. 54.

151. *HaMelits*, 23 July/ 4 August, 1898 #162, p. 3. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

152. *HaMelits*, 30 August/11 September, 1898, #198, page 3. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

153. See Chapter 12, "Pogroms"

154. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 27-28.

155. *Russki Evrei*, June 1883. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

156. *HaMelits*, 4(16) July 1883, p. 815. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

157. *HaMelits*, May 31/June 12, p. 643-644. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

158. Roskies, David and Diane, 1975, *The Shtetl Book*: Ktav Publishing House,p. 260-262.

159. Told to Pauline Zimmerman Chapin by her mother Dena Singer Zimmerman.

160. *HaMelits*, 2/14 May 1883, p. 528. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.

Cupping.
From an early 16th century woodcut.

5

Food

by David Chapin

Introduction

No cultural description would be complete without a description of the foods which filled the bellies of the people along The Road From Letichev. Food was an important part of the Jewish experience. Since maintaining a kosher diet was tantamount to maintaining Jewish identity, a whole institution surrounded it. Indeed, one of the biggest fears about being drafted in the Russian Army was not so much being killed as it was being forced to eat non-kosher food. The institutions surrounding the practice of kashrut included the local rabbi and the kosher butcher -- the *shokhet.* Only the shokhet could slaughter the livestock. Only the rabbi could determine whether the food was prepared according to proper laws of kashrut. Certainly a big anxiety in local community life was in arguments concerning incidents around the kosher food issue, which must have occured on a weekly basis.

The Jewish community not only incorporated recipes from their Gentile neighbors but provided new ones, as well. Every Sabbath was a feast in comparision with the rest of the week. Every Jewish holiday had its own special dishes. Since food preparation was more time-consuming than it is today, a major part of a Jewish woman's life revolved around the stove.

REPERTOIRE OF JEWISH HOUSEWIFE'S DOUGH DELICACIES

From *Yidisher Folklor* vol. 1 no. 3, provided by Beatrice Silverman Weinreich
Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub

This book by Mordkhe Kosover, *Jewish Delicacies* (New York, YIVO, 1958; reprinted from Yuda A. Yafo-book, 1958), placed the research of Jewish Cooking on a new level and established a new standard for accuracy, completeness, and historical/cultural depth in the research of Jewish folk-cooking. But there still remains a lot to do even in the area of cooking with flour, which constitutes the greatest part of Professor Kosover's published works. The material, which Prof. Kosover gathered together after combing a great number of rabbinic texts, dictionaries, and cookbooks, must be completed by drawings which come from the daily practice and memories of Jewish housewives. In addition to an inventory which covers all times and places in one listing, there should be added monographs describing the cuisine of certain areas during certain times. The analysis of an individual repertoire of delicacies helps to highlight certain tendencies of form, material, and function in cooking that would remain unappreciated otherwise.

We present here a description of what one housewife cooked and baked.

We hope to receive from our readers: 1. similar monographs from other sources; 2. Variations of forms of the mentioned delicacies or variations in their preparation; 3. Other names for the same or similar dishes.

Informant: Dvorye Runin, of blessed memory, born circa 1870 in Kozachki (near Letichev, Podolia). She demonstrated the preparation of these delicacies with the help of her daughter, Nina Silverman (b. Stara Sinyava) and her son-in-law George Silverman, of blessed memory, born in Letichev. Written by Bina and Uriel Weinreich, New York, 1954. Drawings by Tsirl Valetski.

Analysis

These dough-delicacies can be analyzed in seven categories: 1. Type of flour; 2. Type of dough; 3. Form; 4. Means of cooking; 5. Filling; 6. Additions; 7. Function. First we will explain the possible variations of each factor. Afterwards, in alphabetical order according to their names, we list and analyze the delicacies.

1. Type of Flour

According to the majority, all of the delicacies are made with wheat flour, but an unleavened dough can also be made of buckwheat flour. Our informant tells us that in other areas corn flour (maize) is also used, but in her village, it was thought to be inferior and only the most unfortunate of pauper were forced to use it. Bread was baked of rye or wheat flour.

2. Type of dough

The two main types of dough were unleavened and leavened. The proportion of the ingredients of unleavened dough were 2 cups of flour to 1 egg, salt on the tip of a knife, and water "as much as it can take." Leavened flour consists of 1 1/2 cups of flour to 1 egg, 1/8 cup of oil, salt on the tip of a knife, and "a little bit" of yeast, softened in warm water. Knead it all together and let it rise. For some holiday delicacies (strudel and such) sugar is added to the raised dough.

A special "eggy" cookie[1] dough consists of 4 eggs to 1 cup of milk, 1/4 lb. of butter, 1 1/2 cups of sugar, three spoons[2] of sour cream and "just a drop" of water.

3. Shape

The form of the delicacy is determined, first of all, by whether one starts out with dough rolled out flat or with dough shaped into strands.

From Flat Rolled-Out Dough

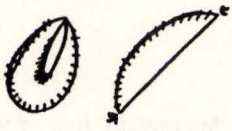
1. Cut into longish pieces, approximately 1/2 inch wide.
2. Cut into square shaped pieces, approximately 1/4 inch square.
3. The round shaped rolled-out piece of dough (10 to 12 inches in diameter) is rolled up. The filling is added as the dough is rolled up.

4. Put together with a corner: the ends of the round shaped rolled-up dough (diameter 3 to 4 inches) are put together. The "seam," where the edges meet stays on top like the ridge of a hill.

5. Same as 4., but the seam stays on the side.

6. The corners remain outside, as in Figure 4., and an indentation is made on top.

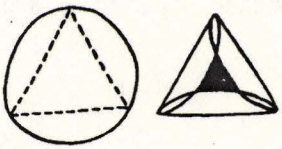
7. After starting with Form 4, the points are then pressed together.



8. The edges of a round shaped flat piece of dough are gathered and pressed together like a little sack.

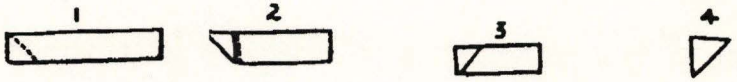
9. Variation of 8. The sides are raised but not pressed together, like an open sack.

10. Three sides of a round, flat piece of dough are raised and the points are pressed together.

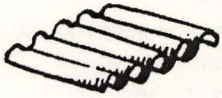


11. A square piece of rolled-out dough is folded in half and the open sides of the triangle are pressed together.

12. From a longish piece of dough, around 2 inches wide, one side is folded up so that a triangle is formed as in 11.; afterwards the dough is rolled another 1/2 roll.



13. A longish rolled-out piece of dough is pressed together in folds like an accordion.

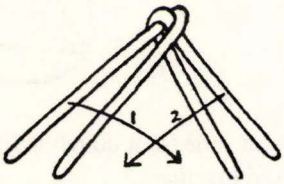


From Strands:

14. A longish strand (around 3/4 inch in diameter) is coiled in a circle like a spring.

15. A long strand is cut into smaller pieces like pellets.

16. Two long strands are plaited like a braid with four strands.



17. The ends of a thick strand are pressed together like a bagel.

4. Means of Cooking

The four other ways in which a dough-delicacy can be prepared are:
1. Baking in an oven
2. Cooking in water
3. Cooking in oil
4. In a gruel: the flour is heated and boiling water is poured over it ("from a cooking dish")

5. Fillings

The most important kinds of fillings are the following:
Cooked rice, mixed with eggs and sugar;
Mashed, cooked potatoes;
Cooked buckwheat groats;
Cooked, sweet apples;
Cooked, sweet cherries or sour cherries;
Jams (plum preserves);
Ground poppy seeds and honey;
Moist white cheese (in America, "pot cheese"), possibly mixed half and half with "farmer cheese" (a thick cottage cheese), mixed with egg, butter, sugar and a little salt;
Sauerkraut;
Cooked millet;
Cooked, sweet plums.

6. Toppings

The toppings can be dairy (butter, sour cream) or derived from meat (chicken, fat).

7. Functions

Some dough-delicacies are eaten together with other dishes (for example, *farfl*[3] with chicken soup); some undergo even further preparation (noodle

pudding—*lukshun kugel*). Many delicacies are associated, in part or completely, with holidays.

The Delicacies

• Egg Cookies [Egg *Kikhl*]
Whole leaves of cookie dough are cooked in oil; when they are done, they are sprinkled with cinnamon. They are eaten when one comes home from synagogue after prayers.

• Fritters [*Bala Veshke*]
Yeast dough which has risen, Form 16, baked; afterwards pour on a mixture which is 1/2 chicken fat, 1/2 water, with garlic added. "A pauper's delicacy."

• Buckwheat Cakes [*Bobke*]
Buckwheat batter, but a little thicker; it is put into a noodle-pot (a pot which is wider on the top than on the bottom) and baked in the oven, often filled with raw plums.

• Bun Cake [*Bulke-Kukhn*]
Twelve rolls of *Khallah*[4] dough, stuck together and baked together. An assistant informant from Letichev calls this "Rebbe Rolls."

• *Bagel*
Unleavened dough, Form 17, is cooked in water. "A hard food."

[*Blintzes* - see *Mlintzes*]

• Bread
In a kneading trough, knead a dough made out of buckwheat flour, water, and salt. Leaven it with a piece of "sour dough," which was left over from last week's baking. (If baking for the first time after Passover and there is not yet any sour dough, buy a bit of yeast from the teacher's wife.)[5] When the leavened dough has risen, punch it down (that is, knead it again), making certain that it is well-kneaded. Make loaves and place them in the oven. Bake them until the bread is a good brown color.

• *Homentash*[6]
Raised dough, Form 10, baked in the oven, filled with prune jam, poppy seeds or cooked plums, basted with an egg so that it will shine. In honor of Purim.

• Fritters [*Vartut*]

Unleavened dough, Form 9, baked in the oven, filled with prune jam or apples. Rare.

• Filled Dumpling

Unleavened dough, Form 5, boiled in water, filled with cherries, cheese, potatoes, buckwheat, or cabbage.

• Buckwheat Dumplings

Unleavened dough of buckwheat flour, Form 6, boiled in water, filled with cheese, less expensive than ordinary dumplings.

• Braided Egg Bread [*Khallah*]

(Not demonstrated)

• Tort

Mix up a dough of very fine matzo-meal with a lot of well-beaten eggs, potato starch is also added for firmness. Then bake. This is eaten on Passover, but not very often.

•*Teygl*

Unleavened dough, Form 15, cooked in water. It is eaten in soup with potatoes or string beans. "A dish for paupers."

• The Second Stomach of Ruminant Animals [*Tsheptshekhe*]

The cooked stomach of cattle, filled with a stuffing of khallah, flour, and chicken fat; sewed up again and cooked.

• *Khrondl*

(Assistant informant from Letichev knows this colloquial name for "macaroon." The chief informant doesn't know of such a baked item.)

• Pancake [*Latke*]

Small portions of batter are poured into a hot frying pan, which is coated with oil. (To spread the oil, one takes a cut onion, dips it in oil and uses it to spread the oil.) Usually, pancakes are made with buckwheat flour, although it can also be made with wheat flour (better) and corn flour (not as good). It is a custom to eat pancakes in honor of Chanuka (with goose fat). The rest of the year, they are an ordinary dish.

• Noodles [*Loksh*]

Unleavened dough, Form 1, dried out. The noodles are cooked and are eaten with chicken soup (it's more festive than buckwheat groats in the soup).

• Passover Noodles

Make a dough of eggs and potato starch. Roll out thin leaves. Roll up each leaf (Form 3) and cut thin slices, so that long noodles are made. Eaten in soup on Passover.

• Little Liver *Knishes*

Small *knishes* (see further) filled with chopped liver.

• Gruel [*Lemeshke*]

Pour boiling water over flour (buckwheat, corn or barley flour) and cooked the whole thing in a pot on the stove. It can be eaten as a dairy dish (with cheese or milk) or as a meat dish (with chicken fat). "A real pauper's dish."

• Stomach *Kugl*

(see "The Second Stomach of Ruminant Animals")

• *Malay*

Inexpensive flour is steamed with boiling water. Yeast is added, and the thin gruel is boiled. Then it is baked in the oven in a baking pan. The top is sprinkled with sugar, so that it forms a crust. It is eaten with cheese or sour milk.

• Soup Nuts [Mondele]

Kikhl dough but without milk or sour cream, Form 15. Cooked in oil. Eaten in chicken soup.

• *Mlintse*

First role out thin leaves of dough made of wheat flour and water, eggs—use 1/4 cup of milk for each egg; it is baked flat. Afterwards each leaf is rolled up with a mixture of cheese, eggs, and sugar. The whole thing is baked in a frying pan. The mlintse can also be filled with buckwheat or potatoes. A festive dairy dish.

• Butter Roll [*Puter-bulke*]

A yeast dough made of wheat flour, milk and butter. It is baked in the form of small rolls. A filling food, especially for women who have just given birth.

• Flat loaf [*Pidpalek*]

What is left over from the dough used to make *khallah*, rolled our flat and quickly baked at a high temperature. For breakfast.

• Small Cake Fried in Honey [*Perezhke*]

Yeast dough, Form 4, baked, filled with apples or mashed peas (or the like). Neither meat nor dairy. [Parve]

• Flat Bread [*Pletsl*]

More flour, oil, and sugar is added to a *khallah* dough. It is rolled our flat. It is notched and then baked. Afterwards, it is sprinkled with poppy seeds. Large flat breads are, for the most part, eaten in villages; in the city, smaller flat breads are more the norm, that is, from the large, flat rolled-out dough smaller pieces of dough are cut (with a glass). Poor people scrape out the *khallah* dough from the kneading trough on Friday afternoon before the Sabbath, and to these scrapings (called *shishveles*), they add flour and oil for baking flat bread, which is one thing that can be done with *khallah* dough.

• *Farfl*

Unleavened dough, Form 2, dried out. It is then cooked and eaten in chicken soup.

• Flat Cake [*Flodn*]

Unleavened dough, but with few eggs, so that it can be rolled out very, very thin. Form 3, but, more often than not, rolled up rather than made like a strudl. Filled with a sweet mixture of apples, honey, nut, and the like, then baked in the oven. Special kinds: honey flodn, almond flodn, nut flodn, white flodn (with lemon). This is the absolutely most festive treat that there is.

• *Frendzlakh*

A mixture of matzo-meal, eggs and chicken fat formed into portions, filled with chopped liver, and baked in a frying pan. A Passover dish. The assistant informant from Letichev calls them *Khremzlach*.

• Little Potato *Knish*

To mashed boiled potatoes add chicken fat, pepper, eggs and a little matzo-meal to make it thicker. Portions are formed and filled, usually with chopped liver. A Passover dish.

• Groat Cake [*Kashnik*]

Risen dough, Form 5 or 7, baked in the oven, filled with buckwheat groats, rice, or millet. Neither meat nor dairy [Parve].

• *Kikhl*

Raised dough, Form 8, baked in the oven, filled with cabbage, cheese, potatoes, or buckwheat groats with fried pieces of skin and chicken fat and fried onions. Made dairy in honor of Shavuos. If meat or parve, a year-round dish.

• *Kezl*

Add 6 eggs and a lot of chicken fat to two grated potatoes; often pickled red beets are also added. It is formed like *kugl* (wider on tope than on the bottom) and is baked in the oven. A Passover dish. "Quite a heavy food—one bite is enough."

• *Kemishbroyt*

Unleavened dough, Form 3, but one starts out with a larger piece of flat rolled-out dough. Baked in the oven. Filled with almonds, raisins, nuts and cinnamon. After it is baked, it is cut into slices and dried some more in the oven so that it becomes hard.

• *Krop*

Raised dough, Form 12, baked in the oven, filled with preserves or apples, spread with honey. Baked in honor of Simkhas Torah.

• *Krepl*

Unleavened dough, Form 11, cooked in water, filled with cheese or with chopped meat. If dairy (spread with butter): Made in honor of Shavuos. If meat: in honor of Purim or before Yom Kippur.

A Jewish family in front of their stove.
Inside their home, the stove served as both an oven for cooking and as a source of heat to keep the house warm. Photo taken ca 1911-1914. From An-sky collection, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

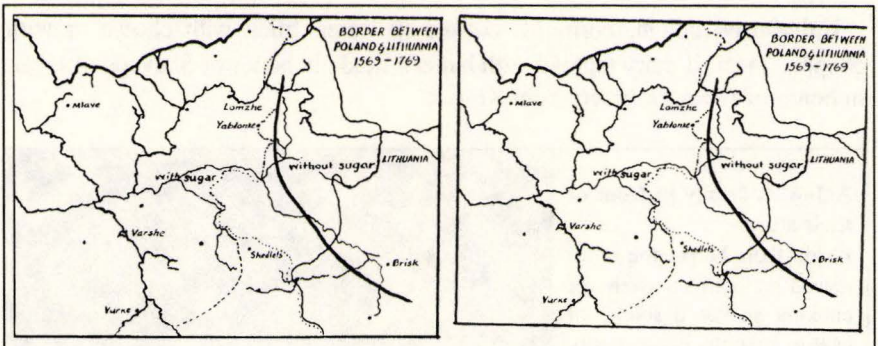
"The stove's prominent location in the Russian peasant home points to its importance. The stove occupied one-fifth to one-fourth of the living space of a peasant hut. It was always built in one corner and surrounded by sleeping lofts for the younger and elderly members of the family. Active adults slept on benches near the stove. Furthermore, because it took up a lot of living space, the stove played an importnat decorative role in the house. The size, color, and ornaments of the stove reflected the owners' prosperity...In short, the traditional stove governed almost all aspects of everyday life in a peasant family."[10]

• *Shtrudl*

Unleavened dough, with very few eggs (see flodn), Form 3, baked in the oven, filled with apples or preserves. A festive treat, but not as special as *flodn*.

GEFILTE FISH AND THE SPREAD OF CHASIDISM

Gefilte Fish is essentially fish dumplings. In Eastern Europe, there were two major varieties: the kind seasoned with sugar and the kind where sugar is not used. Marvin Herzog[11] has proposed that the distribution of the sugared variety of Gefilte Fish seems to have followed the spread of Chasidism throughout Eastern Europe. Where the Chasidic movement was strong, such as in Podolia, Galicia, Volhynia, and southern Poland, the sugared variety was prevalent. If this logic holds true, than it can be assumed that the origin of this recipe was Letichev District, as was the origin of Chasidism.



Maps showing the spread of a gefilte fish recipe.
The map on the right shows the limit of towns in the Northern Pale of Settlement (now Poland, Lithuania and Belorusias) where Gefilte Fish was seasoned differently. To the east, the townspeople seasoned their Gefilte Fish with sugar, as in the above recipe. To the west, the townspeople seasoned their fish without sugar. The map on the right is a larger scale view showing the spread of Chasidism from Medzhibozh (Mezbez) to the north. Herzog claims that the sugared version followed the spread of Chasidism. Maps modified from Roskies.[12]

The following recipe is also from Dena Singer Zimmerman. This recipe was observed and written down (in modern form) by her daughters Pauline Zimmerman Chapin and Shirley Zimmerman Goldstein.

Ingredients:

Raw fish: One-half "Rockfish" (striped bass), the other half Pike (as much as possible), a small whitefish (very fatty so don't use much), crawler, buffle, shad (don't use the head of this fish), or any other seasonal fish. Don't use carp. 16

lbs. of raw fish yields about 58 pieces. It would need two very large pots to cook this amount. Filet and grind the fish. Save the heads and bones. Be sure to find out the weight of the ground fish—typically about half or less of the unground raw fish weight.

Onions, Eggs, Salt, Pepper, Sugar, Matzo meal, Carrots

[1] Wash the bones and heads in running water. Then salt lightly and leave in water to cover while preparing the fish.

[2] Figure a large onion per lb. of raw unground fish, with an extra large onion for each of 2 pots. This is about 2 lbs. of onions to 5 lbs. of raw fish. Grind all the onions except those 2 for the pots. Dice the 2 onions for the pots.

[3] Salt ground fish about 1 tsp. per lb. of ground fish.

[4] Use one egg per lb. of raw unground fish. Beat well with a large amount of pepper. Add to fish. Mix well.

[5] Add ground onions and mix.

[6] Add 2 rounded tbsps. of sugar per 16 pounds of raw unground fish. Add a large amount of pepper. Mix well. Pepper should be seen throughout mix after it's mixed well. When the mix is tasted, the fish should burn the mouth a minute after tasting.

[7] Add enough matzo meal to hold mix together. Should drop from spoon like soft dough (not too wet). Test by wetting hands and dropping a ball. If it can be handled and holds its shape reasonably well and doesn't stick much to hands, it's ready.

[8] Drain bones. Put half into each of 2 pots. Add diced onions, 3-4 cut carrots (between the 2 pots), salt, pepper and almost 1/2 pot of water. Bring to a boil. Taste soup to be sure there is enough salt.

[9] Drop fish balls one-by-one into the boiling liquid (alternate pots). Cover and cook for 1/2 hour. Taste soup! (Add seasoning if needed.) Lower heat but keep to a slow boil.

[10] Uncover and simmer 1-11/2 hours longer. Soup should look rich and brown. It should have reduced in volume to 1/2 or less.

[11] Remove from heat and cool 15 - 20 minutes. Pour off soup. Remove fish carefully and put on platters or in foil. Cover and chill.

[12] Strain soup and chill until jellied (usually overnight).

SUGAR AND THE JEWS

Sugar [beets] was so much cheaper to produce than even the potato and had a higher yield in calories that it was inevitably adopted as a sweetener by the mass of Jewish population in Poland in the latter half of the nineteenth century, just as its use was vigorously espoused by the west European working class.

In the early nineteenth century the Polish gentry in Volhynia and Podolia developed plantations of sugar beet on modern capitalist lines.... Israel Brodsky (1823-1889) was a pioneer [Jewish entrepreneur] of the sugarbeet industry in south Russia, and he and his sons Lazar (1848-1904) and Leon (1851-1923) opened numerous refineries, rapidly becoming the largest sugar manufacturers in Russia. By 1914, 86 sugar refineries in Russia were Jewish owned, and when Jewish-run companies are added to the total, it appears that two-thirds of the sugar industry was in Jewish hands. Apart from Ukraine, sugar beet was grown extensively in the areas of fertile loess soil in the south of Poland. More important, vital segments of the wholesale sugar trade and the retail distribution network through peddlers were controlled by Jews....We would suggest that sugar became an important feature in the diet of the Polish Jews and the Gentiles only in the second half of the nineteenth century, but particularly in the last two decades; and that sugar-based recipes that were part of the Polish-Jewish cuisine were relatively new innovations.

Sugar was extensively utilized in Polish-Jewish cuisine as a seasoning in soup, and fish were similarly flavored with onions and sugar. Jewish-style carp was eaten with almonds, raisins, onions, and then sprinkled with salt, pepper, and sugar. Vegetables, such as cabbages, carrots, and turnips were cut into small pieces, moistened with goose fat, and coated with white sauce consisting of flour mixed with vinegar and sugar. Even *khallah* for the Sabbath was often prepared with sugar.

We can now answer Roskies' question about the making of gefilte fish with sugar and positively declare that the rise of the Chasidic movement in Volhynia and Podolia from 1730 until the 1770s antedated the cultivation of sugar in those provinces. Possibly the taste for locally produced sugar, which was acquired at an early date by the Chasidic pioneers, may have meant that they eagerly promoted the consumption of sugar among their followers when they spread throughout Poland in the first half of the nineteenth century and that sugar became associated with the joy and sweetness of religious celebration. But it is equally plausible that the Jewish domination of the sugar industry in Poland between 1850 and 1914 meant that the Jews created an active network of promoters of the consumption of sugar and that their first converts were their fellow Jews, whether or not they were Chasidim. Moreover, if it can

be shown that gefilte fish without sugar was consumed in Volhynia and Podolia, provinces that were the original seat of the Chasidic movement, then there would be a measure of proof that the flavoring of gefilte fish with sugar had nothing to do with Chasidic ideals and practices but was more closely related to the commercial promotion of the consumption of sugar in the second half of the nineteenth century, as sugar among other things was used in many different kinds of Polish-Jewish fish recipes. Sugar was an attractive, cheap ingredient and an excellent source of energy; it offered Polish Jews an alternative method of digesting food to the sours that were a traditional feature of the diet of the east European Jews.[13]

Kiddish cups.
These silver cups were used for the ceremonial blessing over the wine (kiddish) during the Sabbath and other holidays. They were collected in Podolia during the An-ski Expeditions of 1911-14. From the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

OTHER RECIPES

Pletsalakh Recipe

Pletsalakh was an all-purpose cookie dough used in a variety of special dessert treats such as holiday cookies, mondel brot and pie crusts. (see *Pletsl*) The following is a recipe from Dena Singer Zimmerman, born in Letichev 1886 and died in Baltimore in 1964. Dena never wrote down a single recipe and did all her cooking and baking from memory and through taste. This recipe was observed and written down (in modern form) by her daughter Pauline Zimmerman Chapin.

Ingredients:
3 1/2 cups flour
1 heaping tsp. baking soda
1 1/4 cups sugar
1 dash salt
1/2 cup (1 stick) melted butter
less than 1/4 cup warm water
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 eggs

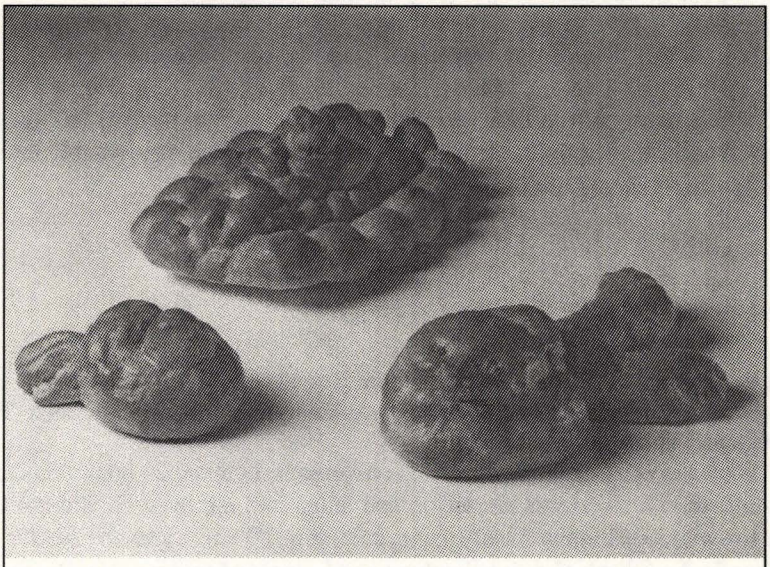
Mix dry ingredients together. Sift. Make a well in the dry ingredients and put in all the wet ingredients. Mix. Knead until stiff. Flour a board, roll the dough out and cut for holiday cookies. Add cinnamon and sugar topping. Bake in moderate (350ÞF) oven. Watch carefully! Remove from oven when edges turn golden brown.

Charoseth Recipe

Charoseth is a ceremonial dish used in the Passover Seder. It represents the mortar used for making bricks. This particular recipe was passed down through the males in the Zimmerman family — indeed it was one of the only dishes throughout the year that the men prepared. This recipe is from David Chapin.

Ingredients:
Apples (usually only one is needed)
Chopped nuts (walnuts work best)
Sugar
Cinnamon
Kiddish wine

Peel the skin off the apple. Grate the apple. Mix in chopped nuts. Add sugar, cinnamon, and wine to taste. The mixture should not be runny, and it should have a sweet taste.



Khallah models.
These paper mache models of Sabbath egg bread (khallah) was from Bershand, near Vinnitsa. Collected by Goldstein in 1939 and given to the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg.

Folk Beliefs and Superstitions about Food

by Dvorye Runin, born in Kozachki (near Bar, Podolia) around 1870

From *Yidisher Folklor* vol. 1 no.1, provided by Beatrice Silverman Weinreich
Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub

1. Why does one braid a *khallah*? To confound the Devil.

2. Why is *farfl* eaten on Rosh Hashana? So that all the sins of the previous year will be lost.

[Translator's note: This is a culinary pun on the noun *farfl*, which refers to little pieces of baked dough, is very much like the verb farfaln which means "lost" or "abandoned."]

3. If a poor man spills a little wine onto the table after *Havdalah* and pretends to put the spilled wine into his pocket, he'll be sure to have enough for the following week.

[Translator's note: *Havdalah* is the ceremony on Saturday evening which concludes the Sabbath. It is usually celebrated by extinguishing a flame on a braided candle by immersing it in a cup of wine, usually splattering the wine in the process.]

4. If a tea leaf floats around on top of your tea, you'll receive a letter.

5. When cutting a fruit or a vegetable, start cutting it at the end farthest from where it was attached to the stem. That is because the fruit or vegetable has feelings, too (so it should not be decapitated).[14]

Bagels and the Baal Shem Tov

"Once in the middle of a meal when the Besht sat with his followers, he lifted up his arms and made motions like a person swimming in a river. He said: "Fool! Do this and you will be saved."

"This was a wonder in the eyes of those present. In about an hour a man came and told them how he and his wagon had fallen into the river. He did not know how to swim, but it immediately occurred to him: "I will try to do like this with my hands. And thank G-d, it helped me and I managed to get out of the river."

"Similarly, once during a meal the Besht shouted: "Fool! Have you not seen how many gentiles there are in the field. Take your bagel and throw it in front of them, and they will come to you."

"Within an hour a man came and said that he had fallen into the river, and there was no one to same him because the gentiles were up on the mountain, and they had not seen him in the river. He recalled that he had a bagel and he threw it to the gentiles. They came at once, and with G-d's help they saved him."[15]

Kosher chickens in Letichev

A humorous story about a dispute over kosher food was submitted to the newspaper *HaMelits* in 1881 signed only by "a man of kindness without deceipt" from Letichev:

> "It's been a year since our town's rabbi died and in his place four rabbis were installed. They argue among themselves. Each one brags that he is a more learned rabbi than the others. It happened that one rabbi prounounced kosher that another declared unkosher. Here is what happened: One woman had a hen that she wanted to be slaughtered. The hen was determined to be unkosher so

the woman asked her neighbor to sell the hen to a gentile, as the rabbi advised. The neighbor suggested that if she asked her rabbi about the hen, he would say it was kosher and she wouldn't have to sell it to a gentile.[16] Indeed, the second rabbi declared the hen kosher. She told her neighbor that the second rabbi said that if she would give him a piece of hen, he would eat it. And so she did. She sent a portion of the hen to the rabbi and he ate it during the third meal of the Sabbath. When this matter came to the attention of the rabbi who originally declared it unkosher, he told the other rabbis that the second rabbi ate unkosher meat. Since then, the relationship between the two rabbis deteriorated. The elders of the community are trying to downplay the oppposite opinions but are actually adding fuel to the fire, by declaring that one of the rabbis ate unkosher meat. The rabbis and the elders could not stop arguing..."[17]

Menu from a Medzhibozh Soup Kitchen

"For 5 kopeks, a visitor gets two portions: regular soup (or cabbage soup), with cereal with 100 grams of beef, without bread (but the Jewish soldiers can have bread also). There is also low-priced flour to be sold to poor people during the holidays."[18]

Food Tax in Medzhibozh

A *korobka* or "box" tax was levied on Jewish food in Medzhibozh. The amount was 2 kopeks per pound on kosher meat in 1883.[19]

Kashrut Laws in Letichev

Reported during the An-sky expeditions of 1911-1914:

"[In Letichev] a butcher was fined and ordered to make a feast for the community, because he had transgressed the regulation that had already existed for a long time. It forbade the slaughter of goats in the summer because it was considered that their meat was harmful to one's health."[20]

TYPICAL FAMILY DIET

Rose Pesotta of Derazhnia, from a relatively rich Jewish family, describes a typical daily family meal routine:

> Upon rising my father and mother would have tea...There was an art in brewing good tea. Tea leaves were put in a small teapot, boiling water was poured over them and then the teapot was placed on the samovar's chimney to keep the contents warm. The samovar, with a brightly glowing charcoal fire inside, was used to boil the water and we called the hot water *okrip*. Because of difficulties in making fire, it was customary for some of our neighbors to drop in and borrow a kettleful of *okrip*. To others we would send this precious liquid.
>
> ...[At] around ten o'clock one of us would take a substantial breakfast to mother at the store— cereal made of barley grits, cocoa or hot chicory and milk, sour cream and pot cheese, and berries when in season. In winter this menu would be varied by *koolish*, a dried-fish-potato-and-onion chowder.
>
> ...Dinner at noon often would comprise hot or cold borscht made of red or white beets, cabbage, onions and a marrow bone. Occasionally blintzes—rolled thin dough filled with chopped liver and onions, would go with such a meal. Or we'd have a dairy lunch, with blintzes filled with cheese or fresh berries, and dipped in home-made sour cream.
>
> Another variation was boiled beef, lima or navy bean soup, and either rice or kasha, buckwheat gruel. The buckwheat was first toasted on the hot primus plate in front of the oven, then covered with boiling water and left to simmer. Each grain had to be separate, not soggy or sticky.
>
> The children would return hungry from school at about five o'clock and we'd get together in a sort of cocktail session. Our favorite food at that hour in winter was herring and pumpernickel....A special reoutine centered around the serving of herring. It would be brought to the table whole. The oldest child, usually Esther or myself, a sharp knife in hand, would make notches in the fish indicating the size of the portion for each. The oldest always got the head, and the youngest the tail end.
>
> ...In summer we would have boiled sweet corn with lots of fresh yellow butter, fresh rye bread covered with cherry jelly or prune-spread, or rubbed with garlic and covered liberally with goose-fat in winter. In cold weather also there were dill pickles and sour krout, and preserved apples, pears, and other fruit. And occasionally, mother would indulge us by buying something special— kosher wurst or sausages, or a sizeable box of *halvah*, ground almond meats mixed with honey and sesame oil.

Seven o'clock would find the younger ones at supper, consisting mainly of cereal (rice, barley, corn, or farina) with milk.[21]

Jewish holidays have been described as the "Jewish catachism" and each had their own special food delicacies. Rose Pesotta describes some of them:

Each year the Jewish women of our town, in advance of [Purim], baked tarts, honey cakes, cookies, and other sweets. They crowned their preparations with a Purim twist, a huge three-tiered loaf of *khallah*, white bread made golden with saffron, and rich in eggs and sugar. This, in all its glory, would dominate the supper table. And no Purim was complete without *hamantaschen*, three-cornered turnovers filled with plum preserves, ground nut-meats, or ground poppyseeds.[22]

The dinner menu [for Passover Seder] would include gefilte fish with sharp horseradish, turkey soup with *knadlach* (egg and matzah dumplings), cup-cakes, (some made of mashed potatoes or matzah meal, some filled with choppped liver and onions [*knishes*]); fricasseed turkey; turkey-neck filled with dressing; and, for dessert, stewed prunes, pears, or apples, with wine, tea and aromatic lemon served "to wash everything down."[23]

[In preparation for each Sabbath] on Thursday, there was shopping to do. The buying of meat and fish, and perhaps a fowl slaughtered by the shokhet for the Sabbath. In the evening, mother would prepare the dough and set it to rise overnight for making khallah next day.

On Fridays, she would get out of bed at dawn and become active at the kitchen stove. [The older girls would be awakened and] soon she would assign each of us to some useful task. One would mix the dough for egg-drop cookies or the strudel, another was instructed to clean and chop the carp or pike bought at the market or the tiny fish caught by peasants at the dam, for gefilte fish. The youngest child awake would be placed on the warm built-in seat near the oven to watch.

By eight o'clock, mother would have completed her culinary duties. The *khallah* was baked, the fish and chicken soup were simmering over the hot coals; and the *kugel*, a traditional Sabbath pudding, was ready to be put in the oven, as were the roast beef and sun-dried fruits -- prunes, pears, apples, and cherries -- so that on Saturday afternoon, after the mid-day dinner, we would have the blended juice to dring -- the Ukrainian *kvas*.

...Usually the Sabbath eve dinner ran to seven courses. Gefilte fish, served first, was fortified with its own chilled sauce and red horseradish, sharp to the point of tears. Daddy served the food, cutting up the fish patties into small portions for the little ones, and ending with whole patties for us older girls. Golden

chicken-noodle soup followed. After that the chicken, with stuffing in the skin of the neck, steamed carrots, and apple-pear or stewed prune compote.

...[After Sabbath synagogue services on Saturday morning] our home again would be transformed into a banquet hall. The table already would be set for *kiddish* -- for wine with a blessing. With it would be *strudel*, honey-cake, and tasty cookies. And vodka, of course.

...[Then] dinner would begin. The food, pre-cooked on Friday, was kept warm in the oven. The soup tasted like soup stock today; the beef was brown and rich in flavor and balanced with vegetables. But the crowning delicacy of the meal would be *kugel* -- a pudding made of many sweets which tasted like candied yams.[24]

Chapter Notes:

1. Harkavy translates *kikhl* as "cake." Weinreich translates it as "cookie." I know it as a very light cookie. - Translator.
2. There is no indication as to whether this is a teaspoon or a tablespoon.
3. Crumbs of dough
4. *Khallah* is the braided egg-bread traditionally eaten on the Sabbath.
5. It seems that in order to supplement her husband's poor pay as a teacher of little children, his wife was given the "yeast concession."
6. Literally "Haman's pockets", three cornered pastries made during the holiday of Purim.
7. Although the Yiddish word used is "baked," I think that they mean "fried."—Translator.
8. Again, the Yiddish word used is "baked" but I think "fried" is meant, since *khremzlakh* is always fried—Translator.
9. The Feast of Weeks, comes 7 weeks after Passover.
10. Snejana Tempest, "Stovelore in Russian Folklife," in *Food in Russian History and Culture*, ed. by Musya Glants and Joyce Toomre, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1997, p. 1-2.
11. Herzog, Marvin, 1965, *The Yiddish Language in Northern Poland: Its Geography and History:* Mouton, The Hague, p. 19-23.
12. Roskies, Diane K. and Roskies, David G., 1979, *The Shtetl Book:* Ktav Publishing House, Inc., p. 37-39.
13. Cooper, John, 1993, *Eat and be Satisfied, A Social History of Jewish Food*: Jason Aronson, Inc., p. 166-167.
14. From Sonya Trachtenberg Breidbart, as told by her mother, Beyla Abramovitch Grubshteyn Trachtenberg from Letichev.
15. *Shivhe ha-Besht,* 1814, English version by Ben-Amos, D. and Mintz, J. R., translators, 1993, *In praise of the Baal Shem Tov:* Jason Aronson, Inc., Tale # 220, p. 221-222.
16. Presumably, this brought a lessor price for the hen.
17. *HaMelits,* no. 13, 1881, p. 263. Translated from Hebrew by Michael Meiberg.
18. Reported in *Russki Evrei,* no. 51, Dec. 1882, by D. Dantsen of Mezhibozh. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

19. Reported in *Russki Evrei,* no. 29, June 1883. Translated from Russian by Leonid Rapoport.

20. Rechtman, Abraham, 1958, *Yidishe Etnografye un Folklor:* YIVO, Buenos Aires. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

21. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of our Lives:* Excelsior Publishers, Boston, p. 83-85.

22. Ibid, p. 2.

23. Ibid, p. 11.

24. Ibid, p. 86-89.

by Mark Chagall

6

Folksongs

by David Chapin and Ben Weinstock

Introduction

Song was the heart and soul of Jewish culture along The Road From Letichev. From the earliest of times, Judaism valued song for both liturgical purposes and for secular culture. Song and verse always played a key role in religious ceremonies. The burgeoning Chasidic movement placed song among the highest religious experiences. In a secular sense, song and verse served as teacher to children, storyteller of history, healer of love lost, and mourner of tragedy. The wheels on The Road From Letichev were lubricated with songs. These songs paved the way for the history, Chasidic experience, and general Yiddishkeit in Letichev District.

Prior to 1900, very little musical documentation exists which describes the songs of this area. We are fortunate to have available songs from Letichev District collected at the turn of the century. The first major collection of Yiddish folk songs was started in 1898 by Jewish historians Peysakh Marek and Saul Ginzburg. It was published in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1901.[1] It is interesting to note that the melodies were considered unimportant in this early collection and were not recorded.

In 1896, under the mentorship of Y.L. Peretz, Yehude-Leyb (Lewis) Cahan (1881-1937) began collecting folksongs. He emigrated to New York and published his first collection of songs in 1912. In 1927, a new collection was published by YIVO in Vilna. In his later years, Cahan continued his monumental

work of cataloguing all his collections. It was posthumously published by YIVO, by now relocated to New York, in 1957.[2] This immensly valuable work was edited by scholar Max Weinreich.[3]

Perhaps the most valuable collection of Yiddish music comes from the An-sky ethnographic expeditions of 1911-14. Shlomo An-sky was the pen name of Shlomo-Zanvel Rappaport (1863-1920), the author of the famous Yiddish play *The Dybbuk*, and author of the anthem of the Bund, *Di Shvua* (The Oath). Funded by Baron Horace Ginsburg, An-sky, an amateur historian, organized a series of ethnographic expeditions to over 70 localities in Volhynia, Podolia and Kiev Guberniyi. Letichev, Medzhibozh and Derazhnia were among the locations visited. An-sky organized the foremost experts of the day and collected thousands of photographs, Edison recordings, and even movies of Jewish shtetl life in Tsarist Russia, shortly before major upheavals were to destroy this culture. The An-sky expeditions provided the world with a unique and rich snapshot of a lost culture.[4]

An-sky.
Pen name for Shlomo-Zanvel Rappaport. Shown in 1916. Courtesy of YIVO.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the An-sky material is only now being rediscovered within the archives the former Soviet Union. Fortunately, many of the songs collected by An-sky expedition ethnographers found their way into collections by Moshe Beregovski (1892-1961).

As for the content of the songs, music historian Bugatch lists these categories of Jewish music in Eastern Europe:[5] labor, love, hope, beggar, soldier, children's, persecution, suffering, childhood, philosophical, drinking, holiday, Sabbath, religious, *Badkhen, mooseinik,* disappointment, protest, workers, revolution, national, *zimoros,* wedding, sarcasm, and lullabies. Out of these categories of songs, three special social organizations grew up around the music: the *khazan,* the *klezmer* band, and the *badkhen.*

Next to the rabbi, the *khazan* or cantor was the most important religious official in the synagogue. The khazan was the special singer of Jewish liturgical music, often beloved and adored by the community. He used an eclectic mix of

traditional melodies with popular or invented melodies to which the prayers were sung. The role of khazan was a special talent that could not be inherited and had to be nurtured. As such, a special apprentice arrangement developed. The *meshoyrer,* or cantorial apprentice-assistant was essentially a khazan in training. Raised at an early age, the meshoyrer learned the music from his mentor by ear.[6]

The second important Jewish music organization was the explosion of Jewish musicians -- *klezmer* -- in Russia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Beregovski estimated that there were over 3,000 klezmer orchestras in Russia (excluding Galicia and Poland) at the beginning of the 20th century. Podolia itself had perhaps 50-60 klezmer orchestras. He claimed that their role was not just in Jewish weddings but in non-Jewish weddings and balls.[7]

These klezmorim represented a special close-knit social group in Eastern Europe. These nomadic groups traveled from town to town in search of job opportunities. Folk musicians with eclectic tastes, they were sometimes considered outside the pale of standard Jewish society. Without any roots to one place, they often kept to themselves.[8]

The klezmorim developed a strong non-Jewish component to their repetoire, probably picking it up on their wanderings around Eastern Europe. Moreover, they would pick up strange collections of string and brass instruments, along with uniforms, typically from army surplus.[9] Typical among the klezmer bands were ensembles which included trumpets, clarinets, fiddles, and accordians. Rarely, one might encounter the *tsimbl*, an ancient Jewish instrument. It was a hammered dulcimer which sounded similar to a harpsicord, but more distant and haunting.

A typical klezmer band.
Photo taken in Russia, 1923. Courtesy of YIVO.

Klezmer music included such dance rhythms as the *bulgar*—a fast circle dance; *freylekh*—literally "frolic" or "happy", a fast upbeat tune; *sher*—a couple dance in moderate rhythm similar to an American square dance; *hora*—a slow line dance; and the *doina*—a slow or rubato, melancholy melody. Mixed in were often indigenous folk melodies from Gypsies, Ukrainians, Tatars, and Romanians.

The third important Jewish musical element were the *badkhen*. The badkhen were important performers and entertainers, indispensable at weddings. They were one-man acts which included acrobatics, rhymes, comedy, and "master of ceremony" responsibilities. In many ways they were the forerunners of the Jewish vaudevillians of a later era. They often sung their homespun folk songs or sponsored sing-alongs. Many folk songs were encouraged or spread by the badkhen.[10]

A Jewish military band from Yelna, Russia.
Courtesy of YIVO.

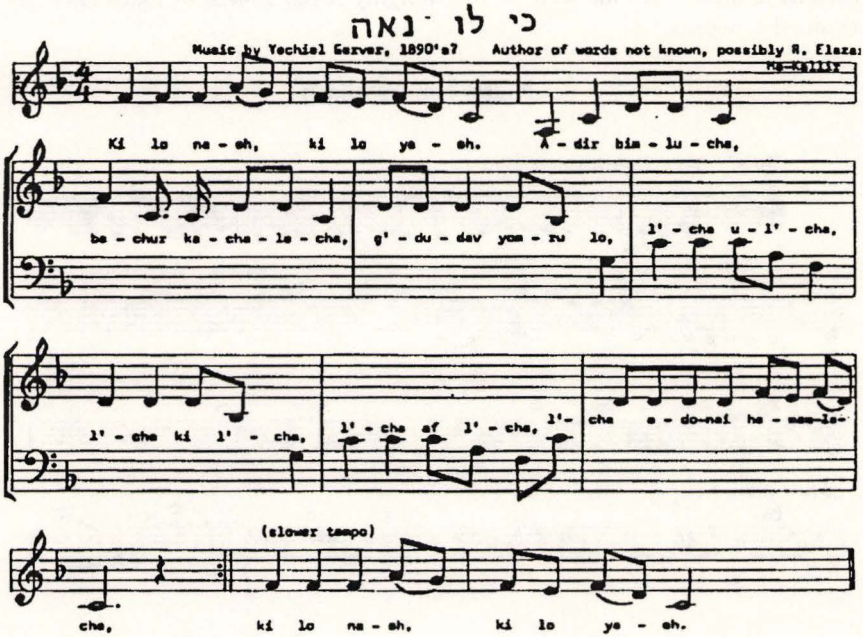
RELIGIOUS SONGS

Ki Lo Na-eh

By Michael Gerver

Yechiel Gerver (originally "Goiva"), born in Medzhibozh, was a talented *khazan*, both in Russia and America, who would make up his own tunes. He had a beautiful tenor voice, according to his son Sol, who remembers Yechiel davening *musaf* in shul in New York. ("An ordinary *khazan* would daven *shacharis*. The star *khazan* would daven *musaf*.") On Simchat Torah in Medzhibozh, the men used to carry Yechiel through the streets on a table, as he sang.[11] Once, in Medzhibozh, Yechiel was in jail for some reason. His wife Chana used to bring him food. He was still in jail on *Pesach*, and was unable to be with his family for the seder. Chana brought him the food for the seder, and he consoled himself by making up a tune for "Ki Lo Na-eh" that was inspired by the rhythm of the soldiers that he could hear marching back and forth outside his cell. This tune was used by his family at their seders from then on, and is still used by some of his descendants at their Passover *seders*.

Yechiel Goiva. Photo taken ca. 1900, courtesy of Michael Gerver.

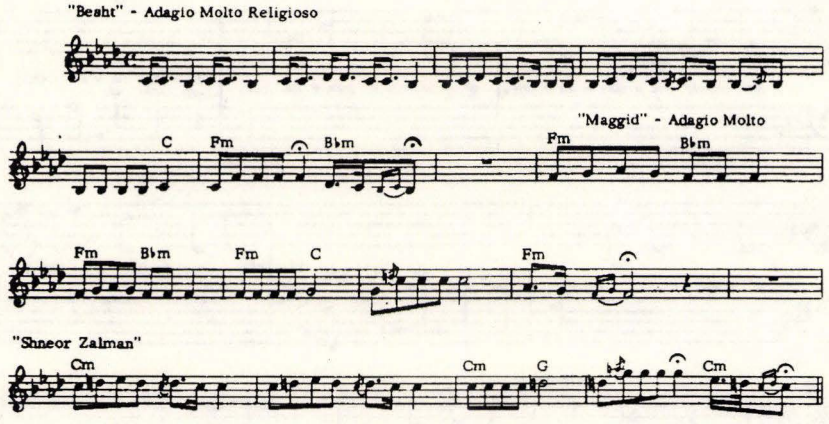


The Baal Shem Tov in Song

The following song is one of the few in existence which is directly attributed to Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov "Besht" (1700-1760). It is a song in three parts, which begins with a melody by the Besht, then continues with his disciple, Rabbi Dov Ber the Maggid of Mezerich (1710-1772), then concludes with the founder of the Lubavich (Chabad) Chasidic movement the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1747-1813). The three parts of this *deveykus* or serious spiritual yearning melody are musically similar, but with each part the intensity increases.

Typical of Chasidic songs, it is wordless, expressed as vocalized nonsense sounds such as "bim bom", "dai dai", "yam bam", etc. Each major Chasidic sect had their own melodies in their ecstatic spiritual quest in reaching God through song and prayer. Song was considered the "ladder to the throne of God." Rabbi Nakhman of Bratslav (1772-1810), the Medzhibozh-born great-grandson of the Besht who became the spiritual founder of the Bratslaver Chasidic sect, said, "All melodies are derived from the source of sanctity, from the Temple of Song. Impurity knows no song, for it is the source of all melancholy." In the Bratslaver sect, each Chasid pictured himself as the master of dance and music, flowing from their own sense of inner beauty.[12] With regard to wordless songs (the *Nigun*) unique in history only to the Chasidic movement, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi wrote, "Melody is the outpouring of the soul. Words interrupt the stream of emotions. The songs of the souls, at the time they are swaying in the high regions to drink from the well of the Almighty King, consist of tones only, dismantled of words."[13]

Nigun Hameshulash



The following story shows the power and influence of song to the spirituality of the early Chasidic movement. It tells of the relationship of song in the life of Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov.

The Baal Shem's daughter Udel was a grown girl. She said to him, "Father, when shall I know my husband?" Rabbi Israel loved his daughter; he stroked her hair. She said, "Father, shall I be a mother of children?"

Rabbi Israel told her, "Your husband is hidden among the scholars who come here to me. You must wait until a sign points him out to you."

On Simkhas Torah, the feast of the Law, there was pious dancing in the house of the Baal Shem Tov. The students danced, and Israel danced with them; they danced with wildest ecstasy for love of the holy Torah. And in the midst of their mad whirling, one of the students lost his shoe. It flew right off his foot.

Then he sang out a popular verse:

"A maiden will put
The shoe on my foot,
A mother will rock
The babe in her cradle!"

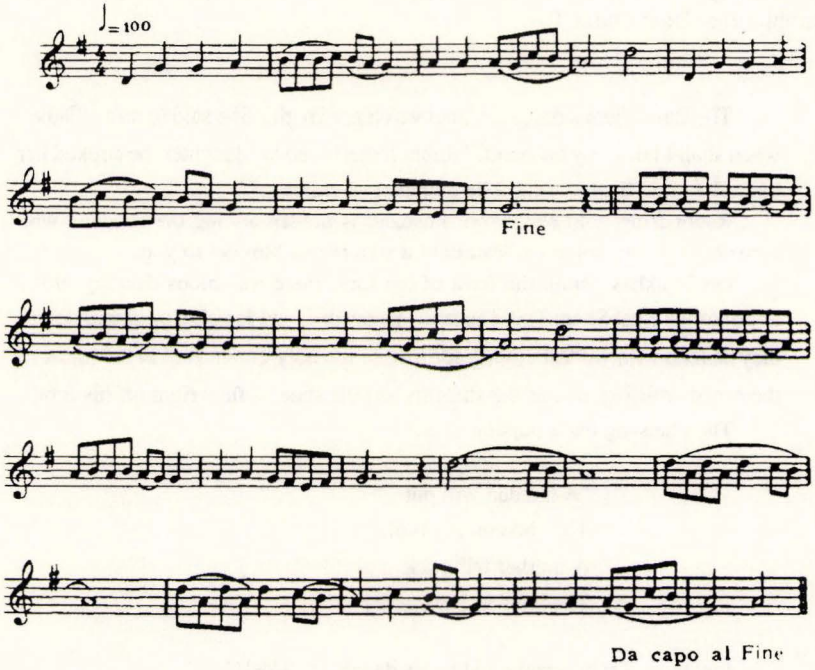
Just then, Rabbi Israel cried to his daughter, "Udel!"

Then the girl became so confused she didn't know where to find the student's slipper. So she sat down and took off both of her own slippers and gave them to the young man.

And she married that man.[14] And from their union two sons and a daughter were born. One son grew up to be the Tsadik of Sudilkov, and the other was Rabbi Borukh of Medzhibozh. The daughter was named Feiga.[15]

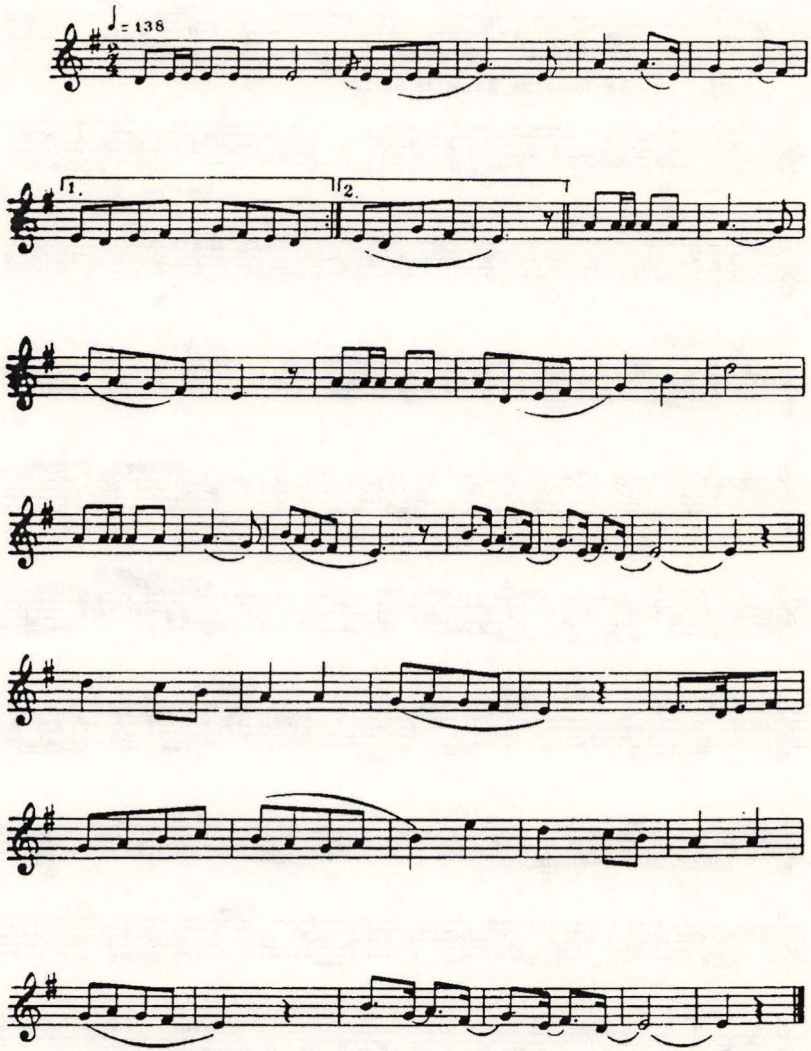
More Wordless Melodies

The following song is a wordless "Nigun", recorded by An-sky in 1913, sung by L. Melamed of Derazhnia.[16]

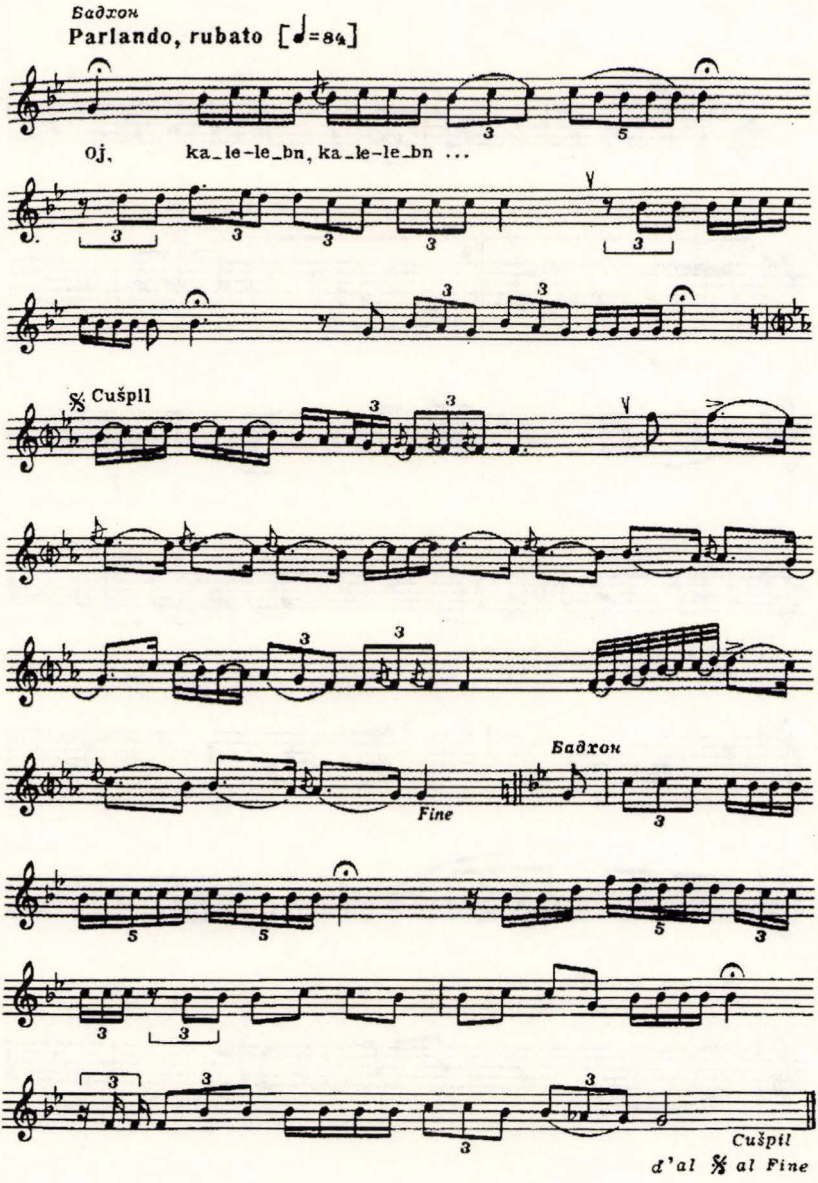


Recording songs during the An-sky expeditions.
Z. Kiselhof (with the white hat), a member of the An-sky expeditions, records folk songs sometime between 1911 and 1914. Some of these recordings were included in Beregovski's collections. Courtesy of YIVO.

The following song is a wordless "Freylekhes", was transcribed during the 1913 An-sky ethnographic expedition. It is sung by an unidentified man of Medzhibozh.[17]

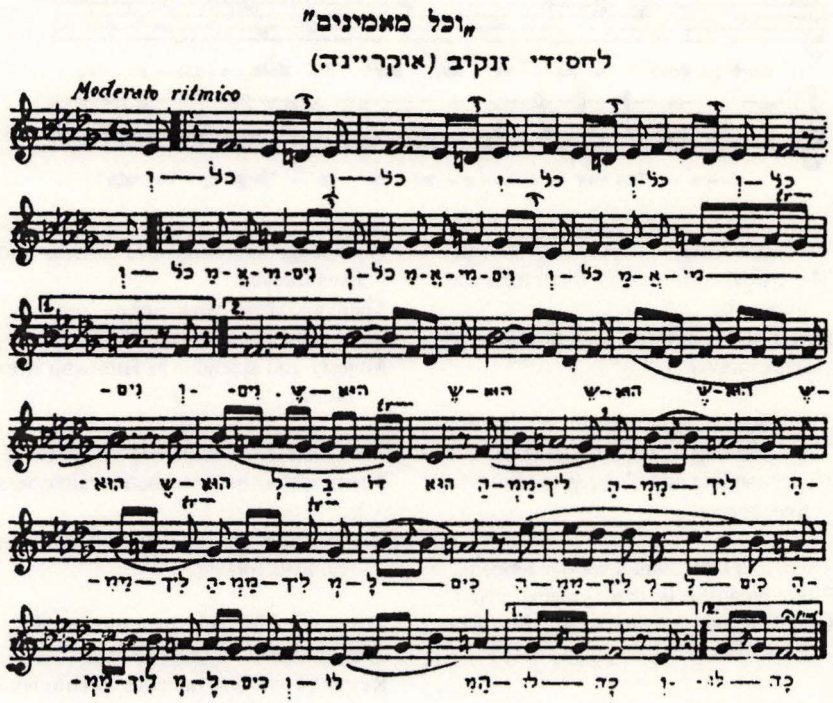


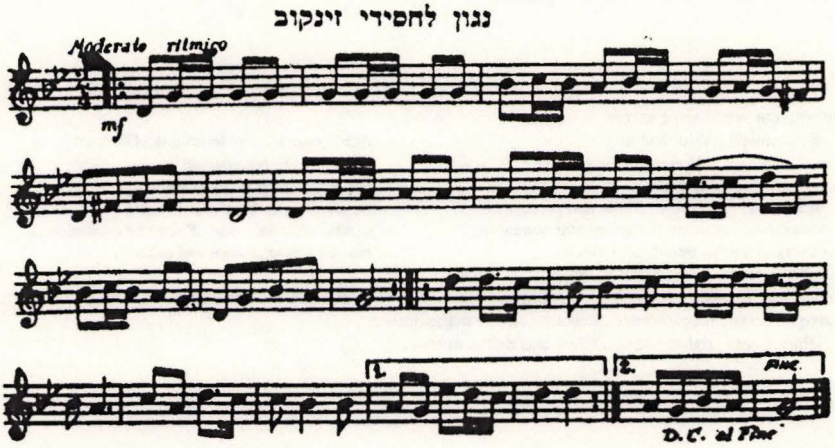
A *nigun* recorded in 1913 in Medzhibozh, sung by M. Gamerberg.[18]



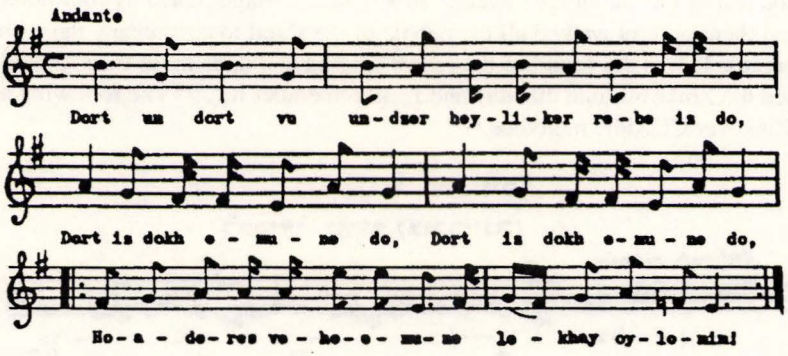
"Most of the Jews of Kupil were Zinkover Chasidim. Once when our family was visiting Kupil, the rebbe Rav Pinkhasel, the son of Rav Khaimel from Zinkov, was present in the village. I was about six at the time and I remember his departure from the *shtetl*. I climbed onto a large boulder next to the main road,

along with other children of the "white society"(*weisse khevreniks*) and from there we could watch as the rebbe left the village. His honor the rebbe, the *gabay*, and the rest of the entourage travelled slowly in a carriage pulled by four horses. Behind them on foot walked all the people of the shtetl to accompany the rebbe. Unforgettable was the sound of the crowd singing and dancing as they walked. I learned the Zinkover tune that day and I still remember it..."[19] The following are two Zinkover Chasidic melodies.[20]





The following is a repetitious Chasidic song from Derazhnia expressing adoration to the Rebbe.[21]



There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There trustworthiness is, there trustworthiness is,
Power and trustworthiness to Him who lives forever.

There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There blessing is, there blessing is,
Understanding and blessing to Him who lives forever.

There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There greatness is, there greatness is,
Grandeur and greatness to Him who lives forever.

There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There eloquence is, there eloquence is,
Knowledge and eloquence to Him who lives forever.

There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There splendor is, there splendor is,
Majesty and splendor to Him who lives forever.

There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There zealousness is, there zealousness is,
Convocation and zealousness to Him who lives forever.

There and there, wherever our rebbe is,
There radiance is, there radiance is,
Resplendence and radiance to Him who lives forever.

Subsequent verses same except:
...might...might...Valor and might...
...purity...purity...Adornment and purity...
...awe...awe...Oneness and awe...
...perception...perception...Torah and perception...
...dominion...dominion...Kingship and dominion...
...victory...victory...Beauty and victory...
...transcendence...transcendence...Supremacy and transcendence...
...humility...humility...Strength and humility...
...magnificence...magnificence...Redemption and magnificence...
...righteousness...righteousness...Glory and righteousness...
...righteousness...righteousness...Glory and righteousness...
...sanctity...sanctity...Invocation and sanctity...
...honor...honor...Crown and honor...
...exaltation...exaltation...Song and exaltation...
...praise...praise...Chant and praise...
...grace...grace...Adoration and grace...

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך אמונה דז, דערט איז דאך אמונה דז,
: האדרת והאמונה לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך ברכה דז, דערט איז דאך ברכה דז,
: הבינה והברכה — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך גדולה דז, דערט איז דאך גדולה דז,
: הנאווה והגדולה — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך דיבור דז, דערט איז דאך דיבור דז,
: הדעה והדיבור — לחי עולמים. :

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: ההוד וההדר — לחי עולמים. :

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: הוועד והוותיקות — לחי עולמים. :

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: חזיוו והזוהר — לחי עולמים. :

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: החיל והחוסן — לחי עולמים. :

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: המכס והטוהר — לחי עולמים. :

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: היִחוד והיִרְאה — לחי עולמים. :

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: הכּתר והכּבוד — לחי עולמים. :

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: הלקח והליבוּב — לחי עולמים. :

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: המלוכה והממשלה — לחי עולמים. :

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דערט איז דאך נצח דז, דערט איז דאך נצח דז,
: הנוי והנצח — לחי עולמים. :

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: הסינוי והשִׂגב — לחי עולמים. :

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דערט איז דאך ענווה דז, דערט איז דאך ענווה דז,
: העוו והענווה — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך פאר דז, דערט איז דאך פאר דז,
: הפּדות והפּאר — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך צדק דז, דערט איז דאך צדק דז,
: הצבי והצדק — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
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: הקריאה והקדושה — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
דערט איז דאך רוממות דז, דערט איז דאך רוממות דז,
: הרון והרוממות — לחי עולמים. :

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: השיר והשבח — לחי עולמים. :

דערט און דערט ווז אונדזער הייליקער רבי איז דז,
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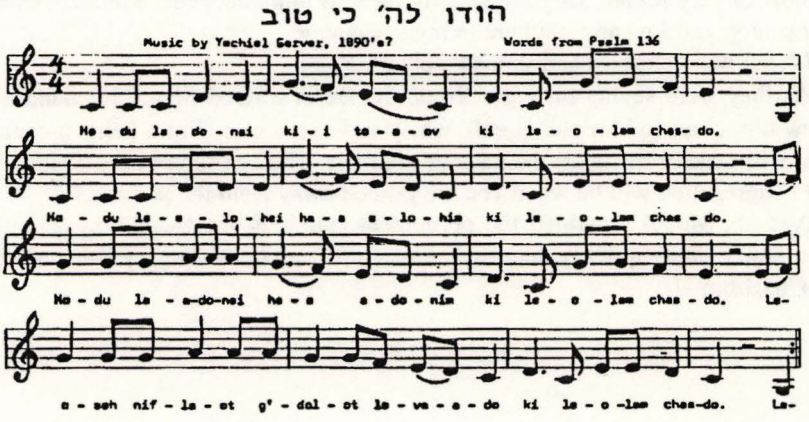
: התהילה והתּפּארת — לחי עולמים. :

Hodu Ladonai is a part of the traditional Jewish liturgy chanted at a variety of Jewish religious occasions. This unusual melody was from Yechiel Gerver of Medzhibozh (provided by Michael Gerver).



The Besht and his Cantor, Mendl

A rich wood merchant in Pilyave, a small town not far from Medzhibozh, was supporting a son-in-law of his who was quite steeped in Chasidism. His name was Mendl. Several times a year, Mendl together with his father-in-law, used to travel to Medzhibozh to get a blessing from the Besht and to drink deeply from the clear well of Chasidism.

After the death of his father-in-law, when Mendl had to start looking around for a means of livelihood, he came to Medzhibozh for the Besht's advice and guidance as to what he should undertake in order to be able to support himself and his family. The Besht listened to his request and told him to remain with him for the Sabbath, to pray with him in his *shul*, listen to his way of praying, but most of all to memorize the new melody to the prayer, "The Lord is God. He has robed Himself with grandeur," (the beginning of Psalm 93) which the Besht himself would sing this Sabbath for the very first time.

Mendl subserviently obeyed, and in the prayer welcoming the Sabbath, as soon as the Besht began to sing his new melody, Mendl listened very attentively, with great sensitivity. And he felt that the holy tones of the melody were etching themselves forever in his fevered brain. The whole Sabbath, all of his senses were poised, ready at any moment to begin singing the Besht's new prayer melody.

After the prayer which is said at the end of the Sabbath, the Besht called Mendl close to him, closed the door to his room so that they could have some privacy and said the following to him: "Mendl, when the prayer welcoming the Sabbath was said, did you hear my new melody? I'll sing it for you again now. Concentrate to learn it and be able to sing along."

"Rebbe, I feel that I learned your holy melody after hearing it only one time - and I know it already."

And he immediately began to sing "The Lord is God. He has robed Himself with grandeur," with such emotion and with such extraordinary ecstasy, just like the Besht had sung it during the prayer welcoming the Sabbath.

The Besht listened with great rapture to his sweet voice. He was quite amazed at how exactly Mendl sang the melody back to him and said: "Mendl, become my cantor, and I mean right here in my synagogue."

Mendl was delighted and immediately accepted.

As they were saying their goodbyes, the Besht offered Mendl his hand and drew him close to him and quietly whispered in his ear: "From being a cantor, you will make a living all the days of your life. The last time you will sing for the congregation will be when you are pushed away from the podium."

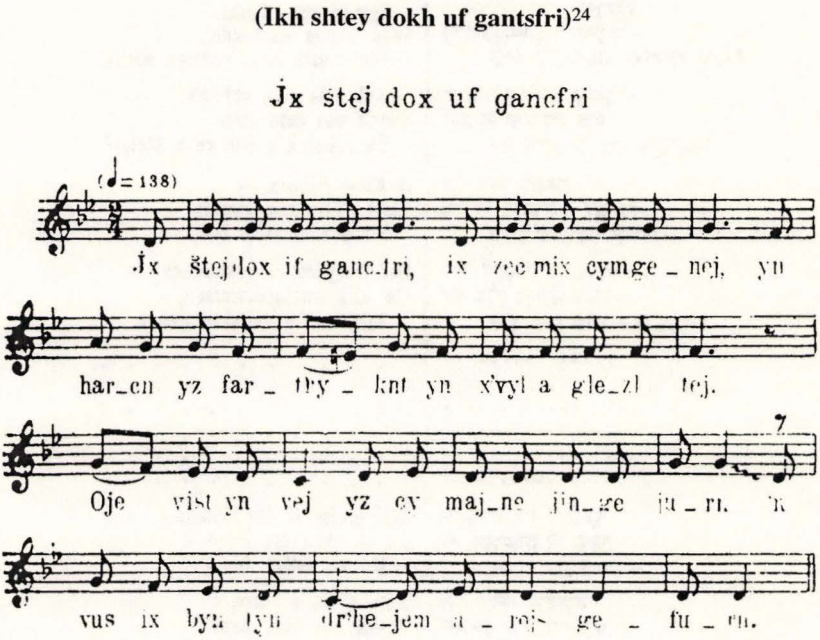
And so, Mendl remained the permanent cantor at the Besht's synagogue. The new melody quickly became famous and was soon sung by the majority of Chasidim.[22]

YIDDISH FOLK MELODIES

The following song was sung by Leyb Abromovich in the town of Medzhibozh and recorded sometime between 1911-14.[23]

I Get Up Early

(Ikh shtey dokh uf gantsfri)[24]



Translation:

Ikh shtey dokh uf gantsfri
Ikh zes mikh kum geney,
In hartsn iz fartruknt.
Un kh'vil a glezl tey.
Oy, vist un vey
Iz tsu mayne yunge yorn,
Vos ikh bin fun dr'heym avekgeforn.

I get up early
And sit at my sewing
My heart is dried up
And I want a glass of tea
Oy vey
To my young years
For leaving my home

The following song was collected and transcribed by M. Sh. Berlyand in Zinkov.[25]

אין קִיעוו אוֹף נאס, 1)
די אוֹיגן נאס,
זיצט א מיידעל א שיינע.

איהר שיינע פיגור,
איהר אייגעלע נאטור
פאסט נאר פאר א קצינה.

—זאג-זשע מיר, מיידעל,
וואס ביזטו אזוי אייגעל,
וואס מאכסו אזא טרויעריגע מינע?

—אך, מענש, ערבארעם,
שטרעק אויס דיין ארם
אוּן שיינק א נדבה א קליינע!

אין קיעוו געבארן, —
אייגעל דערציגן געוארן
מיט'ן שענסטן שטאם.

דער אומגליק איז געקומען
אוּן אלץ אוועקגענומען,
אלץ וואס מיר האבן געהאם,

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

וויי גרויס איז די שאנד
צו שטרעקן די האנד
אוּן צו בעטן געלם!

אך, גאם, ערבארעם,
שטרעק אויס דיין ארם
אוּן נעם מיר שוין צו פון דער וועלם!

In Kiew af'n Gass, [1])
Die Eigen nass,
Sitzt a Meidel a scheine.

Ihr scheine Figur,
Ihr eidele Natur
Passt nor var a Kzine.

—Sog-ze mir, Meidel,
Wos binstu asei eidel,
Wos hostu asa traurige Miene?

—Ach, Mensch, erbarm,
Streck aus dain Arm
Un scheink a Ndowe a kleine!

In Kiew geborn, —
Eidel derzeigen geworn
Mit'n schensten Stat.

Der Umglick is gekummen
Un allz awekgenummen,
Allz wos mir hoben gehat.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Wie greiss is die Schand
Zu strecken die Hand
Un zu betten Geld!

Ach, Gott, erbarm,
Streck aus dain Arm
Un nehm mir schoin zu vun der Welt!

In Kiev on the street
With wet eyes,
Sits a pretty girl

Her pretty figure
Her refined nature
Is fitting only for someone wealthy.

So tell me, young lady,
Why are you so refined,
Why do you look so sad?

Oh, person have pity,
Streatch out your arm
And give me a bit of alms.

Born in Kiev,
Respectably raised
With the best of everything.

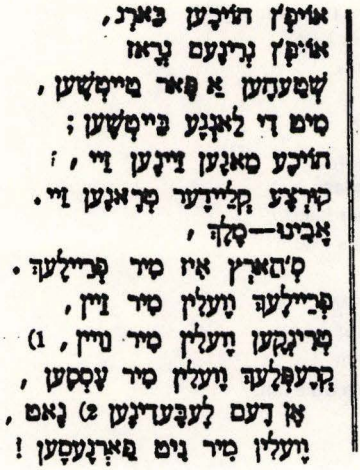
The misfortune occurred
and took everything away,
Everything that we had.

.....
.....

How great is my shame
To have to stretch out my hand
To beg for money!

Oh, God, have pity
Stretch out your arm
And take me from this world already!

A song transcribed by M. Sh. Berlyand in Zinkov prior to 1901.[26]



אויפ'ן הויכען בארג,	**Auf'n heichen Barg,**
אויפ'ן גרינעם גראז	**Auf'n grinem Gros**
שטעהען א פאר טייטשען,	**Steihen a Por Taitschen,**
מיט די לאנגע בייטשען;	**Mit die lange Baitschen;**
הויכע מאנען זיינען זיי,	**Heiche Mannen sainen sei,**
קורצע קליידער טראגען זיי.	**Kurze Kleider trogen sei.**
אבינו—מלך,	**Owinu-Meilech,**
ס'הארץ איז מיר פריילעך.	**'s Harz is mir freilech.**
פריילעך וועלין מיר זיין,	**Freilech welen mir sain,**
טרינקען וועלין מיר ווין, 1)	**Trinken welen mir Wain, 1)**
קרעפלעך וועלין מיר עסען,	**Kreplech welen mir essen,**
אן דעם לעבעדיגען 2) גאט,	**On dem lebedigen 2) Gott**
וועלין מיר ניט פארגעסען!	**Welen mir nit vargessen!**

On the high mountain,
On the green grass,
Stand two Germans
With their long whips;
They are tall men,
They wear short clothes[27]
Our Father, [our] King,
My heart is happy,
Happy we will be,
Wine we will drink,[28]
Kreplakh we will eat.
We will not forget
The living God.[29]

The following is a folk song from Letichev collected sometime between 1860 and 1870.[30]

Nischmas Kol khai issich is sehr gut unfain
Lomir di Toira mkabel sain
Die Toira hot geboten zeh nerlei Geboten
Haschem is borekh is unser Got
Got hot beschafen die ganze Welt
Odom horischon zum ersten gestelt
Odom horischon mitn naketen Laib
Got hot beschafen Chaweh'n far a waib
Chawe is gegangen in Wagarten arain
Sprozt ir der Epel in Hand arain
Nemt si dem Epel un git ihm a bis
Un Kukt sich arum wi sindig si is
Nemt si dem Blat un wikelt sikh arum
Sindige Lait, wi sindig si is!
Khaweh, Khaweh wos hostu gethun?
Die Schang hot mich ongeredt an Awehre zu thun.

That God breathed life into man is good and fine,
And man said "Let's receive the Torah!"
The Torah commanded Him to be our light!
God, Bless His Name, is our Lord.
God created the whole world.
Adam was the first figure,
Adam with his naked body.
God created Eve for his wife.
Eve went into the wine garden
And an apple blossom in her hand.
She takes the apple and bites into it
And looks around.
She knows that she has sinned.
Sinful people, how sinful she is!
Eve, Eve, what have you done?
"The snake convinced me to do a sin."

A song from Derazhnia.[31]

דאָרט שטייט א שמיבעלע, נאָר באַזינדער,
נים ווײַט פֿון די הײַזער לעבן טאָך;
דאָרט זיצט אַן אַלמנה מיט פֿיר קינדער,
ו: פֿאַראַרעמט, בלאַס און שוואַך. :ו

די קינדער ווייַנען נעבעך עסן,
און זי האָט זיי נים ווָאָס צו גיבן;
אין קרעטשמע זענען מיר געזעסן,
ו: פֿון דאָרט האָט מען אונדז אַרויסגעטריבן. :ו

There stands a cottage, quite separate,
Not far from the houses near the lake[32]
A widow with four children sits there,
Impoverished, pale and weak.

The chidren, poor things, cry for food,
And she has nothing to give them;
We sat in the tavern.
We were driven out of there.

WEDDINGS

Weddings were among the most joyous events in Jewish culture. The music was infectious and upbeat and the celebration lasted sometimes for a whole week. It was a community event.

"We used to dance at weddings. If it's a wedding in a little town, everybody goes. It doesn't matter if it's Jews or if it's Gentiles. They brought the klezmorim from Brisk - Antshl the klezmer and his band. They played fiddle, drum, and trumpet, and sometimes there was a *tsimbl* [hammered dulcimer]. And the badkhen came too. We did all kinds of dances: *koketke, kozatske, krakovyak, shrayer, sher, broyges tants, mitsve tants,* quadrille, waltz, paraged waltz, charleston, tango, polka, fox trot, and other ones. Sometimes they would invite me and my brother to sing. We'd sing songs with a marriage theme during dinner."[33]

A klezmer band.
From the An-sky Collection, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg. ca 1911-14.

Rose Pesotta of Derazhnia in the early 1900s remembered:[34]

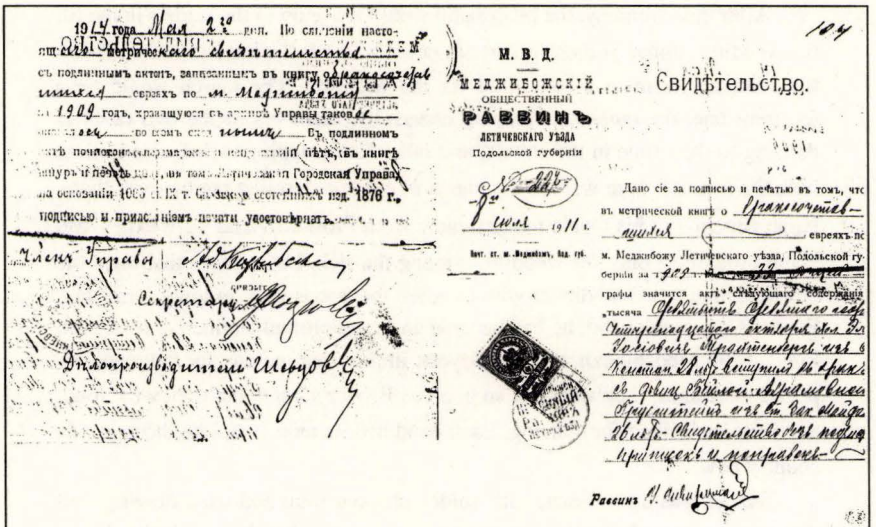
> When a wedding among our people was scheduled, the family of the bride-elect usually made the arrangements for the ceremony and feasting afterward. and the ceremony, weather permitting, generally took place in front of the *shul*....
>
> First in the procession would come a lot of youngsters, then the musicians, the number depending upon the ability of the bride's family to pay for them; next the bride flanked by both mothers; then the bridegroom, the two fathers, and the bridesmaids; and finally, other relatives, invited guests, and many uninvited Derazhnia folk. A wedding was good for a crowd that filled the street for a block. Confetti and fireworks gave the scene a festive, carnival appearance.
>
> In keeping with the ritual, the marriage was solemnized beneath a square canopy, with a pole at each corner, held aloft by four young men. In the course of the ceremony performed by the rabbi, the bride and groom and their parents walked in a circle several times, symbolically setting up an invisible wall against harm to the couple. And the bride and groom each took a sip of wine and then crushed the wineglass beneath their heels to symbolize stamping out all emotional attachment to the past.
>
> There was a long recital by the rabbi, exchange of vows, the placing of the ring on the bride's finger, and, at the end, the kissing of the bride by her kindred, friends, and everybody else.
>
> Once, when a wedding party came from out of town, guests observed that a tall young man, recognized as one of the coach drivers, repeatedly kissed the bride. Relatives on each side imagined he was a kin to the other side. Someone asked him: "Are you related to the bride or to the groom?"
>
> "With such a sweet bride," he answered, "must a fellow be a relative to kiss her?" And he did it again...
>
> From time immemorial, it had been the custom of the Jews of the Pale to have their bride's hair shaved off on her wedding day, so that she would not be attractive to other men. In the course of the marriage ceremony, the groom would throw a white silk kerchief on her bowed head with her girlish hairdo, and henceforth she was never seen without it. But in my day, that custom had changed radically; only in extreme orthodox families was it observed. My mother wore a wig, fashioned by a local wig-maker from her own cut-off hair into a pompadour, the fashion of that period...
>
> The girls of my generation never bothered about the old rule, and were usually married in a modern veil with artificial orange blossoms, after their weddings, they continued wearing their hair in their own favorite way, and if fashion so dictated, used a false switch or curls.

After the ceremony, the procession would move on to the bride's home for the wedding supper, if there was room enough for all the invited guests; if not, the company went to a hall hired for the occasion. The march would be a leisurely one, the musicians playing cheerfully, members of the two families dancing to their tune in the streets, and other folk clapping their hands in time with the music. There were name bands in existence in that region even them. Hirsh Broder and his music-makers came from Proskurov and were expensive, being brought in only for weddings among the rich. I remember that once the young soldier who had dinner with us when the troops were in town came with Broder's top-notch band; he had become an accomplished clarinetist. Itzik Leib Pinya, from Medzhibozh, and his players, improvised melody for the medium-priced marriages; they were not so good as Broder's band, but they were loud, and were well-liked for dancing. Each band had its own fans, like those in this country now.

Supper was a real feast, with golden chicken soup and wine flowing, and then every man and woman present would be expected to dance with the bride. In the midst of this merriment, the wedding gifts would be announced. Usually the band-leader would handle this. He would be a person with a ready tongue and some wit, a forerunner of the M.C. of today.

"Moishe Friedman, on the bride's side, is giving one hundred rubles," he would say. "Avrum Shapiro, a cousin of the groom, gives ten rubles." The guests would applaud each announcement. Naturally there was keen interest in seeing who would outbid others, or who would be practical and give silverware and household articles or only a small sum that he could really afford. Some were realistic enough to contribute as little as half a ruble.

To the accompaniment of violin or flute, the master of ceremonies would intone an admonition to the bride before the wedding ceremony, including jests that were not always subtle. As he went into detail, ad libbing about what the girl might expect in her marital life, the women would wipe moist eyes with handkerchiefs or aprons. When the older women were asked why the tears they would reply: "They just come, maybe from happiness," and more tears would stream down their cheeks. Unmarried girls would stand in groups and giggle, hoping their turn would come next. Such an affair would last until the small hours of the morning, sometimes until dawn.



Marriage Certificate from Letichev District.
This official certification was issued by the Medzhibozh Crown Rabbi for the marriage of Beyla Grubshteyn and Ilya Trachtenberg, in 1914. It was apparently required by the Podolia Gubernia authorities and required a payment of 25 kopeks for the official recording fees. Courtesy of Sonya Breidbart.

In Letichev District, most of the pre-twentieth century Jewish marriages were arranged by the parents of the bride and groom. These were usually legal arrangements complete with formal written contracts. Often there were two such contracts—a Letter of Engagement and the marriage contract itself (called a *Ketuba*). The following is the Letter of Engagement of Rose Gold's parents. This contract was written in Letichev in March 6, 1900:[35]

> Mazel Tov (Congratulations)!
>
> May it come about and flourish as a well-watered garden, as they say in the West, "He who finds a wife, has found goodness."
>
> May he who has determined that which was in the beginning and that which will be in the end, give a good name and future to these statements of conditions and contract that were stipulated between the parties; that is, on the one hand, the woman, Mrs. Enia daughter of Mr. Shmuel Mordechai who represents her son, the bridegroom, the important fellow, Master Khaim Yisrael son

of Shmuel and the second party, Mr. Simcha son of Mr. Mordechai who represents his daughter, the virgin, the bride, Miss Sarah daughter of Mr. Simcha.

Firstly, the young man, the bridegroom, Master Khaim Yisrael, shall marry for his good fortune the bride, the virgin, Miss Sarah through the requirements of the khupah and sanctification according to the Law of Moses and Israel, that they shall not remove nor conceal property, neither he from her, nor she from him but they should govern their assets in full equality, that they should live together in love, in unity, and in peace, and in companionship, as is the common custom.

The woman, the aforementioned Mrs. Enia is obligated to give gifts to the bride as is the custom among proper society, in addition to providing the bridegroom with clothing for the Sabbath and holidays and for workdays as is the custom of proper society. The man, the aforementioned Simcha, is obligated to give a dowry for his daughter, the bride, Miss Sarah, the amount of two hundred rubles, thusly: 200 payable at the time of writing down the stipulated conditions...also to provide clothing to the bride for the Sabbath and holidays and for workdays, as is the custom in proper society.

The time of the wedding is, God willing, one week from now...may it come upon us for good... A fine is to be paid by the party that breaks the agreement to the party that fulfills it in the amount of half the dowry...

Witness from the side of the bridegroom, Mr. Yehuda son of Mr. Yaakov. Witness from the side of the bride, Mr. Avraham son of Mr. Simcha. The parties are obligated to compensate the abovementioned witnesses, may no harm fall upon them, God forbid.

The legal force of the agreement that has been written and explained above between the abovementioned parties and the witnesses has been made proper and binding.

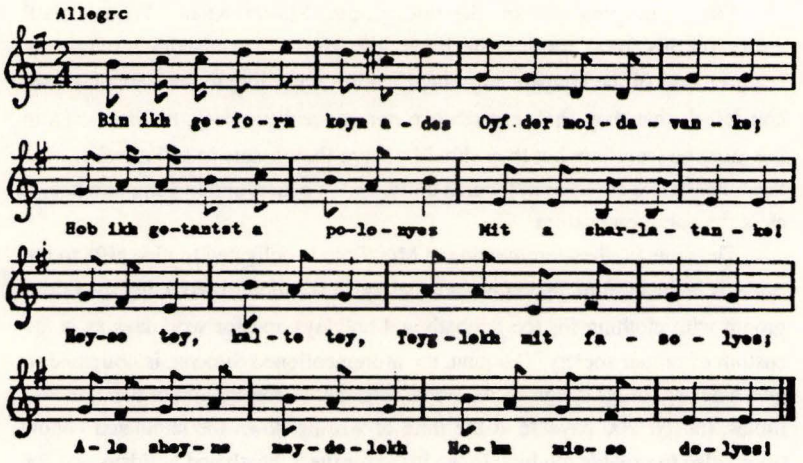
Upon this we have come to affix our signatures this day Tuesday, the fifth day in the month of Adar II of the year 5660 in this place Letichev. And everything is firm and binding.

Signed: Michael son of Khaim Dov

Signed: Shmuel son of Mr. Meir

It was not uncommon in the eighteenth century for Jews to try to make expensive weddings, possibly in an attempt to imitate the wealthy Polish landlords. Unfortunately these affairs led to debts, drunkenness and coarse behavior. In an effort to put an end to this problem , specific regulations were passed by the religious leaders of the communities. In the town of Bar these rules included the limitation of alcohol and the limitation of the number of guests.[36]

From Medzhibozh, a dance song.[37]



בין איך געפֿאָרן קיין אדעס
אויף דער מאָלדאַוואַנקע;
האָב איך געטאַנצט א פּאָלאָניעז
מיט א שארלאַטאַנקע!

I travelled to Odessa
On the Moldau Ferry,
There I danced a Polonese
With a licentious woman!

הייסע טיי, קאַלטע טיי,
טייגלעך מיט פֿאַסאָליעס;
אַלע שיינע מיידעלעך
האָבן מיאוסע דאָליעס!

Hot tea, cold tea,
Dough and string beans;
All the pretty girls
Have ugly futures!

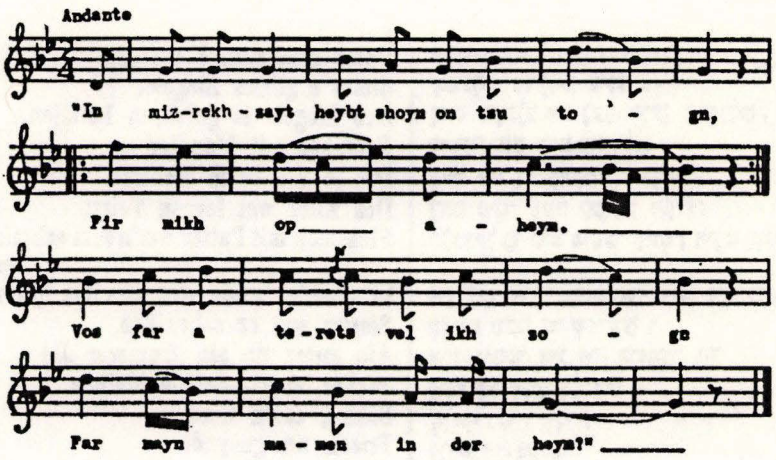
וואָס האָסטו געקאָכט א גאַנצע וואָך?
טייגלעך מיט פֿאַסאָליעס;
וואָס האָסטו געקאָכט אויף שבת נאָך?
פֿאַרפֿל מיט בארבאָליעס.

What have you cooked for a whole week?
Dough delicacies and green beans;
What else did you cook for the Sabbath?
Farfl with *varvalies*.[38]

הייסע טיי, קאַלטע טיי,
טייגלעך מיט פֿאַסאָליעס;
אַלע שיינע מיידעלעך
האָבן מיאוסע דאָליעס!

Hot tea, cold tea,
Dough and string beans;
All the pretty girls
Have ugly futures!

A song from Medzhibozh.[39]



„אין מיזרח־זײַט הייבט שוין אָן צו טאָגן,
וו: פֿיר מיך אַף אַהיים. :וו
וואָס פֿאַר אַ תּירוץ וועל איך זאָגן
פֿאַר מײַן מאַמען אין דר׳יים?"

„דעם ערשטן תּירוץ זאָלסטו זאָגן,
וו: אַז דו האָסט געאַרבעט שפּעט; :וו
דעם צווייטן תּירוץ זאָלסטו זאָגן,
אַז דו האָסט געבלאָנדזשעט אין וועג".

"In the east, day is already breaking
Take me home.
What excuse will I tell
My mother at home?"

"The first excuse you should give
Is that you worked late;
The second excuse you should give
Is that you lost your way."

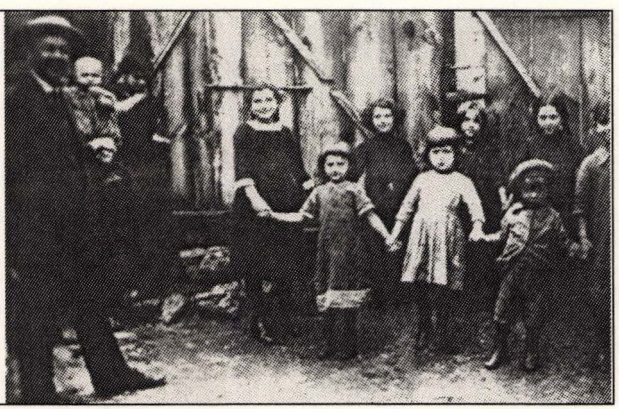
CHILDREN'S SONGS

The following song was also transcribed by M. Sh. Berlyand in Zinkov prior to 1901.[40]

אונטער דעם קינדס ווינעלע
שטעהט אנגילדען ציגעלע.
דאס ציגעלע איז נעפאהרען האנדלען,
ראזשינקעס מים מאנדלען —
דאס איז די בעסטע קויפה.
דאס קינד וועט לערנען תורה;
פלעצעלעך מים פוטער וועט'ן אים שמירען,
אין חדר ארין וועט מען אים פירען.
ספרים וועט ער שרייבען,
אין גוטער אונ אין פרומער יוד
וועט ער אים בלייבען.
שלאף, מיין קינד,
פרישלעך אונ געזונד!
א שלאף אויף דיר א גוטער,
ווי פאר-טאג אויפ דעם היטער!

Unter dem Kind's Wiegele
Steiht a gilden Ziegele.
Dos Ziegele is gefohren handlen,
Rozinkes mit Mandlen—
Dos is die beste S'cheire.
Dos Kind wet lernen Teire;
Plezelech mit Putter wet'n ihm schmieren,
In Cheider arain wet men ihm fihren.
Sforim wet er schraiben,
Ain guter un ain frummer Jid
Wet er 'm-irze-Schem blaiben.
Schlof, Main Kind,
Frisch un gesynd!
A Schlof auf dir a gyter,
Wie var-Tog auf dem Hiter!

Under a child's cradle
Stands a little golden goat.
The goat went to do business,
Raisins and almonds—
That the best merchandise.
The child will study Torah;
Flat breads with butter will be
smeared for him.
He will be brought to *kheder.*
Religious books he will write,
A good Jew, a religious Jew
He will, will God's help remain.
Sleep my child,
Fresh and healthy![41]
May you enjoy your sleep
Like the watchman, the dawn.[42]



Children playing and dancing. From the An-sky expeditions of 1911-14. Courtesy of YIVO.

The following song was passed through the Zimmerman family from Letichev. It is a children's nursery rhyme usually performed on infant and toddlers with some hand movements. The words are said more as an exaggerated rhyme than a real song. It is interesting to note that the version passed down through the Zimmerman family was altered from the original with a few extra Yiddish words. Obviously, the meaning of the original Russian words were not known to the perveyors of the family tradition and were corrupted over time. Amazingly, much of it survives intact, given nearly a century of repetition of what amounts to nonsense words to the performers of the rhyme.[43]

1.	Sorika varona	
	Git im kachka varona	*Yiddish:* Give him duck varona
	Na pripachika tamadala	
	Na pripachika tamadala	
2.	Tamadala	
	Tamadala	
	Tamadala	
	Tamadala	
	Tamadala	
3.	Meezala, Mazala	*Yiddish:* Wousy, Mousy (little mouse)
	Meezala, Mazala	
4.	Kitch, kitch, kitch, kitch	

Hand movements: 1 - tapping palm of hand of the child in rhythm with the words
2 - close child's fingers one at a time
3 - circles in the palm of the child's hand
4 - finger walk up the child's outstretched arm and tickle

The "original" version, entirely in Russian, is still said today in Ukraine. The entire rhyme is an allusion to a mother bird feeding her chicks.[44]

1.	Sorika varona	*a bird native to Ukraine*
	Kashu varila, dytok carmila	Cook kasha, feed children
	Na pripachika tam'dala	On the stove, give it to him
	Na pripachika tam'dala	On the stove, give it to him
2.	Tam'dala	Give it to him
	Tam'dala	Give it to him
	Tam'dala	Give it to him
	Tam'dala	Give it to him
	Tama-nyet	Don't give it to him
3.	Kitch, kitch, kitch, kitch	

Hand movements: 1 - tapping palm of hand of the child in rhythm with the words
2 - yank on child's fingers one at a time, ending with the thumb
3 - finger walk up the child's outstretched arm and tickle

From Medzhibozh, a children's nonsense rhyme.[45]

ענגעלע, בענגעלע,
שטופ א סטענגעלע.
פיף, פאף!
גאגל ברי!
אנע זאנע,
קומט די פאנע,
גרייט צום טיש
און כאפט אראפ
די גרעסטע שטיק פיש.

Engele, bengele	
Shtop a stengele.	Push a little ribbon.
Pif, paf!	
Gugl, bray!	
Aneh, Zaneh	
Komt di parne,	The lady is coming,
Gryt tsum tish	Set the table
Un khapt arap	And grab off
Di greste stik fish.	The largest piece of fish.

Another from Medzhibozh, a children's rhyme.[46]

א מאל איז געווען א באבעטשקע,
האט זי געהאט א הינדעלע א ראבעטשקע.
דאס הינדעלע האט געלייגט אן אייעלע,
איז געוואָרן צווייעלע.
הון אייעלע,
האן קרייעלע,
קאטשקע פוטערל,
גאט איז א גוטערל.

Once there was an old grandmother	
And she had a little speckled chick.	
The little chick laid a little egg,	
Then there were two.	
The little egg of the chicken,	
Little crowing of the rooster,	
The down coat of a duckling,	
G-d is good.	

From Letichev, a children's song.[47]

Chorus:	Chorus:
Kosheliok dorogoi	Dearest Kid,[48]
Vtiebe vsia sila dushevnie nash pokoi	You have the power and the heartfelt peace
Damu eel devizu kol zavletsch chotitie	If you want to lure a girl
Vi eem koskelotshek pokazshite	You better show her the kid
Chorus	Chorus
Chot deviza shtepka lish bila bogata	In spite of the fact she is very rich
Ludiam isa deneg nritsia a vata	She likes the money and the kid
Chorus	Chorus
Livdi is sa deneg tchesti narushant	People can do almost everthing because of money
Akasiri v kasu lapi sanuskaut	But rich people count their money

Love and Romance

A ballad from Derazhnia.[49]

צי האָט איר געהערט, וואָס עס האָט זיך געטראָפֿן,
צי האָט איר געזען מיט אײַערע אויגן?
רייזעלע האָט זיך אין מענדלען פֿאַרליבט
און האָט אים פֿון וויַיב און קינד אָפּגעצויגן.

„מײַערע רייזעלע, רייזעלע־לעבן,
צי האָב איך דיך אָפֿילו געווואָלט קענען?
איך האָב מיר בײַ דײַן מאַטן קעסטל אָנגעדונגען,
האָסטו געזאָגט, איך זאָל דיך נעמען.

אז איך זאָל דיך נעמען, רייזעלע מײַן לעבן,
ווי קאָן דען אזא זאַך זײַן?
איך האָב אין דר'יים* א וויַיב מיט א קינד,
אין גיהנום וועט מען מיך ניט לאָזן ארײַן".

„וואָס טויג מיר דער גיהנום, מענדעלע מײַן לעבן,
פֿאַר אונדז וועט דאָ זײַן א גן־עדן;
דין אָפּ פֿאָניען און גט דיך מיט דײַן וויַיב
און קום צו אונדז פֿאַר אַן אײדעם".

רייזעלע ליובע, רייזעלע מײַן לעבן,
וואָס שלאָגסטו מיט אײַדן בלאָטן?
מענדל האָט א וויַיב מיט אַן אײַנציק קינד
און דערצו איז ער נאָך א סאָלדאָט.

„איך האָב זיך ערשט מיט מענדלען אָפּגעזעגנט,
געגעבן האָט ער מיר זײַן האַנט,
געשווויירן האָט ער מיר בײַ זײַן לעבן,
אז ביז אייביק וועלן מיר זײַן בײַ נאָנד".

קאַוואַלערן און מאַמזעלן, צי איז אײַך דאָס געפֿעלן?
סע כאָפּט אָזש אַן א גרויל בײַם לייַב!
מענדל האָט שוין זײַן וויַיב ציפּקע געגט
און נעמט שוין רייזעלען פֿאַר א וויַיב.

Have you heard what happened,
Have you seen it with your own eyes?
Reyzle has fallen in love with Mendl
And has separated him from his wife and children.

"Darling Reyzle, Reyzle my dear,
Did I ever want to know you?
I paid your father to eat at your house,
You said that I should marry you.

That I should marry you, Reyzele my dear,
How could such a thing be?
I have a wife and child at home,
I won't even be permitted into hell."

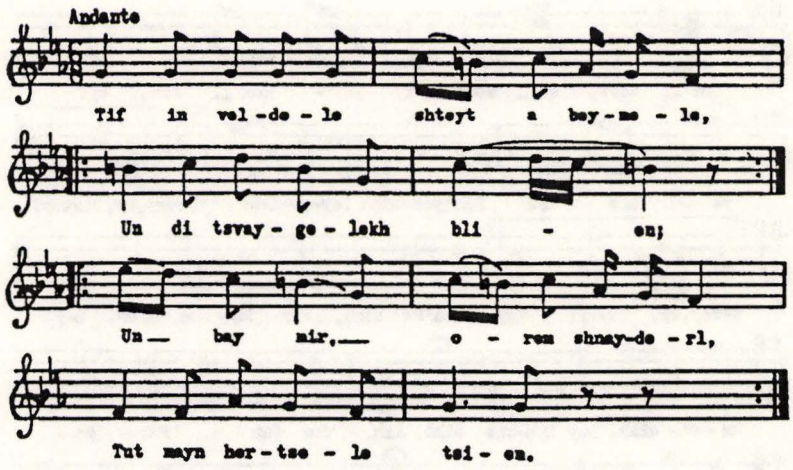
"What do I need hell for, Mendele my dear,
For us life here will be paradise;
Finish your tour of duty in the Russian Army and divorce your wife
And come to us as a son-in-law."

Reyzele my love, Reyzele my dear,
Why are you so persistent?
Mendl has a wife and an only child,
And, in addition, he's still a soldier

"I have just said goodbye to Mendl.
He gave me his hand.
He swore to me on his life,
That we will be together forever."

Young men and young ladies, how do you like this?
I shudder to think of it!
Mendle has already divorced his wife, Tsipke,
And is taking Reyzl as his wife.

A love song from Medzhibozh.[50]



טיף אין וועלדעלע שטייט א ביימעלע,
׀: און די צווײַגעלעך בלִיען; :׀
׀: און בײַ מיר, אַרעם שנײַדערל,
טוט מײַן הערצעלע צִיען. :׀

Deep in the woods stands a little tree,
And the branches bloom;
And my heart, poor tailor,
is drawn [to you].

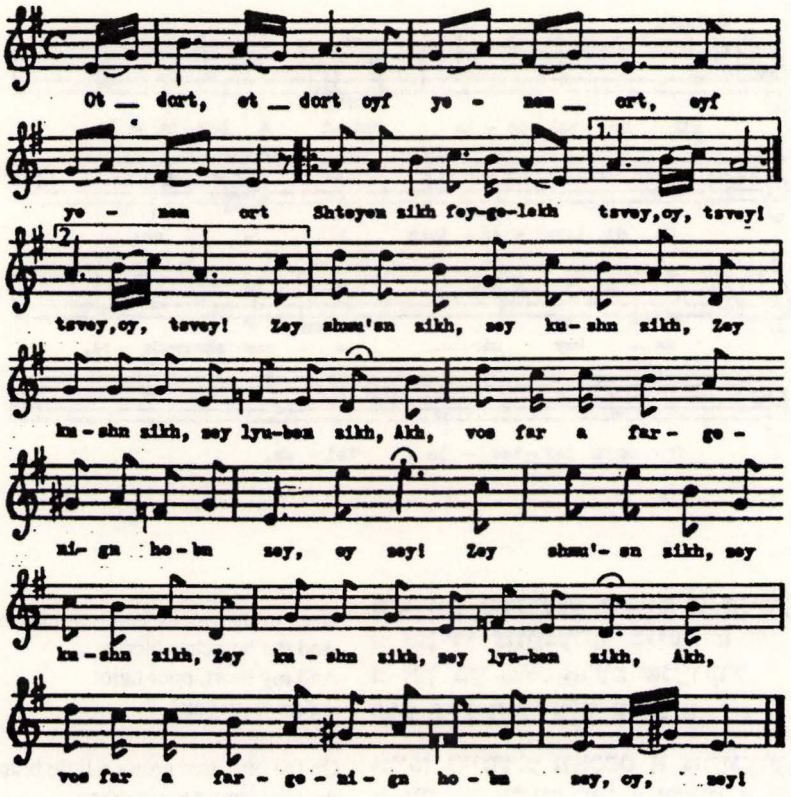
אויפֿן ביימעלע וואַקסט א צווײַגעלע,
׀: און די בלעטעלעך צוויטען; :׀
׀: און מײַן אַרעם, שוואַך הערצעלע
ציט צו מײַן זיסער איטען. :׀

On the little tree grows a little branch
And the leaves are budding;
And my poor, weak heart
Is drawn to my sweet Ethan.

אויפֿן צווײַגעלע שטייט א פֿייגעלע,
׀: און דאָס פֿייגעלע פּישטשעט; :׀
׀: און בײַ מיר, אַרעם שנײַדערל,
מײַן שוואַך הערצעלע טרישטשעט. :׀

On the little branch stands a little bird,
And the little bird chirps;
And my weak heart,
Poor tailor, cries.

Another song from Medzhibozh.[51]



אָם דאָרט, אָם דאָרט אויף יענעם אָרט, אויף יענעם אָרט
שמייען זיך פֿייגעלעך צוויי, אוי, צוויי! צוויי, אוי, צוויי!
זיי שמו'סן זיך, זיי קושן זיך,
זיי קושן זיך, זיי ליובען זיך,

אך, וואָס פֿאַר א פֿאַרגעניגן האָבן זיי, אוי, זיי!
זיי שמו'סן זיך, זיי קושן זיך,
זיי קושן זיך, זיי ליובען זיך,
אך, וואָס פֿאַר א פֿאַרגעניגן האָבן זיי, אוי, זיי!

Over there, over there, in that place in that place
Stands two little birds, Oh, two! Two, oh, two!
They talk together and kiss each other,
They kiss each other, they love each other.

Oh, what pleasure they have, my, my!
They talk together, they kiss each other,
They kiss each other, they love each other,
Oh, what pleasure they have, my, my!

From Medzhibozh, a military town, a song showing the hardship of military duty on young love.[52]

דער ערשטער אנפאנג פון אונדזער ליבע
איז געווען צוקער זים;
אבער דער סוף פון אונדזער ליבע
האט זיך אויסגעלאזן זייער מיאוס.

„איין זאך וועל איך דיר זאגן,
איין זאך וועל איך דיך בייטן:
זאלסט זיך ארויסגנבענען פון דיין שטוב,
און פֿאָרן זאלסטו מיך באלייטן".

„פֿאָרן וועל איך דיך באלייטן,
פונעם טויער ביז צום באן;"
אנגעקושט און אנגעליובעט —
ביז דער פּאיעזד איז אוועקגעגאן.

אז דער פּאיעזד איז אוועקגעגאן,
בין איך געבליבן בים וואקזאל;
ווי מיין זים-לעבן איז אוועקגעפֿאָרן
האב איך ארויסגעלאזט א גרויס קול!

„ווייַן ניט, דושעניו, ווייַן ניט, ליובעניו,
מיר וועלן נאך ביידע זיין א פּאָר;
שווער מיר צו ביַי דיין לעבן,
אז וואַרטן וועסטו אויף מיר פֿינעף יאָר!"

פֿינעף יאָר וועל איך אויף דיר וואַרטן,
ביז מיין מזל וועט זיין גרויס;
און אפֿשר וועט מיר גאָט העלפֿן
און מיט א זשערעב וועסטו ארויס?

איך האב געמיינט, אויף דיַינע רייד
וועל איך קענען שטעלן מויערן;
אבער דו האסט מיר מיין קאָפּ פֿאַרדרייט,
אז שטענדיק זאל איך גיין און טרויערן.

The first beginning of our love
Was sugar sweet;
But the ending of our love
Was very ugly.

"I will tell you one thing,
I will ask one thing of you,
That you sneak out of your house
And accompany me."

"I will accompany you
From your gate to the train;"
We kissed and embraced
Until the train left.

And when the train left,
I remained at the station;
As soon as my darling left,
I let out a great cry!

"Don't cry, my sweetheart. Don't cry, my love.
The two of us will yet be a couple;
Swear to me on your life,
That you will wait five years for me!"

I will wait five years for you.
Until my fortune will be great;
And perhaps G-d will help me
And you'll finish your military duty.

I thought that on your words
I would be able to erect a brick building,
But you fooled me,
So that I will always be sad.

Another song from Medzhibozh, expressing love for the *melamed*, or *kheder* schoolteacher. Perhaps this represents a typical schoolgirl crush.[53]

אַברהמעלע מלמד,
אַברהמעלע מלמד!
וואָס שטייסטו בײַ דעם פֿענצטער?
אַברהמעלע מלמד,
דו ביסט בײַ מיר דער שענסטער,
אַ: אַברהמעלע מלמד! :אַ

Avremele the schoolteacher,
Avremele the schoolteacher!
Why are you standing by the window?
Avremele the schoolteacher,
I think you're the handsomest,
Avremele the schoolteacher!

אַברהמעלע מלמד,
וואָס שטייסטו בײַ דער טיר?
אַברהמעלע מלמד,
קום אַהער צו מיר!
אַ: אַברהמעלע מלמד! :אַ

Avremele the schoolteacher,
Why are you standing by the door?
Avremele the schoolteacher,
Come over here to me!
Avremele the schoolteacher!

אַברהמעלע מלמד,
זעץ דיך דא אַנידער!
אַברהמעלע מלמד,
ווער אַ גוטער־בריידער!
אַ: אַברהמעלע מלמד! :אַ

Avremele the schoolteacher,
Sit down over here!
Avremele the schoolteacher,
Become my good friend!
Avremele the schoolteacher!

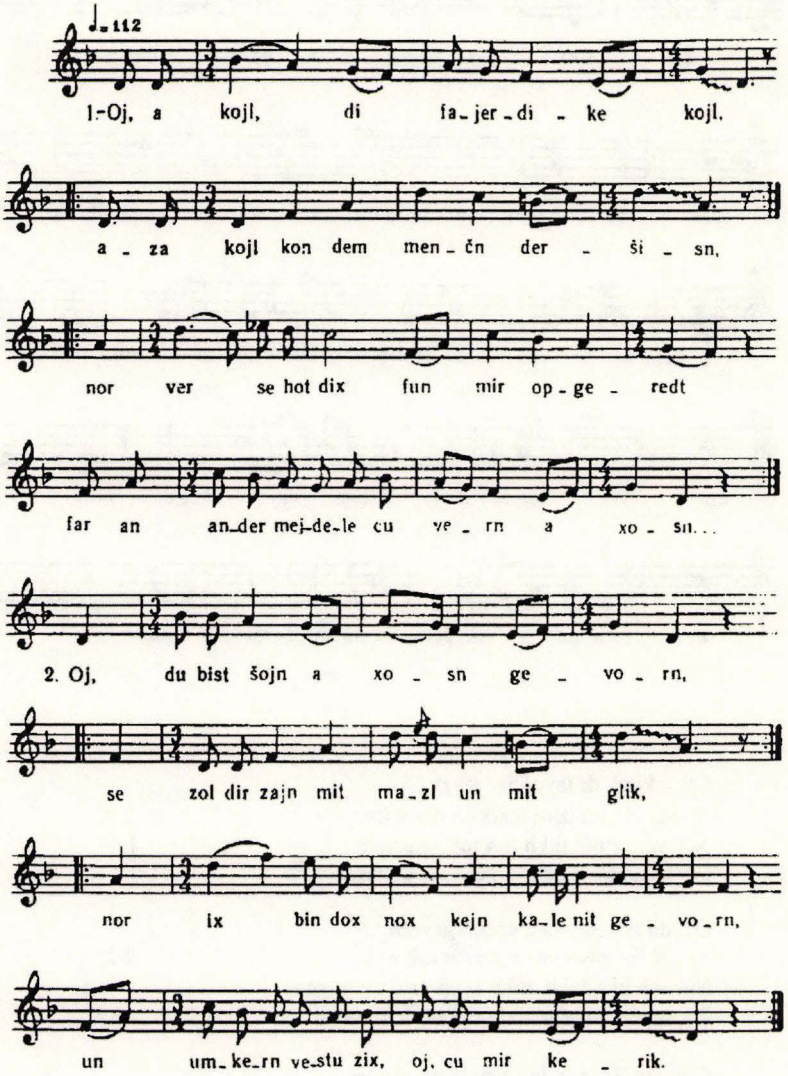
אַברהמעלע מלמד,
טרינק אַ גלעזעלע ביר;
אַברהמעלע מלמד,
רוק דיך צו צו מיר!
אַ: אַברהמעלע מלמד! :אַ

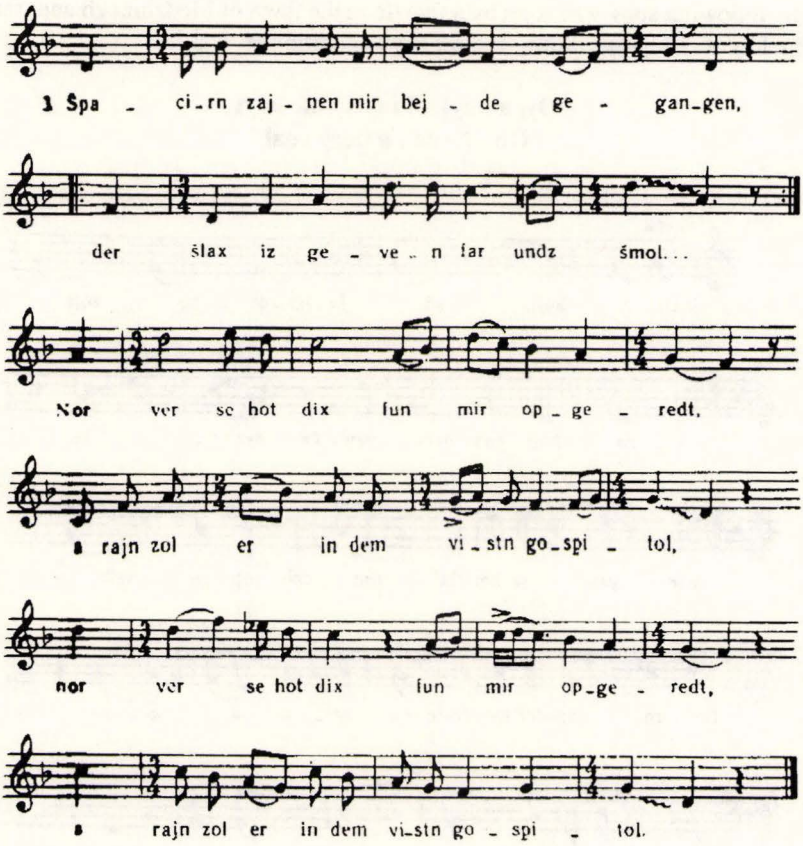
Avremele the schoolteacher,
Drink a glass of beer!
Avremele the teacher,
Move over close to me!
Avremele the schoolteacher!

A Melamed and his students. From the An-sky Collection, State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg ca 1911-14.

The following song was sung by a female in the town of Medzhibozh and transcribed by R. Kleyman during the An-sky expedition.[54]

Oy, a koyl, di fayerdike koyl
Oh , a coal, a fiery coal





Oy, a koyl, di fayerdike koyl,
Aza koyl kon dem menchn dershisn, 2 X
Nor ver se hot dikh fun mir opgeredt |
Far an ander meydele tsu vern a khosn | 2 X

Oy, du bist shoyn a khosn gevorn,
Se zol dir zayn mit mazl un mit glik, 2 X
Nor ikh bin dokh nokh keyn kale nit govern, |
Oy, umkern vestu zikh, oy, tsu mir kerik. | 2 X

Spatsirn Zaynen mir beyde gegangen,
Der shlakh iz geven far undz shmol... 2 X
Nor ver se hot dikh fun mir opgeredt, |
Arayn zol er in dem vistn gospitol. | 2 X

Un haynt, az mir geyen beyde shpatsirn,
Der shlakh iz gevorn far undz breyt... 2 X
Nor der zol keynmol fun keyn guter velt nit visn, |
Ver se hot undzer libe tsesheydt... | 2 X

Tsesheydt hot men undz beyde
Azoy vi dem guf mit der neshome 2 X
Nor akh dayne sonim veln zikh dervisn |
Derlebn veln zey zikh in undz a nekome. | 2 X

Du forst avek, mayn tayer zis-lebn,
Az dayne eltern zoln zikh mit mir nit shemen.
...[missing]
...[missing]

Oy, hodi shoyn tsu veynen un tsu klogn,
Fun dayne heyse trern vert dayn sheyner ponem nas. 2X
Nor demlt veln mir zikh beyde tsesheydn, |
Ven a feygele vet oystrinken dem kas (! ?) | 2 X

Oh, a coal, a fiery coal
Such a coal can shoot a person
Particularly the one who talked you into
Becoming another girl's groom.

Oh, you're already a groom
May it be with luck and good fortune
But I'm still not a bride
Oh, you'll come back, oh, to me.

We went walking
The road was too narrow
But whoever talked you out of me
Should go into a desolate hospital.

And today, as we go walking
The path has become wide
Only the one who has parted our love
Should know of no good end.

They parted us
Like the body from the soul
When your enemies find out
They'll experience great pleasure.

Your leaving, my dearest
So your parents won't be ashamed of me
[missing]
[missing]

Oh, stop weeping and wailing
Your pretty face is wet from your hot tears
We'll only part
When a bird will drink up a glassful.

POGROM SONGS

The *historish lid*, or historical song were Yiddish ballads which were meant to convey recent events in the 16th through 18th centuries in Europe. While not entirely designed for historical posterity, *historish lider* do provide an accurate reporting of current events, much as a newspaper might do today. Unique among other types of Yiddish songs, *historish lider* were generally relayed intact without abridgements, adaptations or embellishments. The theme of each epic ballad would typically chronicle events which happened to a particular Jewish community within Europe. They often portrayed bad events such as fires, plagues, wars , persecutions, and other calamities.[55]

The *historish lid* entitled *Kine al gzeyres kak Ukraine* serves as an archtypical ballad of this genre. Its publication date in Prague, September 1648 was just in the middle of the Khmelnitsky massacres and just before the Jewish New Year. It is a lengthy ballad of which only the sixty-sixth stanza is reproduced.[56]

יום ד׳, ג׳ בחודש אָב, אז פפלעגן צרות צו זיין,
האט מן אך דיא ק״ק פאלאנא״ה גינומן איין
מיט צוועלף קהלות זענן אנטלופן א ניין,
ק״ק מעזיבוש אך ק״ק באר , חמשת אלפים
נפשות גיהרגט מיט גרושה פיין.

Wednesday, in the month of Av [1648], misery spread in the holy communities of Poland, with twelve communities fleeing again. In the holy communites of Medzhibozh and Bar, 5,000 souls were killed with great pain.

This *historish lid* takes place in the year 1648 in the midst of the Khmelnitsky massacres. It describes specifically about Cossack attack on the town of Bar, which was on the border of Letichev District. It describes details of actions by Cossack leaders Krivonos and Lysenko (lieutenants under Khmelnitski). This song was transcribed in 1884 by N. W. Litinsky from local residents in Bar who still sang this song at the time, over 200 years later.[57]

Ver fun undz yidishe kinder
Veyst nisht fun di kozakn milkhomes?
Ver fun undz ayeder bazunder
Veyst nisht fun di haydamakn nekomes?

Which of us Jewish children
Does not know of the Cossack wars?
Which one of us, each and all
Does not know of the bitter Haidamak cruelties?

Demstmol in der biterer tsayt,
Shteyt in Bar, Krivno der kozakn-held.
Nebn im, Lisenko mit di gute layt,
Un a tseylem hobn zey anidergeshtelt.

Then in those bitter times,
Krivno, the Cossack hero, stood at Bar.
Beside him, Lysenko and his "good" men,
Near the crucifix which they had set up.

Farchoyshekht, mit tsubrochene glider,
Fun a vistn grub, a finstere nest,
Firt men tsu, undzere umgliklekhe brider,
Un Krivno hot zey mit di diburim getreyst:

"Ch'ob shoyn geshmust mit ayere roshim un g'virim,"
Ruft er zikh on un tut derbay a lakh,
"Atsindert zog ikh aykh mayne letste diburim
Far mayne layt un far aykh:

Genug hot ir un ayer vayb un kind
Gelitn tsores, hunger, dorsht un kelt,

Bukt zikh tsum tseylem un zayt nisht blind,
Vet ir lebn gliklikh oyf der velt!"

"Shtum, du roshe, un red nisht mer a vort!"
Hobn ale yidn ge-entfert azoy:
"Yoyt undz beser do oyfn ort,
Ober baytn undzer emune, Loy, Loy!

Undzer emune shaynt vi di zun,
S'vet dir, roshe, gornisht gerotn.
Kayn ander emune nemen mir nisht in zin,
Megst undz hakn un brenen un brotn!"

Bald hot men gezen a shreklekh bild,
Oyf kidesh-hashem zenen zey ale geshtorbn.
Dos ort iz geblibn pust un fild,
Ful mit beyner funem yidishn korbn.

Doomed, with broken limbs,
Out of a dismal pit, a dark grave,
Our unfortunate brethren are led out,
And Krivno comforted them with these words:

"I've already spoken with your elders and wealthy men,"
He says to them, laughing therewith,
"Now, I will give you my final words

Before my men and before you:

You and your wives and children
Having suffered enough hunger, thirst and cold,
Bow down to the cross and don't be stubborn,
And you can live happily in this world!"

"Be silent, evil man, and say not another word!"
All the Jews answered together.
"Put us to death rather on the spot,
But change our faith? No, No!

Our faith shines like the sun,
Nothing will avail you, wicked man.
No other faith will we entertain,

Though you cut us up, burn, and roast us!"

Soon a dreadful scene unfolded;
They all died in the name of the Holy One.

The area was laid waste and barren,
Covered with the bones of the Jewish martyrs.

This *historish lid* takes place in the year 1656 and chronicles renewed actions by Khmelnitsky, who included the towns of Medzhibozh, Bar, and Vinnitsa in his path of destruction. Only a portion of the song is reproduced here.[58]

Vogn, shlogn tetn zi ale glaych,
Es dertranken fil im tifn taykh;
Di shoyn varn oysgeshvumen varn derharget onderbarmiglaych,
Nit geshoynt yung nokh alt, arim oder raykh.

They chased and killed everyone alike,
Many were drowned in the deep river;
Those who swam out were slain without mercy;
No one was spared, young or old, poor or rich.

Afory-toyres tsehakt, deroys gemakht posteles oyf fisn,
Aforlige toyre, vi zol dikh dos nit fardrisn?
Oy vey, vi hot men farumreynigt dayne red zo zisn,
Derism mayn oygn mit trern az ayn bakh flisn.

Holy scrolls were mutilated and made into slippers,
Holy Torah, how can it not anger you?
Oh, wo, how they defiled your sweet words,
That is why my eyes flow in a river of tears.

Ofn lagn di meysim unter der zun;
Eyn kodesh den andern bedekt, der untersht hots gevunen.
Oy vey iber der make urplitsling un farzonen,
Finf hundert kinder tsu gefinen in brunen.

Unburied the dead lie under the sun,
One holy martyr covers another, the one underneath is better off.
Oh, this unexpected terrible horror,
Five hundred children drowned in wells.

Noshim un b'sules m'tume gevezn un geshent,
Oykh fil koyfer gevezn, fun y'chod vek gevent,
Fil shuln ayngeleygt biz oyf fir vent.

Liber got, varum halstu dikh oyf, ze unzer elnt!

Women and maidens defiled and raped,
Many forced to turn from their faith in the one God,
Many synagogues destroyed down to the four walls.
Dear Lord, why do you withhold your mercy? Witness our helplessness!

Her got vi konstu dikh oyfhaltn,
Az zi di trognde vayber di baykh shpaltn?
Nun, ven shoyn hobn gezindigt di altn,
Varum zol men mit kleyne kinder azoy shaltn unvaltn?

Lord, how can you restrain your mercy,
Witnessing the bellies of pregnant women split open?
And if the old ones have sinned
Why should the little children be the terrible victims?

The following song was song by Dvorye Runin in memory of a pogrom which took place in the village of Kozachki, near Letichev, during the 1919-1921 Ukrainian Civil War.[59]

I. זעצט זיך, יידן, צו די קינות,
חאָר ס׳איז נאָר אין טרערן זאַט.
ס׳האָבן צו זאָגן אַנדערע אומות,
אוי, אויף אונדזער ליבן גאָט.

צוזונג:

שרײַט און ווײנט אין אַלע גאַסן,
וועקט אויף אַלט און יונג.
פֿעלדער מעסטן, קבֿרים רײַסן,
ס׳האַלט מיט אונדז ניט גרינג.
זע, גאָט, אונדז׳רע טרערן,
אונדזער נויט און פּײַן!
ווײנען ווילן מיר ניט אויפֿהערן
ביז דײַן הילף וועט זײַן!

II. ס׳(איז) אַראָפּגעפֿאַלן אַ שטערן פֿונעם הימל
און ר׳האָט די ערד פֿאַרשמירט
און צעבראָכן די קרוין פֿון אונדזערע ערן
וואָס האָט אונדז שיין געצירט.

צוזונג:

III. דאָקטוירים, סטודענטן, די גרעסטע מענער,
וואָס האָבן זיך קריסטלעך געפֿירט,
פֿאַרגיסן אויך שוין קוואַלן מיט טרערן,
עס האָט זיי גאָנץ טיף באַרירט.

צוזונג.

I. Sit down, Jews, to [say] your lamentations,[60]
Whoever has had enough of tears.
Other people also have things to say
Oh, about our dear God.
Chorus:
Scream and cry in all the streets,
Wake up young and old.
Measure fields, tear up graves[61]
Things look bad for us.
See, God, our tears,
Our need and anguish!
We will not stop crying
Until You help us!

II. A star has fallen from the sky
And smeared the earth
And broken the crown of our honor
Which had decorated us so beautifully.
Chorus.

III. Doctors, students, the greatest men,
Who behaved like Christians,
Today, they too cry and scream.
It has touched even them now.
Chorus.

Chapter Notes:

1. Mlotek, E.G., 1989, *Mir Trogn A Gezang!, 5th edition: Favorite Yiddish Songs of Our Generation:* Workmen's Circle Education Dept., p. v.

2. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Introduction by Max Weinreich, p. 558-9.

3. Max Weinreich also has a Letichev District connection. His daughter-in-law, Beatrice Silverman Weinreich, had parents who came from Letichev, Kozachki, and Stara Sinyava.

4. Gitelman, Z., 1988, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the present:* YIVO, New York, p. 70-71.

5. Bugatch, S., 1967, "Yiddish folk song and its importance to Jewish music," in Heskes, I. and Wolfson, A., eds. *The Historical Contribution of Russian Jewry to Jewish Music:* Jewish Music Council, p. 10.

6. Slobin, M., 1982, *Tenement Songs: The popular music of the Jewish immigrants:* Univ. of Illinois Press, p. 19 -21.

7. Frumkin, J., Aronson, G., and Goldenweiser, A., 1966, *Russian Jewry (1860-1917),* translated by M. Ginsburg: Union of Russian Jews, Inc., New York, p. 313.

8. Slobin, M., 1982, *Tenement Songs: The popular music of the Jewish immigrants:* Univ. of Illinois Press, p. 16.

9. Ibid, p. 21.

10. Ibid, p. 16.

11. According to his daughter, Ida Storch.

12. Green, A., 1992, *Tormented Master: The life and spiritual quest of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav:* Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vt., p. 138.

13. Song and description from Siegel, Richard and Rheins, Carl, eds., 1980, *The Jewish Almanac:* Bantam Books, p. 462-470.

14. It is not mentioned here but his name was Rabbi Yekhiel Mikhal Ashkenazi.

15. Story from Levin, M., 1931, *Classic Hassidic Tales:* Dorset Press, New York, p. 113.

16. From Slobin, Mark, editor and translator, 1982, *Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski:* Univ. of Pa. Press, Song #142, p. 484.

17. Ibid, Song #149, p. 489.

18. Beregorskiy, M., 1987, *Evreiskaya Narodnaya Instrumentalnaya Muzika*, Moscow, Sovetskiy Kompozitor., #13, p. 55.

19. Cohen, Meyer S., 1972, *Hayah Ish--Hayu Zmanim*, M.Neuman Ltd., Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, 1972. Translated by Eliav Bar-Hai.

20. Alfasi, Yitkhak, 1980, *haRav me-Apta baal "Ohev Yisrael" todotov, korot hazav, imrotav, banav re-tseetsaar*, Jerusalem, Mekhon Sifta Tsadikim, p. 161.

21. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Song #492, p. 400-402. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

22. From Rabbi Khaim Bick, recorded in 1913 by Abraham Rechtman. Rechtman, A., 1958, *Yidishe etnografye un folklor*: YIVO, Buenos Aires. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

23. From Slobin, Mark, editor and translator, 1982, *Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski:* Univ. of Pa. Press, Song #2, p. 47, translation on p. 243, description on p. 277.

24. Note: transliteration in the music is from the original source and does not follow the conventions used in this book.

25. From Ginzburg, S.M. and Marek, P.S., 1901, *Yiddish Folksongs in Russia:* Photoreproduction of the 1901 St. Petersburg Edition by Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, Ramat Gan, Israel, 1991, Song #58, p. 56. An alternative version of the first sentence translates to "In the middle of the street." The transliteration is from the original and does not follow the conventions used in this book. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

26. Ibid, Song #112, p.86.

27. Translator's note: This really means that they wear short jackets as opposed to the long frock coats worn by the ultra-Orthodox.

28. Another version has the same words in a different order and adds the line: "Songs we sing."

29. Another version has "dear God."

30. *Evreiskaia Starina,* v. 5, 1912, "Folksongs of the Southern Land", p. 497 (from the folk song collection of Ginzburg and Marek, Song #8). Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

31. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Song #45, p. 60-61.

32. Translator's note: The Yiddish word is *taykh,* which may mean either lake or river. Here I think it means lake.

33. Recollections by Mariam Nirenberg, YIVO Jewish folksong project, in Slobin, M., 1982, *Tenement Songs: The popular music of the Jewish immigrants:* Univ. of Illinois Press, p. 28. Missing from the list of klezmer wedding dances provided are the *Turkishe.*

34. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of our Lives*: Excelsior Publ., Boston, p. 23-26.

35. Translated from the original Yiddish by Alex Korn.

36. Diane K. Roskies and David G. Roskies, 1975, *The Shtetl Book*, K'Tav Publishing House, Inc., p. 190-191.

37. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Song #239, p. 233. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

38. Translator's note: Not sure what *varvalies* is.

39. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Song #28, p. 43-44. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

40. From Ginzburg, S.M. and Marek, P.S., 1901, *Yiddish Folksongs in Russia:* Photoreproduction of the 1901 St. Petersburg Edition by Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, Ramat Gan, Israel, 1991, Song #61, p.59. Transliteration is from the original and does not follow the conventions used in this book. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

41. Translator's note: This line probably means "Refresh yourself, be healthy"

42. Translator's note: The dawn is the watchman's sign that he may now go to sleep.

43. From Pauline Zimmerman Chapin and Shirley Zimmerman Goldstein, 1996.

44. From Raisa Popokh, of Khmelnitsky, Ukraine, 1997.

45. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Song #362, p. 325. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

46. Ibid, Song #455, p. 359.

47. Taught to Sonya Trachtenberg Breidbart by her father. Translated from Russian by Leonid Popokh.

48. Kid in this context is a baby she goat.

49. Cahan, Y.L., 1957, *Yiddish Folksongs with Melodies:* New York, YIVO, Song #3, p. 14-15. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

50. Ibid, Song #61, p. 75-76.

51. Ibid, Song #99, p. 108-109.

52. Ibid, Song #203, p. 209.

53. Ibid, Song #519, p. 439.

54. From Slobin, Mark, editor and translator, 1982, *Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski:* Univ. of Pa. Press, Song #30, p. 346, translation on p. 413, description on p. 496. Transliteration in the music comes from the original and does not follow the conventions used in this book.

55. Turniansky, Chava, 1989, "Yiddish 'historical' songs as sources for the history of the Jews in pre-partition Poland" in *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, v. 2, p. 42-51.

56. Weinrech, M., 1928, "Epic laments about the 1648 massacres in the kehilot of Ukraine" in *Bilder fun der yidisher literatur geshikhte:* Vilna, p. 209. Translated from Yiddish to English by Beatrice Silverman Weinreich.

57. Rubin, R., 1979, *Voices of a People, the story of Yiddish folksong:* Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, p. 200-2.

58. Ibid, p. 202-3.

59. From Weinreich, B.S., 1949, "Three songs from the time of pogroms in Russia": *YIVO-Bleter*, v. 33, New York, p. 239-240 (Song #1). Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

60. Translators note: the word "lamentations" is not just a vocabulary word. The Yiddish word *kines* are specialized formal lamenetations which are said during tragic times.

61. Translators note: the implied meaning is to measure the ground to dig new graves.

7

Education

by Ben Weinstock

Introduction

Az Khaimke lernt nit, ken nit Khaim (If the young Khaim doesn't study, the adult Khaim won't know).[1] This Letichev District proverb is indicative of the high value of education that was held by the Jews in the shtetl; teaching and learning have been paramount in the lives of Jews for thousands of years. This concept of education followed the Jews down The Road from Letichev. An early reference to Jewish education in Poland, by Rabbi Nathan Hanover (chronicler of the Khmelnitsky massacres of the mid-1600s), describes the importance of education and communal support for students in seventeenth century Polish towns:[2]

> ...throughout the dispersions of Israel there was nowhere so much learning as in the Kingdom of Poland. Each community maintained academies, and the head of each academy was given an ample salary so that he could maintain his school without worry, and that the study of Torah might be his sole occupation. The head of the academy did not leave his house the whole year except to go from the house of study to the synagogue. Thus he was engaged in the study of Torah day and night. Each community maintained young men and provided for them a weekly allowance of money that they might study with the head of the academy. And for each young man they also maintained two boys to study under his guidance, so that he would orally discuss the Gemara (Talmud), the commentaries of Rashi, and the Tosafoth, which he had learned, and thus he

> would gain experience in the subtlety of Talmudic argumentaton. The boys were provided wih food from the community benevolent fund or from the public kitchen. If the community consisted of fifty householders it supported not less than thirty young men and boys. One young man and two boys would be assigned to one householder. And the young man ate at his table as one of his sons. Although the young man received a stipend from the community, the householder provided him with all the food and drink that he needed.

Despite their overwhelming poverty, the Jews of Letichev District, like Jews in other parts of Eastern Europe, emphasized the life-long study of the Torah. In the words of Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel, a descendent of the Apter Rebbe of Medzhibozh,[3]

> Poor Jews sit like intellectual magnates. They possess a wealth of ideas and of knowledge, culled from little known passages in the Talmud. One raises a question about a difficult passage in Maimonides; the other outdoes him in his answer, in the subtelty of his dialectic. The stomach is empty, the home overcrowded; but the heads are full of spiritual and cultural riches, and the Torah is free and ample. For recreation one goes not to the tavern, but to the House of Study.

Many Jewish boys and girls began their studies at home, from their parents. Boys aged four (or five) to thirteen would attend a *kheder*, which was a private school. Many girls received only a basic education in reading in a *kheder* with boys, in a girls' *kheder*, or by private tutors. For most females, their adult reading was primarily of *Tkhines*, devotional prayers. The most popular version of *Tkhines* was *Shloshe Shearim*, written by a woman of Satanov named Sarah bas Tovim (c.1660-c.1730).[4] An 1894 survey of 13,683 *khederim* in Tsarist Russia recorded 191,505 boys but only 10,459 girls.[5]

Unfortunately, the memories of many who "survived" the *kheder* system are negative. The teachers, or *melamedim*, were often untrained, incompetent, and abusive. The rooms used for teaching were generally crowded and unsanitary.[6] . Occasionally good *melamedim* did turn up. Isachar Dov ben Yosef Kantorshtik of Letichev recalled in 1886 that he had several excellent teachers of the school of G. Borishkevich (who taught mathematics), named G. Shkalinayda and G. Voytchisin.[7] However, just a few years earlier, a Letichev *melamed* treated his students so violently that some would only go to class accompanied by an adult.[8] Students were taught the Bible, Hebrew grammar and writing, arithmetic, and Yiddish writing by *dardeki melamedim*. *Gemora melamedim* taught the more advanced topic of the Talmud with commentaries.[9]

A *melamed* was paid by the parents of the child; but in those rare cases where a child's family was unable to pay, the child would go to a Talmud Torah, in

which the teachers received support from the community. Interestingly, there were 950 *khederim* in Podolia as of 1849, but only one Talmud Torah existed in all of Podolia at that time, in Kamenets-Podolsky.[10] In 1898 another one was organized in Zinkov. For formal, advanced religious studies in a yeshiva (generally after the age of thirteen), a young man would have to travel to either Kishinev,[11] Odessa, or other large cities. For example, Micha Joseph Berdichevski of Medzhibozh went to the famous yeshiva in Volozhin. For those unable or unwilling to go to a yeshiva, studies were continued in the local *kloiz*, or study hall. "Study Societies" were organized (see the Appendix to this chapter for selected passages of their various bylaws.).

Early adolescent marriages were not uncommon and the subsequent support by in-laws (*kest*) allowed Talmudic students to study without having to worry about financial strains. It has been argued that the tensions relating to this practice gave rise to two very different strains of rebellion in Jewish males in the 1800s which rejected the ways of their traditionalist parents: to become a Chasid, or a *maskil* (a proponent of the Enlightenment).[12]

KHEDER MEMORIES

Children were taken to the *kheder* by a *behalfer*, such as Itsche-Meyer of Derazhnia:[13]

> In stormy or slushy weather he would carry two little children on his back, while leading others by the hand to and from the *kheder*. Usually the behalfer was an adolescent who was apprenticed to the *melamed*, serving as an errand boy for the melamed's wife and nurse-maid for his children. He led a miserable life. Being a behalfer meant that he was good for nothing else. He received no money from the families he served, but was given his weekly meals in various households. In many homes he was put in a corner to eat by himself. When our turn came to supply his meals, the behalfer would come from the shul after his early morning prayers, have his breakfast with us, and then take David to the *kheder*.
>
> One of the *behalfers* impressed himself upon us notably. He was a mild-mannered lad named Itsche-Meyer, whom we spoke of as "Itzik with the *tephilim*" because he never appeared without the velvet bag containing his phylacteries on his arm.
>
> Once when he was new in Derazhnia, Marishka was serving breakfast to him, and she asked him point-blank: 'Why should an able-bodied fellow like you be carrying babies on your back to *kheder* ? Can't you find any more useful work to do?'
>
> Itzik straightened up. His face took on defying, dignified expression.
>
> "What's wrong with being a behalfer?" he countered, "It's honorable work, carrying children to *kheder* so they'll get a real Hebrew education, as

befitsJewish children. What's more, did you know that the Baal Shem Tov himself was once a behalfer?"

"Is that a fact?" said Marishka. "I never knew that."

Somehow that statement by Itzik with the *tephilim* made us ponder the question of his lowly profession. After all, the Baal Shem Tov, founder and leader of Hasidism, also served in that capacity, so we began to look with more respect on our young *behalfer*.

Morris Garber remembered the teachers of the *kheder* of Zinkov:[14]

Since I never learned with a *gemora* teacher, I will dwell on only three teachers of small children in Zinkov: teacher Sany, teacher Doid, and teacher Gedalia-Hersh. Sany was, even then, an unusual person. He was not at all the kind that one finds in the rich gallery of teacher types, which our great artist with a pen, Sholom Aleichem, has described in his children's stories.

It very seldom happens that children love their teacher. But we actually did love our teacher, Rabbi Sany. He wasn't too stern with us, he didn't make us afraid, he rarely used his leather whip, and we respected him. We did what he told us to do and we were able to learn much more than the students of other schools. Our teacher's wife, Rifka, was a good person and very hospitable. She kept her apartment and the *kheder* clean and tidy. We also never heard any arguments between our rabbi and his wife. Rabbi Sany would never tell us any fantastic tales about spirits and goblins as was the common practice of other teachers. He never frightened us with hell and beatings with fiery rods in the other world if we committed a sin, told a lie or other such transgressions. I believe that Sany was the only teacher who went to private homes and taught bigger girls, who were too embarrassed to go to *kheder* to learn. He even taught some of them who wanted to learn modern Hebrew.

Sany was, however, never in love with the profession of teaching. First of all, it brought him a very meager livelihood. Secondly, he found it very difficult, because he suffered from asthma, which we called *adushlayeve*. Every once in a while, he would have a fit of coughing and couldn't catch his breath. In the end, Sany decided to give up the *kheder* and try America. He was to go first by himself and then bring over his family, which consisted of his wife, his oldest son Itsi, his second son Nakhman, and the youngest child, his only daughter, Frumele, whom the teacher's wife gave me the great honor to rock her in her cradle. The news that the teacher was going to America evoked in us great worry and unhappiness, especially when we learned that we were to be turned over to Teacher Doid.

Teacher Doid was the exact opposite of Sany. He actually was, right down to the smallest detail, a stereotype from Sholom Aleichem's collection of teachers. He was clumsily tall and broad, with a great wild beard, and he was always angry. The whip never left his hand, and he used it right and left whether we deserved it or not. He very often argued with his wife, and the children couldn't help but see this and listen to all the insults and curse words to which they treated each other in their anger and rage.

You can imagine how awful we felt, when we saw what a terrible situation we had fallen into. But none of us dared to complain, because we had to uphold the unwritten law that no one tells tales out of school. So we silently carried this heavy burden and suffered and missed our good teacher Sany and the kind of school he ran.

One time, it happened that when the rabbi was not in class, a few students got into a fight and caused a great commotion, but right then the rabbi unexpectantly returned. He flew into a wild rage and began raining blows on all the students without exception. I was a small, quiet child, whose chin barely reached the desk. Out of great fear, I kept my mouth shut, but when the rabbi delivered a blow to the back of my head, my teeth cut into my tongue and it bled profusely. Out of both fright and pain, I let out a scream, began to wail, and ran home. After this happened, I could no longer contain myself and poured out my bitter heart to my parents. I described the hellish *kheder* to them, embellished, most likely, with exaggerations. From that time on, there was no more *kheder* and no more Teacher Doid.

A while later, we received the good news that our Rabbi Sany was coming back. Because of his health problems, he wasn't permitted to enter America. Now I understand how disappointed, embittered, and despondent Sany must have felt at that time and how difficult it must have been for him to take up teaching once again, a job that he had hoped to be rid of. But we children weren't thinking about such things. We were pleased, happy, joyous. Every one of us was delighted to return to our beloved teacher and to his *kheder*.

Now we come to the third teacher, Gedalia-Hirsch. Because of two reasons, I had the felicitous opportunity to get to know him better: firstly, because he lived not far away from us, and secondly, because, for a while, I was good friends with his son Moishe. Gedalia-Hirsch was completely different from the other two teachers, Sany and Doid. He was a quiet, kindly person. Poverty didn't affect him much, nor did he worry very much about health or other such matters which worried Sany so. He lacked the short temper and wrath, which had given Teacher Doid such a bad reputation. Gedalia-Hirsch wasn't held in very high esteem. His students weren't overworked. He also wasn't overly pious and certainly not a fanatic.

Who would have believed that a teacher of those times would have a "hobby"? Gedalia's hobby was pigeons, yes pigeons. He really loved pigeons. That's why he built himself a large dovecote on the roof of his house. Through special little windows, the pigeons would fly in and out, and they would, may no evil eye befall them, be fruitful and multiply. One could not find a happier person than Gedalia-Hirsch on a summer night as he stood, dressed only in his undershirt, his four-cornered fringed garment, and a yarmulke on his head, maneuvering his pigeons with a special stick to make them fly here and there. They flew happily about flapping their wings. They soared and descended and covered the whole roof of their master's house. It seemed as if the birds also derived tremendous pleasure from this game.

It was jokingly said that Gedalia-Hirsch spent more time with his pigeons than with his students. May this, God forbid, not disgrace him in any way, and may he forgive me...

Rose Pesotta remembered the *melamed* of Derazhnia, circa 1900:[15]

Kalman was a *shlimazel*, a luckless one. An intellectual in his own right and a student of the Hebrew scriptures, he was no good in any kind of business, so he became a *melamed* as a last resort. A devout Jew, short and spare, he always wore a skullcap, white knee-length socks, old felt shoes, and in his shirt sleeves and vest, he would often preside at the long table, inculcating the accumulated Hebrew wisdom in his young pupils, and always holding his cat-o-nine-tails ready to snap at the tardy. He was burdened with a large family, and his wife, in addition to caring for her brood, assisted during weddings and bar-mitzvahs with the catering, and as a nurse to young mothers during births and confinements.

When a boy or girl was born, it was Kalman's duty to bring his whole class to the mother's bedside, to chant in chorus a blessing upon her and her newborn. In turn the class would get honey cookies, raisins, dates, and other sweets, depending on the financial resources of the family...following the traditional hymn, beginning with *El Melekh* and ending with *Shmai Israel Adonoi Elohenu Adonoi Eykhod* (Hear, O Israel, the Lord Our God, the Lord is One). Sarah, our *melamed's* wife, would distribute to us, now in line formation, the sweets, and I would see that our girls got in on everything, even to double and triple portions.

Although it was unusual for girls to attend *kheder*, we are fortunate in that we have the stories of several women who went to school. Zina Celniker Wolson attended school in Medzhibozh starting around 1884. She wrote:[16]

Every Jewish male child had to attend [*kheder*] from the age of three...On the other hand the female child was free from that obligation. Of course many girls when older, mostly members of the so-called better class, received some private schooling; generally speaking it was limited to the three Rs....

My father, his outlook broadened, decided to let me have a taste of the fruit of knowledge on equal terms with the male. One reason for his decision might have been the lack of a male offspring...

I am unable to recall my own reaction when I was brought to school for the first time. I suppose at the ripe age of three I had none, I simply did what I was told to do as any obedient child that age. In fact I am sure I have not even realized the novelty of the situation.

One thing I recall after attending school for a while: I suddenly felt proud of the fact that I was a part of it all. I can still visualize the winter nights when I used to walk home with a bunch of boys singing as loudly as we could. We all carried lanterns to illuminate the pitch-dark streets that were unpaved and all through the winter were covered knee-deep with mud or snow, mostly a combination of both. But that did not dampen my spirit, if anything it seemed more adventurous, I had the fun of my life. Probably it was the pride of being singled out, or a sense of belonging. At any rate it must have meant a lot to me since I am still able to recall such details....

Zina Celniker Wolson, ca. 1916. Courtesy of Leo Celniker.

I do not recall whether any other girl followed my example but I do remember that a couple of years later, some co-educational schools were organized—the children were older and the subjects were various -- a step in the right direction. I myself attended one such school when I was older...

The school I attended wa not the last word in comfort or instruction, but it was the only kind available and it served its purpose. The entire school consisted of one large room, low benches surrounded the walls for the children to sit on. There were no desks. The benches for the youngsters were formed in the style of a grandstand, but all one level.

Facing the benches near a window stood a large table serving may purposes including family dining. At one end was an arm-chair for the Instructor, and

two long benches on each side of the table for the children that were called over, either for instruction or punishment. At the other end facing the Instructor sat the Helper. On the top of the table was prominently displayed a Cat-of-Nine-Tails, a reminder of human frailities.

The Rabbi was the sole instructor, the Helper was always at his side ready for action when called upon. It was his duty to keep the children in line; it goes without saying that the Cat-of-Nine-Tails was no idle gesture....The children, though protesting with tears, most of the time endured the punishment without much complaint, as if concurring that the punishment fit the crime.

I do not remember ever seeing a smile on the Rabbi's face...But now when I think of it, I fully understand the reason why. I just wonder what were the forces that sustained him and many others like him?

Another Medzhibozh schoolgirl was Dora Khariton Zichroni who attended school starting around 1913:[17]

We had a Hebrew school in Medzhibozh. In spite of the fact that there were very Orthodox people, we went to school boys and girls together. Nowadays, in modern times, it's not like that. I was in a class where there were three girls and the rest were boys (about 20 boys). All through the time I went to school we were always together. (I left Medzhibozh when I was 10.) We used to play together. There was no question about separating men from women. Only in the synagogue. On the street we were free to play together. The women were separate at the top, and the men were down. But the men were so free that during Yom Kippur, during the *hafseka* [afternoon break in the services] almost every husband (with his talis on) went to see how his wife was doing. There was no questions about it. Some of the men would come to the women's section and take their wife out for a walk. I wondered to myself why in this day and age it should be the opposite. You would think it would be then the separation, and now the freedom.

The school was a Hebrew school but we learned every subject, even French. Everything that we learned was the new Hebrew (Sephardic) not Ashkenazic. We learned the new way. There was a teacher, I think he came from England, and he taught us Hebrew.

There was no government to support the school, we had to pay. One of my uncles started that school. Everybody gave the school money. The fathers of the children, if they could afford it, they paid. But my little brother and I didn't pay because my mother had no money. But there was no problem because everybody was allowed to go to school.

> We studied geography and everything the regular way. But when it came to Hebrew, we had to talk only Hebrew. We learned Russian, we learned French.

Rose Pesotta described the private girls' school in Derazhnia:[18]

> ...a woman named Fannia Isaevna came from the town of Bar and announced that she was ready to open an elementary school for girls in Derazhnia. For a moderate monthly fee, she would teach reading, writing, Russian history, arithmetic, geography, and social deportment, all in line with the government covering such an institution...
>
> [After the marriage and departure of Fannia Isaevna she] was succeeded by a friend, Rosalia Davidovna Tabachnik, a tall robust young woman with kinky black hair and large bulging eyes....
>
> Among our studies were the Hebrew language and Jewish history. These were taught surreptiously, not being specified in the curriculum for which Rosalia Davidovna had a permit. Because of this, we were coached on how to act if a government inspector should suddenly appear.

Dena Singer Zimmerman, whose father Israel Singer was a *melamed* in Letichev, received a Jewish education by osmosis. Hanging around the *kheder* as she was growing up, she learned what the kheder children learned. Later in life, it was said she could hold her own in synagogue with any male—unusual for a woman of the time.[19]

THE TALMUD TORAH OF ZINKOV

It was reported in the newspaper *HaMelits* in August of 1898 by Moshe Berlyand that there was not a Jewish school in Zinkov for impoverished Jewish children. The children tried to listen to lessons from outside but "nobody had the pity to teach them." Despite the fact that residents of Zinkov boasted of their volunteer organizations--the Fire Department, the Zionist group, the Hebrew Language Society, and the Hebrew Literature Reading Room -- there was not a Talmud Torah. Berlyand commented, "What are the other groups worth, without a Talmud Torah? Last summer two supporters of the Haskalah, A. Goldshteyn and M. Rubinshteyn, tried to do something regarding this matter. Unfortunately they had little support and the problem remains." Upon reading the article in *HaMelits*, the community immediately convened and decided to open a Talmud Torah. One hundred students were in need of education. Sixty students received ten rubles each from their families; the other forty students were allowed to attend for free. The total tuition for the school cost 1,500 rubles: 600 from tuition; 300 from community funds; and from the City Council of Kamenets-Podolsky, 600 rubles. The curriculum consisted of *Tanakh* (Bible study), Jewish history, Hebrew, Russian, and arithmetic.[20]

THE HASKALAH MOVEMENT AND JUDAH LEIB NEVAKHOVICH

Rabbi Joel Sirkes, rabbi of Medzhibozh in the early 1600s, was a strong proponent of an expanded education—one that went beyond the instruction in only Pentateuch. He favored the teaching of all of the Written Law as well as of mathematics, secular languages, and Hebrew grammar.[21] Amazingly, his ideas on education were reached independently one hundred and fifty years later by those who joined the movement known as *Haskalah*, or "Enlightenment."

This movement among Jews to gain civic emancipation and secular education is usually traced to the ideas of the French enlightenment of the eighteenth century, which spread eastward to other parts of Europe. Jewish enlightenment took hold in Berlin and was expounded by the writer and philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786). The aims of Mendelssohn's movement was to promote the expansion of Jewish education to include secular subjects, French, and German, in addition to the standard religious topics. As the movement spread to Podolia, an early *maskil* gained prominence: Judah Leib Nevakhovich.

Born in Letichev in 1776, Judah Leib took the surname Nevakhovich ("son of Nevakh," with "Nevakh" being the Russian version of the name Noah). Stifled by the backwardness of shtetl life, he moved to the Jewish cultural and intellectual center of Shklov, Belorussia around 1791. It was here that he learned German and Russian with great fluency. By the age of twenty-two he had relocated to St. Petersburg (being one of the first Jews take up residence there) and found employment in the Russian court system as an official translator of Hebrew documents. The most notable of the cases in which he worked was the one pertaining to the imprisonment of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Chasidism.[22] In 1802 Tsar Alexander named a special committee to find a solution for the "Jewish problem," of which Nevakhovich was retained as an advisor. One of the members of this committee was Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, owner of Medzhibozh and other towns in Podolia, Volhynia, and Galicia.

Nevakhovich tried to help the cause of Jews by writing *Vopl Dicheri Iudeiskoi* ("Lament of the Daughter of Judea") in 1803, the first book ever written in Russian by a Jew. His plea to Russians was to accept Jews, as they are loyal to the Tsar and needed only Christians to overcome their prejudices and accept Jews as full citizens:[23]

> ...unsound customs of entire peoples cannot be reformed other than by removing the causes that have produced the faults in them...How greatly doth my soul exult over these matters; how deeply doth it grieve over my coreligionists, who are removed from the hearts of their compatriots...[Neither] the age of humanity, toleration and meekness, [nor] the smiling spring of the present century, the beginning of which hath been crowned...by the accession of Alexander the Merciful, has removed the deep seated Jewish hatred in Russia...Many

> minds doom the tribe of Judah to contempt. The name 'Judean' hath become an object of ridicule, contempt, and scorn for children and the feeble-minded...You searched for the Jew in man. Search for the man in the Jew, and you will no doubt find him. While the hearts of all the European nations have drawn nearer to one another, the Jewish people still finds itself despised. I feel the full weight of this torment. I appeal to all who have sympathy and compassion. Why do you sentence my entire people to contempt ? Thus waileth sadly the daughter of Judah, wiping her tears, sighing and yet uncomforted.

The book was revised and published in Hebrew in 1804 as *Kol Shaveath Bath Yehudah*; Nevakhovich's ideas thus reached Jews, relating the message that Jews also should also be more open-minded. Despite Nevakhovich's dream that his book would have a positive influence on Russian legislation, the Statute of 1804 dashed his hopes.[24] Within a few years he abandonded Judaism in his effort to advance his playwriting career. He converted to Lutheranism around 1809, changed his name to Lev Nikolayevich Nevakhovich and married a German woman named Catherine Michaelson.[25] His conversion alienated many Jews from the Haskalah movement. In 1817 Nevakhovich received a government post in Warsaw with several exclusive consumer licenses, including the one for importing food into Warsaw. He soon became one of the wealthiest, and most hated, men in Congress Poland.[26] He lost his wealth as he fled the 1831 Polish Uprising, escaping to St. Petersburg, where he died soon after.

CHASIDIC EDUCATION AND STORYTELLING

Chasidic education differed from traditional Jewish education in that besides the learning of Torah and Talmud, a Chasidic child also learned ethical and mystical (Kabbalistic) literature. Rabbi Nakhman, great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, learned from the following works when he was a boy in Medzhibozh: *Zohar*, *Tiqquney Zohar*, *Reshit Hokhmah*, and the Lurianic writings.[27] Moreover, Chasidic stories, such as the tales of the Baal Shem Tov, were told to children and adults alike. The stories of the *tsaddikim*,[28]

> ...passed from one [C]hasid to another, or, in later generations, told by latter-day masters about the saints of old, lay at the very core of [C]hasidism as a popular movement. Undoubtedly they functioned both as edification and entertainment for a class and time when neither of these was readily accesible through other channels. Though collected and recorded in writing only rather late in the development of the movement, the tales in oral form had tremendous influence in the spread of [C]hasidism, an influence probably no less great than that of the published teachings and homilies of the early masters.

The stories of the Baal Shem Tov ("Besht") were most likely collected in the 1790s and were first published as *Shivhei haBesht* in 1814. The book sold as many as 10,000 copies by 1816.[29] In the words of the writer of *Shivhei haBesht* (Dov Ber of Ilintsy, the son-in-law of Rabbi Alexander, who had been the scribe of the Besht), the purpose of the book was so that[30]

> The reader should realize that I wrote all this not as history nor as stories. In each tale he should perceive His awesome deeds. He should infer the moral of each tale, so that he will be able to attach his heart to the fear of God, the beliefs of the sages, and the power of our holy Torah.

Similarly, the thirteen tales of Rabbi Nakhman were collected and published in 1815, as *Sippure Massioth*. Each tale "presents a self-contained fantasy world born of the author's imagination and received Jewish tradition. Some of the symbolic and allegorical threads woven into the tales beckon invitingly toward interpretation, while other elements remain elusive, enigmatic."[31]

CZARTORYSKI AND THE *MASKILIM* OF PODOLIA

Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski strongly favored the expansion of education for Jews and gentiles alike.[32] He served on the Jewish reform committees of 1802 and 1815, promoting the granting of full rights for Jews as Russian citizens. In his capacity as an advisor to the Tsar concerning the Jewish question, Czartoryski wrote that "Coming closer to the Christians, the Jews would be able to free themselves from superstition, forget their avarice, raise themselves to the proper level...only then would their true education begin..."[33]

Interestingly, some years before he served on these reform committees, Czartoryski happened to visit a crockery shop in a town which belonged to him named Mikolayev. Noticing a German mathematical book on the table, Czartoryski inquired as to who was the owner of the book. The lady shopkeeper replied that it belonged to her husband, named Mendel Lefin. Czartoryski was fascinated that a shtetl Jew should be aware of such a book. Upon meeting Lefin, Czartoryski had what was undoubtedly his first encounter with an enlightened Jew. The Prince soon became a champion of Lefin, who became the teacher of Czartoryski's children.[34]

Born in Satanov in 1749, Lefin received a traditional Jewish education. His thirst for knowledge led him to studying the works of Maimonides, Galileo, and other scholars. As fate would have it, Lefin developed an eye disease, and he traveled to Berlin seeking a cure. It was there that he met Moses Mendelsohn and other German writers. By the time he met Czartoryski, Lefin had written several works, knew several languages, and had a thorough knowledge of popular philosphical writings. At the suggestion of Czartoryski he wrote a pamphlet (in French) imploring the Polish government to improve situations for Jews. His

Refuot Ha-Am, a health manual, was published with the financial assistance of Czartoryski. Lefin wrote to a friend, "I am always supported by my good prince."[35] Lefin corresponded with numerous other *maskilim*, encouraging them to write satires and educational works in Hebrew and Yiddish that could be read by the simple Jews of the shtetl. Lefin died in 1826.

Other Podolian Jews embraced the Enlightenment movement as well, pouring out writings that invited Jews to expand their minds beyond the Torah and Talmud. Isaac haLevi (1732-1804), also of Satanov, became a prolific Hebrew writer in Berlin.[36] A disciple of Lefin named Khaim Malage, who lived in Bar in the 1820s, wrote a brilliant anti-Chasidic parody entitled *Gdules Reb Volf m'Charno Ostro* ("The Greatness of Reb Wolf of Charno Ostrow").[37] Israel Aksenfeld (1787-1866), born in Nemirov, wrote dozens of anti-Chasidic and pro-Russian works, such as his famous play, *Der Ershter Yidisher Rekrut* ("The First Jewish Recruit.").[38] Israel Joseph Sirkis (1860-1928) wrote the novel *Esther*.[39] Born into a Chasidic family in Vinnitsa, Yitzkhok Yoel Linetski (1839-1915) wrote what was the most widely read anti-Chasidic satire *Dos poylishe yingl* ("The Polish Lad").[40] It is of interest that the famous Yiddish writer "Mendele Moykher-Sforim" (the pen name for Sholem Abramovitsh, 1836-1917), who was born in Minsk Province, wandered throughout Volhynia and Podolia in the mid 1850s before landing in Kamenets-Podolsky. There he became acquainted with the famous *maskil* Avrom-Ber Gottlober (1811-1899) who was teaching in the Kamenets-Podolsky Crown school. With Gottlober's help, Mendele furthered his education in secular subjects and was able to pass the state exam for teaching in the Kamenets-Podolsky school.[41] Of all of the notable Podolian *maskilim* who emerged in this time of conflict between tradition and modernity, possibly the most interesting one was Micha Joseph Berdichevski of Medzhibozh.

MICHA JOSEPH BERDICHEVSKI

Micha Joseph Berdichevski was born in Medzhibozh in 1865, the son of a Chasidic rabbi. The family traced their roots back through thirteen generations of rabbis including Reb Shmuel of Nikolsburg, a disciple of the Baal Shem Tov. Micha was raised in a very strict Chasidic and pious atmosphere. At the age of seventeen he married the daughter of a rich Podolian merchant who fully supported his Talmudic-studying son-in-law. However, two years later, when the father-in-law discovered that he was studying *Haskalah* literature, he forced him to divorce his wife. Shortly afterwards, Micha attended the famous yeshiva in Volozhin where he became immersed in study. He wrote[42]

> He who walks along the yeshiva square on a winter night will behold a wondrous sight. Lamps shed their light on the white snow. The voices of the three hundred students studying with ardent devotion are heard from one end of the square to the other. Here comes a comely youth, a volume of the Talmud

under his arm, hurries by; his soul thirsts for the Torah. Some students turn their steps homeward; weariness has overtaken them, yet it is with reluctance that they have interrupted their studies. It is here that Jewishness is revealed in all its majesty. It can truly be said that he who has not witnessed this sight has never witnessed beauty.

Micha Joseph Berdichevsky. Engraving by M. Aryeh.

After he left the yeshiva Micha wandered for several years, temporarily settling in Odessa where he studied for the entrance examinations to the University of Breslau. His matriculation began in 1890; however, he also studied at the rabbinical seminary. During this phase of his life he became a student of Nietzschean philosophy and wrote numerous discourses in Hebrew journals basing his works on the themes of individual identity and free will. By 1900 he had written over a dozen volumes of essays, stories, and articles on various aspects of modern philosophy, Jewish literature, Zionism, Chasidic legends, and Biblical history. Berdichevski was by this time recognized as one of the top Jewish writers of the day, despite the fact that his works embraced conflicting values at different times--sometimes traditionalist, sometimes Chasidic, sometimes enlightenist.

He remarried in 1900, to Rachel Romberg. For the next twenty years she assisted him in his literary work. By 1914 Berdichevski's health began to fail. During the Revolutionary upheaval in the Ukraine his brother and father were killed in pogroms. Plagued by self-torment, Berdichevski wrote of[43]

> A Jewish sadness...raps upon the portals of my heart. I sit in my room, and hear the restless moaning of the Jewish people, its protracted grief, hoary with age...Within my being I feel the pain of my heritage, the aching of a life and a soul that which I want to break down...I crave unification, I want to create a new people, new human beings—yet I am torn in my own soul; we are ripped to tatters forevermore.

Micha Joseph Berdichevski was born and raised in the world of Chasidim, educated in European philosophies, lived through the times of pogroms, the Balfour Declaration, and the breakup of the Pale of Settlement. He died in 1921, leaving behind scores of anthologies of his writings which reflect his inner conflicts as a Jew caught in a world of change.

HASKALAH IN LETICHEV DISTRICT

The District of Letichev, due to its strong Chasidic influence, was generally regarded as the epitomy of the backward Jewish life. The *maskil* (and friend of Mendel Lefin) Joseph Perl, in his classic anti-Chasidic satire *Megalle Temirin* ("Revealer of Secrets"), utilized real and fictional characters from Medzhibozh, Letichev, and other Chasidic enclaves. Perl's Chasidim are portrayed as liars, alcoholics, charlatans, and hypocrites. *Shivhei haBesht* is mocked throughout the book. Perl's goal was to destroy Chasidism; but by the time the book was published in 1819 Chasidism had strengthened itself in scores of communities throughout Eastern Europe.[44]

Proponents of the *Haskalah* were usually not accepted by traditional rabbis, teachers, and townspeople—the *mitnagdim*. Although there had been disagreements over the years between *mitnagdim* and Chasidim, it appears that both groups were at odds with *maskilim*. Numerous articles were written in the Hebrew and Russian-Jewish press describing these conflicts. In 1880, the enlightened teacher of the *kheder* in Letichev was fired because he distributed secular literature to the students; the rabbi asked all parents to confiscate and burn the books.[45] M. Spektor of Medzhibozh described a dispute in the newspaper *Russki Evrei* in September 1881: "A young man, 17 years old, son of merchant 'F.' , declared a hunger strike to his parents as they disagreed with their son's wish to attend a secular high school. The father took his son away to Kishinev. Other young men of Medzhibozh began to demand the same—they wanted to go to non-religious schools. One father said that he could reconcile himself to the situation if only his son wouldn't emancipate himself from wearing *peyas* and *kapot*."[46]

The establishment of libraries in the Chasidic enclaves was met with opposition. A library opened in Medzhibozh in early 1882 by the merchants A.M. Lukashevich and M. Arensberg was noted as having books which "oppose God;" however, the "Tsaddik" did not leave town.[47] Many local Jews believed that reading non-religious books was a sin and wanted the library closed.[48] The private library of Yakov Tselniker in Medzhibozh was burned by his cousin because the cousin felt it was sacreligious to use Hebrew in popular literature.[49] The elders of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan wanted to burn the colony's small library composed of secular books and newspapers, but the wishes of the youths prevailed.[50] A library was built in Derazhnia in 1905, and was later taken over by the Zionist group of the town.[51] In all likelihood the supplier of the books under dispute was the *Obshchestvo dlia rasprostranenia proveschenia mezhdu evreimi rossii*, or OPE (Society for Dissemination of Enlightenment Among Jews of Russia) founded in St. Petersburg in 1863. The local branch for Letichev District was in Volkovintsy. In addition to providing books and newspapers, the OPE also supplied materials to improve teaching methods, geared toward Jewish educators. Ironically, the OPE reported that

there was not one Jewish teacher in Volkovintsy in 1910, although there were more than 500 Jewish families living there.[52]

Dovid Fukhs of Zinkov remembered how he read about the world outside the shtetl:[53]

> The first friend that I made in Zinkov was actually Israel Sonis (Roytburd). First of all, his house was open to all the young people. One of Israel's relations also lived there. She was a pretty girl named Bashe, an orphan, and she was a good friend of my cousin Sonya. We also became good friends. In Sonya's house, my spiritual education also started. Sonya would hold conversations on various topics, and Israel was already at that time getting the Russian illustrated magazine *Nivo*, which used to award as prizes the works of the best Russian authors. I read these books with great interest and they had a definite influence on my spiritual development. From time to time, I was also able to read the daily Yiddish newspapers called "Moment" and "Today," to which my father, of blessed memory, subscribed in the village. Occassionally, I also read *Kievskaya Misl*, to which one of the villagers had subscribed.

Young Intellectual's Club, Letichev. Seated far left is Ilya Trachtenberg, second from right is Yankel Javetz. Courtesy of Sonya Breidbart.

Youth groups in the different towns formed their own little study groups, exchanging Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish books, newpapers, and ideas. One such club was "The Young Intellectual's Club" in Letichev.

CROWN SCHOOLS

After debates between Jewish representatives and government officials, *maskilim* scored a victory in the passing of a new law. "On Establishing Special Schools for the Education of Jewish Youth" was confirmed on November 13,

1844 and allowed the establishment of state-run ("Crown") Jewish schools.[54] In Podolia, Crown schools were opened in Kamenets-Podolsky, Proskurov, Vinnitsa, Olgopol, Nemirov, and Letichev.[55]

The Letichev school was opened on August 7, 1845.[56] The curriculum of Crown primary schools consisted of: Jewish law, Russian, Hebrew, mathematics, and calligraphy. Students in Crown secondary schools were taught Russian history, geography, natural history, geometry, mechanics, and other commercial and science courses. Over the years additional schools were organized in other towns. Letichev had in fact several different Crown schools over the years. In 1906 a two-stage Jewish school was opened with the approval from government supervisors in Kiev.[57]

Graduates of these Crown schools were the *maskilim* who spread the idea of Russification of Jews for the next generation. This intelligentsia consisted of hundreds, and influenced thousands. Succeeding generations of Jews strove to continue their secular studies in the Russian gymnazium system. Unfortunately, these nineteenth-century *maskilim* lived in a state of wishful thinking. Their dream of full acceptance of Jews by the Russian government, and of the dying out of anti-Semitism, was to burst in 1881-1882 with the waves of pogroms following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II.

Historians look upon the period of Russian *Haskalah* and weigh the negatives versus the positives. On one hand, many *maskilim* broke away from Judaism, lost their Jewish identities, and contributed to assimilation. However, out of the *Haskalah* movement emerged a new social order, which broke down the rigid structure of shtetl leadership. Moreover, the revival of the Hebrew language contributed to another powerful movement in Russia: Zionism.[58]

RUSSIAN PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS (GYMNAZIUM)

Under Tsar Nicholas I and Tsar Alexander II, strong efforts were made to attract Jewish students into the Russian school system, in order to Russify young Jews. During the period of *Haskalah*, Jews did begin to flock to Russian schools. However, an abrupt change in educational rules occurred in 1887. A quota system, referred to as *numerous clausus*, became accepted policy. Within the Pale only 10% of a class in a Russian school could be Jewish. Outside the Pale the restriction was even worse: 5% in all places other than Moscow and St. Petersburg, where it was 3%.[59] David Kurtzman was unable to get into the gymnazia in Letichev. He recalled that "there was a quota system under which only ten percent of the students could be Jewish. So I was sent to the gymnazia in Odessa. Odessa was a big city. The quota wasn't filled there."[60]

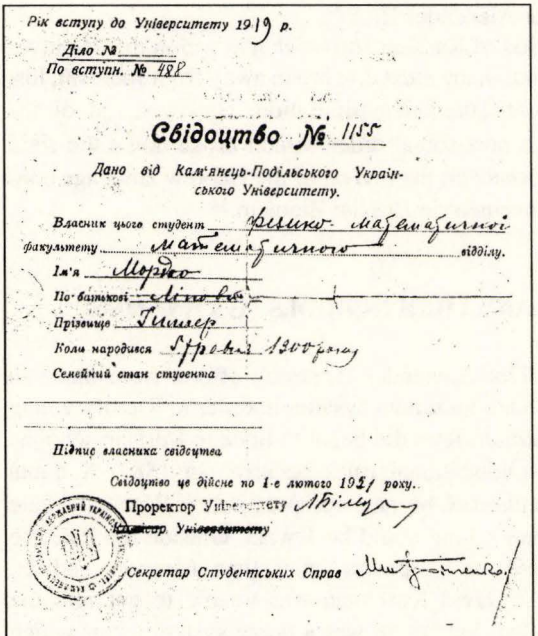
If they were able to pass the entrance exams, Jewish girls were also allowed to attend a Russian school for girls (*Zhenski Shkol*). Students who had a relative who served in the military were granted special status and were accepted more

readily into the Russian school system. For example, Polina Rabinna Rapoport of Letichev was able to attend because her brother Meyer was in the military.[61] Jocheved Malkiman (later known as Bat -Rachel Tarshish) left Mikhalpol to study in Bar:[62]

> There was no elementary school in my town, so I took lessons with private teachers. When I had reached the age of 13, I passed the exams and got into the city gymnazium for girls in Bar. Like other schools in Russia, this school also accepted Jewish girls by certain percentage (*numerous clausus*). In my class there were only 4 Jewish girls out of 40. The school demanded hard discipline and every step of the girls had been watched carefully. The stubborn and rebellious girls were sometimes kicked out of school with a "wolf ticket" over their heads, blocking their way to another schools.

Emanuel Pulier remembered the harshness of the government school system in Letichev:[63]

> I attended a government school which admitted only a few Jewish children. I was one of them because my father was well-known in the town and could pull some strings. The life in the school was very unpleasant. The Gentile kids were constantly insulting us and many times we suffered blows and other injustices. In order to enter a better school, namely "Gymnazium," Jews were admitted only if they had the best grades and fell into the five percent quota. This meant that for every twenty eligible children, only one Jewish child was admitted. I passed the entrance exams with best marks and only after two years of trying was finally admitted. To illustrate how important it was for Jewish



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Діло №
По вступн. № 488

Свідоцтво № 1155

Дано від Кам'янець-Подільського Українського Університету.

Власник цього студент фізико-математичної факультету математичного відділу.
Ім'я Мордко
По батькові Лінович
Прізвище Гиллер
Коли народився 5 травня 1300 року
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Gymnazium Certificate of Graduation.
Mouzya Giller, whose family came from Letichev and Zinkov, graduated the Gymnazium in Kamenets-Podolsky in 1921. Courtesy of Edward Giller.

children to attend a better school, Jewish parents were paying for Gentile children in order to have enough of them admitted in the school to enable an additional Jewish child to be admitted!

Life in "Gymnazium" was not happy. We were suffering from anti-Semitism and we were subjected to abuse and insults...I was an average student. My marks were about eighty to ninety per cent and I never failed in any subjects. My memory was never too good. I had to study hard and usually crammed before exams. I loved to study algebra, geometry and geography. I hated Latin and especially a course in Old Russian.

The Giller Family of Kamenets-Podolsky, ca. 1915.
Lipa Giller, Feiga Rapoport Giller and their two boys Nunya and Mousya. This family had deep connections with the Giller family of Letichev and the Rapoport family of Zinkov. Lipa was extremely wealthy and owned the power and light company in Kamenets-Podolsky. At about the time of this photo, Mousya was attending Gymnazium in Kamenets-Podolsky. Photo courtesy of Sonya Breidbart and Edward Giller.

There were several rules that governed our lives at school. A student had to wear an approved uniform. All jackets and coats had to be buttoned at all times. No matter how hot the weather was, the coat or jacket had to be buttoned from top to bottom. Hands could never be kept in the pockets of a coat when meeting a teacher in the street. All students had to be home after dark and in bed at nine o'clock. Detective storybooks were not allowed in the students' homes and of course, subversive literature meant expulsion from school with a certificate that would prevent further admittance to any government school. A special teacher was appointed to supervise the compliance with the rules. He had the right to enter one's home at any time for the purpose of inspection. All of this was rather provocative and the students did everything possible to circumvet these atrocious rules.

One good thing about the school was that everyone had to wear the same uniform. Some students had their uniforms made from material that was a little better quality or a little cheaper quality but we all looked the same. You really couldn't say who was rich and who was poor. Of course, after a while the poorer

material would wear out and the differentiation would show. The girls all wore the same dresses.

The discipline in the school was very strong. The teachers were very severe and demanding. There was no fooling around and if you didn't know your lesson, you would get a bad mark and remain in the same grade for another year. There was no such thing as mercy or anything of that sort. There was no parent-teacher association. Parents had nothing to do with school except when a child misbehaved and a note was sent home for the parents to appear before the prinicipal. The parents were told to punish their child and make sure the child behaves himself. It never happened to me. Only once did I get an unsatisfactory mark in behavior. I don't remember why...There was no such thing as a teacher liking a student. They never showed likes or dislikes. Of course, if a child was a good student, the teacher would like him but they would never show it. We were afraid of the teachers. They were like semi-gods.

We had three female teachers as well as [several]male teachers. One of the female teachers, a middle-aged German lady, fell in love with a student and they got married. So there it was -- a high-school student marrying a middle-aged German teacher. It was not a scandal. Everything was handled nicely and quietly.

The subjects we took in school were French, German, Latin, Old Russian, Geometry, History, Geography, Algebra, Physics, Chemistry, Biology. We had physical education but very little of it. The Gentile students had to have a religious hour. The Jewish kids didn't have anything like that.

Morris Garber described the school of Zinkov, and the struggle to further one's education:[64]

The policy of the Tsarist regime was to keep its vast masses in primitive darkness and ignorance. They were afraid to educate the people. An educated people may start seeing things in a different light and they may present a dangerous threat to their absolute rulers. That is why schools were so rare. Our town of Zinkov was larger and more progressive than the other small Jewish communities nearby. Therefore, we were fortunate to have a six-grade school, which was named after its principal. It was known as *Shkola Sumniewitche*. Not too many of our Jewish children were lucky enough to become students of this school. The graduates of this "temple" of learning were treated like real cultured intellectuals, receiving their due respect amid people who, in their great majority were ignorant and illiterate...The crucial problem, however, had to be met by those Jewish youths who were striving for a higher wordly education, or those whose ambition it was to elevate themselves themselves above the average level and to make a place for themselves in those few limited professions in which only a couple of narrow avenues were still open.

The pharmaceutical and dental professions along those with some less impressive and less inviting fields of endeavor were still open to the Jewish youths (because there were very few Gentile aspirants to this field). In order to be admitted into these professions, a certain degree of education was required; for druggists assistants four years and for dentists six years of High School. The Russian gymnazium was an eight year or eight class-school. Of course, there were no gymnazia in our small town. The only one that counted was the one in the capitol of our province—Kamenets-Podolsky—60 miles distance from our Zinkov. so we had to study hard and then go to Kamenets-Podolsky to take the exam. Because of the fact that we were students outside of a school, we were called "*Externiki*," which means outsiders.

Dr. Elya Grubshteyn of Letichev, 1910.
Due to inadequate facilities in Podolia, Grubshteyn was forced to go to medical school in Belgium. Courtesy of Sonya Breidbart.

It took months and years of hard, nerve-wracking and back breaking labor. We had to have the endurance, patience and calm of a saint in order to keep it up. The closer we came to the tests, the harder we worked, the less we slept giving up every little pleasure, and every bit of freedom and relaxation which are a part of a growing adolescent. We stayed up nights in groups of two and three making sure that each will keep the other from falling asleep. We kept washing our eyes with cold water to stay awake. Only when our brains became numb and refused to absorb any more cramming, only then we had to stop for a couple of hours of sleep.

We had to be in the city of Kamenets-Podolsky at least six weeks prior to the date set for the exams. It was important to engage the help of a local, experienced teacher in order to make sure that we were ready to face the ordeal of the tests. Again we studied day and night, living on a starvation diet. Most of us came from not too wealthy families. The children of the richer families did not have to be "*externs*." They were inside the schools, not outside.

Finally came the day or rather the week of judgement. Scared, with pounding hearts, we entered the holy sanctuary of learning, the huge auditorium was brightly illuminated, with row after row of separate tables. At each table

there were two or three teachers for every required subject. The imposing uniforms of the teachers scared us and confused us even more.

It was a known fact that the teachers, those high priests of education, disliked us very much, even Christian *externs* and more so the Jewish ones. It was their belief that no *extern*, however brilliant, can ever equal an inside student. Armed with this dogma and prejudice, it was no wonder that they hardly ever passed an *extern* the first time. Some of us got discouraged and gave up. But, the more stubborn and persistent ones tried over and over again, until they finally made it...That's exactly how it was with our externs. Some didn't have the will and stamina, or the financial means to go on. But some were determined to reach their goal at any cost, even to the degree of giving up their faith in order to be admitted to the universities and medical and law schools. Some of these converts became famous doctors, lawyers, engineers, and professors, but at what a terrible price?

Lev Zeidman, son of Michael Joseph Zeidman of Letichev, attended the Kishinev Gymnazia in 1907. This was the curriculum:[65]

-Stenography
-Esperanto
-English
-Geometry
-Zoology
-Geography

Derazhnia School, 1928. From left, Louis Meyer with Fira Solomonova Goldshteyn (teacher), an identified Soviet escort. Courtesy of Peter Myers.

-French
-German
-Russian
-Algebra.
-History
-Chemistry
-Physics

SOVIET JEWISH SCHOOLS

After the Russian Revolution, the Pale of Settlement was dissolved and the countless *ukases* which discriminated against Jews were abolished. The quota system for schools became a thing of the past and individual ethnic groups were allowed to organize their own schools. Hebrew schools were organized but by 1919 were in effect outlawed due to mounting pressures from the *Evsektsiia* and their anti-Zionist stance. However, by 1921-1922, Communist Yiddish schools were developed. Unfortunately, it was also during these years that the age-old Jewish educational system of *khederim* and *yeshivot* were outlawed. Any individuals who taught Hebrew were subject to arrest. The teachers of illegal Hebrew schools were denounced.[66] By 1931 there were over 1,000 Yiddish schools in the

Derazhnia Jewish School, 1926.

1. Shmil Kreizman, 2. Shika Shvarts, Srul Reizheyer (teacher), 4. unknown, 5. Shmil Friedzon, 6. Pola Nuzava, 7. ? Spector, 8. Khaika Galperin, 9. Khana Krut, 10. Tsila Mandel, 11. ? Yusem, 12. Ukrainian cleaning lady, 13. Abrum Brener, 14. Zhena Senderovich, 15. Sonya Reizheyer (teacher), 16. Adel Spector (teacher), 17. ? Kreminetsky (teacher), 18. Khana Gelman (teacher), 19. Meyer Mak, 20. ? Yusem, 21. Maria Balagor (teacher), 22. Genya Patashnik, 23. Boris Levin, 24. ? Balagor (teacher), 25. ? Tenzerman (teacher), 26. Meyer Zeigerman, 27. Zhenya Ribel, 28. Shivka Tisch, 29. Dora Sigal (teacher), 30. Shlome Grach, 31. Manya Kreizman, 32. Nakhman Burshteyn, 33. Mekhel Goldfarb, 34. Klara Oykerman, 35. Srul Lerner, 36. Anya Eidelman, 37. Yasha Frenkel, 38. Yosef Morenis. Photo courtesy of Simyon and Eta Bik.

Ukraine.[67] The Yiddish schools used newly-published Yiddish textbooks, which were actually translations of the standard Soviet texts. Russian and Ukrainian instruction were of course included in the curriculum, but students received a rich instruction in Jewish culture and literature.

Sam Honigberg recalled the school in post-Revolutionary Volkovintsy:[68]

> Our school was located in a private home vacated by the America-bound Caplan family. As I recall, we used three rooms. The students ranged in age from seven to about thirteen. I remember getting up at the break of dawn, churning through the muddy street, lamp in hand during winter months, firing up the stove in the main room to heat the building. We learned geography, math, science, and Russian. Discussions of Communism were ingrained into us—and Lenin's picture decorated the walls.

A letter to Soviet authorities dated April 7, 1923 reveals the hardships of running the Jewish school in Zinkov. The head of the "Union for Mutual Aid" Rafalovich, the school Chairman Israel Finkel, the secretaries Rotman and Abramovich, and school economist Balagur all documented that teachers were forced to work under difficult conditions. There were no books, no supplies; the teachers were poor, and were not getting paid; and as 80% of the students were poor orphans, they could not provide any financial assistance.[69]

List of schoolchildren, Zinkov, April 1923:[70]

Surname, given name and patronymic	Age	Father's profession
1. Averbukh, Zina Srulevna	8	without work (paid for tuition)
2. Berenshtein, Etla Shmulevna	9	hatmaker
3. Abramovich, Rivka Abramovna	8	wheelmaker
4. Akman, Brana Gershovna	13	synagogue worker
5. Brezman, Feiga Moishevna	10	furrier
6. Brezman, Khaika Moishevna	11	furrier
7. Berman, Zlata Ikhilevna	12	--without father--
8. Velgal, Ios Shlemov	11	tailor
9. Vigderovich, Etya Moshkov	8	--orphaned--
10. Vigderovich, Mendel Moshkov	7	--orphaned--
11. Vigderovich, Gersh Ikhilov	9	furrier
12. Vigderovich, Khaika Ikhilevna	7	furrier
13. Gultman, Moishe Leizerov	9	--without father--
14. Gusis, Teiba Yakolevna	7	barber
15. Gluzman, Beila Yakovlevna	8	manual laborer
16. Glukh, Khana Moshevna	8	flour miller
17. Grois, Duvid Aronov	10	furrier
18. Gorbman, Abram Pinkasov	11	tailor
19. Goikhman, Shmuel Itskov	11	furrier
20. Diner, Keila Motovna	10	furrier
21. Diner, Zlata Motovna	11	furrier
22. Zola, Freida Itskovna	8	leather factory (paid for tuition)
23. Ikman, Manya Srulevna	12	furrier
24. Kelenzon, Yalka Itskovna	11	butcher
25. Kleinman, Manya Idelevna	7	blacksmith
26. Kats, Duvid Abrumov	9	works in village

27. Kats, Mot Yakovlev	9	--orphaned--
28. Komarogkin, Mikhel Azrielov	10	--orphaned--
29. Konat, Sura Srulevna	10	--orphaned--
30. Konat, Etla Srulevna	8	--orphaned--
31. Kurtsman, Esfir Yakovlevna	11	works in beer factory
32. Kurtsman, Izrail Yakovlov	9	works in beer factory
33. Malamud, Esfir Abramovna	9	Soviet employee
34. Malamud, Iser Abramovich	8	Soviet employee
35. Malamud, Malvina Abramovna	11	Soviet employee
36. Miropolskaya, Etla Idelovna	8	miller
37. Petrashner, Sara Duvidovna	8	--orphaned--
38. Presel, Roza Iosevna	8	--without father--
39. Raitsis, Ikhil Moshkov	10	capmaker
40. Rozenblit, Ios Leibov	9	cabinetmaker
41. Tepermeister, Sara Duvidovna	8	--orphaned--
42. Tepermeister, Itsik Duvidov	10	--orphaned--
43. Tikhman, Zislya Shlemovna	11	pauper
44. Tikhman, Etlya Yankelevna	8	hardware
45. Traiberman, Sosya Zeidovna	8	works in village
46. Traiberman, Eidya Zeidovna	12	works in village
47. Frenkel, Dora Aronovna	8	hardware
48. Fainman, Bunya Shlemovna	10	works in village
49. Ferman, Idel Itsil	9	coachman
50. Ferman, Ios Nusinov	8	coachman
51. Shafman, Ikhil Itskov	10	--without father--
52. Shalita, Itsko Aronov	7	tinsmith
53. Shalita, Khaskel Aronov	8	tinsmith
54. Shinderman, Khaya Abramovna	10	furrier
55. Shvarts, Yakov Ovsheyev	9	--without father--
56. Sheinfeld, Aron Moishov	10	works in village
57. Shor, Srul Zelmanov	11	
58. Shapira, Dora Morona	9	merchant
59. Etkin, Feiga Aronovna	11	--without father--
60. Aizenberg, Tuba Shimonovna	10	--without father--
61. Gernoys, Pesya Benyamovna	10	tailor
62. Gernoys, Mot Benyamovna	8	tailor
63. Batler, Ester Z (illegible)	11	--orphaned--
64. Kibrik, Abram Pinkasov	12	blacksmith
65. Aizenberg, Srul Shimonov	11	--orphaned--
66. Aizenberg, Bluma Shimonovna	12	--orphaned--
67. Berger, Sonya Abramovna	12	--orphaned--
68. Berger, Sonya Borukhovna	12	
69. Balagur, Yakov Froimov	12	hatmaker
70. Giltman, Sonya Leizerovna	13	--orphaned--
71. Zilbermints, Volf Mikhelev	12	--orphaned--
72. Kotlarman, Borukh Iosev	10	--orphaned--
73. Miler, Sheva Moshkov	12	works in leather factory
74. Miropolskaya, Khana Idelevna	11	
75. Miropolskaya, Feiga Idelevna	13	
76. Milshteyn, Aron Abramov	11	works in village
77. Parnes, Moishe Aronov	11	--without father--
78. Rafalovich, Khaika Motevna	10	works in vodka factory
79. Roizen, Rivka Moshevna	12	planter
80. Rozentul, Vigdor Usherov	13	glazier
81. Froiman, El Moshkov	11	--without father--
82. Shteinbuk, Gersh Aronov	10	--without father--
83. Koifman, Moishe Nusinov	10	--without father--
84. Abramovich, Rakhil Abramovna	9	wheelmaker
85. Berzon, Polya Gershovna	12	--without father--
86. Volokh, Enya Iosevna	11	roofer
87. Kleinman, Basya Idelevna	9	blacksmith
88. Koifman, Roza Nusinovna	11	--without father--
89. Kurtsman, Rakhil Yakovna	13	worker in beer factory
90. Leiderman, Rivka Leibovna	11	--orphaned--

91. Leiderman, Berl Leibovna	10	--orphaned--
92. Milshteyn, Roza Abramovna	12	works in village
93. Rozenblit, Sara Leibovna	13	cabinetmaker
94. Rozenblit, Yakov Leibov	11	cabinetmaker
95. Frenkel, Anya Aronovna	12	merchant (paid for tuition)
96. Frenkel, Geinikh Aronovna	10	merchant (paid for tuition)
97. Sher, Khaim Zelmanov	13	
98. Lerner, Sonya Faivelovna	13	without father

In 1925 a Jewish school was opened in Staro Zakrevsky Meidan. It was an elementary school (4 grades only), with two teachers—one who taught 1st and 3rd grades and the other who taught 2nd and 4th grades. They alternated between teaching responsibilities on a yearly basis. As there was no school for the local Ukrainian children, they also attended—and learned Yiddish.[71] The larger towns had both Yiddish and Ukrainian schools. For example, Letichev had a K-7 Yiddish school, and a Ukrainian K-10 school.

By the mid-1930s and the purges of Stalin, Jewish culture was suppressed throughout the USSR. By 1938, all Yiddish schools (and other Jewish institutions) were closed. Even before the Nazi onslaught, the timeframe of the 1930s can be considered to be the end of Jewish education and culture in the Soviet Union.

APPENDIX : PINKAS BOOKS FROM THE LETICHEV DISTRICT

Pinkas books provide a record of the minutes of Jewish religious organizations. Some *pinkas* books provide communal registers, such as birth and death records, which were required by the Russian government of the Crown Rabbi of each *kahal*. Other *pinkas* books served as permanent records of the organization's functions, heirarchy, and rules. Other types of *pinkas* books were often kept by the *gabay* of each *kahal* or *khevre*. Many *pinkas* books were written by professional scribes and were therefore given the appearance of a holy book. It was a common belief that some *pinkas* books had the power to heal the sick, ease childbirth, and prevent fires.

Fortunately, over a half dozen *pinkas* books have been preserved from Letichev and Medzhibozh. Several of them are for "Mishna Societies"—study groups from a common chasidic sect. One *pinkas* consists of rules for sheltering travelers and another is for the book restorer's society. Probably the most interesting *pinkas* is that of the *khevra kadisha*, or burial society, of Letichev. Entries date from 1744 to the 1890s.

Selected passages from *Pinkas m'ha Khevra Mishnayot* (Book of the Mishnayoth Study Society) of Letichev (1886).[72]

V. The person who will not complete his regimen of study according to the time schedule appointed by the trustees, and if this is unintentional or not his fault, then he is excused once and twice. However, the third time he will be responsible for his misdeed and he must compensate according to the stipulation of the Society's leaders.

VI. The person who will purposely disregard the rules will be expelled from the Society. Said person will have no charge, complaint or protest regarding his past dues should he refuse to compensate the members of the Society. He will also be given a fine according to the judgement of the Society leaders.

VII. It is the right of the citizen to apply for membership and he must request membership from the trustees who will in turn confer with the other members of the society for approval.

VIII. When the members of the board will agree upon acceptance of a member, said member will pay a membership fee not less than eighteen golden coins. The first year he will not be eligible to express his opinion but after the first year he will be a member as all members.

IX. It is right and proper to accept as a member also the person who is not a scholar if most of the members and trustees do not object, but they must pay dues double as mentioned in regulation number five.

X. Every week each member shall pay no less than two guilden for the Society's fund so they will have money for good things. All who exceed that amount will be blessed.

XI. We have all agreed for this purpose that when and with the help of *HaShem* a member will be blessed with a new son or daughter when he will be called up to the Torah he will also donate for the Society not less than eighteen golden coins. The trustees cannot use these funds without the permission of the members of the Society.

XII. To strengthen the union of our Society we have deemed it necessary to appoint men of knowledge whose eyes will be open to the ways of the Society regarding the division of the Mishnayot to the members of the Society and to make sure the members behave according to the manner appropriate for this holy society.

XIII. Elections will be held for the Society once a year at a gathering of the entire Society upon the completion of the Mishnayot for the fourth time, at which time they will make a ballot chosen by three members who will in turn choose two trustees who will give it an accounting every year.

XIV. We have found it proper to declare the 17th day of Nisan the anniversary of the passing of the holy Admor, Rabbi Yitzkhok of Skvir so that the merits of our learning will merge with the merits of this holy *Tsaddik* to watch over us as it is written that holy saints are greater in their passing than in this life.[73]

XV. The rules and regulations of our Society that declared the 17th day of Nisan as the anniversary and completion of the learning of the *Mishnayot* also deem it proper that each

Title page from the Pinkas book of the Mishnah Society of Medzhibozh.
Mid 19th to early 20th century. Courtesy of the State Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg.

will donate a sum of money for the celebration dinner, and assure that this money will not come out of the Society funds.

XVI. Every Sabbath and month *Aliyahs* will be divided among the Society members by lottery, and the trustees will call out the names.

XVII. The persons who will be called up to the Torah on the said Sabbath will donate no less than one guilden.

XVIII. The person who will be the sexton of the Society will be exempt from paying dues.

XIX. If a member so desires to place a child into the Society let him express this wish before the Society members and they in turn will accept the new member into the Society without dues having to be paid on his behalf..all as the Society leaders see fit.

XX. Should a non-member pass away and the family wishes prayers and learning of Mishnayoth in behalf of his soul, let them apply to the Society and they will decide the proper course to take.

XXI. All of the funds that will be raised by the Society will go for the purchase of Mishnayoth for the members to learn from and the books will be placed where the members of the Society decide upon.

XXII. The rules and regulations shall be as written here, not added to or deleted, and may *HaShem* light our way with His Torah, and send us the true redeemer in our Times. Amen.

IN MEMORY AND TESTIMONY OF THOSE WRITTEN HERE INNOCENT AND PURE, WHOSE NAMES I WILL WRITE THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY TO STUDY *MISHNAYOT*. MAY *HASHEM* BLESS THEM ALL....

* * * * *

Khavurah Mishnayot m'haKloiz d'haRav m'Apta d'Mezhbizh (The *Mishnah* Society of the Study Hall of the Apter Rebbe in Medzhibozh), mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries:[74]

At a meeting of the *Mishnah* Society, upon the completion of *Mishnah* learning on Rosh Khodesh Iyyar of the year '632 [1872] it was accepted and brought into effect that [it is incumbent] upon the [current] *Mishnah* Society and upon the generations to come who will join the aforementioned Society that each one of the Society, who is registered in this record book, is obliged to learn one chapter of *Mishnah* on the day of the Yohrtzeit on behalf of the departed soul of R. Avraham Yehoshua Heshel the son of R. Moshe, may his memory be a blessing, who passed away on the twenty-sixth day of the month of Tammuz in the year '631 [1871] ... And, may the soul of the deceased stand at the right hand side of the Highest One, and pray and make honest entreaty on behalf of the living...

It is to be a preserved memorial for generation after generation by the local *Mishnah* Society of the city of Medzhibozh upon our accepting from the hand of the woman, Mrs. Khana, the wife of the departed, our Master and Teacher, Tzallel[75] son of R. Meshulem Zussya, the amount of fifty rubles, for a Torah crown of silver that will serve in the Beth *Midrash* of the holy rabbi from Apta, with the assent of the *gabays* and a majority of the Society's membership [for the memory] of the soul of the departed rabbi, the aforementioned Tzallel. And, in this manner we accepted from the aforementioned woman the said amount [in exchange] for the men of the aforementioned Society have dedicated to his soul through the study of *Mishnah* on the *Yohrtzeit*, which is the fourth day of the month of Nissan, departed in the year 5664 [1904]. Also, we, the Society, are purchasing for the aforementioned departed a third part of the Torah crown--an obligation that we have made and accepted upon ourselves completely and with full force, an additional act of the Society is that it will be the obligation of the gabay that every year on the day of the Yohrtzeit he must remind the Society to study *Mishnah* in his name, as is the custom.

And, as witness we and the gabays have come to affix our signatures on Wednesday, the fifth day of the month of Tishrei, the year of 5665 [1904], here in Medzhibozh:

Yitshak Minor, the son of R. Yosef Khaim
Yosef son of R. Avraham, may his memory be a blessing
Tsvi son of Menakhem...Hekht
Reuven Tsvi son of Yehoshua
Moshe son of R. Khaim
Menakhem Yehuda son of R. Avraham Dov
Avraham Yitskhak on of Aharon Shlomo
Berish son of R. Zekharia haLevi
Naftali ...Kats
Aharon son of R. Yisrael Tsvi Yitskhak haLevi

In front of those whose signatures appear above we, the members of the society, have received from the woman, Khana, the said amount of fifty rubles upon the abovementioned conditions...

Yitskhak Khankis, Rabbi and religious teacher of Medzhibozh

With the Help of God, may He be blessed :

Behold, on this day at a public meeting, we, the *Mishnah* Society of the study hall of the holy Rabbi of Opatow--may the memory of the saint and holy man be for a blessing in the next world--at the time of the sitting down to a festive dinner of the righteous Rabbi, our master and teacher, Yitzkhak Meir, may his memory be for a blessing in the next world, it was said and assented to renew the twelfth regulation, which is detailed in this record book, wherein each and every one is obliged to go to pray at the home of the deceased head of the community. and, because it has verily been seen how many people of our Society are negligent in fulfilling what is written, and, although its penalty has been delineated that he should be given leave from the Society, in view of the severity of the penalty, such a thing shall not be carried out nor be done to the transgressor. Because of this, it was considered and was decided that any man whosoever of the Society, when he

shall receive a written notice from the gabay to go and to pray, and he, from some force of circumstance, is unable to fulfill the instruction of the person in charge, then he shall give a ransom for the redemption of his soul of one gold coin, that is, fifteen kopecks, to the Society, in order that there be the possibility to hire someone else in his place. Then, the *Minyan* in the home of the deceased head of the community will not be lacking, and no one shall be punished because someone is missing. However, if it be that he shall not wish even to carry out this said payment which will be imposed upon him, then he shall simply be removed from his service and from the Society altogether, without remembrance, and he shall be expelled.

And, we look forward for the redemption of the Lord--" and He will swallow up death forever"[76]—and may the blessed Lord show us his salvation and lift up our strength, and bless us with peace as it is written—"God will bless his nation with peace."[77]

And for evidence and true sign we have come to affix our signatures on this day, the second day of Rosh Khodesh Adar, that brings joy in plenty, in this year 5675 [1915].

Aharon son of R. Yisrael Yitskhak Tsvi haLevi Rubinovits
Yitskhak son of R. Shlomo
Yakov son of R. Moshe
Menakhem Yehuda son of Avraham Dov
Yakov son of R Aharon haLevi Rubinovits
Simkha Gershon Shkolur (?)
Eliezer son of R. Avraham haKohen
Yissakhar Dov son of R. Aharon Ari Kigel
Khaimson of R. Shimon
Barukh son of R. Moshe Fogel (?)
Aryeh Yehoshua son of R. Yekheil, shokhet from Vankovits
Aharon Eliezer son of R. Simkha Leib

That it be a preserved memorial for all generations of the *Mishnah* Society of the study hall of the Apter Rebbe, may God be his helper, the son of R. Yosef Khaim prepared a Torah scroll for the *Mishnah* Society on behalf of the souls of his son, the teacher and rabbi, Aharon Yitzkhak, who passed way on the fifteenth day of the month of Markheshvan, and on behalf of the soul of his daughter Mrs. Shayna Pessia who passed away on the fifteenth day of the month of Iyyar, 5677 [1917], with the assent of the *gabay*, the *Mishnah* Society has obliged itself to learn Mishnah on the *Yohrtzeit* day both of the aforementioned son and of the aforementioned daughter for their name and the name of her soul, as is the custom.

And as witness we, the undersigned, have come to affix our signatures :

Aharon Eliezer son of R. Simkha Gershon Shkolur [?]
Barukh son of R. Yosef

* * * * *

Pinkas Khevra Tikkun S'forim ha-Kloiz shel kavod Admor (The Book Restorers' Society, Letichev, Prayer House in honor of the Admor) 1840:[78]

We, the undersigned confirm that we have seen all the holy books planted here in this *Bes Midrash* of the Admor, and we have opened our eyes to keep watch over this matter. Until we are able to purchase new holy books we have decided unanimously and with a clear mind to establish a Society for Book Restoration where each one of us will donate generously each and every week until we raise the sum of fifty rubles and from that time on we will purchase holy books for the above prayer house according to the rules and regulations stipulated in this register, and according to the trustees elected in each time. Heaven forbid us from touching any of this money for anything even redemption of prisoners, other than the restoration and purchase of books. May the merit of holy Torah stand by us that it never leaves us or our children ever, and that we learn and teach, observe and do according to His will, and may the good Lord help us realize our thoughts, this year 5600.

Rules and Regulations have been designated inscribed by pen in iron and lead:

1. We have all decided that it is a very great *mitzvah* to collect the sum of fifty rubles as soon as possible to begin purchasing books for the *shtibel* of the Rabbi may he be blessed and may his name be blessed.
2. Until six years from the day inscribed below each and every one of us promises to give weekly funds for this *mitzvah* a written in this register.
3. Twice a year, on *Chol Hamoed Pesach* and *Chol Hamoed Succoth*, the Society must gather for elections to choose five advocates who will choose one superior administrator and two faithful trustees who will be in charge of all the needs of the Society until the next election. If the Society sees that they do not want to carry out their tasks accordingly the Society has the right to fine them.
4. The trustees chosen by the advocates by election are not allowed to remove their hand from this *mitzvah* until the coming election, however, if the administrator sees that they cannot fulfill their task for valid reasons then they must choose replacements.
5. The administrator must collect the dues from each member of the Society registered in the registry book, and he will hold the money until the new month at which time he must give the money to the trustees.
6. Each member of the Society registered must pay weekly dues, and must pay his debt every week or every month, particularly before elections. If someone does not pay before elections then he will be fined. There must not be anyone who has not paid for the year.

7. Whoever wishes to appoint himself with the members of the Society must pay entrance dues, and will then be considered a member of the Society.

8. Each member is obligated to attend the *minyan* and cannot refuse. If someone refuses to go he must pay six coins to be exempt. If he has a valid reason in the eyes of the trustees hedoes not have to pay. The adminitrator must take care of the Minyan and gather the Society for the *minyan*.

9. Each one's dues are registered in the registry according to the discretion of the trustees, should one not be able to afford said sum then the trustees can set amount as they see fit.

10. No one will be accepted into the Society before marriage.

11. One who wants his son to be a member will donate "A Pot of Honey" and after his marriage he will be one of the Society.

12. If one is missing from the Society, the Society must make a *minyan* and learn *Mishnayot* together, and in this merit they will live and be saved from death.

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12. Biale, David, 1986, "Eros and Enlightenment: Love Against Marriage in the East European Jewish Enlightenment,"in *POLIN*, Volume 1, Basil Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, p. 49-67.

13. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives*, Excelsior Publishers, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 133-134.

14. Garber, Morris, in *Pinkas Zinkov*, Tel Aviv, 1964, p. 146-149. Translated from Yiddish by Anita Turtletaub.

15. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives*, Excelsior Publishers, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 26-27.

16. Unpublished memoirs of Zina Celniker Wolson, provided by Leo Celniker.

17. Interview with Dora Zichroni by Asher Fischman and Sara Tarsish, 1994.

18. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives*, Excelsior Publishers, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 104-105.

19. Personal communications with Pauline Zimmerman Chapin and Annette Zimmerman Singer.

20. *HaMelits* articles, dated August 11 (23), 1898, #178, p. 3, and October 11 (23), #222, p. 2. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

21. Schochet, E.J., 1971, *BACH: Rabbi Joel Sirkes--His Life, Works, and Times*: Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem-New York, p. 115.

22. Rabbi Shneur Zalman had been arrested for "personal acts of treason against the state"--founding a new religious sect and for sending money to Palestine. He later received a full acquittal and was released.

23. V. Lvov Rogachevsky, *A History of Russian Jewish Literature*, edited and translated by Arthur Levin, Ardis Publishers, Ann Arbor Michigan, 1979, p. 70, 80, 90; Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, Volume 1, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916, p. 387.

24. This statute defined and restricted the powers of the kahal; thousands of Jews were to be uprooted from villages and sent to cities; Jewish agriculture was to be implemented, as a means of Russification.

25. They raised three children : Alexander, who became a theatrical director; Michael, who became the editor of a comic paper; and Emilia, whose son Elya Metchnikoff (1845-1916) became a Nobel Prize winning biologist.

26. Kieniewicz, Stefan, 1991, "The Jews of Warsaw, Polish Society and the Partioning Powers 1795-1861," in *The Jews in Warsaw*, edited by Batoszewski and Polonsky, Basil Blackwell Ltd., p. 159.

27. Green, Arthur, 1992, *Tormented Master: The Life and Spiritual Quest of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav*, Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, p. 30.

28. Ibid, p. 338.

29. For a detailed analysis of the various editions of the book, see : Moshe Rosman, "In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov: A User's Guide to the Editions of Shivhei haBesht", in *POLIN*, Volume 10, Basil Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, 1997, p. 183-199.

30. Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz, translators and editors, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov [Shivhei ha-Besht]*, Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, 1993, p. 5.

31. Wiskind-Elper, Ora, 1998, *Tradition and Fantasy in the Tales of Reb Nahman of Bratslav*, State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 3.

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44. See Dov Taylor, translator, *Joseph Perl's Revealer of Secrets*, Westview Press, 1997.

45. *HaMelits*, October 21 (November 2) 1880, p. 618. Translated by Michael Meiberg.

46. Translated by Leonid Rapoport.

47. *Russki Evrei*, January 1882; translated by Leonid Rapoport.

48. *Russki Evrei*, No. 29, June 1883; translated by Leonid Rapoport.

49. Unpublished memoirs, Zina Celniker Wolson, 1961. Courtesy of Leo Celniker.

50. *Voskhod*, 1887.

51. Veitzblit, *Derazhnia: Sovremennoe Evreiskoe Mestechko*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

52. O. Dashevskaya, *"Evrei v Podolskoi gubernii po materialam zhurnala 'Vestnik OPE'* in *Istoriya Evreev na Ukrain i v Belorussii*, edited by V.A.Dimshits, St. Petersburg, 1994, p. 128-131.

53. Dovid Fukhs, "My Childhood Years in Zinkov," *Pinkas Zinkov*, Tel Aviv, 1964, p. 120-122. Translated by Anita Turtletaub.

54. Stanislawski, Michael, 1983, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, p. 82-84.

55. *Voenno-Statisticheskoe obozrinie Rossiskoi Imperii: Podolskaya Gubernia*, St. Petersburg, 1849, p 152-153; see also Stanislawski, pages 98-99.

56. It was rented by the government of Podolia from Ges Tarl Shmuilovich of Letichev. Central Historical Archive of Kiev,Fund 707, inv. 87, File 3332, p. 40-41.

57. Central Historical Archive of Kiev, Fond 442, inv. 658, File 108.

58. See "Conflicting Jewish Responses to Modernity" by Steven Bayme, in *Great Schisms in Jewish History*, edited by Raphael Jospe and Stanley Wagner, KTAV, New York, 1981, p. 177-199.

59. Jacob Frumkin, Gregor Aronson, Alexis Goldenweiser, editors, *Russian Jewry 1860-1917*, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1966, p. 100.

60. "From Odessa to Emeritus: with Love," *Pitt* , Spring 1967, p. 3.

61. Interview, Leonid Rapoport, January 1997.

62. *The Path I Took*, Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House Ltd., 1981. Courtesy of Carmel Ravid.

63. Emanuel Pulier, unpublished memoir. Courtesy of Suzanne Pulier.

64. Morris Garber, "Externiks,"*Pinkas Zinkov*, Tel Aviv 1966, p. 12-14.

65. Interview, Douglas Seidman, July 1998.

66. Halevy, Zvi, 1976, *Jewish Schools under Czarism and Communism*, Springer Publishing Company, New York, 1976, p. 162-164.

67. Ibid, p. 177.

68. Personal communication, Sam Honigberg, August 28, 1998.

69. Khmelnitsky Archive, "Protokol No. 7," School Council of Zinkov. Summarized by Leonid Rapoport.

70. Khmelnitsky Archives, fond 4669, op. 1, #30.

71. Personal interview, Yefrem Mankovetsky, 1993.

72. Vernadsky Central Scientific Library of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, fond 321, opis 1, or. 84, n. 48. Translated by Sora Ludmir.

73. Rabbi Yitzkhok Tversky of Skvir died on 17 Nisan 1885.

74. Vernadsky Central Scientific Library of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, fond 321, opis 1, op. 95, n. 60. Translated by Alex Korn.

75. Probably refers to Rabbi Samuel Heshel, who died in 1862.

76. From Isaiah 25:8.

77. From Psalm 29:11.

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8

Occupations

by Ben Weinstock

INTRODUCTION

Jews have been documented as being involved in trade as early as 1509 in Medzhibozh, but Jewish merchants probably passed through the area starting in the mid to late 1400s.[1] There is no doubt that the location of Medzhibozh (about half-way between the major towns of central Poland and Kiev), combined with the security of its fortress, made it an ideal haven for travelers along THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV with their caravans of goods. Within a short time it became a center for economic activity. In order to encourage Jewish colonization of the outlying area (especially after the devastation caused by the Khmelnitsky massacres), the leading Polish noble families granted numerous privileges to Jews, encouraging them to engage in trade and the production of crafts. The Polish magnates recognized that Jews were essential to the economy of the region and were needed in order for their estates to become profitable again. Skilled Jewish workers were allowed to establish *khevrot*, or guilds (such as the butchers guild in Medzhibozh in 1730, and the tailors-furriers guild in Letichev in 1780). The by-laws of these guilds protected the profits of the Jews as well as those of the Polish magnates. For example, members of these guilds were to be only married men—-as it was feared that bachelors, with fewer family responsibilities, might be tempted to sell their goods or services at rates lower than their married counterparts.[2] Agricultural leaseholding and innkeeping (described below) were almost entirely in Jewish hands. A visitor to Medzhibozh

in the 1780s observed that "many Jews settled here; they deal with the trade of crops, different goods, and different crafts." Of Letichev, it was said that "Jews took over the taverns and the city and some of the city dwellers were not allowed by the Jews to build distilleries. Jewish leaseholders took over the tolls (duties) and trade fees." It was noted about Derazhnia that "in a brick city hall which had stores on the first floor, Jews sell pottery, leather straps, and dried fish."[3]

LEASEHOLDING AND INNKEEPING

The system of *arrenda*, the leasing of assets or rights, was widespread in Poland—Lithuania from the 1500s through even into Russian rule. Not only could land, mills, ponds, inns, distilleries, and other potential businesses be rented out, but the jobs of tax and duty collecting could be as well. An example of an *arenda* contract is one of 1594 of Prince Piotr Zabreski, who leased several towns, villages, and settlements of Volhynia "...together with the noble boyars...serfs...and their debts, obligations, and privileges, with the *arrendas*, taverns, tolls, ponds, mills and their revenues...and the various tithes paid...to Mikolaj Wrasnowicz and to Efraim the Jew of Medzhibozh for the amount of 9,000 Polish zloties for three years..."[4]

The Jews of THE ROAD FROM LETICHEV participated in this economic system, not unlike Jews in other areas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. According to the historians Salo Baron and Arcadius Kahan, "The increasing exports of agricultural products to Western Europe and the development of processing industries (especially alcoholic beverages) led to the progressive commercialization of the landed estates, but the majority of the nobility had little interest in the actual administration of their vast (and remote) *latifundia*, as well

A Zinkov Inn.
Photograph was taken ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

A row of inns in Mikhalpol.
Photograph was taken ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

as insufficient capital and commercial skills. Thus they turned to the capital, enterprise, and expertise of Jewish lessees."[5]

In return for paying rent on time, serving good quality liquor, and engaging the business in an honest fashion, leaseholders were entitled to quite a few rights. Provisions common in the contracts between the Jews of Zinkov, Medzhibozh, and other towns belonging to the vast *latifundia* of the Sieniawskis and Czartoryskis were:[6]

-the right to conduct business in the inns, mills, etc. specified in the contract;
-the right to use the lord's brewing/distilling facilities;
-housing for the leaseholder, and his family;
-the right to utilize other properties and receive produce from the lands of the owner;
-tax exemption;
-the right to engage in subcontracts.

A specific type of *arrenda* was *propincja*, the manufacture and sale of grain-based alcoholic beverages. Income from the alcohol industry grew from only 0.3% of the total income of Polish royal properties in 1564 to 40.1% in 1784.[7] The primary customers of taverns were the serfs, and the primary holders of the tavern leases were Jews. Thus gave rise to a system by which drunkenness and poverty among the poor masses could be blamed, not on the Polish lords who owned the taverns and leased out the contracts for the manufacture and sale of alcohol, or on the peasants themselves, but on the Jewish innkeepers. This perception of "the drunken peasant and the Jewish innkeeper" was made worse by Polish and Russian popular literature which stereotyped Jews as the corrupters of

society.[8] Government programs which expelled Jews from certain towns and regions, and which encouraged Jews to become agriculturists, stemmed from the popular myth of the "Jewish parasites" engaged in the liquor trades.[9]

David Toback described an inn as he travelled with two men who were going to the Medzhibozh fair:

> We rode into the village and entered the courtyard of an inn. It was a one-story, thatched-roof building with a heavy wooden door. Inside was a large room with peeling yellow paper on the walls and a low ceiling. There were several wooden tables with people crowded around them. Everything was a confusion of brightness, heat, clattering dishes, strange faces, and strong odors.
>
> Itze and Mendel went off to get themselves some food and forgot about me. The mistress of the inn approached me and asked me to see my passport, and she wrote my name in a red book. The book was sent to the police daily, as everyone had to register with the authorities when staying somewhere overnight. Particularly there was concern that a Jew might try to travel somewhere illegally, and even in a small village like this there were raids of the inn in the middle of the night, when people were pulled out of bed and every corner was searched.
>
> "Look how this child is shivering," the mistress said and shook her head. "Bring blankets and a warm drink," she called to a pretty girl of about twelve years.
>
> "But I don't have any money to pay for such things."

A Zinkov Inn.
Photograph was taken ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

"Don't worry, my child. In this inn all are welcome. The rich pay a little more, and the poor pay nothing. In this way I never commit the sin of turning anyone away."

Soon I was wrapped in a quilt and eating heartily. After finishing my meal, I joined several guests who sat near the stove telling stories. I felt restored not just by the food and warmth, but by the kindness I had received that day. A heaviness crept over me and soon I was asleep.[10]

Artisans

The Jews of the Letichev District, like Jews all over the Pale of Settlement, traditionally engaged in a wide variety of skilled craftwork. It was observed that "the artisan's home is the artisan's shop. And while sentimentalists may consider it one of the advantages of the artisan's work, because of its tendency to preserve the home, in reality it is one of the greatest drawbacks in the life of the artisan's family. It is not the function of the home to be the workshop, and the combination is especially harmful where the homes are as small, crowded, and poverty-stricken as are the majority of Jewish homes ..."[11] It was not uncommon for Jewish craftsmen to work 17 or 18 hours a day.[12]

Based upon the 1758 census of Medzhibozh, Slobod, and Trebukhovtsy (see appendix), we can note that almost half of the occupational surnames pertain to craftsmen:

Craftsmen: (total of 54 ; approximately 48%)
- 3 glaziers
- 2 coppersmiths
- 3 goldsmiths
- 1 jeweler
- 1 lathe operator
- 5 lacemakers
- 1 tar maker
- 1 wax maker
- 1 saddle maker
- 2 cap makers
- 18 tailors
- 6 furriers
- 1 tinsmith
- 2 bookbinders
- 4 blacksmiths

Religious functionaries: (total of 19; approxmately 18%)
- 7 rabbis / clerics
- 2 scribes
- 2 sextons
- 4 cantors / bass singers (possibly assistant cantors)
- 2 teachers

2 bathhouse attendants

Food and drink: (total of 14; approximately 12%)

4 butchers
4 bakers
6 innkeepers / wine makers

Merchants/leaseholders: (total of 12; approximately 10%)

3 leaseholders
1 "merchant"
8 haberdashers

Health care: (total of 5; approximately 3%)

3 barber-surgeons
1 oculist
1 baal shem

Other: (total of 10; approximately 9%)

3 stall-keepers
4 wagon-drivers
2 "inspectors"
1 musician

Interestingly, tailoring remained the most common skilled craftwork almost 150 years later. There were over 200 tailors in the Letichev District in 1904, according to a statistical survey conducted by the Jewish Colonization Association. This may have been due in part to efforts of ORT[13] to distribute sewing machines to needy applicants. The main craftsmen of the Jews of the southwestern Pale of Settlement (including Podolia) in 1904 were:[14]

tailors and dressmakers	36,014
cobblers and shoemakers	17,737
carpenters	10,258
butchers	6,232
seamstresses	6,106
hatters and capmakers	5,815
blacksmiths	5,629
bakers	4,493
coppersmiths and tinsmiths	3,509
stovemakers	2,905
furniture and cabinetmakers	2,778
bookbinders	2,399
tanners	2,293
musical instrument makers	2,242
glaziers	2,231
cigarette makers	1,900
painters	1,777
barbers	1,659
dyers	1,571
watchmakers	1,316
locksmiths	1,265
weavers	660

Fairs and Merchants

Fairs

A nineteenth-century writer noted that "the modern growth of Russia is greater than that of any other European country. Its fairs have done much to facilitate that growth. It seems as if people were passing through those stages of commercial building up which other nationalities have long left in the dim vista of the past."[15] The most grandiose fair in Europe was held in Nizhni-Novogorod. Other large fairs in the Russian Empire took place in Riga, Kiakhta, Irbit, and Yekaterinburg. Within the Ukraine, large fairs were held in Berdichev, Elizavetgrad, Zhitomir, Kharkov, and Kremenchug.[16] The largest fairs in Podolia were the week-long fairs that took place twice a year in Yarmolintsy (June 29-July 1; December 15-20) and once a year in Balta (May 25-June 1). Millions of rubles changed hands during these events.[17] The fair in Yarmolintsy specialized in horses (up to 2,000 were sold each year), furs, farm implements, among other goods. The Yarmolintsy event was described by an anti-Semitic Polish visitor:

> ...from Berdichev, from Kamenets, from Dubno, from Moscow even, there arrived caravans of Russians and oriental products. Around the small town, herds of wild horses were whinnying, oxen from Podolia and Kiev were bellowing, sheep fom Saxony and Silesia were bleating...some poor peasants slowly drew near on their simple carts, while the countless carriages of magnates and of the nobility passed or hurried by...Already in all the houses the Jews had given up their newly white-washed lodgings to the nobles, in return for a handsome renumeration, while they themselves—a disgusting race—shacked up in the stables and cow-sheds.[18]

Eight smaller fairs were scheduled within the District of Letichev : in Medzhibozh on January 6, March 6, and March 31, and in Letichev on April 9, May 3, June 20, October 1, and December 6.[19] Goods were sold on a more local basis in bazaars:

> Letichev: Sundays and Thursdays every week.
> Derazhnia: Thursdays every two weeks.
> Zinkov: Tuesdays every two weeks.
> Medzhibozh: Tuesdays every two weeks.
> Mikhalpol: Tuesdays every two weeks.
> Butsnevtsy: Sundays every two weeks.

Rose Pesotta of Derazhnia described market day in Derazhnia, circa 1905:

On Mondays in spring or early summer, my father, with a horse and buggy hired at one of the livery stables, or with a peasant driving his own wagon, left early in the morning for a tour of the countryside to contract for standing grain. When harvested, the wheat, rye, oats, or corn, or beans, peas and lentils were put into burlap sacks holding five poods, about one hundred and eighty pounds. Brought in by peasant wagons and carts to Derazhnia, the sacks were loaded into box cars and shipped to Kiev, Odessa, or perhaps to Western Europe. Dad would be gone two or three days, staying overnight in the homes of some of those from whom he bought the grain...Meanwhile, the merchants began preparing for Thursday, the next trading day. And some of the townsmen congregated in little groups in the market place to discuss the events of the week. In those days when radio and television were non-existent and newpapers in the cities too costly for most of Derazhnia's residents, they managed somehow to get news from the outside world.

On Thursday before daybreak, hundreds of peasants, men, women, and children, would be converging on Derazhnia over every road and foot path. Heavily laden with farm produce, the wagons and carts rumbled into town. Often they had been on the road all night so as not to miss the early buyers. If they arrived too soon, the drivers took a snooze, usually under the vehicles in warm weather, with one eye cocked for the beginning of trading. Some slept as they rode, trusting their horses, which probably knew the way as well as their masters. And there was livestock to be offered for sale—led, driven, or carried in wagons or carts—cows, calves, sheep, lambs, hogs, baby pigs, and goats. The women brought their own products--chickens, ducks, geese, eggs, butter, cheese, berries in season, beets, cabbage, pumpkins, onions, and garlic,woven with straw into huge garlands; homespun linen, and hand-woven colorfully embroidered towels and sheets; or perhaps only a small bag of beans, peas, or dried mushrooms. These would be sold or bartered for goods in the stores.

Gypsies, too, came frequently on market days, arriving in gayly painted covered wagons with a string of horses to sell or trade. Skilled blacksmiths and metal workers, they would make camp near the river, put up a forge, and shoe horses and mend copper and tinware. At night, around their campfires, they played on guitars or fiddles, sang melodious songs, and danced wild dances. Their brightly clad and bespangled women moved about the market place, telling fortunes for whomever would cross their palms with copper or silver coins...

Often, traveling men would come by train carrying heavy duffle-bags with merchandise. Hailing from nearby cities, they were easily recognizable by their store clothes and highly polished shoes, the luster of which was soon dimmed by Derazhnia's dust. They carted all kinds of notions, among them ikons, rosary

beads, honey combs, ribbons, mirrors, perfumes, and other items which the peasant lads and girls could afford to buy. We would scamper through the square, where the products of Podolia's fertile soil were displayed in the peasants' wagons. In the booths and stalls of the merchants and commission men were notable additions from distant places--round green melons from the South in season; dewy and glistening, red, green, and purple grapes from Bessarabia, lemons and oranges--a great luxury from the Crimea and Palestine. In the fall, the peasants would bring big barrels of amber honey still in the comb. As the uncovered barrels were unloaded from the wagons, swarms of disturbed bees humming angrily would rise in a cloud. But the peasants were not stung because these were working bees, engrossed in making delicious nectar...

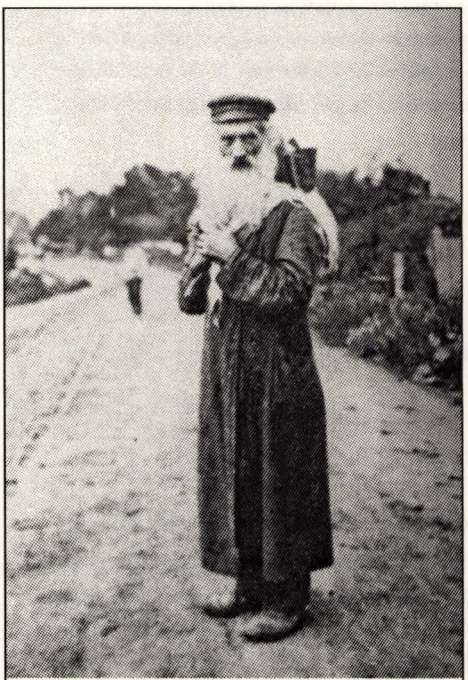
One bearded and rollicking giant who sold melons and juggled them in the air for the amusement of prospective customers also was a talented singer. Cutting a tiny triangular window in a melon to show the red ripeness of its luscious interior, he sang in a deep vibrant voice:

> Melons, melons, melons
> That the sun hath kissed,
> Melons, melons, melons
> That the Fates have blessed
> They are Nature's lovely gift
> When summer comes;
> I would not lie to you,
> They are as sweet as sugar plums.

By noontime, most of the peasants would have disposed of their offerings to the merchants and middle-men, while a few of them, having rented stalls for themselves, sold directly to consumers who appeared with baskets to stock up larders. In the afternoon peasants and their womenfolk would shop around to buy store goods. Among such available merchandise were wheat and rye flour for making bread and buckwheat for kasha, clothing, men's and boy's fur hats and caps, boots and shoes, calico, muslin, cotton, imported kerchiefs, lamps and lanterns, kerosene, sugar, tea, dried fish, salt, soap, tar, axle grease, mahorka smoking tobacco, and farm implements.

On market days, professional variety artists came to town to entertain the crowd. Sometimes they performed in a tent, with a barker and girls outside to lure onlookers in, but most of them presented their acts in the open and took up collections afterwards. There were acrobats performing on small rugs, jugglers, singers with accordions, balalaikas, and hurdy-gurdies, dancers, a magician, a fire-eater, a jocular man with a dancing bear, and a woman snake-charmer...

In the midst of the busiest trading, a horseless carriage made its first appearance in the market place, causing much commotion and excitement. That was the first automobile we saw in Derazhnia. It was a 1904 vintage; the driver sat stiffly in front dressed in goggles, cap, and gloves, the lady next to him with a large hat and veil tied under the chin. It came through at a speed of about five miles per hour, enough to cause a peasant's horse to become frightened. One horse ran away, and raced around the market place, knocking over booths and breaking open everything in its way. Geese and ducks, quacking, scattered through the market and fled to the river...[20]



A Jewish peddler in Ukraine.
Courtesy of the Dallas Holocaust Center.

Merchants

A variety of merchant types existed—some were poor, traveling peddlers; others sold their goods locally; while others were relatively wealthy guild merchants. Rose Pesotta recalled that "some of the Jews in [Derazhnia] were called what-have-you-to-sell-men. They were the middlemen, those who bought from the peasants anything they had for sale to be resold either to other peasants or to the people living in the town. Others were peddlers...Packs containing notions, household utensils, and various knick-knacks on their backs, or with a one-horse cart, they would bring their shining wares to the peasants in the villages. In summer heat and in bitter winter cold, these peddlers would trudge the countryside in quest of trade. Instead of money, they would bring back some of the farm produce, which they would then resell to the storekeepers in town. Sometimes, in winter, some of them would get lost in snowdrifts and their bodies would be found later in grotesque sitting or standing positions—frozen stiff, stone-like. Those bodies would be brought to town for burial, but first had to be thawed out."[21]

Some artisans and merchants lived in the Letichev District but sold their goods elsewhere. For example, the Tsimerman brothers of Letichev (Sam, Ben,

and Morris, and their father Khaim) were skilled craftsmen who made trunks, suitcases and other finished leather goods. Since there was no real market for such items within Letichev District, they had to find other outlets to make a living. Once every few months, they would load up a horsecart heaped high with their handmade luggage and they carted it over to big cities to sell, particularly Odessa and Kiev. Eventually, sometime between 1898 and 1902, Morris set up a permanent shop in Odessa which could serve as an outlet for his Letichev family's handiwork.[22]

There were also those merchants who were not forced to travel with a pack on their backs to earn a living. For example, Dora Zichroni from Medzhibozh in the early 1900s remembered:

> There was a very rich man who used to sell dried fish from all over the world. His name was Katchmar. He lived in a house that was like an estate. He had horses — every child had a horse and a buggy. It was a very exclusive, beautiful house. I remember it very well.
>
> Then there was another family, Khodrov. There were two Khodrov families who lived next to each other, across the street from me. They were not rich, but they were rich in culture. They were held with very high esteem, the elite of Medzhibozh. They called it *yikhes*. Although most people in Medzhibozh were called by the their first name and their occupation (for example Moshe *Politseyer* [the Policeman], Sheindel *fun di Piter* [from the Butter]), the Khodrovs were referred to as "the Khodrovs." They didn't mix with everyone, you had to be priviledged to be in their company. You had to be a real somebody even to able to talk to them. My family were in their company. We were considered also with the same kind of *yikhes*. Simkha Khodrov [my brother's friend] lived in K'far Vitkin [when he came to Israel]. Fifty years ago, when I came to Israel with my husband and I visited K'far Vitkin, we were taken there by a friend, and I met a lot of people [from Medzhibozh]. Of course it was much smaller then.
>
>
>
> **A street peddler.**
> From a century old postcard.
>
> There was a man that used to sell herring. His name was Moshe Pizik. He had a barrel of herring out in the street in front of his house. He used to cut

slices. If you came over, he used to give you one or two slices. People didn't have much money. My mother couldn't buy a whole herring and she had five children to feed. She used to tell me to go and ask Moshe Pizik to give me three pieces of herring from the middle of the fish. When I brought it back, my mother used to cut it in pieces and serve it to us. That would be a meal for us with bread and tea.

There was a store where they sold flour. My mother used to bake khallah and bread. She had to buy the flour. But she had a store and was too busy to go shopping. I was the smallest in the house, so she used to send me out to go shopping to buy the flour without any money. I had to tell the man that my mother had no money today, to please give me the flour and after Shabbat she would pay you.

I learned from childhood on what poverty is and not to be ashamed of it and not to take it as a stigma. Poverty is a part of life. My other richness came from the spiritual way of life which I inherited a great deal and I still live up to it now, even at my old age.

There was one man, they called him Ertseleh *fun di Piter*. Why? Because his wife sold butter. She was called Sheindel *fun di Piter*. He used to work for a *poritz*—a big estate man. He owned the entire farm. And people worked for him. This Ertseleh was a Chasid and he knew how to dance the Chasidic way. So the poritz made him dance when there were invited guests. And he made Ertseleh dance these old Jewish dances. The *poritz* would give him a lot of food to take home with him. A lot of people didn't think he should do this. They thought it was degrading for the Jewish people that he should dance for the *poritz*, but he did it anyway.[23]

Under Tsarist rule, the payment of extra fees qualified a merchant as being a member of a trade guild. The greater the fee paid, the higher the guild one could join. In all of Podolia in 1851, there were only 7 first guild merchants; 125 second guild merchants; but there were 5,747 third guild merchants.[24] After 1859, first guild merchants were allowed to live and trade outside the Pale of Settlement. However, the primary reason why thousands of Jews strived to become a member of a guild was to avoid the military duty of the ordinary *meshchane* class, even though their actual business was in no way changed once they became a guild merchant.

By the late nineteenth century, a variety of factories were operating throughout the Letichev District, with plants for processing grapes into wine, sugar-beets into sugar (by 1872, reportedly 25% of this industry in Russia was in Jewish hands), and clay into bricks. There were also lumberyards, tobacco plants, silkworks (especially in Medzhibozh), beer-making factories, soap-making factories, glassworks and numerous mills. Many of these factories

were owned by enterprising Jews, whose fathers or grandfathers had "emerged from a complex ...struggle among Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian merchants to become the overwhelming predominant ethnic minority [in some industries]. Following the repression of the Polish revolt in 1831, Russian merchants, encouraged by the government's discriminatory tariff policy against the rebels, steadily forced out their Polish competitors from the southwest provinces...Jewish traders were able, with the help of state subsidies, to buy up large woolen cloth enterprises from the declining Polish nobility. By the 1830s Jewish merchants controlled 30% of the textile industry of the Ukraine."[25]

The Gervits Family of Medzhibozh. Khana and Meshulam Nosson Gervits (Horowitz), millers of Medzhibozh, ca. 1930. Courtesy of Beatrice Furst.

Local grain dealers were divided into different groups: wholesalers; small merchants, millers, and flour sellers; brokers and stockbrokers; and clerks. The wholesalers purchased grain from the landowners (*economicheskii khleb*), and the small local merchants purchased it from the peasants. The wholesalers purchased grain from the

Two mills in the Medzhibozh. Photograph was taken ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

landowners in summer as well ("future harvest"). The wholesalers were very well aware of the landowners' loans and loan deadlines, as well as the market price of grain in Koningsburg and Hamburg. The relations between the small merchants and the peasants were a little more complex. The peasants would put garbage in their sacks along with their grain. The merchant was aware of this, but he was more interested in attracting peasants away from his competitors, and would transport the sacks of grain to his shop. Both sides prepared for the weighing of the grain ahead of time, but the merchant usually won. This was considered the norm, and the peasants would sell grain to the same merchant the next time all the same. The grain was altered by the merchants before it was placed onto the wagons. They would add various superfluous seeds and grasses to the grain themselves. Thus, the sale of grain was the principle business of the majority of the population up to the Russian Revolution, but only the wholesalers got rich from it. Another business was the sale of large amounts of fruit. Up to 200 wagons of apples, 5,000-6,000 tons of dried plums in jars were sent to the industrial area in Donbass. The Jewish merchants were the middlemen between the peasants and the trade firms and stockbrokers. After the Russian Revolution, the state began to regulate the sale of grain. The preparation and sale of grain came to a halt, for there were no more landowners, and the peasants could not sell the same quantity of grain.[26]

Millers also stood to make money in the grain trade. Controlling a town's mill was considered a lucrative *arrenda*. Since most towns had only one mill, this was the source of numerous activities related to heavy industry in the town. The most important job of the miller was to grind grain into flour, of which he generally took a percentage of the final product and his family was never hungry. Secondarily, the water-powered mill powered heavy machinery, such as saws and lathes, so the millers often owned a lumberyard on the side. Finally, in order for the water-powered mills to operate, a dam was required on the main river coming through town. The mill lake was often stocked with fish. Some millers also owned the fishing *arrenda*, as well.[27]

The Medzhibozh mills today. Photograph taken 1995 by D. Chapin.

Transportation and Trade

As Odessa grew in its capacity as a major city of import and export, goods were transported there from all over the Ukraine by barges, coaches, or by trains.

River transport

River transport in Podolia to Odessa was limited. The major rivers in southern Podolia were the Dniester and the Yuzhny Bug, which both empty southeastward into the Black Sea. Unfortunately, fluctuations in the level of the water in the Dniester River made navigation unreliable and at times dangerous. The Yuzhny (Southern) Bug, which runs directly through the Letichev District, had only one bridge along its 120 mile course. Large sections of the Bug are, in fact, nothing more than a small stream. Moreover, virtually every town along its course placed a dam across it for defensive purposes and to create water mills. Thus it was unnavigable for long distance travel. But boat travel may have been possible between some close towns, particularly where there was a large mill lake, like near Letichev. In the winter, when the rivers froze over, some overland traffic may have used them a ice highways for their horsedrawn sleighs. In the years before the growth of Odessa, the Bug and Dniester were considered as flowing "the wrong way," as the major trade markets of Europe lay to the north and west. Although the rivers of Podolia may have been sufficient for smaller, more localized shipping, the transport of large shipments of goods was primarily via overland routes, and then later via rail.[28]

Coachmen

Coachmen (*balagulim* in Yiddish, *chumaky* in Ukrainian) were usually thought of as being coarse and uneducated, near the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum. Children were warned by their mothers that if they did not pursue an education they would wind up as coachmen. However, these men actually played an important role in the economy of Eastern Europe, especially in the south Ukraine.

Transporting sacks of various grains in ox-driven carts, these coachmen provided the quickest and least expensive means of transporting goods to the port cities. As such, coachmen responsible for both short and long distance jobs felt severely threatened in the mid-nineteenth century as railroads began to be built throughout the Russian Empire.

It has been common knowledge in the Letichev District for over 125 years that the coachmen of Letichev bribed railroad officials in the 1860s to prevent the railway from passing through Letichev as was originally planned. The drivers feared that they would lose business if the train cut through their town.[29] After the construction of the Derazhnia train station local coachmen and drivers from nearby villages fought over parking spaces, and often the local police interceded to avoid problems. It was not uncommon for a coachman to carry a knife in the leg of one of his boots. Some were masters at lying to passengers, getting 50

Coachmen in Podolia.
Photographed during the An-ski expeditions between 1911 and 1914. Courtesy of YIVO.

kopecks out of the passengers in a rude way, and intimidating anyone who interfered (including some police). It was noted that the coachmen from Medzhibozh were especially aggressive. The coachmen threw themselves on the people getting off the train and would get themselves a passenger in the most unceremonious way. The coachmen bargained for passengers, who had to patiently wait and to be told where to sit. Fights broke out between the drivers which sometimes resulted in injuries to the passengers. At the beginning of World War I the number of coachmen started to decline. The horses were taken for use by the army, and some of the men were drafted.[30]

The only Russian coachman was Cherkassy of Derazhnia. He always stood right at the entrance to the station. He was well remembered by Rose Pesotta:

> Lavrenty Cherkassy, the Muscovite, sat slouched in the driver's seat of his droshka outside the station. His tall fur hat was balanced precariously on his head, and his three drooping horses seemed equally tired on this raw day in late autumn.
>
> 'Hey Cherkassky,' we yelled. Instantly he straightened up.

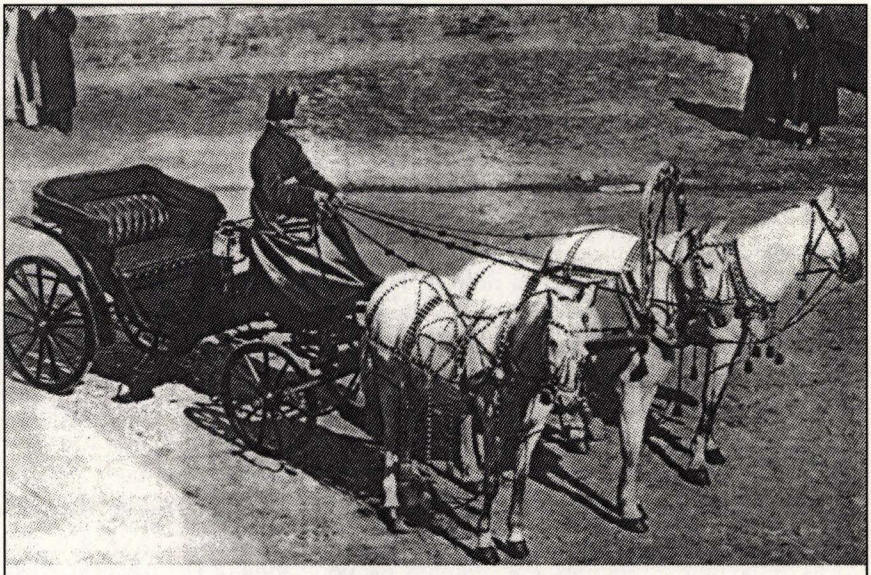
'Hey, *golubchichi*--little pigeons !' he answered. ' What devilment are you up to now ?'

'No devilment, my good man,' Esther [my sister] said, with great dignity. ' We came to see whether any chinovniki would honor Derazhnia with their presence today...'

Notables traveling to our province might be military men or government officials, or members of the Greek Orthodox Church's hierarchy.

'Maybe they come. Maybe no. we will see.' Cherkassky got down from his post, took a cloth from a hidden pocket in the droshka, and wiped the dust from his shiny black surface. And he polished anew the boobenchicki, the silver harness bells.

This Muscovite was our friend and ally. When not on duty, he kept his horses in the stable adjacent to Uncle Elkhono's inn; so he seemed like one of the family. We knew that if no passenger stepped into his carriage, that would be our cue to shout: ' Hi Cherkassky, take us with you !' And he would say, Kharasho, *vleisayti*!--Sure, climb in, all of you!' His invitation often included friends who might be with us, or our younger sisters. Then he would drive fast, cracking his whip in true khvatsky fashion, like a stagecoach driver.



A coachman driving a troika.

Always genial with children, he gave us candy, and told us funny stories. I never learned how he happened to come to Derazhnia; but I think now he must have been a lonely man in a strange environment. Between trains, while resting, he would sing sad Russian songs for us, like Down the Volga River, and

Doobinushka. We would try to imitate his deep Moscow speech, so different from the way we spoke. Our speech was soft-toned Ukrainian, with a sprinkling of words from Polish and Yiddish.

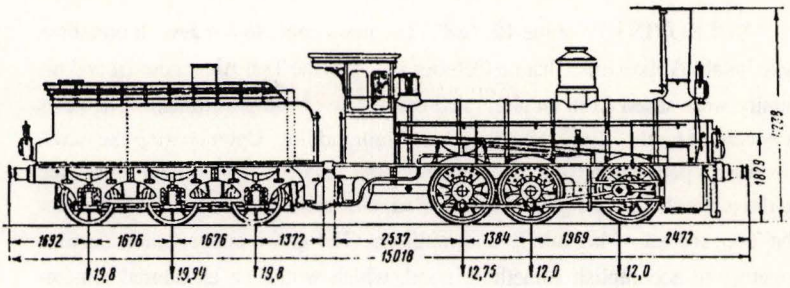
Six feet tall and with broad shoulders, Cherkassky wore a shirt with an embroidered front, wide pantaloons tucked into his patent-leather boots, and a sleeveless black velvet Kaftan coat in summer. There was a fine courtesy about his manner to everyone.

When the snow fell, he would put away his carriage and bring out his troika sleigh, with black bear robes for his passengers and himself. And when he had no paying clients, he would take some of us sleighing to one of the villages, saying, 'The horses need exercise. If they stand still too much they get stiff.' We would snuggle deep under the bear robe with just our noses exposed. The harness bells would jingle merrily as we sped along, and Cherkassky would sing a song such as this:

I shall harness up my troika and together
We shall fly to my beloved maiden.
My horses know the road from many journeys
And they take me on wings to my sweet one.
Their sharpened shoes break up the hardened snow
Which scatters in all directions.
My heart is pounding--be still until I greet her,
Until I hold her lovely being in my arms.[31]

The railroad

In the late 1800s, the Russian railway system was the envy of Europe. The Southern Railway (also known as the Kursk-Kharkov-Azov line) was built in the late 1860s and early 1870s by the Russian-Jewish railroad magnate Shmuel Poliakov. Extensions were made linking Austrian cities to the Black Sea region. From western Podolia, one would travel through the stations of Volochisk, Proskurov, Derazhnia, Volkovintsy, Komarovtsy, Bar, Zhmerinka, Kazatin, and onward to Odessa. Zhmerinka was a major transfer point between the southeast route to Odessa and the northeast route to Kiev and the northern stretches of Russia. As a result of this massive industrial project, thousands flocked to the towns of the railroad stations. For example, the population of Derazhnia swelled from 1,201 in 1873 to 4,499 in 1904.[32] In 1882, pogromists blamed the new Jews in the area for taking away the earnings of local peasants.[33] Jews engaged not only in work which was based upon the expansion of the local economy, but also on the trains themselves. Unfortunately, Jews employed by the railroad lost their jobs when the government took control of the rail system in the late 1890s.[34]



Typical locomotive used on the Derazhnia rail line.
This is a line drawing of a 0-6-0 type Russian locomotive common on the Southern railway system which ran through Volkovintsy and Derazhnia.[35]

The large halls of the Derazhnia train station were always crowded. It was possible to meet local merchants and banking figures, merchants arriving from different places from the district, Austrian Jewish merchants who would close deals about selling dozens of wagons of grain without ever leaving the station (before the Revolution, approximately 1,500 wagons of grain passed through the station each season). In short, the Derazhnia station functioned not only as a place for passengers to board, but also as a clubhouse and as a marketplace. The people who lived on the station street were very different in their culture from those who lived across the river. Their proximity to the station connected them with cities from all over Russia, Germany, and Austria, and they conducted business with the outside world--in sharp contrast to the poor residents of the town, who lived in dirty, crowded homes, rarely venturing out of the Letichev District. For these people, such as bankrupt merchants, widows, orphans, and other unfortunates, there was only one trip that was taken—to America.[36]

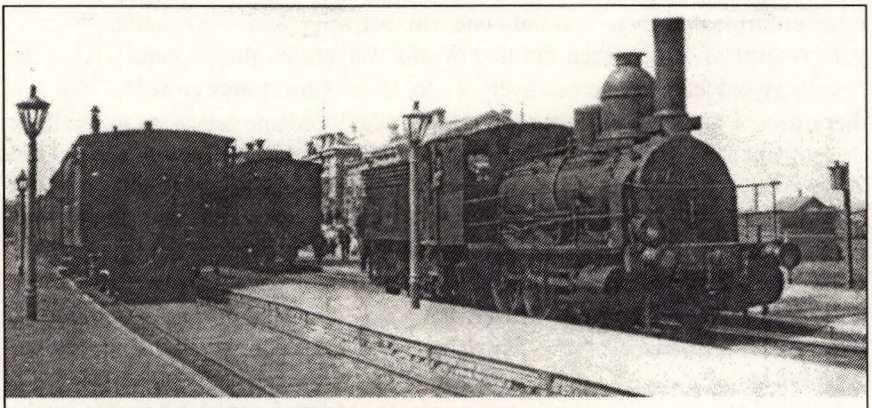
In August of 1914, when the first World War began, the peaceful life of the town was suddenly shattered. Every 10 to 15 minutes, trains crowded with soldiers, horses, and guns came through Derazhnia. It became necessary to reinforce the embankment that held up the trains to the 54th *verst* mark (on the road to Zhmerinka). The town's inhabitants (tailors, bootmakers, merchants, etc.) all took on the work of pounding in piles. As they were not accustomed to this type of work, the job proceeded slowly. Twenty to thirty people would pull on the lines, but nothing worked, often leading to fits of laughter by the workers. These people, nonetheless, continued to work on the embankment.Four years later, at the very embankment of the 54th *verst*, the local inhabitants disarmed the Austrian invaders.[37]

In addition to carrying people and goods, the railroad was also a vector for the spread of news. Postal trains regularly stopped at the Derazhnia train station; news was also transmitted via telegraph and by word of mouth by passengers and railroad workers. Here is one story of "news delivery", and the effect on the Jews of Volkovintsy:[38]

VOLKOVINTSY--June 12, 1887: The news came to our Jewish breathren who inhabit Volkovintsy that on October 17, 1886 the Tsar Alexander III and his family were saved from an attempted overthrow of the government. The news was carried by the 'Kursk-Kharkov-Azov' railroad line. Upon hearing the news, our town's population (like all small and large Jewish communities) proceeded to the prayer house and gave praise to God, who redeemed and saved our leader the Tsar and all of his family and ministers. The entire congregation decided together to accomplish something good, which would be an eternal remembrance to this great miracle in order that no one should ever forget. But what would be a greater eternal monument than the Torah itself? So it was decided that a Torah scroll would be written in honor of the Tsar, with a Torah-cover bearing the Tsar's name upon it.

They notified via telegraph the Minister, Count Vorontsov-Dashkov[39] of their intentions, and the Count then telegraphed the community with the following message: 'To Gervits, the elder of the inhabitants of the town of Volkovintsy, Letichev District. In the name of our master the Tsar, he has ordered praise upon the Jewish inhabitants of the town of Volkovintsy concerning the faithful feelings that you expressed in your telegram. Signed, Count Vorontsov-Dashkov.'

It is impossible to describe in this journal the joy of the people of our city in receiving the telegram and that the Tsar did not insult or belittle the offering of the poor. On the 12th of June, 1887, they made a ceremony that the Torah was finished being written, and the town of Volkovintsy was overjoyed. All the stores were closed, all the artisans put aside their tools, all the houses raised the



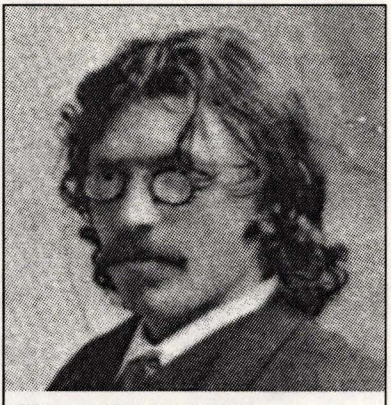
A locomotive operating on the Derazhnia rail line.
This is a photograph of a typical 0-6-0 type Russian locomotive common on the Southern railway system which ran through Volkovintsy and Derazhnia.[40]

three-colored flag, and all the Jews (young and old, men, women and children) dressed in Shabbos garments and prepared to bring the Sefer-Torah under a canopy of honor into the synagogue. For this holiday, the Minister of the District of Letichev came, along with the Christian ministers from our town, the stationmaster, and other important Christians. With great honor, the Torah was kissed and carried under the canopy. The Torah was bedecked with a crown with a silver breast-plate on it. Also there was a red silken Torah cover placed over it. On the Torah-cover was sewn with silken thread a large eagle with outstretched wings. Above it was the verse in Hebrew 'God, with your might, the King will rejoice' and below 'May days be added to the life of the King.' On the two sides were the Russian letter A (for 'Alexander') and on the other side III (for 'the Third'). Musicians with a choir sang and the whole congregation shouted 'Hurrah!!'. Afterwards, they took the Torah into the synagogue, where the honorable *maskil* Mr. Katznelson spoke from the pulpit, in Russian, about subjects relevant to the times. He ended his words with a prayer asking for a long life for the Tsar. Then the Crown Rabbi of Letichev spoke from the pulpit and blessed the Tsar, the Tsarina, and the Prince according to a blessing composed by Rabbi Minor. Then the cantor of Letichev sang with his choir. All recited the psalms, as is customary. The Sefer-Torah was then placed in the ark and the entire congregation went to their homes full of joy.

Der Daitch / "The German"

a short story by Sholom Aleichem[41]

I am as I've told you a Derazhner, that is I come from Derazhnia, a tiny, a very tiny town in the Province of Podolia. Nowadays Derazhnia has, so to speak, become a big town, with a railway station, a baggage room, a depot. When Derazhnia first became a railway town, the whole world envied us. They all thought our fortunes were made. We would be shoveling up money in the streets. The town would become a gold mine. And people began pouring in from the surrounding villages into the town. The townspeople began remodeling their houses, putting up new stores. The tax on meat was raised, there was talk of hiring another *shokhet*, of building a new synagogue, of buying more land and enlarging the old cemetery. In short, there was great rejoicing. Just think of it. A station, a baggage room, a depot! It's true the town's teamsters rebelled

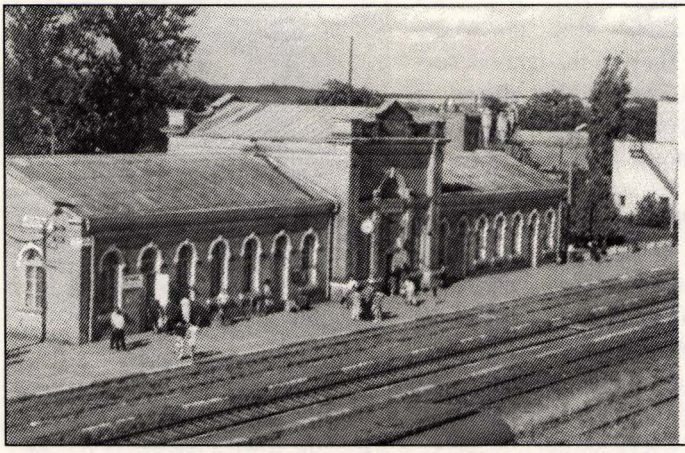


Sholom Aleichem, 1889.
Famous Yiddish humorist and writer.

a little, they didn't like the turn of events. But who listened to them? Rails were laid, railway cars brought down, a depot was built, a bell was hung, and a board was nailed up with the words: *Stansya* Derazhnia. And the deed was done!

When the train began running, my wife said to me, "What do you think you'll be doing now, Jonah?" (That's my name—Jonah.) "What should I be doing? The same thing everybody else is doing. All the citizens of Derazhnia are hanging around the train. I'll hang around too." I took my walking stick, strolled over to the depot, and became, with God's help, a station agent—a *pravitel*. What does a station agent do? Well, if a man buys a wagonload of wheat he has to have someone load it on a car and send it off. A *pravitel* does that for him. But since nearly everybody in Derazhnia became a *pravitel*, business was not good. You spent most of your time hanging around, waiting for something to turn up. Sometimes you bought a sack of wheat from a peasant and sold it. You either made a profit on it or you took a loss. Sometimes you picked up a little commission on the side, you tried this, that and the other, anything that came along. But most of the time things were bad. There was nothing to do. You will say that we had nothing to do before either? Yes, but at least we had no railway station then. Now we had a station, with a depot, with a baggage room, with a bell, with trains coming and going, with noise and smoke and confusion—and we weren't any better off!

One day it happened that I was standing at the station in a rather dejected mood seeing off the Potchevo Express. The third bell had sounded, the locomotive had whistled, smoke was pouring out of the chimney. I take a good look, and there on the platform stands a tall, lean individual, an aristocratic-looking fellow in checkered trousers and a tall hat, surrounded by a pile of luggage. He stands there with his long neck stretched out, turning it this way and that way looking for something. "His lordship seems to be in want of something," I think to myself and it's as though something shoved me from behind. "Go up and ask him what he wants." Just as I start out toward him, if he doesn't move right toward me and



The Derazhnia train station. Photograph by D. Chapin, 1995.

lift off his tall hat and say to me in German in a sing-song accent, "*Gut mo-yen, Mein Herr.*"

"Good day to you," I answer him, partly in German, partly in Yiddish and the rest with my hands.

I ask him where he hails from. And he asks me if I know of a good inn, that is, a lodging place near by.

"Certainly," I tell him. "Why not?" And to myself I think, "What a pity that I don't own an inn. If only I had an inn I could take him to it myself. He is a fine-looking German, he looks as though he is able to pay." And then a thought flits through my head. "Fool! Is it written on your forehead that you don't own an inn? Just imagine to yourself that you do." And I address myself to him, partly in German, partly in Yiddish and the rest with my hands. "If *Mein Harr* wishes, let *Mein Harr* have me summon a driver and I will lead him, that is conduct him, to the finest inn, that is lodging place, immediately."

When he hears this the German is overjoyed and says pointing to his mouth, "*Haben sie vass essen? Shpeizen?*"

"The very best *shpeizen*," I assured him. "You will feast like a Lord, *Harr* German. For my spouse, that is, my *frau*, is an excellent housekeeper, that is *hausfrau*. Her cooking and her baking are famous in this part of the country. The fish she makes may be eaten by royalty, by Ahasheurus[42] himself."

"*Ja wohl*," he says joyfully, and his eyes sparkle and his whole face shines like the sun. "A clever man, this German," I think to myself, and without waiting any more time I hire a wagon and take him straight to my house.

When we arrive I pass the whole story on to my wife — how God has sent me a guest, a German of a very superior sort. But does a woman understand such things? She begins abusing me because I have arrived at the wrong moment, right in the middle of housecleaning. "What's this guest you have there? What's the idea of bringing unexpected guests all of a sudden?"

"Woman," I tell her, "don't converse in our language. This gentleman understands German."[43]

But does she listen to me? She goes on with her cleaning, sweeping her broom right in our faces, muttering angrily. All this time, the German and I are standing in the doorway not knowing whether to back out or to come forward.

At last I convinced her that this was no ordinary guest I was bringing. This guest would pay and pay well for his food and lodging. And we could make something extra from the deal too, lick a bone, as they say. Is that good enough for you? But no, when I finally convinced her, she turns around and says to me, "And where do you want me to put him, in the ground?"

"Be quiet, stupid woman. I told you not to talk, he understands what we are saying."

At last she caught on to what I meant. We showed him to our room, and in no time at all my wife was blowing up the coals under the samovar and getting ready to make supper.

When the German took a look at our room he turned up his nose, as though to say, "It could have been better." But what does a German understand? As soon as

the samovar was brought in and tea was brewed, he took out a bottle of rum, poured himself a stiff drink, gave me a little drink too, and all was well. He spread out his suitcases, made himself at home as though he were in his father's vineyard, and we sat down together like old friends.

After we had finished our tea I began a conversation, about this, that and the other. What was he doing in Derazhnia? Perhaps he wanted to sell something?—Or buy something? It turned out that he was neither buying nor selling. He was expecting some machinery to pass through—some foolishness or other—and in the meanwhile he kept stealing looks into the oven and asking every minute or so when the meal would be ready.

"Apparently, *Mein Harr*," said I, "you believe in taking nourishment." He didn't answer me. But then how can you expect a German to understand when a person is trying to make a joke?

At last the table was set, and supper was brought in—a hot delicious chicken soup with dumplings, a whole chicken with grits and carrots and parsnips and all the other trimmings. (When my wife wants to she knows how!) "A good appetite to you," I said, but he didn't answer. He was going after that chicken as though he'd just been through a fast. "Enjoy your food in good health," I tell him, and he keeps on guzzling the hot soup. Do you think he even said "thank you" to this? Not a word or a nod. "He has no manners and he is a glutton besides," I think to myself.

Well, he finished eating, lit his pipe and sat smoking and smiling to himself. I could see my German friend looking all about him, he was looking for a place to rest his head, his eyes were shutting, and he wanted to go to sleep.

I beckoned to my wife. "Where can we put him to sleep?'

"What do you mean?" she says. "In my bed, of course."

Without any more ado she goes up to the bed and begins getting it ready for him, beating up the featherbed, beating and fluffing up the pillows. (When my wife wants to she knows how!) I look over at the German—he doesn't look very happy, he is probably displeased because feathers are flying. He wrinkles his nose and begins to sneeze violently. I tell him, "*Gesundheit, Mein Harr*, long may you live." Do you think he says "thank you" to this? "He has no manners," I think to myself. "He isn't even civilized." Well, my wife made up the bed in good style, with featherbeds and billows as high as the ceiling. A king might rest in such a bed. We wished him a very good night, and then we all turned in.

After I had gone to bed I heard the German snoring in his room, puffing like a locomotive, then gurgling and whistling like a slain ox. Suddenly he wakes up and begins to moan and groan and to scratch himself, to spit and to mutter. Then he turns over on the other side, begins to snore and to puff and to whistle for a while again, and then wakes up once more with a groaning and a moaning and a scratching and a spitting and mumbling. This happened several times over, until I heard him leap out of the bed and begin tossing the bedding to the floor, one pillow after another with terrible fury, uttering strange oaths all the time such as, "A thousand devils! Sacramento! *Donner-wetter*!" I ran up and looked through a crack in the door. There stood my German, stark naked, in the middle of the

floor, throwing the pillows one after another off the bed and spitting and cursing fearfully in his own language.

"What seems to be the trouble, *Mein Harr*?" I asked, opening the door. When he saw me, he fell on me in a great fury, hitting out with his fists as though he was going to murder me, then he grabbed my hand and led me to the window. He showed me his body, how it had been bitten all over, then chased me out and shut the door behind me.

"That German is crazy," I told my wife. "And much to finicky besides. He imagines he's been bitten by something and you should hear him. It's the end of the world."

"I can't understand it," my wife said. "What could be biting him? I just cleaned all the bedding for Passover, and doused it in kerosene."

The next morning I thought the German would be so insulted that he would run off to where the pepper trees grow. But nothing doing. He greeted us with a cheerful "*gutt mo-yen*," again he puffed on his pipe, and smiled, and again ordered food to be prepared. He wanted soft-boiled eggs with his tea. And how many do you think? Not less than ten eggs. With his meal, he poured himself a stiff drink, poured me a little drink too, and all was well.

Night came and the same thing happened all over again. At first he snored, whistled, puffed and gurgled, then he moaned, groaned scratched himself and mumbled, leaped out of bed, threw all the bedding on the floor, spat and cursed in his own language: "To the devil! Sacramento! *Donner-wetter*!" And he got up in the morning, again said "*gut mo-yen*," again puffed on his pipe and smiled and ate and poured himself a drink and gave me a little drink too. This went on for several days in a row, until the appointed day came, his machines went through, and it was time for him to leave.

When it was time for him to leave, he began to pack his things, and he asked me to figure what he owed me. "What is there to figure?" I said, "It's a short account. *Harr* German, you owe me exactly twenty-five *rubles*."

He opened his eyes wide as though to say, "I don't understand." So I said to him in my best German, "*Mein Harr*, you will pay me if you please the sum of twenty-five *rubles*, that is five and twenty *rubles*." And I showed him with my fingers, ten and ten, and then five more. Do you think he appeared shocked at this? Not at all. He merely smiled and puffed on his pipe and took out a pencil and paper and handed them to me saying that he wanted me to list each item separately.

"You are a clever German," I thought to myself, "but I am cleverer than you. I have more brains in my left heel than you in your whole head."

"Write it down, *Harr* German, if you please — For the room, that is for six days' lodging, six times a *ruble* and a half, which makes nine *rubles*. Six times two is twelve samovars, which is twelve *guldens* or ninety *kopeks*. Six times ten eggs in the morning and ten at night is one hundred and twenty eggs, or twice threescore eggs, at a *ruble* a threescore—is two *rubles*. Six chickens at five *guldens* a chicken—aside from the grits and dumplings, the carrots and all the rest—is an even six *rubles*. Six nights—six lamps is sixty *kopeks*. You drank your

own *schnapps*—two *rubles*. You had no sugar or tea—one *ruble*, which makes three *rubles* altogether. You had no wine—one *ruble*, which makes four *rubles* in all. There was no beer—seventy *kopeks*. Five *rubles* altogether. But to make it an even sum, put down five-fifty. Well, Reb German, doesn't that add up to twenty-five *rubles*?" I said this to him in all seriousness, and do you think he disagreed with me? God forbid. He kept on puffing at his pipe and smiling, then took out a twenty-five *ruble* note and threw it at me the way you might throw a copper coin. We made our farewells, in a most friendly manner, and he went off on the train.

"What do you think of this kind of German, my wife?" said I.

"If God sent us this kind of German every week," she said, "it wouldn't be so bad."

The German left town. Scarcely three days had passed before the mail carrier came and handed me a letter, but first he told me to pay him fourteen *kopeks*. Why fourteen *kopeks*? The sender, he said, forgot to put a stamp on the letter. I paid him fourteen *kopeks* and opened the letter— it's written in German. I can't read a word of it. I began carrying the letter around with me from one end of the town to the other, trying this one and that one. Nobody knew how to read German. What's to be done? I searched the whole town through and at last found one man—the pharmacist at the drugstore—who could read German. He read the letter, then translated it for me. A German was writing to me to thank me for the comfortable and restful lodging he had at my house and for our hospitality and our kind-heartedness which he would never forget.

"Be it so," I think to myself. "If you are happy, I am satisfied." And to my wife I said, "What do you think of our German? Not a little bit of a fool, eh?"

"If God sent us such fools every week," she said, "it would be so bad."

Another week passed. I come home one day from the railway station and my wife hands me a letter and tells me the mailcarrier told her to pay twenty-eight *kopeks*. "Why twenty-eight *kopeks*?" "Because he wouldn't have it otherwise."

I opened the letter—it's again in German. I ran straight to my pharmacist and asked him to read it to me. The same German, he read, had just crossed the border and since he was on his way to his Fatherland he wanted to thank me again for the comfortable and restful lodging I had given him and for our hospitality and kindheartedness which he will never, never forget.

"Let my troubles fall on his head," I thought to myself. When I came home and my wife asked me, "What was in the letter?" I told here, "It's from the German again. He can't forget the favor we did him, the crazy fellow."

"If God sent us crazy fellows like him every week," she said, "it wouldn't be so bad."

Two more weeks passed and a large envelope arrived by mail and I was asked to pay fifty-six *kopeks*. I wouldn't pay it. The mail carrier said, "As you like," and took the letter back. But I had a pang of regret. I was curious to know where the letter was from—maybe it was something important. I paid him the fifty-six *kopeks* and opened the letter. I looked—it's again in German. I went right to my pharmacist and asked him to forgive me for annoying him so often. What else could I do? I was an accursed creature, I couldn't read German. The pharmacist

took the letter and read me a long legend. It was the German once more. Since he had just arrived at home, he wrote, and had seen his beloved family, his "frau" and his "kinder," he told them the whole story of how he had come to Derazhnia, and how he had met me at the station, how I took him to my house, and gave him a most comfortable and restful lodging. Therefore he thanked us over and over for our hospitality and our kind-heartedness which he would never, never forget as long as he lived.

"To the devil with him," I said, wishing him every kind of ill luck. I wouldn't even tell my wife about this letter. I acted as though nothing had happened.

Three more weeks passed and I get a notice from the Post Office for a *ruble* and twelve *kopeks*. "What is this ruble and twelve *kopeks*?" my wife asks.

"I haven't the least notion," I told here. "May I know as little of evil." I made straight for the Post Office and began to inquire where I was getting this *ruble* and twelve *kopeks* from. I wasn't getting a *ruble* and twelve *kopeks*, they told me. On the contrary, I had to pay it. "For what?" I asked. "For a letter." "What letter? Maybe it's from the German."

They wouldn't tell me a thing. Would arguing with them have helped? I paid the *ruble* and twelve *kopeks* and got the letter—a large packet this time. I opened it up—it's in German. I go to my pharmacist. "Forgive me sir, for bothering you again. I have a fresh affliction, a German letter." The pharmacist, not too bright a fellow either, you understand, left all his work in the middle and began reading me another long tale. It was the same German, may his name be blotted out. What did he write? He wrote that this being a "Firetag," that is a holiday in his country, he had invited all his friends and relatives to his house and when they were all gathered together he told them the whole story from a to z. How he had come to this small town of Derazhnia, how he was stranded at the railway station, all alone in a foreign land, unable to speak or understand the language, how he met me and how I took him to may house, in what friendly manner my wife and I received him, gave him a comfortable and restful lodging, let him have the finest room in the house, the best of food and drink and treated him altogether with such honesty and decency, that he couldn't refrain from writing again to thank me for our hospitality and kind-heartedness which he would never, never in the world forget.

"A practical joker, that German," I thought. "I'll never accept another letter, not even if it's stamped with gold."

Another month passed—two months. No more letter. Finished. I was almost beginning to forget about the German. Suddenly there arrives a notice from the railway station that there is a package for me worth twenty-five *rubles*. What kind of package could this be for twenty-five *rubles*? I racked my brain. My wife sat and racked her brain also, and we could think of nothing. Then something occurred to me. We have friends in America—it must me a present from them, a ship's ticket, a lottery ticket, something of the sort. I didn't waste any more time, but went straight to the railway station and asked for my package. They told me to be so kind and please pay two *rubles* and twenty-four kopeks

first. What could I do—I had to get the two *rubles* and twenty-four *kopeks* and pay it in to get my package.

I got the package—a very handsome little box, carefully wrapped—and ran home with it. I began to unpack the box and what should fall out of it but a portrait? We take a good look. What sort of nightmare or evil visitation is this? The portrait is of him, the *shlimazl*, the German himself with his long scrawny neck, and his tall hat and a pipe in his mouth. With the photograph was a short note written in German, probably the same thing again; he was thanking us for the lodging and our hospitality and our kind-heartedness which he would never, never forget. What a thorn in the flesh this German was getting to be! You can imagine what we both wished him at that moment.

Several more months passed. It's the end. No more German. Thank God we were rid of this affliction. He was as good as buried. My mind was at ease again. I was a happy man. But do you think we were through at last? Listen—it was not the end.

One night without warning there arrived a telegram for me telling me to go to Odessa without fail and to find a certain merchant named Gorgelshtein. This merchant was stopping at the Hotel Victoria and had to see me on very important business. Odessa? Gorgelshtein? Hotel Victoria? Business? "What can it all mean?" I asked my wife. She at once began to urge me to go, for who know, it might be something important. Maybe a commission, maybe something to do with wheat.

But it's easy to say—go to Odessa. A trip to Odessa costs money. But lack of money is no excuse, when it comes to an important business matter. I borrowed a few rubles, got on the train and went off to Odessa. I arrived in Odessa and began inquiring everywhere for the Hotel Victoria. I found the Hotel Victoria, went in, and asked, "Do you have a man here by the name of Gorgelshtein?"

"We have a man by the name of Gorgelshtein," they told me.

"Where is he?"

"He is not in his room right now. Could you please return at ten o'clock in the evening?"

I returned at ten o'clock in the evening. Gorgelshtein was not in. "If you come back at ten in the morning you will find him in."

I came back at ten in the morning. Where is Gorgelshtein? Gorgelshtein had just been there and had left. Before leaving, he had asked them very particularly that if a man from Derazhnia should come and see him, they should tell him to be so kind as to return either at three in the afternoon or at ten in the evening.

I returned at three in the afternoon and again at ten in the evening. No Gorgelshtein at either hour.

What more shall I tell you? I wandered around Odessa like a lost soul for six days and six nights. I neither ate nor slept. I suffered tortures of body and mind until I finally succeeded in meeting Gorgelshtein.

Gorgelshtein turned out to be a dignified-looking man with a handsome black beard. He greeted me cordially, invited me to be seated.

"You are," he said, half in German, half in Yiddish, "the man from Derazhnia."

"I am," I said to him, "the man from Derazhnia. What about it?"

"Last winter," he continued, "a certain German lodged at your house."

"Yes," I said. "He did. What about it?"

"Nothing," he said. "This German is a partner of mine in the machinery business." He combed his black beard with his fingers and leaned back in his chair. "I have a letter from him from London. He writes me that when you come to see me in Odessa I must be sure to convey to you his kindest greetings, and to thank you for the comfortable and restful lodging he had at your house and for your hospitality and kind-heartedness. He is indebted to you for your honest and decent treatment of him which he can't possible forget forever and ever, as long as he lives"

That's the affliction I have to bear. I am planning, with God's help, after the holidays, if God grants me life, to move from Derazhnia to some other town. I will run wherever my eyes lead me, wherever my feet carry me, I don't care where, just to get rid of this *shlimazl*, this German, may his name be blotted out from memory forever and ever.

APPENDIX : Tax Lists, Merchant Lists, Business Directories and Voter lists, 1758-1913

Medzhibozh taxpayers, 1758[44]

This list (just one of many such lists found in the archives relating to the landholdings of Czartoryski) can be used as a time capsule to see the variety of surnames of the Jews of Medzhibozh and its suburbs (Slobod and Trebukhovtsy). Some of the surnames translate into different professions and are therefore useful to determining what types of work Jews were engaged in during the eighteenth century. The surnames were used for individual labeling purposes, not as a heritage to be passed down the generations. There are several obvious shortcomings to analyzing this list and then drawing conclusions: first, out of 320 names, only 113 have a surname which translates as a clearly defined profession; second, as this list indicates only taxpayers, those most destitute (but possibly still working) are excluded; and third, those with a translateable surname may have actually engaged in a different type of work, but were recorded under the name (and profession) of a relative. Note that the numbering scheme probably relates to house numbers on a map that no longer exists. It is likely that those who are listed at nearby numbers lived close in proximity.

NAME	ZLOTY	GROSCHEN	MEANING OF SURNAME
MEDZHIBOZH			
1. house of the treasurer			
2. Notu Aronowicz	5	10	son of Aron
3. old Rabbi	1	0	
4. Wolf Kucy	1	10	small. Wolf Kitces, Besht assistant
5. Rabbi's house	free		

6. Iankiel Szcerbaty	5	10	gap-toothed
7. Abramko Scharyin	6	10	of Scharia (pers. name)
8. Moszko Polonski	2	10	from Poland
9. Moszko Cerulik		10	barber-surgeon
10. Ios Iudczyn	2	10	son of Judah
11. Abel, son-in-law of Szaja	1	10	
12. Iankiel Pinski	4	10	from Pinsk
13. Dawidko Zlotnik		10	goldsmith
14. Szymon Boruchowicz	6	10	son of Boruch
15. Aron Iankielowicz	renter		son of Jacob
16. mother of Srol	2	10	
17. Gdal Knisyn	6	10	Knisyn (near Bialystok)
18. Naftoli Luczynski	1	10	Luchin (Belorussia)
19. Mychal	1	10	
20. Bun	burned out		
21. treasurer's house	burned out		
22. Bucycha, widow		10	
23. Iewzio (?)	burned out		
24. Majorko	burned out		
25. Aron Zelmanowicz	burned out		son of Zelman
26. Heuszyi Okuliszyn	burned out		Yoshua the oculist
27. Bluma Kowelski	1	10	of the blacksmith
28. Srol Enochowicz	2	10	son of Enoch
29. Dawidko Enochowicz	1	10	son of Enoch
30. Szaja Froimowicz	4	10	son of Froim
31. Ezdra Zlotnik	2	10	goldsmith
32. Herszko Dziubin	4	10	pockmarked
33. Dawid Iudczyn		10	son of Judah
34. Inkiel Tandetnik	5	10	dealer in old clothes
35. Berko Szmuklerz		10	haberdasher
36. Awrus Rzeznik	3	10	butcher
37. Moszko Basisty	1	10	bass player/singer
38. Leybka's mother, poor		10	
39. Inkiel Bakartz(or Bakarlz?)		10	teacher ?
40. Gdal Krawiec	3	10	tailor
41. Leybka Kruhtenk	2	10	bandy-legged
42. Berko Tandetnik	3	10	dealer in old clothes
43. Szmuylo Leybowicz	3	10	son of Leib
44. Szczupak		10	pike
45. Szlomowa Woloszynka		10	from Wallachia
46. Wol Krawiec	1	10	tailor
47. Szcynusia, widow		10	
48. Herszko Deyneka	3	10	ruffian
49. Majorko Manasternego	3	10	from Monasterich
50. Leybka Fuczensk	5	10	Foshnya (Belorussia)
51. Szaja Wertepny		10	
52. Czarnenka, widow	1	10	
53. Iankiel Cyrulik	3	10	barber-surgeon
54. Manaszko		10	
55. Mot	renter in Medzhibozh		
56. Majorko Niesmaczny	2	10	"coarse"; compare to #49
57. Manaszko Boruchow	5	10	
58. Giec Szynkarz	4	10	barman/tavern
59. Munesz Iudkowicz	9	10	son of Judah
60. Herszko Wertepny	3	10	
61. Iontef Kramarz		10	stall-keeper
62. Zeylik Notowicz	3	10	son of Nuta (Natan)
63. Mychel Zlotnik	2	10	goldsmith
64. Leybka Notkowicz	6	10	son of Notko
65. Icko Dubiler		10	jeweler
66. Iankiel Leybkowicz	2	10	son of Leib
67. Abel, son-in-law of Oron(Aron)	2	10	
68. Chaim , son-in-law of Stanislawoski	2	10	from town of S.(Galicia)
69. Abrambowa Olycka		10	from Olei (Kovno gub.)

70. Mendel Szmuklerz	4	10	haberdasher
71. Gdal Moszkowicz	4	10	son of Moszko(Moses)
72. Ios Kowelski		10	of the blacksmith
73. Moszko Pinczuk	9	10	of Pinchos
74. Chaskiel, son-in-law of Zelman	3	10	
75. Nysanel Rabinowicz	3	10	son of the Rabbi
76. Szmylo Wertepnie	1	10	
77. house of Manaszka	free		
78. old Rabbi Herszko	1	10	
79. Icko Litmanowicz	6	10	son of Litman
80. Wolf Abramowicz	renter		son of Abram
81. Szlomka Szayczyszyn	2	10	
82. Cerulik		10	barber-surgeon
83. widow Trusicha		10	
84. Notka Aronowicz	2	10	son of Aron
85. Leybka, Nutko's s-in-law	1	0	
86. Ios, Krawiec (wielki)	1	10	the (large) tailor
87. Dawidko Zwaniecki	2	10	from Zhvanets
88. Notka		10	
89. Srol Piekarz	2	10	baker
90. Abramko Baldaszow		10	
91. Leybka Zelmanowicz	1	10	son of Zelman
92. previous Rabbi Leybka		10	
93. Szloma Woloszyn	3	10	from Wallachia
94. Ichel, Balsam's son-in-law	2	10	
95. Balsam	free		Baal Shem Tov
96. Zelman Rzeznik		10	butcher
97. Starasienawski Rabbi	2	10	Rabbi from Stara Sinyava
98. Abramko Wolowicz	3	10	of Wolf
99. Szymcha		10	
100. Zaywel Inspektor		10	inspector
101. Inkiel Kowelski	1	10	of the blacksmith
102. Iankiel Francuz	1	10	Frankist ? from France ?
103. Oszar Introligator		10	bookbinder
104. Leybka Charytan (karlik)	1	10	from Kharitony (dwarf)
105. Szmelko Kupiec	2	10	merchant
106. Majorko Zelmanowicz	1	10	son of Zelman
107. Szmuylo, Balsam's stepson	3	10	
108. Falk Duchowny	1	10	cleric
109. Dawidko Purkon	1	10	from name Tsipora. David Purkes, Besht assistant
110. Majorko Stawnicki	2	10	stable man; or Stavnitsa
111. Icko Kotkow	2	10	small; or, small cat
112. Mendel Pronilowski, renter	3	10	from Pronilov (Letichev d.?)
113. widow Iudczycha	2	10	
114. Fajuch Kramarz		10	stall-keeper
115. Orinicha Szkolniczka		10	wife of Aron the sexton?
116. Leyzor Tokarz	3	10	lathe operator
117. Ios Szklarz (momotliwy)		10	(stuttering) glazier
118. Mordha Blacharz		10	tinsmith
119. Szaycha Kusznierka		10	furrier
120. Iankiel Kusznierz	2	10	furrier
121. Mordha Pargaminnik		10	parchment
122. Nyson ,son-in-law of Ios	2	10	
123. Herszko, of the Balsam	3	10	
124. Ios Szapowalnik	1	10	cap maker
125. Kicilicha, widow		10	
126. Moszko Giersonowicz		10	son of Gershon
127. Mos Niemiec	1	10	German
128. Mendel Forman		10	wagon driver
129. Nyson Basisty		10	bass player/singer
130. Rwen Majorkow	1	10	Reuven, son of Maier
131. Szymchowa Szkolniczka		10	wife of S. the sexton ?
132. Kochmanka, widow		10	
133. Leybka Rzeznik(wielki)	3	10	the (large) butcher

134. Iudka Stroz		10	caretaker
135. Herszko Szwiec	1	10	shoemaker
136. Faytel Kotlarz		10	coppersmith
137. Majorko Piekarz		10	baker
138. Leybicha Wigderczyna		10	wife of Leyb, son of Vigdor?
139. Leyba Gabay		10	Rabbi's assistant
140. Fiszel Lazebnik	1	10	bathhouse attendant
141. Ios Sklarz	3	10	glazier
142. Wol Lazebnik	1	10	bathhouse attendant
143. Mordha Gitin		10	from Gitel: or, good
144. Dawidko Galaganow		10	of the scoundrel
145. Iankielicha, widow		10	Yankel's widow?
146. Berko Gluchy		10	deaf
147. Iankiel Zelenenki	burned out		from Zelenaya (Proskurov d.)
148. Herszko Rudy		10	redhead
149. Leybka Chawczyn	1	10	from Chaus(Mogilev gub.)
150. Wolo Szwiec	1	10	shoemaker
151. Ezdra Iarmut		10	surname from: Yirmiahu
152. Leyzor Rzeznik		10	butcher
153. Iankiel Inspektor		10	inspector
154. Moszko Gipinder	4	10	
155. Ios Rzeznik	3	10	butcher
156. Moszko Winnik		10	wine maker
157. Iosycha Piekarka	1	10	wife of Ios the baker?
158. Ben Rymarz	2	10	saddle maker
159. Ayzyk Kantor	3	10	cantor
160. Abel Arendarz	2	10	renter
161. Iankiel, son-in-law of Charyton	2	10	
162. Icko, son-in-law of Charyton	6	10	
163. Iewna Boruchowicz	poor		of Boruch
164. Marko Charyton	6	10	
165. Rabbi from Starasienawa	2	10	
166. Froim Szmuklerz		10	haberdasher
167. Wol Froimowicz	1	10	son of Froim
168. Majorko Rzeznik	1	10	butcher
169. Iawel Kusnierz		10	furrier
170. Herszko Szmuklerz	4	10	lace maker
171. Leybka, son-in-law of Herszko		10	
172. Aron, Rabbi's son-in-law		10	
173. Szloma Iewzayszyn		10	son of Yevsey (Joshua)
174. Moszko Krawiec	2	10	tailor
175. Szlomka Krawiec	1	10	tailor
176. Wigder Krawiec	4	10	tailor
177. Szepsel Krawiec	3	10	tailor
178. Iankiel Kramarz	1	10	tailor
179. Zaywel Ayzykow	1	10	son of Isaac
180. Icko Kusnierz	2	10	furrier
181. Szachno Krawiec	2	10	tailor
182. Leybka Kotlarz	1	10	coppersmith
183. Szymon Szmuklerz	1	10	lace-maker
184. Zyskiel Kramarz	2	10	stall-keeper
185. Zysnel(?) Bakalarz	2	10	teacher
186. Naftoli Woloszyn	1	10	son of Volf
187. Iudka Krawiec	1	10	tailor
188. Ios Krysyszyn	1	10	son of Kresil
189. Icko Litwin	1	10	Lithuanian
190. Tewia Muniow	1	10	name derived from Menakhem
191. Feyga, daughter of Krzw(?)	2	10	
192. Iudka Kowel's widow	1	10	
193. Leybicha Piernikarka		10	
194. Peysach Szklarz	2	10	glazier
195. Peysach Leybowicz	3	10	son of Leyb
196. Ilia Francuz	1	10	Frankist ?
197. Daniel Budko	1	10	from Budki? or,bathhouse

198. Berko Szmuklerz	3	10	lace-maker
199. Herszko Czarny	1	10	dark-skinned
200. Iewna Piekarz		10	baker
201. Leybka Szkolnik	kahal		sexton
202. Ayzyk Krawiec	2	10	tailor
203. Srol Kusnierz	2	10	furrier
204. Herszko Pinczuk	2	10	of Pinchos
205. Abramko Szapowal	1	10	cap-maker
206. Chaym Forman		10	wagon-driver
207. Moszko Kozak	4	10	"Cossack"
208. Zaywel Kusnierz	2	10	furrier
209. Abramko Krawiec		10	tailor
210. Ruwen Kusnierz	1	10	furrier
211. Iankiel Krawiec	1	10	tailor
212. Herszko Winnik	1	10	wine-maker
213. Berko Muzykant	1	10	musician
214. Ios Giersonow	1	10	of Gershon
215. Moszko Letyn	2	10	from Lithuania; or, Litin
216. Hewszyja Podlubnego	1	10	lingerer?
217. Hanania Krawiec	1	10	tailor
218. Szmoylicha Podlubnego	1	10	lingerer ?
219. Abramko Rochlin		10	of Rachel
220. Szmuylo Giedrycz	3	10	
221. Iankiel , son-in-law of Giedrycz	3	10	
222. Berko Szwiec	2	10	shoemaker
223. Zyskiel Szkolnik		10	sexton
224. Mendel Giedrycz	2	10	
225. Herszko Krawiec		10	tailor
226. Moszko Tandetnik		10	dealer in old clothes
227. Leybka Maydannik		10	resin worker
228. Srol Krawiec	1	10	tailor
229. Nachman Szmuklerz	1	10	lace-maker
230. Majorko Szmuklerz	3	10	lace-maker
231. Iankiel Pinczuk	3	10	of Pinchos
232. Ostrozka Piekarka	1	10	wife of baker from Ostro?
233. Todros Slepy		10	blind
234. Icko, son-in-law of Nysan		10	
235. Aron Piekarz	2	10	baker
236. Majorko Figilczyn		10	son of Feigel
237. Szmuylo Dubowy		10	from Dubovo (many towns)
238. Heuszyia		10	Joshua
239. NOTE : THIS LINE WAS INADVERTENLY LEFT BLANK BY CENSUS TAKER			
240. Moszko Tandetnik		10	dealer in old clothes
241. Szywach Krawiec	1	10	tailor
242. Leybicha Winniczka	poor		from Vinnitsa ?
243. Majorko Derewicki	3	10	from Derevichi
244. Notka Szynkarz	4	10	barman/tavern
245. Icko Rzeznik Derezanski	3	10	butcher from Derazhnia
246. Ios Peysachowicz	4	10	son of Peysach
247. Lachman	3	10	

SLOBOD

248. Meszel , son-in-law of Iudko	4	10	
249. Tenze Meszel	3	10	from Meshulom
250. Dawidko Bakalarz	1	10	teacher
251. Peysach Chayczyn	1	10	son of Chaya or Chaim
252. Froim Kopeliszyn	1	10	son of Koppel
253. Zeylik Forman		10	wagon-driver
254. Mychel Forman	2	10	wagon-driver
255. Litman Mychelowicz		10	son of Michael
256. Szmuylo Bezwerchy		10	homeless ?
257. Elo, son-in-law of Hozey	1	10	
258. Iankiel Reduinsk	1	10	from Redeny (Bessarabia)

259. Wol, son-in-law of Hozey		10	
260. Wol Pinczuk	3	10	of Pinchos
261. Leyzor Giersonowicz	2	10	son of Gershon
262. Mot, renter from Iwankowiecki	2	10	Ivankovets, Proskurov d.
263. Icko Kanter	kahal		cantor
264. Ruwen Polaczek	2	10	from Poland
265. Reyzia Wigdorka	1	10	Reyzia, wife of Vigdor
266. Polak	1	10	from Poland
267. Mol son-in-law of Piuni	1	10	(sic, should be Mot?) son-in-law of Pinchos
268. Nyson Szmulowicz		10	son of Shmuel
269. Abramko Figlarz		10	of Feigel
270. Iudycha Kramarka		10	wife of Iudko ?
271. old Peysach	1	10	
272. Enoch Krawiec	2	10	tailor
273. Iosyp Boruchowicz	2	10	son of Boruch
274. Szmuylo Iankielowicz	2	10	son of Jacob
275. Dawidko Polak	3	10	from Poland
276. Iankiel Szmuylowicz		10	son of Shmuel
277. Szulim Heuszejowicz	3	10	son of Joshua
278. Abel, Rabbi of Zamiechow	1	10	from Zamechov
279. Boruch Szynkarz	3	10	barman/tavern
280. Froim Stawnicki	3	10	stable man;or.of Stavnitsa
281. Leyzor Froimowicz		10	son of Froim
282. Leybkowa Rzeznicka		10	wife of Leyb the butcher?
283. Herszko Boruchowicz		10	son of Boruch
284. Icko Intoligator		10	bookbinder
285. Leybka Winnik	2	10	wine maker
286. Oron Tarnopolski	1	10	from Tarnopol
287. Moszko Dziegciarz	2	10	tar maker?
288. Leyzor Tandetnik	1	10	dealer in old clothes
289. Majorko Okaly	1	10	from Okli? oculist?
290. Mordha, son-in-law of Heuszyja	1	10	
291. Buniowa, widow		10	
292. Szlomka Woskoboynik	1	10	wax maker
293. Peysach Mytkouski	3	10	from Mitkov(Polotsk)
294. Szlomka Froimowicz		10	son of Froim
295. Wol Boruchowicz	1	10	
296. Icko Iankielowicz		10	
297. Iankielicha, widow	deceased		
298. Iankiel Krawiec		10	tailor
299. Leybka Wengier		10	Hungarian
300. Kilimnik Majoryszyn	1	10	carpet-maker, son of Maier
301. Abramko Pargaminnik	1	10	parchment
302. Chaim Srolow	2	10	of Srol(Israel)
303. old Oszer	1	10	
304. son-in-law of Froim	1	10	
305. Icko Zahiczyn	2	10	? (many possible interpretations)
306. Moszko, son of man from Bar	2	10	
307. Elo Zahika	1	10	
308. widow from Bar	2	10	
309. Zeylik Rachmilow	2	10	of Rachmil
310. Icko Slepy	10		blind
311. Boruch	1	10	
312. Moszko Anszelow	1	10	of Ansel
313. Iankiel Srolow		10	of Srol
314. Szlomka Rachmilow	2	10	of Rachmil
315. dom Sharbowy	municipal		treasurer's house
316. Moszko Chaimowicz		10	son of Chaim
317. Leybka Wiernik	renter		delegate of kahal
318. Fabisz, Chaim's brother-in-law	4	10	
319. Abramko's mother	2	10	
320. Majorko Kowelski	2	10	of the blacksmith
321. Zlotka Piekarka		10	baker

* * * * *

Letichev District merchants, 1820[45]

	Craftsmen	Merchants
Letichev	83	502
Medzhibozh	673	2,417
Derazhnia	145	542
Mikhalpol	72	345
Snitkov	5	14
Volkovintsy	23	209
Zinkov	135	588
Butsnevtsy	-	21
Totals:	1,136	4,638

Note: This list indicates that in 1820, Medzhibozh was still the home to the largest number of Jews. Zinkov, Letichev, and Derazhnia were much smaller in comparison.

* * * * *

Jewish homeowners in Letichev, 1838[46]

Shlioma Goldbark
Tovba Git
Leyba Golenischevskiy
Iosia Kats
Vol Kigel
Iosia Kurtsman
Kelman Voloshin
Foler Nutka
Motia Sapozhnik
Itsek Desiatskiy
Moysha Leib Kurtsman
Mikhel Fikeman
Feyga Tovba
Duvid Sukhoy
Beniamin Zalkman
Lipa Morgults
Gershka Rakhlis
Khaya Lebra
Itsek Shtivelman
Shaya Mortkovich
Khaim Litny Nudelman
Yudka Gebets
Kelman Kreyna
Shimon Lazebnik
Shimon Mortkovich
Srul Zaltsman
Khaim Shpak
Leiba Nuzman
Froim Gispet
Yudka Shinderman
widow Minikha
Zeilik Tabak
Aron Portnoy
Khaim Kurtsman
Yankel Etsey
Froim Shuri
Moshka Sangelshtein
Nus Lemish
Naftula Portnoy
Itsek Seniavsky
Shmil Feler
Zil Shtivelman
Shimon Tabak
Khaim Svima
Gershek Tepeka
Leyzor Khaytman
Ges Tarla
Abramka Grimbarg
Froim Efrus
Naftula Gadshmit
Avner Grimbarg
Abramka Zaltsman
Leibish Reznik
widow Khayta
Berk Morgults
Vol Kigel
Yukel Portnoy
Mikhel Frinkel
Khaim Shtulboym
Vol Malvich
Mortka Leybnermiter
Togot Livka
Berk Ferber
Alter Giler
Khaim Rozenblit
Khaim Kigel

* * * * *

Letichev District merchants, 1836-1839[47]

Letichev

1836
Segal, Abramko
Khaytsman, Ios
Bukhbander, Mortko

1837
Zusman, Leybche
Sruliovich and his son
Zusman, Duvid
Ziskeliovich, Ioyna

1838
Mikhelzun, Ios
Sheyndelman, Itsko
Shmid, Shaya
Gitelman, Moshko
Goldberg, Menashe
Tsikinavker, Srul
Goykhan, Aron
Navreikh, Alter
Sigal, Oyzer
Gerber, Moshko
Polyak, Shmul
Geylman, Zelman

and his son
Geylman, Duvid
Kesher, Abramko
and his brother
Kesher, Ruvin
Yovin, Itsko
Daychekh, Borukh
Liberman, Mortko
Felgendler, Mortko
Bukher, Nukhim
Krisher, Mortko
Kvuris, Gershko
Shvarts, Moshko
Moyzman, Aron
Gluzman, Beyrish
and his son
Gluzman, Leyzor
Perelman, Yankel
Rakhlis, Mortko
Podliska, Yankel
Felgendler, Ruvin
Khazin, Duvid
Biletsker, Vol
and his sons
Biletsker, Alter
Biletsker, Abramko
Perelman, Berko
Portnoy, Khaskel
Kurtsmin, Srul
Nevreykh, Yankel

1839
Gurfinkel, Mikhel
Perelman, Berko

Butsnevtsy

1838
Shubkesel, Itsko

Volkovintsy

1838
Yankeliovich, Duvid
Fishgal, Alter
Grinshpun, Gershko
Chovnik, Srul
Gumbar, Duvid
Shekhtman, Vol
Zhovna, Lipa
Gumbar, Simkha
Bey, Peysakh
Galuz, Khuna
Koyfman, Duvid
Gershkovich, Shlioma
Koyfman, Shulim
and his brothers
Koyfman, Meer
Koyfman, Abramko
Koyfman, Gdal
Fishboyn, Shimon
Sruliovich, Moshka
and his brother
Sruliovich, Gershko
Gumberg, Toviya
Khazin, Moshko

1839
Burshteyn, Srul
Zelmanovich, Meylikh
Meerovich, Duvid
and his son
Meerovich, Meer
Iosiovich, Alter

Derazhnia

1836
Korkh, Srul Usher
Mendeliovich, Duvid

1837
Tepner, Berko
and his son
Tepner, Ruvin
Berk's brother
Tepner, Mikhel
Ratner, Moshko

1838
Korkh, Duvid Yankel
Nizner, Yodko
Tishelman, Gerts
and his brother
Tishelman, Ruvin
Kats, Berko
Vinokur, Abramko
Yankeliovich, Abramko
1839
Vulikh, Shmul
Ratner, Khuna
Blatsis, Ios
Nudyas, Srul
Kreyzman, Itsko
Kushnir, Itsko
Leybovich, Moshko Khaim
Ideliovich, Berko
Feldman, Shmul

Zinkov

1839
Groysman, Borukh
Khamerman, Khaim
Pesel, Srul Ios
Petrishiev, Khaskel
and his brother
Petrisheiv, Abramko
Shor, Zelman
Tayger, Alter
Bochkis, Aron
Charnus, Srul
Sodak, Abramko
Neses, Nusin
Boyn, Ios Volf
Rozenman, Nuta
Yosim, Borukh
Shokhetman, Meer
and his brother
Shokhetman, Moshko
Shekhman, Shneer
Khamerman, Binish
Shvartsberg, Gershko
Guron, Shlioma
Malamid, Moshko
Munkart, Yankel
and his sons
Munkart, Mikhel
Munkart, Alter
Fleyderman, Idal
Khat, Leybish
and his son
Khat, Alter
Dib, Matus
Royter, Aron Fishel
and his son
Royter, Meer
Rekhelman, Ayzin
Vaserman, Shakhna

Medzhibozh

1837
Vainer, Ioyzin
Laviner, Shlioma

1838
Grinber, Abramko
Rabinovich, Duvid
and his brother
Rabinovich, Froim
Mendelzon, Mendel
Goldenshteyn, Moshko
Grishiteyn, Abramko
and his son
Grishiteyn, Mortko
Fiks, Leyba
Glikman, Ios

1839
Charnis, Gershko
and his son
Charnis, Ios
Snitivker, Aron
Rimer, Shmul
Sudilkovskiy, Shlioma
Gimberg, Nuta
Zilberman, Yoda Leyb
Zats, Leyba Itsko
Vaynshteyn, Benyamin
Dinas, Alter

Mikhalpol

1838
Kilerman, Berko

1839
Bershteyn, Ruvin
Endziman, Khaim
Shtipelman, Vol
Fiks, Berk

* * * * *

Guild merchants of the Letichev District, 1826-1862[48]

Note: When known, the town of residence is listed.

Averbukh, Froim Iankelevich (1852-1862)
Akselbandova, Sosia (1826)-Medzhibozh
Beyn, Itsko Shliomovich (1858)
Berger, Borukh Aizykovich (1855-1856)
Berger, Ios-Leizor Iankelevich (1827-1853)-Medzhibozh
Berger, Leiba Kopeliovich (1826-1838)
Berger, Khaim Iukelovich (1845-1862)
Bergerova, Khana (1855-1862)
Bershteyn (or Berenshteyn), Binnim Frumovich (1852-1862)
Brandman, San Leibovich (1852-1862) -Medzhibozh
Bodner, Leibish Eliavich (1856)
Bik, Shavel Abramovich (1845-1853)
Bykova, Pesia Iankeliova (1855-1862)
Dudarev, Stepan Ivanovich (1855-1858)*
Elzon, Porkel (?)Iudkovich (1852-1862)
Finger, Fedor Stakhovich (1852-1862)*
Finkelshteyn, Moshko Sruliovich (1845-1862)
Galperin, Itsko Khaimovich (1852-1862)
Galperinova, Tsina (1826-1827)
Galperson, Duvid-Itsek Mikhelovich (1862)
Gamarnikova, Khana (1852-1862)
Garber, Abrashko Pinkhasovich (1858)
Gervits, Iankel Gevshkovich (1845-1862)-Medzhibozh
Geshel, Itsek-Meyer-Avrum Gevsheivich (1838-1839)
Geshel (or Geshal or Getal), Itsko Abramovich (1852-1855)
Geshel (or Goshel or Getal), Zus Itskovich (1858-1862)
Geshel (or Goshel), Srul Iosiovich (1853-1862)
Goiva, Gershka Abramovich (1852-1862)-Medzhibozh
Goiva, Froim Abramovich (1853)-Medzhibozh
Goldenshteyn, Moshko Aronovich (1826)
Goldenshteyn (or Goldenshmit), Froim Moshkovich (1845-1858)
Goldenshteyn, Ide Froimovich (1853-1862)
Goldenshteyn, Usher Shloimovich (1855-1858)
Goldenshteyn, U.F. (1862)
Goldfayn, Ios, Gersh, and Moishe Moziovich (1862)
Gervits (or Gorvits), Iankel G. (1862)-Medzhibozh
Gervits, Iankel Iovliovich (1853)
Gorinshteyn, Ios Shmuelovich (1826-1853)-Medzhibozh
Gorinshteyn(or Gorenshteyn), Mendel Iosiovich (1852-1862)-Medzhibozh
Gorinshteyn(or Gorenshteyn), Khaim Iosiovich (1855-1862)-Medzhibozh
Iukhim, Gershko Moshkovich (1845)
Iukhim, Shmul-Khaim Gershkovich (1852-1862)
Kagan, Shlioma Mikhilovich (1852-1862)
Karvasarskiy, Khaim Mordkovich (1856)
Karvarska, Rukhlia (1858-1862)
Kvasha, Borukh Abramovich (1826)-Medzhibozh
Kvasha (also Shapira) Leib Duvidovich (1838-1862)-Medzhibozh
Kibrik, Leibish Gertseliovich (1826-1839)
Kibrik (or Kibryk), Mortko Iankeliovich (1852-1853)
Kibrikova, Ekhvid (1852-1862)
Kibrikova, Ita (1855-1856)
Kibrikova, Leia Usherovna (1853)
Kigel, Vol Gershkovich (1852-1856)-Letichev
Kigel, Zus Voliovich (1858-1862)-Letichev
Kipnis, Shlioma Leibovich (1858)
Kitshes, Shmul-Vol (1862)-Medzhibozh
Kozlovskiy, Nikolai Antonovich (1858)*
Levinshteyn, Volf Khaimovich (1838)

Lozovitskiy, Ivan Evstafevich (1852)*
Morgulis, Berko Lipovich (1838-1858)
Morgulis, Ios Lipovich (1856)
Morgulisova, Raitsia (1858-1862)
Perelmiter, Mortko-Leib Berkovich (1838-1862)
Perelmiter, Shlioma Mortkovich (1862)
Perevarov, Ivan Nikiforovich, Old Believer, (1838)*
Perevarov, Lukian Ivanovich, Old Believer, (1839)*
Rapoport, Itsko Etovich (or Eshkovich) (1852-1862)
Rakhlis, Borukh Gershkovich (1858-1862)
Rakhlis, Ios Leibovich (1858)
Reznik (or Verteletskii), Nikifor Grigorevich (1856-1862)-Medzhibozh*
Reznik, Evdokia (1858)*
Rozenberg, Daniel (1853)
Rozentul, Srul Moshkovich (1826-1839)
Rozentul, Moshko Itskovich (1858)
Rubinshteyn, Abrashka (1845)
Rubinshteyn, Aron Monatovich (1827)
Rubinshteyn, Khaim-Slioma Duvidovich (1839-1858)
Rubinshteynova, Khana (1838-1839)
Rukhlinova, Etli (1852-1853)
Rukhlis (or Rukhlin), Leibish Iankelivich (1855-1862)
Salitern, Nakhman-Volf Leibovich (1826-1827)
Salitrennik, Peisakh (1845)
Salitrennik, Pinkhas Nakhmanovich (1852-1862)-Medzhibozh
Salitrennik, Shlioma Nakhmanovich (1856-1862)- Medzhibozh
Serebrei, Ziskil Mendelovich (1826-1827)
Serebrei, Leibish Ziskilovich (1838
Shapira, Leibish-Meilakh Itskovich (1826-1845)
Shapira, Mortko Leibovich (1858-1862)
Shapirova, Iokheved (1852)
Shar, Ios Sruliovich (1852)
Shatsman, Aizik Duvidovich (1852-1862)
Shteyngold, Mikhel Pinkhasovich (1853)
Shvartsman, Mordko Itskovich (1852-1862)-Medzhibozh
Shvartsman, Peisakh Duvidovich (1852-1858)-Medzhibozh
Shpringel, Aizyk-Moishe Shalovich (1845)
Srayginblat, Sanko Abramovich (1838)
Tsymelzun, Geftiia Gershkovich (1826)-Medzhibozh
Tsidilkiver, Isoskher-Srul Berkovich (1827)
Vaiderman, Vol Itskovich (1852)
Vaynlaz (or Vaynliz), Leiba Fishilovich (1826-1838)-Medzhibozh
Vaynlizova, Sosia (1845)-Medzhibozh
Vaynliz, Abram Leibovich (1852-1856)-Medzhibozh
Veitser, Duvid Nisanovich (1852-1856)-Medzhibozh
Vernitskiy, Frants Isakovich (1845)*
Zak, Gershon Iosiovich (1852-1862)-Letichev
Zak, Zus Aronovich (1852-1858)-Letichev
Zak, Naftula (1858)-Letichev
Zakova, Git'l Naftulovna (1852-1856)-Letichev
Zilberman, Mortko Leibovich-Mikhalpol
Zilbermints, Peisakh (1845)
Zilbermints, Iankel Peisakovich (1826-1827)
Zilbermints, Simkha Iankelevich (1838-1845)
Zisman, Gershko Abramovich (1852)
Zmoira, Moshko Meirovich (1852-1862)-Medzhibozh
Zmoira, Khuna Leizorovich (1852-1855)-Medzhibozh
Zmoira, Shmul Khonovich (1856-1858)-Medzhibozh

Among the members of the Letichev Trade Council from 1826-1862 were the Jews Rubinshteyn, Goldbart, Rozenblit, and Kurtsman.

* Denotes not Jewish.

* * * * *

Medzhibozh town hall merchants[49]

Up until 1831 the town hall in Medzhibozh was owned by Prince Adam Czartoryski. After a large fire in Medzhibozh in 1826, the decision was made to repair the building. Repairs continued for over 30 years. The town hall was a two-story stone building and included a watch tower (which was covered with tin and had a clock). The building was square with a courtyard in the middle. During fairs theatre performances and the sale of alcoholic beverages took place in the courtyard. A stone cellar in the courtyard was also available for rent. The outside perimeter of the complex was approximately 500 feet.

The owners of the fifty-four stores on the ground floor of the town hall paid a yearly rent to Czartoryski, and after 1831, to the Treasury. In 1863 a question regarding the right of these people to own property was raised in conjunction with the decision of the Treasury concerning the sale of the town hall. The State Treasury had several offices on the top floor, on the ground floor, and in the cellar (some of this space had previously been utilized by the Military Police). Additional space on the top floor was rented to the nobleman Ivan Soltik in which he created a tavern. Tensions ran high in 1864 after a Medzhibozh Jewish merchant woman named Vittia Toporovskaia purchased numerous stores at a public auction for 2,036 silver rubles. Disgruntled private owners, who lost the bid, subsequently made it difficult for her to set up her business: they would not let her through the gate, some utilized her space, and others actually began construction on her property. Petitions to the authorities were turned down by the Treasury department as they decided not to interfere in the conflict between the involved parties.

Medzhibozh Town Hall.
Photograph was taken ca. 1935. From the Taranushenko Archive, courtesy of V.A. Dymshits.

It is important to note that most of the original owners of the stores had acquired the properties from Prince Czartoryski on November 30, 1786. What follows is a store by store listing:

# of store 1863 owner	1786 owner
1. San Brandman, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1858)	Gdal Volnovich
2. Volko Brand, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1839)	Vasilii Korzhevich
3. Abram Gerberg, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1850)	Munis Iudkovich
4 & 47. Aron Grinfeld & Itsko Perelman, Medzhibozh *meschane* (inherited by Perelman in 1826)	Faibish Kontorov
5. Berko Sigal, Medzhibozh *meschane* (inherited from his mother, maiden name Kaznacheeva)	Berka Stanislavskii
6. Moshko Rozenboym, Staro Konstantinov *meschane* (owner since 1847)	unknown *
7. Iankel Geiler, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1847)	unknown *
8. Medzhibozh Sviatouspenskaia church (since 1851)	Benyamin Gershkovich
9. Mosko Benis Gelilzon, Medzhibozh *meschane*	Grigorii Shemiakovskii
10. Leib Plesser, Medzhibozh meschane (owner since 1848)	Abraska Borokhovich
11 & 38. Gershko Goiva, son of Medzhibozh merchant (owner since 1848)	Srul Manashkovich
12. Shloima Salitrennik & Moshko Zmoira, Medzhibozh merchants (owners since 1848)	unknown *
13. heirs of the deceased Ignatii Kurechka of Shrubkov	
14. nobleman Ludwig Prosalovskii	
15 & 27. Itsko Beyn, Krasilov *meschane* (owner since 1860)	Dobrovolskii
16. Medzhibozh synagogue (since 1850)	Aron Srulevich
17. Borukh Khlaster, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since the 1840s)	Itska Litvak
18. heirs of the deceased nobleman Zakharii Dobrovolskii	
19. Itsko Lerner, Medzhibozh *meschane* (purchased from Moshko Zmoira)	Itska Brodskii
20. peasants Ivashkevichevs	
21. Berko Goibar, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1851)	I. Iakimovich
22. Moshko Zmoira, Medzhibozh merchant (owner since 1856)	Grigorovichev
23. Berko Ishniovich Tsymelzon, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant	Berko's grandfather, Abram Tsymelzon
24. Priest Arkadii Logodovskii	
25 & 53. Leizer Leibenzon, a merchant's son from Berdichev (purchased from Letichev merchant Duvid Veitser in 1852)	Pavel Sheremetovskii
26. Nikifor Verteletskii, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (purchased from heirs of Iankel Berger in 1857)	Iankel Berger
27. ----------see # 15	
28. Itsko Berenshteyn, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1840s)	Mordko Gershkovich
29. Leib Goldenshteyn, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant, Lazer Berkalin, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owners since 1850)	Itsko Faibishovich
30. Merchant's daughters Leia and Beila Rozentul (since 1837)	Iankel Fishel
31. Medzhibozh merchant Duvid Akselbind (owner since 1840s)	Aron Shmilkovich
32. Nikifor Verteletskii, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant	
33. Shloima Salitrennik, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1840s)	Maraina Tomashova
34. Berko Gaikhberg, Medzhibozh *meschane* (purchased store from Leib Serebrier, who acquired it from Averbakh)	Zaskel Aronovich
35. Borukh Serebria, Medzhibozh *meschane* (purchased from Iankel Averbukh around 1846)	Itska Kharitonov
36. Jewish school (Bes Midrash); inherited from Duvid Tsimelzon after his death in 1847	Volka Moshkovich

37 & 40. Abraska Gerberg, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant; purchased from Gomovskii brothers, who acquired it from Ios Gorenshteyn in 1847.

39. Ios Vascherman and Mikhel Aksalbinder of Medzhibozh (purchased from Royzenblits in 1846) — Gershka Iankeliovich

41. Dina Shapirova, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1849) — Khariton

42. Leibish Gliants, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since the 1840s) — Itska Meerovich

43. Ios Vaserman (a.k.a. Kats), Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1830s) — Elia Kontorov

44. Berko Tsymelzon, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1840s) — Abram Iosiovich

45. Gerts Gliants, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1840s) — Leia Kharitonova

46. Iankel Gervits, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant — Iankel Usherovich

47. ----------see # 4

48. Froim Goldenshteyn, Medzhibozh *meschane* (owner since 1840s) — Maiorka Gershkovich

49. Pesia Saliternnikova, Medzhibozh merchant (obtained from husband Nakhman Salitrennikov, who had the store since 1820s) — Abrashka Iosiovich

50. Mikhel Goldbarg, Staro Konstantinov *meschane* (owner since 1830s)

51. Khaim Gorenshteyn, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1848; previous owners were his mother,Khaiatuba Gorenshteyn, and father Aron Motkovski.) — Aron Motkovski

52. Leibish Gliants, Medzhibozh *meschane*, and Khaim Shlioma Rubinshteyn (owners since 1830s) — Aron Motkovski

53. ----------see # 25

54. Iankel Gervits, Medzhibozh 3rd guild merchant (owner since 1855; previous owners were Leib Vaynlez, and then Abrashka Vaynlez)

top floor: Gerts Gliants, Shevel Gliants, Khaim -Shloima Rubinshteyn (owners since 1840s) — Srul Leibovich **

(without number)

* Many documents were destroyed in the Letichev fire of April 9, 1854.

** This store (which had previously been a drug store) was purchased in 1813 from Prince Czartoryski for 400 Dutch gold coins.

* * * * *

Medzhibozh merchants, circa 1880[50]

name	taxes paid (in rubles)	name	taxes paid (in rubles)
Akselband, D.	1	Lykashevich, A.M.	25
Armel, E.	1	Nisetsman, Kh.	2
Brandman, M.	3	Privep, D.	1
Broido, M.Sh.	2	Royzenberg, L.	1
Veidman, D.	1	Sas, Z.	3
Veitser, M.	1	Saschin, G.	1
Gerber, A.	3	Sigal, N.	1
Goykhberg, Zhak.	2	Tentser, M.	1
Goykhberg, B.	2	Tulchinsky, Sh.	3
Goldenshteyn, E.	1	Uderman, Sh.	1
Goldshmit, L.	1	Fayn, Sh.	2
Goldshteyn, I.	1	Tselniker, Y.	3
Gurvich, Ch.	3	Tsimelzon, V.	1
Dantsek, L.	1	Shvartsman, A.	3
Ivankovitser, M.	1	Shvartsman, G.	2
Kvasha, V.	3	Shvartsman, L.	10
Kvasha, I.	1	Shvartsman, M.	3
Kvasha, L.	3	Shaynkestel, P.	1
Kiselik, B.	1	Ekht, G.	1

* * * * *

1895 Russian business directory[51]

Business directories were the equivalent of today's yellow pages or city directories. They listed the towns and the businesses which thrived there. Most of the private businesses at the time were owned by Jews. Thus, business directories provide useful information about who lived and worked in the towns of Letichev District.

LETICHEV TOWN

Wine:
Kurtsman
Makogon
Malkiman

Newpaper:
Kalyos

Fancy Goods:
Perlmuter
Tsudichkis

Iron:
Ayzenberg
Elzon

Wood:
Shperkan

Manufacturing:
Ayzenberg
Perlmuter
Finkelshteyn

LETICHEV DISTRICT

Wine Distillers:
Gringolts, Sh. M. (in Medzhibozh)
Shtefko, Mart. Mart. (in Monastirka)

Bricks:
Khvalboga, Naslidn. (in Knilskovtsy)

Honey:
Faynblat (in Medzhibozh)

Millers:
Baranetskiy (in Baranovka)
Zalisskaya, M. (3) (in Sutkovtsy)
Kazennaya (4) (Krivulya and Tsaritsa) (Zinkovo, Kalinovka, Adamovka)
Merkhievskiy, Mechislav (in Gorlika)
Minist. Gasud. Imush. (in Medzhibozh)
Orlovskaya, Roza (in Muravannaya Verbka)
Tolstaya, Nadezhda (Slitofka)
Sherbachev, Nikl. Anol. (in Butsnevo)

Beer Brewery:
Divishev, Ivan and Cherniy, Frants (in Zinkov)

Sugar:
Kozminskiy, Vladimir (in Butsnevo)

Tobacco:
Gelman and Goldenshteyn (in Medzhibozh)
Shvartsman (in Medzhibozh)

Paper:
Molmokovi, Dmitriy and Mikhail (in Noviy Poselok)

Grocer:
Vertsman (in Zinkov)
Gervitsova (in Medzhibozh)
Ginsburg (in Medzhibozh)
Zaionchik (in Derazhnia)
Roizenblit (in Zinkov)

Haberdashery:
Gervits (in Medzhibozh)

Kerosene:
Gliner (in Derazhnia)
Zaionchik (in Derazhnia)

Kolonialnaya:
Gervitsova (in Medzhibozh)
Salitrennick (in Medzhibozh)
Tselniker (in Derazhnia)

Coral:
Salitrennik (in Medzhibozh)

Wood:
Berlyand (in Zinkov)

Manufacturing Tobacco:
Gleizor (in Medzhibozh)
Malkiman (in Medzhibozh)
Rabinovich

Tobacco:
Gervitsova (in Medzhibozh)
Shvartsman (in Medzhibozh)
Gelman (in Medzhibozh)
Goldenshteyn (in Medzhibozh)

Bread Grain:
Gervitsova (in Medzhibozh)

Eggs:
Boida (in Derazhnia)
Mazel (in Derazhnia)

* * * * *

1903 Russian business directory[52]

LETICHEV TOWN

Factories and plants -
Water Mills:
Vitels, Shmul Leyb.

Tobacco:
Malkiman, Aron Alter. - 28 Rubles

Trade-Industrial Businesses -
Pharmacist:
Kozlovskiy, Ad. Nikl. (anesthesia)

Pharmaceutical Products:
Landa, Beniam. Isaak. and Perelmiter, Gersh. Duv.
Rozen, Azril Moshk.

Grocers:
Khranevich, Sabina Yol. (Wine)

Vodka and Spirits:
{Kazen. Vinniy Skl.}

Hardware:
Grubshteyn, Bella Abr.

Manufacturing:
Gayzner, Reyzya Leyb.
Perelmikher, Abr. Khaim.
Finkelshteyn, Shifra Zeyd.
Shpirkan, Yak. Arkad.

Furniture:
Grubshteyn, Bella Abr.

Photography:
Apostolov, Nikl.
Rozenberg, Kaz.

LETICHEV DISTRICT

Factories and plants -
Water Mills:
Kupets, Nusin Mend. (in Zinkov)
Kur, Konr. Frants and Adamovka (in Zinkov)
Morkov, Nikl. Ark. and Shedrovo (in Suslovetsk)
Urod, Stan. Goak. and Dunevich, Iv. Nikl. and Boranovka (in Zinkov)

Beer Breweries:
Divishek, Vatsl. Iv. (in Zinkov)

Sugar Beets:
Butsnevski Sugar Beets and Refining Co. (Butsnevoy, Derazhnia)
Shchedrovski Sugar Beet Co. (Shedrovoy, Gorbasovoy, and Suslovetsk)

Phosphate Mines:
Galperin, Ios. Abr. (in Kruti-Borodintsy, Zinkov)

Trade-Industrial Businesses -
Pharmacist:
Binkovskiy, Genr. Nik. (in Volkovintsy, Voytevetsk)
Vurshtatman, Ide-Mordka Ios. (in Zinkov)
Khmilnitskaya, Mani Efroim. (in Derazhnia)

Grocers:
Vertsman, Baba Zusev. (in Zinkov)
Rozenblit, Ios Shaev. (in Zinkov)

Kerosene:
Gringolts, Shimshon Moshk. (in Derazhnia)
Zaionchik, Abr. Mend. (in Derazhnia)
Maryanchik, Meer Ionov. (in Derazhnia)
Rotshteyn, Leyba Nusin. (in Volkovintsy, Voytovetsk)

Wood:
Bernshteyn, I. B. and Geller, M. G. (in Pevukha)
Katsknelson, Ios Palt. (in Zinkov)
Shefel, Shlema Berk. and Gayzner, Reyzya Leyb. (in Terlovka)
Shefel, Shlema Berk and Pechuk, Moshko Leyb. (in Bokhnakhts)
Estrin, Yank. Isr. (in Zinkov)

Manufacturing:
Rozenblit, Dav. Shaev. (in Zinkov)
Tsukerman, Mar.-Sura Abov. (in Mikhalpol)

Sugar:
Rabinshteyn, Khaim Volev. (in Derazhnia)

MEDZHIBOZH TOWN

Factories and Plants -
Water Mills:
Pechuk, Moshko and Gervits, Charna

Tobacco:
Gelman, Itsko Nusin
Shvartsman, Itya, Aron, Ovshiy and Shlema Gershk.

Trade-Industrial Businesses -
Pharmacist:
Kokh, Tereza

Pharmaceutical Products:
Gervits, Yank. Eliov.

Type-Lithographers:
Brinde, Moske.

Grocers:
Diaman, Malka Gershk. (Tobacco)
Minatsakanov, Kozar
Fishman, Umer Azr.

View of the Letichev Market Square, ca. 1910.
From a postcard series. Courtesy of Suzanne Pulier, Hedy Augenbraun, and Betty Rollin.

A Letichev Market Street, ca. 1910.
From a postcard series. Courtesy of Suzanne Pulier, Hedy Augenbraun, and Betty Rollin.

A Letichev Market Street, ca. 1910.
From a postcard series. Courtesy of Suzanne Pulier, Hedy Augenbraun, and Betty Rollin.

View of The Road from Letichev, ca. 1910.
Foreground is Letichev Castle; background is the Polish Catholic Church. From a postcard series. Courtesy of Suzanne Pulier, Hedy Augenbraun, and Betty Rollin.

Khodorov, Mordko Leyb.
Tsukerman, Pesya Khaskel.
Okht, Gershko Maniov. (Tobacco)

Books:
Korf, Mordko

Manufacturing:
Berger, Nekhosh Aron.
Krigsgaber, Ios-Ber Umer.
Rozenberg, Yank. Leyz.
Tselniker, Tema Gershk.
Shayn, Azik Mikhel.
Shvartsman, Ita Shlem.

Contractor:
Yaglosh, Movsha Leyb and Karmazin, Noekh Srul.

Photographer:
Grositskiy, Vladisl.
Sonich, Solom.

* * * * *

1905 Voter Registration List[53]

Lower Middle Class (*Mechshanye*):

Name	Value of Property (rubles)
Letichev:	
Asnis, Shmul Borukhovich	3500
Bilik, Shloima	1750
Bilik, Ester-Khaya	1700
Gringolts, Lipa Moshkovich	1500
Pechuk, Leyba	2000
Rabinovich, Leya Borukhovich	2000
Rosen, Reyzya Simkhovna	1500
Sigal, Gershko Volkovich	1800
Tsudichkis, Tsudik	1600
Shefel, Shlema Berkovich	1850
Medzhibozh:	
Vilk, Volko Shmulevich	1500
Goldenberg, Khaim-Gersh	1600
Gringolts, Shimshona	2900 (Heirs)
Derevicher, Nakhman	2400
Tulchinskiy, Shefel	2000
Shvartsman, Khaya-Yofe	1500
Derazhnia:	
Gershgorin, San Yankelevich	1500
Volkovintsy:	
Brun, Aron-Yankel Yankelevich	1520
Rukhlevich, Duvid Shaevich	1850
Zinkov:	
Gershel, Moshko Khaimovich	1500

Commercial, Industrial and Business Category (*Kupstov*):

Name	Category
Letichev:	
Bilk, Elik Leyzerovich	Commercial
Dinets, Zelman Simkhovich	Commercial
Finkelshteyn, Shimshon Srulevich	Commercial
Malkiman, Aron Alterovich	Industry

Medzhibozh:

Gervits, Yankel Eliovich	Commercial
Kuperberg, Izrail Berkovich	Commercial
Shapiro, Kelman Iosevich	Commercial
Ekht (Gekht), Gershko Manevich	Commercial

Derazhnia:

Gringolts, Khaim Shimshonovich	Commercial
Zaionchik, Abram Mendelevich	Commercial
Maryanchik, Meer Ioynovich	Commercial

Zinkov:

Rozenblit, Duvid Shaevich	Commercial
Rozenblit, Ios Shaevich	Commercial
Kupets, Nusin Mendelevich	Industry

Medzhibozh:

Geshel, Srul Abramovich	Imposed Taxes

* * * * *

1910 Russian business directory[54]

LETICHEV TOWN

Pharmacy:
Kozlorski, Mar. Ad.

Grocery:
Marantz, Yank. Nut.
Khranevich, Sabina Iul.

Bank
Wine Factory - No. 541, 542

Haberdashery Products:
Palti, Gersh Abr.

Hardware:
Trakhtenberg, Beila Abr.

Manufacturing:
Zak, Khava Srul.
Finkelshteyn, Shim. Sr.
Izufov, Khaia Volf.

Tractor:
Malinovsky, Ios, Yul.

Photographer:
Anostolov, N.
Berzhbitski, K.

LETICHEV DISTRICT

Pharmacy:

Volkovintsy:	Grabovskaya, Appol.
Derazhnia:	Khmilnitski, Is. Bor.
Zinkov:	Tsinberg, E.I.
Medzhibozh:	Krzhishlivskaya, F.
Mikhalpol:	Zektser, L. Abr.

Groceries:

Derazhnia:	Galay, Pesya
	Goldfayn, Duv. Send.
	Zamochik, Abr. Mendel
Zinkov:	Rozenblit, Ios. Shaev.
Medzhibozh:	Dantsig, Khaim Moshko.
	Diamant, Malka Gershk.
	Fishman, Enya and Ios
	Khodorov, Ios, with Leiba
Trebukhovtsy:	Medzhibozhsk, V.
	Manatsakonov, Kaz. Mikh.

Wine Factory:

Derazhnia:	No. 492, 1346

Wine:

Zinkov:	Sadikova, Sarra Leib.

Haberdashery Products:

Medzhibozh:	Rosenberg, Sr. Yank.

Gold and Silver Products:

Medzhibozh:	Grinberg, Itsko Mendel

Kerosene:

Derazhnia:	Gringolts, Khaim Shim
	Zaionchik, Abram. Mendel
	Maryanchik, Meier Ion.
Komorovtsi:	Dolgov, Iongol, Sr.

Leather Products:

Medzhibozh:	Kigil, Gedel Abram.

Lumberyard:			Tsukerman, Pesya and Khaim
Derazhnia:	Galay, Duv. Leyb.		
Manufacturing:		*Fish*:	
Volkovintsy:	Lifshits, Leah	Medzhibozh:	Derevicher, Nakhm. Zeil.
	Steynborg, Duv.		
Derazhnia:	Barshtein, Sh. Volf.	*Sugar and Tea*:	
	Teper, Yank. Sr.	Derazhnia:	Rabinshteyn, Khaim Volkov.
	Fukelman, Sura Av.		
Zinkov:	Rozenblit, Duv. Shaev.		
	Teiman, Itsko Zelman	*Photography*:	
Medzhibozh:	Berik, Volko M.	Derazhnia:	Rozentul, Est.
	Mosenkis, Rukhel Ben.	Zinkov:	Shvaiger, R.V.
	Rozenberg, Mordechai Yankel	Medzhibozh:	Sonin, Sol.
	Khelemer, P. Sh.	*Sewing Machines*:	
		Derazhnia:	Singer Sewing Machines
Furniture:			
Medzhibozh:	Gekht, Gershko. Maniov.		

* * * * *

1912 Voter Registration List[55]

List of Jews who have the right to participate in the poll for the Russian Duma (the election was cancelled after registration).

Note: "Although Beider says that the percentage of Jewish men included in the voter lists is statistically representative of the total Jewish population at that time, and although the list of Jewish voters was considerably expanded for these elections, one must remember that a significant portion of the population was not included in the lists. Generally speaking, only those persons who owned tangible assets, who had taxable property, who had trade or manufacturing licenses, who paid other sorts of taxes, who occupied a separate apartment or who served as workers in some facility with no fewer than 50 employees were allowed to vote.

"In addition, there were more detailed limitations, e.g., the ruling Senate carefully explained that the definition 'apartment' applied exclusively to premises with a separate entrance and separate kitchen. Naturally, many small renters did not have all of that. Those whose housing was furnished by their employers also were excluded. Another requirement was residence in the same territory for not less than one year." One other requirement is that the voter be males 25 years of age or older.[56]

First Class (*Kupstov*)

Letichev

Asnis, Smul Borukhovich
Averbukh, Luzer Abramovich
Asnis, Aba Khaimovich

Bilik, Shlema Leyzorovich
Broytman, Srul Abramovich
Brind, Moshko
Broytman, Zeyda
Barats, Froim
Bik, Aron
Broytman, Leyba Srulevich
Bekman, Srul
Baltman, Duvid
Bronshteyn, Gdal Mendelevich

Veytsman, Yankel Evelevich
Veksler, Khaim Scharievich
Vaynshtok, Ios Shmulevich

Vayser, Berko Oiniovich
Vatover, Yankel Berkovich
Veksler, Gilel Khaimovich

Ganulin, Moicey Khaimovich
Grinbarg, Gilil Avnerovich
Gershonovich, Abram
Goldis, Yankel Duvidovich
Gershonovich, Abram Nukhimov
Giller, Lipa Mordkovich
Gringolts, Lipa Moshkovich
Goldshmit, Naftul Yankelevich
Gitelman, Moshko Shmulevich
Gitman, Srul Berkovich
Galperin, Idel Shlemovich
Gluzman, Leyba

Zamochnik, Duvid
Zaydenberg, Abrum Shiovich
Zilberman, Duvid Peysakhovich
Zak, Benyomen Aronovich

Koyfman, Khaim Iosevich
Kontorshchik, Iosif
Kozak, Khaim-Srul Duvidovich
Kneyloz, Khaim-Gersh
Kreyman, Gersko
Kolomeyskiy, Leyba Khaimovich
Kuptsov, Aron Zeylikovich
Kritsshteyn, Gershko Iosev
Kalyos, Shmul Berkovich
Knur, Mordko Mordkovich

Leznerer, Liber
Lopatin, Leyzor Gershonovich

Makogon, Yankel Peysakhovich
Morgulis, Mendel Duvidovich
Morgulis, Khaim Itskovich
Malkiman, Aron Alterovich
Makogon, Es Moshkovich

Oystacher, Shulim Iosevich
Oystacher, Ios
Ostrozhetskiy, Zus Gershkovich

Perelmiter, Nusil Berkovich
Paltiy, Gersh Abramovich
Pasternak, Yankel-Gersh Berovich
Perelmiter, Ios Srulevich
Perelmiter, Geshel Khaimovich
Pastirnak, Yankel-Gersh
Perelmiter, Gershon Duvidovich

Royfman, Mordko Shmulev
Ronichnik, Zindel Vigdorov
Ratner, Tsudik Borukhovich
Ratner, Borukh Tsudikovich
Rapoport, Ioyna Moshkovich
Royzman, Pinkhas Nusinovich
Rukhlin, Gersko Froimovich
Rapoport, Nakhman Moshkovich
Royfman, Abram

Rakhlis, Shlioma Berkovich

Simis, Yankel Itskovich
Sigal, Duvid Yankelevich
Sirota, Leyba Senderovich
Sigal, Gershko Volkovich

Tovbis, Volko Pinkhasovich

Fuk, Moshko Iosevich
Flit, Ruvin Avrumovich
Fleysh, Toviy
Finkelshteyn, Shimshon Srulevich

Khaytsman, Gerts
Khaytsman, Gershko

Tsudichkis, Tsudik Borukhovich
Tsin, Abram

Shefel, El Shlemov
Shtulboym, Ikhil Khaimovich
Shefel, Shlema Berkovich
Shirbarg, Moshko
Shvarts, El

Yozefov, Iosi Motelev

Medzhibozh
Albershtut, Khaim-Ber

Berik, Volko Manusovich

Vayntrub, Zaybel Khaimov

Goykhbarg, Gershko Berkovich
Goykhbarg, Yankel Berkovich
Gintsburg, Zus Itskovich
Goldinsteyn, Shmul Usherovich
Gelman, Gersh-Leyb
Grinberg, Itsko

Derevicher, Nakhman Zeylikovich
Derevitskiy, El Oyzerovich

Zisels, Ovshiya Arievich

Lisiy, Abram Moshkovich

Polyak, Ikhil Shmulevich

Rozenberg, Srul Yankelevich

Serebrier, Pinkhas Froimovich

Udler, Aron Duvidovich

Khodorov, Leyba Mordkov
Khodorov, Ios Mordkov
Khelemer, Pinkas Shamovich

Shtemberg, Ovshiya Moshkovich
Sherman, Fishel Peysakhovich

Sherman, Yudko Fishelez

Ekht, Gershko Menevich

Derazhnia
Birshteyn, Sheyvakh Volkovich

Vulakh, Ios Meerovich
Vayser, Itsko Volfovich
Vaysman, Esra Froimovich
Vayser, Borukh Volfovich
Vayser, Shimon

Groysman, Khaskel
Gapay, Duvid Leybovich
Galperin, Ios Yankelevich
Gluzman, Mot
Gringolts, Khaim Shimonovich
Galushka, Duvid Gershokovich
Golovatiy, Shmul

Dobtsis, Ikhil

Zaionchik, Abram Mendelevich
Zak, Zus

Klig, Itsko Duvidovich
Kibrik, Lipa Itskovich
Kalyuzhner, Aron Ayzikovich
Kats, Mordko
Kondel, Aron
Koros, Berko
Kupershteyn, Froim
Kumer, Shimon
Kats, Ios

Lerner, Nakhman Srulevich
Lerner, Berko Borukhovich
Livshits, Oyzer

Mariyanchik, Meer Ioynovich

Oksman, Shimon

Pundik, Shmul Aronovich
Potashnik, Gershko

Rosenblit, Ruvin Iosevich
Roysenboym, Simkha Moshkovich
Ruvinshteyn, Khaim Volevich
Rudberg, Mordko Mordkovich
Rudbarg, Zus

Serbin, Borukh
Sklyarevskiy, Yankel Iosevich

Faynshteyn, Mikhel Shulimovich
Finger, Moshko
Finkelman, Duvid
Faynshteyn, Shmul
Fridman, Moshko Duvidov

Tsukerman, Itsek-Meer
Kharif, Shimon

Shatsman, Gershko Alterov

Eyger, Shlema

Zinkov
Vertsman, Yankel-Moyshe Mordkov
Vertsman, Mordko
Virtsman, Yankel-Moyshe Mordkov
Virtsman, Mordko

Galperin, Khaim-Leyb Mikhelevich
Gertsenshteyn, Itsko Shmulevich
Geshel, Pinkhas Khaimovich
Geshel, Moshko Khaimovich

Koyfman, Abram Slemovich
Kliger, Khaim Mordkovich

Meller, Zurikh Gershkovich

Royzenblit, Ios Shaevich
Royzenblit, Duvid Shaevich
Rutberg, Bentsion Leyzorovich

Sadik, Ios Shovelevich

Tsinberg, Simkha Leyzorovich

Shor, Slema Mendelevich

Mikhalpol
Vaysman, Shmerko
Gofman, Itsko

Kloyzner, Fishel

Volkovintsy
Brun, Aron Yankelevich
Blank, Yankel Volfovich

Vaserman, Peysakh Srulevich

Gladshteyn, Shevel Khaimov
Gladshteyn, Yankel Shevelev

Duvidovich, Nukhim Duvidovich

Zayndenshteyn, Yankel Shevelev

Kupershmid, Ira Shmulevich
Kapler, Moshko Srulevich
Kreychman, Zus Leyzorovich
Kurtsman, Peysakh Gershkovich
Kogos, Berko Iosevich

Livshits, Shupl Khaimovich
Livshits, Mordko Shoilevich
Liberzon, Ios Liberovich

Milman, Srul Moshkovich

Neshelshteyn, Noekh Shliomovich

Psakhis, Duvid Itskovich

Rukhlevich, Duvid Itskovich

Shikhman, Abram Mordkovich
Shvarts, Ayzik Yankelevich
Shvarts, Ovshiya Nukhmovich
Shekhtman, Ios Volevich

Butsnevtsy
Veseliy, Leyzor Itskovich

Second Class (*Mechshanye*)
Letichev
Alterman, Shimshon Duvidov
Anshin, Ios Zeylikovich
Asnis, Elsh Shmuelev
Aizenberg, Duvid-Ber

Bukhbinder, Leyb Mendelevich
Burshteyn, Srul Volkovich
Barenfeld, Ovshiy Shaevich
Bokserboym, Leyba
Breytman, Ikhil Meylekhovich
Bereza, Mordko Mordkovich
Basin, Aron
Burshteyn, Froim
Bresler, Yankel
Burshteyn, Mot
Bar, Khaim Yolkovich
Brind, Shmul Ayzikov
Berchenko, Peysakh Itskovich
Burshteyn, Peysakh Itskovich
Breyman, Meylakh
Burman, Froim Abramovich
Burshteyn, Moshko Mordokovich

Vaynerman, Moshko
Vaynbarg, Shlema Iosevich
Vayserman, Moshko Yankelevich
Volzon, Borukh Shmulevich
Vayner, Aron Ruvinovich
Vayner, Yudko Shmulevich
Vaynblat, Mshko
Vatover, Berko
Veytsman, Yankel Iosevich
Vekselman, Khaim-Ber Shmulevich
Veytsman, Yankel Mordkovich
Vayner, Ioyna

Galer, Mordko Mordkovich
Groysman, Manus
Goldshteyn, Gershko Nakhmanovich
Goldman, Peysakh Volkovich
Gurfinkel, Pal Yukelevich
Gitman, Faybish Froimovich
Goldenberg, Meer Moshkovich
Gleyzer, Moshko
Gluz, Yankel
Grinshteyn, Aron Mordkovich
Gershinovich, Shmul Leyzorovich
Galtsman, Froim Shmulevich
Goldbarg, Shlioma
Grinblat, Ios Azrilevich
Galperin, Shmul
Grinshteyn, Khaim-Volf Yankelevich
God, Motel
Gluzman, Yodko
Gendler, Leyba
Gabay, Gersh Shlemovich
Grubshteyn, Borukh Aronovich
Gingolts, Bentsion Lipovich
Grebelskiy, Abram Gershkovich
Grebelskiy, Shmul Khaimovich
Grinberg, Moshko
Glants, Mendel
Gringolts, Shulim Lipovich

Dikler, Leyba-Avrum Ayzikovich
Diminshteyn, Ikhil Itskovich
Dodik, Moshko

Zemelzon, El-Moyshe
Zusman, Berko
Zilberman, Rakhmil Duvidovich
Zilberman, Nukhim Duvidovich
Zelman, Shlema
Zabarskiy, Duvid Zayvilevich
Zekhtser, Yankel Zeylikovich
Zilberman, Avrum
Zilberman, Aron Duvidovich
Zakman, Shulim Moshkovich
Zaydel, Abram
Zonis, Abram Leybovich
Zak, Ios

Iolis, El
Kotlyar, Moshko
Kurtsman, Leyba
Kibrik, Berish
Kigel, Srul
Krupnik, Leyzer
Kalyus, Gersh Adamov
Kneyluz, Leybish
Kats, Zelman Leybov
Kurtsman, Moshko Mordkovich
Kravets, Berko Abramovich
Kats, Duvid
Kleyman, Srul Mendelevich
Kurtsman, Mordko Ovshievich
Kiperbarg, Moshko Benyuminovich
Kurtsman, Peysakh
Kushner, Gershko
Kopit, Itsko Leyzorovich
Kertsburd, Yankel-Leyb Aronovich
Kurtsman, Shaya
Kozak, Srul Shlemovich
Kalyos, Gersh Moshkovich

Kurtsman, Sender
Kleyman, Khaim
Kats, Khaim
Kurtsman, Shmul
Kolomeyskiy, Moshko
Kurtsman, Yasher
Kreyman, Itsko Gershkovich
Kalyos, Aron Leybov
Krupnik, Meylikh Itskovich
Kalyos, Zeyda Leybovich
Kalyos, Moshko Samuilov
Kurtsman, Shlema
Kontorshchik, Samuil Iosevich
Kalifshteyn, Itsko
Kleyman, Yankel

Leybzon, Aron
Lubman, Moshko
Liberman, Leyba
Lyolka, Duvid Ovshievich
Litvinetskiy Yankel
Lemelekhis, Mordko
Levin, Gersh Abramovich
Leybenzon, Shmul-Ios Nukhimovich
Lekhtser, Ios Berkovich

Makogon, Khaim Shmulevich
Mikhelevich, Shimshon Leybovich
Mikhelevich, Leyzer Leyvievich
Moshkit, Gershko
Mendelevich, Benyomon Abovich
Mekhelzon, Itsko
Mendelzon, Mordko
Morgulis, Itsko
Makogon, Khaim Leybovich
Mok, Gershko Itkovich
Magid, Moshko Mordkovich
Mok, Moshko Shmulevich
Malkiman, Abram Volfovich
Mirlis, Itsko Mordekovich
Mok, Ios Shmulevich
Monzon, Gershko
Morgulis, Yankel
Meerovich, Moshko Itskovich
Motis, Avrum
Mishkart, Volko
Margulis, Meer
Malkiman, Nukhim Aronovich
Mishkat, Moshko
Makogon, Ayzik
Marants, Yankel Nutovich

Nudelman, Froim Leybovich
Neyman, Itsko

Oksengorin, Getsl Gersh-Berkovich

Perelmiter, Srul Menashkovich
Polyak, Abram Borukhovich
Pergament, Gershko Elevich
Portnoy, Gershko
Polyak, Ikhil Dakhmanovich
Pinis, Duvid
Pilat, Noekh
Peler, Shmul Benyaminov
Palti, Meer-Leyba Nusinov
Puler, Berko Khaimovich
Pergament, Ios Gershkovich

Royzenblit, Yodko Yankelevich
Rubinshteyn, Shlema
Rukhlis, Ikhel Fishelevich
Roykhman, Khaikel Nakhmanovich
Royzman, Mot Nutovich
Royzman, Duvid Nutovich
Rabinovich, Shulim Shliomovich
Ratner, Borukh Tsudikovich
Rubinshteyn, Ios Shliomovich
Rukhlin, Faytel
Royf, Shabsa Arievich
Rukhlin, Khaim Gershkovich
Risis, Froim
Rizun, Shlema
Rukhlin, Volko
Rubinshteyn, Khaim Abramovich
Rapoport, Shoel Abramovich
Rukhlis, Ios
Ratner, Khaim
Riznik, Yorko
Royzman, Pinkhas Nusevich
Risis, Avrum Khaimovich
Rukhlin, Ios Khaimovich
Rukhtsman, Yankel Yodkovich

Sandler, Gershko
Sandler, Fryko Zeylikovich
Spektor, Gershko
Sendler, Aron
Spektor, Gershko Ovshievich
Sigal, Srul Gilelevich
Sklyarevskiy, Shmul Yankelevich
Suris, Berko Froimovich
Stepenskiy, Isaak Shmulevich
Soshchin, Ios Srulevich

Tabak, Abram
Tabachnik, Itsko
Tovbis, Gilel Moshkovich
Trakhtenberg, Ios Geynikhovich
Toyter, Es Abramovich
Tabachnik, Moshko
Tabak, Ios Zeylikovich
Tabachnik, Abram
Toyter, Kisil-Leyba
Tovbis, Duvid
Tretyak, Shlioma Iosevich
Tretyak, Duvid
Toyter, Khaskel Itskovich
Tovbis, Pinkhas

Umanskiy, Itsko
Uderman, Shaya
Uberfeld, Gelil Ayzikovich

Farber, Meer Duvidovich
Flomenfeld, Pinkas Zelmanovich
Farber, Mordko Iosevich
Fisgeer, Yankel Aronovich
Farber, Ios
Froyman, Naftula Itskovich
Fridman, Duvid
Feldshteyn, Mordko
Filer, Srul
Fishman, Shmul-Duvid
Froyman, Naftula
Fuks, Zelman
Fishman, Shevel
Fasman, Shlioma

Khusid, Moshko Itskovich
Khelemer, Ios Itskovich

Tsukerman, Duvid Srulevich
Tsidulka, Mendel
Tsudichkis, Froim
Tsudechkis, Volko

Chervonenkiy, Ios Leybovich
Cherkasskiy, Ovsy Froimovich

Shuster, Shmul Yankelevich
Shtivelman, Itsko-Zil
Sheydelman, Mot Moshkovich
Shtivelman, Khaim-Srul
Shor, Moshko
Shtivelman, Khaskel Alterovich
Shatkhen, Zelman Shmulevich
Shvartsman, Srul
Shatkhen, Shmul Zelmanovich
Shvartsbarg, Peysakh
Shtromberg, Gershko Ayzikovich
Shtivelman, Shloima Mordkovich
Shtulbaum, Srul Gershkovich
Shteynbarg, Shmul Bentsionovich
Shtivelman, Shlioma
Shtromberg, Mikhel
Shefel, Manus Shlemovich
Shmidt, Moshko Leybovich
Shoykhtman, Itsko-Zelko
Shvidko, Srul
Shoykhit, Boris Ilich
Sheynman, Moyshe-Srul
Sheynker, Srul Moshkovich
Shtilerman, Abram

Shcherber, Iosevich

Elbirt, Meer
Elman, Nuta

Yozefov, Motel
Yozefov, Khaim Volfovich
Yozefov, Volf Mordkovich

Yavits, Leybish Iosevich
Yavits, Ios

Medzhibozh
Aksman, Mordko
Avrumovich, Ios Abramovich

Berger, Ios Abovich
Bershteyn, Volko Itskovich
Beygeldrut, Berko Kelmanovich
Bokser, Itsko Shlemovich
Berman, Moshko Gershov
Brandman, Mordko Sanevich
Beker, Nukhim Gershkovich
Bershteyn, Gerts Shevelevich
Beygeldrut, Yankel Meerovich
Brind, Itsko Ayzikovich
Braverman, Leyba Berkovich
Bas, Avrum Borukhovich
Brind, Moshko Ayzikovich
Bogomilniy, Peysakh
Brodskiy Meer-Iuda
Barats Yankel-Oyzer Leybovich

Vaysman, Leba Itskovich
Veretnik, Toyviy Itskovich
Vaynshteyn, Meer Khaimovich
Vilk, Volko Shmulevich
Veytsman, Avrum
Veytser, Moshko
Vaysman, Ios Alterovich
Vaysfeld, Yankel
Voliovich, Gershko

Gulyan, Gershko Iosevich
Gelfond, Zeylik Nutovich
Golbarg, Pin Shmulevich
Golfond, Mordko Abramovich
Gluzbarg, Shmul Yankelevich
Gershgorin, Ruvin Duvidovich
Grinberg, Moshko Gdalevich
Goldentul, Shmerel Borukhovich
Goldbarg, Moshko Gdalevich
Gomerbarg, Yankel Mendelevich
Garmil, Khaim Yokelevich
Gluzbarg, Zus Shulimovich
Goykhman, Leyzor
Grinberg, Duvid Itskovich
Gluzbarg, Itsko Benyominovich
Grebnya, Gershko Zeylikovich
Goldenberg, Khaim-Gersh Leybovich
Gaba, Ikhel Leybovich
Grinberg, Duvid Volkovich
Gindis, Iovil Zusiovich
Gindes, Yankel Evelevich
Grinberg, Pinkhas Ovshievich
Garshel, Moshko Khaimovich
Gervits, Yankel Meshelimovich
Gervits, Yankel Eliovich
Gervits, Gershko Evelevich
Gleyzer, Bentsion Alterovich
Gindis, Khaim Abramovich
Giller, Shmul Iosevich

The Wexler Family of Letichev, ca. 1911.
Standing from left: Sam Wexler, Libby Wexler, Lazar Wexler, Brana Wexler. Seated: Aaron Wexler, Israel and his wife Rifka. Children seated: two unknown, Fagie Wexler. Courtesy of Randy Davis.

Goldenshteyn, Yankel Gershkovich
Gomirberg, Mendel Yankelevich
Goykhberg, Itsko Gershkovich
Goykhberg, Itsko Berkovich
Gorenshteyn, Volko Duvidovich
Garshel, Berko Khaimovich
Gelfond, Mendelev
Gelfond, Ovshiya-Leyzor
Geshel, Zus Abramovich
Gerbich, Khaim-Gersh
Goldenberg, Khaim Moshkovich
Gelman, Ikhil Itskovich
Gorovich, Nusin
Gleyzer, Froim Gershkovich
Genelmakher, Srul
Gleyzer, Moicey Bentsionovich
Glants, Abrum Rertsovich
Gindis, Moshko Eliovich
Goldshteyn, Itsko Abramovich
Gelman, Shmul Shliomovich
Goykhberg, Gershko

Dantsig, Luzer
Dorbarminiker, Leyka

Drosvit, Shimon Senderovich

Zats, Volko Moshkovich
Zain, Moshko Khaimovich
Zisels, Ariya Usherovich
Zamikhovskiy, Shulim Iosevich
Zisels, Ios Arievich
Zats, Khaim Moshkovich
Zak, Simkha Leybovich
Zeltser, Itsko Leybovich
Zak, Leyzor

Isterman, Moshko

Krut, Pin Iosevich
Kuptsov, Itsko Aronov
Kats, Ios Naftulovich
Kogan, Gershko Duvidovich
Kibrik, Shmul
Krut, Leyba Falikov
Koretskiy, Aron Leyzorovich
Kats, Khaim Abrumov
Kvasho, Ios Volkovich
Kigel, Gdal Abovich

Korchmar, Gershon Duvidovich
Kats, Yankel
Krimer, Zeyda
Kitsis, Fayvel
Kushnir, Shmul
Kleynman, Nukham

Landa, Leyba Elevich
Landa, Froim
Lekhtman, Avrum Yolevich
Levintub, Ikhel Yankelevich
Lev, Yankel
Lisker, Yankel Khaimovich
Leyferman, Pinkhas Azrilevich

Markizon, Srul Leybovich
Markizon, Froim
Mordkovich, Duvid Iosevich
Muskatblit, Aron

Nudelman, Yodko
Nemchinitser, Ayzik

Otenzikht, Isaak Moyseevich
Okon, Shmul Shimonovich

Pendler, Mordko Shlemovich
Pendler, Motel
Poyzner, Mendel Shmulevich
Pirem, Meer Iosifovich
Polyak, Yankel Moshkovich

Ruboym {?}, Ovshiy Shamovich
Ruzin, Abram Volkovich
Royzenblit, Khaim-Shlioma Srulevich
Ruvinshteyn, Froim Ayzikovich
Ratner, Shlioma Tsudikovich
Rozenberg, Leyba Yankelevich
Rozenberg, Yankel Leyzerovich
Ruvinshteyn, Moshko
Rozenberg, Mordko Yankelevich

Soskin, Moshko Usherov
Sidon, Minikha Mendelevich
Stavnitser, Abram Pinkhasovich
Sigal, Simkha
Somin, Khaskel Shmulevich
Sigal, Leyzor Naftulovich
Soshchin, Yankel Gershkovich
Sigal, Yankel
Sigal, Berko Benyomenov
Serebrier, Moshe Pinkhasovich

Trager, Moshko Iosevich
Taksman, Aron Duvidovich
Tarlo, Shulim Mordkovich

Udler, Aron Yankelevich
Ushitskiy, Bentsion Mordkovich

Fiks, Ios Beyrishovich
Fishman, Ios Usherov

Fiks, El
Fatelis, Khaim Vigdorovich

Khinkis, Itsko
Khodorov, Ios Nukhimovich
Khais, Ezra Iosevich
Khasin, Gilel Gershkovich
Khmilnitskiy, Borukh Abramovich
Khodorov, Mordko Leybovich
Khaskin, Volko Gershkovich
Khandin, Leyba
Khodorov, Pin
Khmilnitskiy, Shulim

Tselman, Berko Moshkov
Tsingiser, Berko Leybov
Tsimerman, Itsko Aronovich
Tsukerman, Leybish Srulevich
Tsukerman, Khaim Leyb-Mordkov
Tsipris, Srul Gdalevich
Tsinman, Ovshiy Khaimovich
Tsipelshteyn, Boris
Tselman, Berko Gershkovich
Tsiner, Nukhim Aronovich

Shterengas, Abram Gershkovich
Shaevich, Ovshiy
Shapira, Kelman Iosevich
Shvartsman, Fayvel Iosevich
Shneyfer, Yankel Sheyvakhovich
Shenberg, Berko Iosevich
Sherman, Meer Yodkovich
Shoykhed, Volko Abramovich
Shpaner, Itsko Srulevich
Sherman, Mendel Shneerovich
Shteynbarg, Khaskel Moshkovich
Shterengas, Gersh Srulevich

Entelis, Srul
Eydelman, Kelman Moshkovich

Yosim, Leybish Yankelevich
Yolis, Abram

Yampolskiy, Gersh Moshkovich

Derazhnia
Akselrud, Shlioma Khaimovich
Adisman, Itsko
Akerman, Kopel

Balagur, Meylakh Yankelev
Bodnar, Liber Yankelevich
Bodnar, Zus
Bargraser, Berko Shmulevich
Barenfeld, Moshko Volkovich
Bronshteyn, Mendel Ovshievich
Berdichevskiy, Srul Berkovich
Barenfeld, Erukhim Yankelevich
Broyda, Aron Meerovich
Beltser, Gershko Abramovich
Barinberg, Itsko Peysakhovich

Bereyzon, Srul
Berlyand, Isaak
Bronshteyn, Mendel-Moyshe
Bronshteyn, Itsko Ayzikovich
Broenshtrom, Ios
Berenzon, Mot
Brondzikh, Khaim
Basin, Sendel
Budnik, Khaim
Berik, Volko Manusovich

Vakshtey, Shlema
Veytsblit, Itsko
Vaynshteyn, Froim
Vayner, Shulim
Voldman, Froim
Voloshin, Lipa

Gleyzor, Khaskel Alterovich
Goldshteyn, Meer Idovich
Garber, Srul-Duvid Itskovich
Goldbarg, Yankel Volevich
Gutman, Gdal
Goldshteyn, Shaya Yankelevich
Goldbarg, Srul Itskovich
Groynimus, Shmul
Grach, Ayzik-Gersh
Gurfinkel, Mendel
Goldbarg, Abram
Goldbarg, Berko
Grach, Yodko Fishelevich
Gluzman, Yokel Zusevich
Golovatiy, Moshko Berkovich
Galperin, Gershko Ayzikovich
Grebelskiy, Leyba Shmulevich
Geyfin, Ios Shlemovich
Grinblat, Mikhel
Geyfin, Shlema Srulevich
Goldshteyn, Srul
Grebelskiy, Shmul Iosevich
Gurvits, Meer-Mordko Moshkovich
Geyner, Yankel Gershkovich
Grinband, Shmul
Gershfeld, Moshko
Gelfond, Abramko
Groynimus, Shaya Shmulevich

Dobtsis, Yodko Shmulevich
Dikshteyn, Aron

Zibenberg, Ikhel Srulevich
Zats, Shmul Srulevich
Zaydfeld, Mikhel Ovshievich
Zeltser, Shoil-Leyb Iosevich
Zach, Aba Yodkovich
Zak, Nusin Itskovich
Zeltser, Yankel
Zilberman, Moshko
Zilbermints, Abram

Yosevich, Froim Aronovich

Krayzman, Itsko
Kuris, Berko Leyzorovich
Kleynerman, El Gershkovich
Kupershteyn, Abramko
Kokish, Itsko Yankelevich
Kigis, Kisil, Moshkovich
Kogos, Kisil Moshkovich {same person ?}
Kreymer, Moshko Aronovich
Korikh, Leyzor Mordkovich
Kriger, Leyba
Korikh, Shlema Ikhelevich
Klich, Itsko Duvidovich

Levin, Froim
Lerner, Moshko Leybovich
Leyderman, Abram Shmulevich
Lerner, Shmul
Leyderman, Berko Shmulevich
Leyferman, Yankel Itskovich
Livshits, Ariya
Leybovich, Maiorko
Lerner, Khaim
Lekman, Meer
Litvak, Fridel
Lerner, Itsko
Lerner, Volko Srulevich

Malkiman, Gerts Abramovich
Mandel, Yankel Duvidovich
Makoriya, Srul Volkovich
Mints, Ios Mendelevich
Malamud, Yankel
Matsikh, Gershkovich
Mandel, Gershko Gershkovich
Maydel, Abram
Malamud, Simkha
Malamud, Leyba
Manzon, Volko
Mermon, Azril Nukhimovich
Malkis, Tevol
Mazover, Froim
Malkiman, Berko
Malamud, Moshko Yankelevich

Nus, Ios Duvidovich

Oykerman, Moshko Itskovich

Piser, Leyba
Polyak, Nukhim
Potashnik, Gershko Nusinovich
Peysatiy, Itsko Duvidovich
Peysatiy, Khuna Leybovich
Plotnik, Yankel Gershkovich
Pugach, Volko Nusevich

Ranish, Leyba
Radbel, Peysakh Gelelevich
Royzentul, Shmul Mendelevich
Rubinshteyn, Khaim

Senderovich, Peysakh

Slepoy, Duvid Ruvinovich
Suris, Yodko Ioynovich
Sigal, Mendel Mordkovich
Sigal, Ios

Telpner, Mendel
Telpner, Abram Mendelevich
Teper, Yankel Srulevich
Tartakovskiy, Mordko

Fudish, Moshko Abovich
Faynshteyn, Duvid
Fudish, Berko
Fridman, Mikhel
Frayman, Berko Shlemovich
Frizon, Itsko Naftulovich
Freydzon, Yankel Itskovich
Falikovich, Moshko
Fridman, Shlioma
Fridman, Ios
Frenkel, Srul Shaevich

Khmilnitskiy, Isaak Berkovich

Tsukerman, Borukh Yokelevich

Charnis, Itsko

Shapira, Itsko
Shatsman, Ios Govshievich
Shnayder, Ikhil
Shlyak, Khaim Abramovich
Shamis, Gershko Moshkovich
Shuster, Ios Berkovich
Shamis, Ioyzin
Shlimen, Srul Elevich
Shpitsberg, El Khaimovich
Shenker, Luzer Naftulovich
Shraga, Mikhel Moshkovich
Shteynbarg, Duvid Yankelevich
Shteynberg, Monashe Yankelevich
Shenker, Moshko
Shoykhet, Itsko
Shapira, Meer-Gersh

Yankelman, Shlema

Zinkov
Alshon, Leyba Tsalevich
Ayzenberg, Zus Leybovich
Averbukh, Ayzik Mendelevich
Ayzelman, Gersko Modkovich
Ayzenbarg, Luzer Shlemovich
Abramovich, Alter Itskovich
Akkerman, Berko Itskovich
Ayzenshan, Ikhil Iosevich

Brezman, Iokhiel Shimonov
Berenshteyn, Leyzor Peysakhovich
Bezborodkiy, Iovel Meerovich
Batler, Leyb Moshkovich
Burdman, Zyda Nesanelevich

The Tsukerman Family of Letichev, ca. 1910.
Sorke Tsukerman and her two daughters: (left) Reyzl and (right) Tsilia. Courtesy of Rose Gold.

Barmad, Nafula Khaskelevich
Berenzon, Favish Gershkovich
Bezborodkiy, Zus Meerovich
Blat, San Yankelevich
Bronshteyn, Gershko Moshkovich
Berger, Itsko Abramovich
Berenshteyn, Mordko Peysakhovich
Berger, Ios-Leyzor Yankelevich
Bodner, Duvid Shmerelevich
Bantelman, Meer-Leybish Mordkovich
Bar, Yankel Moshkovich
Bilokoshen, Shmul Azrilevich
Berkovich, Berko Moshkovich
Belfer, Nakhman Abramovich
Berman, Srul Itskovich

Vaynerman, Srul Mendelevich
Volfbeyn, Yankel Shaevich
Vaserman, Abram-Shimon Shakhnovich
Vaserbarg, Yankel Itskovich
Vigdorovich, Itsko Shmulevich
Vaynshteyn, Yankel Leyzorovich

The Silvermans of Letichev, ca. 1910. Seated from left: George Silverman, unknown Silverman. Standing: Anna Silverman, Nina Silverman Runin, Sam Runin. George had a dry goods store in Letichev. Courtesy of Beatrice Silverman Weinreich.

Veksler, Mikhel Ovsheivich
Vaserman, Duvid Shakhnovich
Vugman, Gershko Geynikhovich
Vodovoz, Mordko Iosevich
Vayntrub, Khaim-Idel Ios-Usherovich
Volfbeyn, Abram Iosevich
Volfbeyn, Itsko Iosevich
Vuler, Moshko Mendelevich
Vaserman, Leyba Shakhnovich
Vertsman, Eynikh

Gluzman, Volko Moshkovich
Gelman, Shlema Khaimovich
Grinbarg, Pinkhas Abramovich
Grinbarg, Moshko Abramovich
Giltman, Ios Moshkovich
Gershgorin, Duvid Gershonov
Garber, Ios Yodkovich
Garber, Ioyna Yodkovich
Gamarnik, Moshko Khaimovich
Gamarnik, Mana Khaimovich
Gluzman, Ikhil Iosevich
Goykhman, Moshko Iserovich
Gurtman, Zeylik Shlemovich
Glukh, Eyzel Leyzorovich
Gladshteyn, Leyba Benyominovich
Gorbman, Pinkhas Mogikovich
Gisheynerman, Ikhil Toyvievich
Goykhman, Leybish Iserovich
Grinbarg, Shmelko Srulevich
Grinbarg, Mordko Abramovich
Gershbeyn, Ikhil Yankelevich
Groysman, Ios Leyzorovich
Giltman, Leyzor Moshkovich
Garber, Shmul Senderovich
Garber, Ovshiya Senderovich
Grinbarg, Itsko Leybiovich
Gervits, Leyb Nakhmanovich
Gladshteyn, Itsko Leybovich
Grinbarg, Pinkhas Abramovich

Dukhovshiy, Khaim Mordkovich
Diment, Zus Aronovich
Dukach, Moshko Luzerovich
Duvidovich, Duvid Gershkovich
Duvidovich, Itsko Kopelevich
Duvidovich, Kopel Duvidovich
Dukhterov, Khuna Srul-Avrumovich

Zeylikman Itsko
Zeylikman, Anchel Moshkovich
Zeylikman, Bentsion Anchelevich
Zeerman, Ovshiya Khaimovich
Zeltser, Shaya Itskovich
Zeylikman, Gershko Leyzerovich
Zeylikman, Duvid Zeylikovich
Zekel, Moshko Leyzorovich
Zekel, Leyzor Moshkovich
Zats, Leybish Gertsovich
Zeylikman, Gersh Itskovich
Zola, Abram Volevich
Zola, Yankel Volevich
Zola, Itsko Volevich
Zekherman, Ayzik Moshkovich
Zekherman, Moyshe-Duvid Gershkovich
Zekherman, Ios Moyshe-Duvidovich

Iontefovich, Ayzik Itskovich
Ioshpa, Itko, Munishevich
Ioshpa, Ikhel Itskovich
Itsekzon, Khaim-Shama Moshkovich

Kravets, Itsko Khaimovich
Kreymarman, Ovshiya Meerovich
Kats, Itsko Abramovich
Katsev, Shimon Khaninovich
Krutiy, Ios Abramovich
Krutiy, Ovshiya Abramovich
Kleynman, Yodko Ayzikovich
Kogan, Khaim Aronovich
Kibrik, Shmul Moshkovich
Kilinzon, Moshko Itskovich
Kilinzon, Srul Moshkovich
Kushner, Gashilel Avyerovich
Kogan, Aron Zeli-Monovich
Kreychmer, Mordko Berkovich
Kreychmer, Ioyna Erikhimovich
Kalikhman, Khaim Shmulevich
Kopit, Zeyda Khaimovich
Kupets, Zus Nusinovich

Kalikhman, Glal Abramovich
Kupershmid, Ayzik Shulimovich
Kalikhman, Ioel Abramovich
Kupets, Nusin Mendelevich
Kalika, Zovel Gershkovich
Klekband, Raful Abramovich
Kligerman, Yankel Meerovich
Korenblit, Shmul Gershkovich
Kibrik, Berko Moshkovich
Kibrik, Moshko Berkovich

Lakhterman, Abram Mordko-Leybovich
Lakhterman, Shmul Mordko-Leybovich
Lerner, Yankel Mendelevich
Lisker, Ikhel Mendelevich
Lakhman, Itsek Meer- Yankelevich
Laskin, Itsko Abramovich
Lisiy, Favel Duvidovich

Milshteyn, Mordko Leybovich
Melamud, Kisil Shoyvelevich
Meylakh, Gershko Yankelevich
Milshteyn, Zus Leyviovich
Munblat, Leyva Berkovich
Munblat, Yankel-Ios Leybiovich
Mozinker, Berko Gershkovich
Melamud, Iser Mendelevich
Mozniker, Shmul Khaimovich

Neyter, Benyomin Mordkovich
Nesin, Gershko Berkovich
Nisel, Mendel Ikhelevich
Narman, Aba Leybovich
Nesin, Nuta Volevich
Nesin, Yankel Berkovich
Natenzon, Khaim Alterovich
Natenzon, Itsko Khaimov
Navizhenniy, Yankel Khaskelevich
Nesis, Moshko Nutovich

Orentlikh, Moshko Moshkovich
Orentlikh, Ikhil Moshkovich
Ofrekhter, Srul Vigdovich

Peres, Simkha Moshkovich
Perelmiter, Shimon Aronovich
Petrashiver, Kiva Abramovich
Presel, Ios

Rukhelman, Ikhel Froimovich
Rikels, Leyzor Iosevich
Royzentul, Yankel Moshkovich
Ruvinshteyn, Ikhel Mordkovich
Roytbarg, San Leyb-Tsalevich
Roytbard, Alter Nesanelevich
Royzenblit, Zus Borukhovich
Rafulovich, Zus Motevich
Rapoport, Zeyda Shmulevich
Rapoport, Shoel Shmulevich
Reydman, Gershko Moshkovich
Riznik, Ios Aronovich
Royzentul, El Ruvinovich
Royzenblit, Shmul Volkovich
Royzenblit, Borukh Yankelevich
Raytsis, Ios Itskovich
Royzenfeld, Khaim Sanevich
Raboy, Yankel Motelevich
Rikels, Shulim Iosevich
Raytsis, Kopel Erikhimovich
Refulovich, Reful Motevich
Reynman, Srul Ioynovich
Roytman, El Gersh-Leybovich
Rukhlyak, Mikhel Geynikhovich
Rukhelman, Ikhel Yankelevich

Sadigurskiy, Berko Mordkovich
Segal, Zus Mikhelevich
Sudak, Shimon Alterovich
Sima, Peysya Moshkovich
Soyfer, Volkoy Zusevich
Sigal, Gersh

Tabak, Srul-Leyb Ruvinovich
Tabak, Yodko Ruvinovich
Tepermaynster, Volko Yankelevich
Tepermaynster, Mana Yankelevich
Tepermaynster, Duvid Yankelevich
Tenenboym, Iser Monashkovich
Treyger, Beyrish Srulevich
Treyger, Moshko Birishovich
Tikhman, Ruvin Volevich
Teyman, Itsko Zelmanovich
Tikhman, Srul Volevich
Trakhtenberg, Moshko Iosevich

Uzbarg, Itsko Meerovich
Uchitelniy, Nakhman Gdalevich
Uchitelniy, Gdal Nakhmanovich

Feldman, Ikhel Moshkovich
Ferman, Duvid Ruvinovich
Fuks, Gershko Leyzorovich
Fasman, Itsko Moshkovich
Faershteyn, Duvid Mordkovich
Faershteyn, Aron Mordkovich
Faynman, Simkha Shlemovich
Fliman, Ovshiya-Geshel Aronovich
Froyman, Shmul Azrilevich
Fishman, Duvid Mordkovich
Felman, Ios Srulevich
Faver, Ikhil Alterovich
Feter, Itsek-Aron Abramovich
Faerman, Leybish Moshkovich
Fridman, Ioyna Fridelevich
Frenkel, Aron Ioynovich
Faynman, Moshko Gershkovich
Faerman, Yankel Moshkovich
Feyderman, Khaim Yankelevich
Fuks, Ioyzen Meerovich
Fuks, Froim Leyzorovich
Fuks, El Leyzorovich
Fuks, Yankel Leyzorovich

Khariton, Yankel Borukhovich

Tsinermans, Aron-Zeylik
Tsigan, Shmul Volov
Tsimerman, Abram-Gersh Ezrovich
Tsarinskiy, Moshko Mordkovich

Cherniy, Fishel Mordkovich
Cherniy, Moshko Mordkovich
Chachka, Itsko Shovelevich
Chachka, Zeylik Itskovich

Shvarts, Iovel Moshkovich
Shvarts, Ioyna Itskovich
Shteynbok, Aron Abramovich
Shoykhet, Psakhiya Godevich
Shoykhet, Azril Godevich
Sheynfeld, Gershko Yankelevich
Shraydman, Itsko Leybovich
Shpitsburg, Yankel Zurikhovich
Shvartsburg, Duvid Zeylkovich
Shmukler, Azril Leybovich
Shtamberg, Zelman Mikhelevich
Shinderman, Srul Yankel-Gershkovich
Shinder, Ovshiy Fatelevich
Shtromberg, Itsko Shmulevich
Sheer, Khaim Mordkovich
Shvartsman, Shimon Iosevich
Shlayman, Ikhel Yankelevich
Shor, Duvid Shamshonovich
Shteynbok, Alter Abramovich
Sheerman, Ios Moshkovich
Shteynvas, Tsal Shaevich
Shvartsman, Gershko Iosevich
Sheynman, Nison Aronovich
Sherman, Itsko Benyomenovich
Shapira, Modko Shliomovich
Shtekhman, Khaskel Zeylekovich
Shtekhman, Mikhel Khaskelevich
Shor, Gershko Zelmanovich
Shor, Shmul Shlemovich

Eydelman, Srul Zusevich
Epel, Ios Moshkovich
Eydison, Moshko Mendelevich

Yankelevich, Moshko Ikhelevich

Mikhalpol
Bershteyn, Itsko Susherovich
Bershteyn, Ios Susherovich
Bershteyn, Nis Meerovich
Balber, Volko Shmulevich
Barits, Khaim Iosevich
Bik, Moshko

Valdman, Ios Yankelevich

Grosman, Duvid
Grosman, Ios Gershkovich
Groysshteyn, Yankel Khaimovich
Groysshteyn, Leyba Khaimovich
Graber, Moshko Mordkovich
Graber, Khaim Moshkovich
Gofman, Shmul Iosevich

Gvilman, Shama Berkovich
Groysman, Mot Shmulevich
Goykhman, Itsek Shimonovich
Gruverman, Ikhel Skharievich
Gershman, Moshko Nakhmanovich
Gleyzerman, Moshko Nakhmanovich
Groysman, Gershko Leybovich
Groysshteyn, Abram Khaimovich
Grinbarg, Gershko
Goykhman, Simkha Abramovich
Gorin, Vigdor Gershkovich
Gruverman, Srul Ikhilevich
Genzelman, Itsko Leybovich
Groysshteyn, Moshko Khaimovich
Gofman, Shlema-Gershko Iosevich

Dorfman, Mendel Shlemovich
Drakhler, Mot Gertsovich

Zlochen, Skhariy-Ikhel Gershkovich
Zeytsman, Vigdor Itskovich
Zlochin, Mendel Mordkovich
Zlochen, Srul-Mordko Gershkovich
Zlochen, Ios Gershkovich
Zigelboym, Mordko Lebovich
Zinman, Pinkas
Zilberberg, Ioel Skharievich

Imelshteyn, Gershko Yankelevich
Imelshteyn, Noikh Moshkovich
Imelshteyn, Moshko Yankelevich

Kats, Oyzer Mendelevich
Krimnuz, Yankel-Moyshe Nusinovich
Krimnuz, Abramko Nusinovich
Krayzman, Duvid Volevich
Kartsman, Mot Meerovich
Kertsman, Shulim Umerovich
Kesler, Moshko Ruvinovich
Kizhnerman, Moshko Shlemovich
Kizhnerman, Itsko Shlemovich
Kilerman, Moshko-Leyba Luzerovich
Kigel, Moshko Gdal-Shmulevich
Kotler, Nis Moshkovich
Kertsman, Moshko Shulimovich
Kisilev, Volko Ekisilevich
Koyfman, El Nakhmanovich
Kizhnerman, Shama, Moshkovich
Kirtsman, {illegible} Moshkovich

Lerner, Avner Shlemovich

Milshteyn, Abramko
Meylman, Itsko
Meylman, Ovshiya
Marder, Khaim-Itsek Moshkovich
Malkiman, El Aronovich
Melamid, Pinkas

Naerman, Duvid Moshkovich
Oksman, Gershko Sumerovich
Oksman, Moshko Itskovich
Oksman, Abram Mordkovich
Oksman, Itsko Gershkovich

Portnoy, Moshko Mordkovich
Parnes, Abramko Mikhelevich
Parnes, Ios-Pinkas Mikhelevich

Royzen, Shmul Berkovich
Royzbarg, Bentsion Ioyzekovich
Roytman, Shelma Mordkovich
Rukhelman, Yankel Froimovich
Royzenboym, Gershon Nisanovich
Royzenboym, Shimon Gdalevich
Royzenblat, Shmerel, Berkovich
Royzman, Abramko
Royzman, Ovshiya Abramovich
Royz, Moshko
Rabinshteyn, Shama Abramkovich
Royzbarg, Moshko Gershonovich

Seroker, Itsko Duvid Yankelevich
Soyfer, Berko Yankelevich
Sirota, Shneer Mordkovich
Sirota, Leyba Gershkovich
Sirota, Moshko Shneerovich

Taflya, Itsko Srulevich

Frenkel, Ioyna Moshkovich
Finkel, Pinkas Moshkovich
Fiks, Zelman Geynikovich
Finkel, Ikhel Moshkovich

Tsukerman, Nukhim Abovich
Tsatska, Naftula Volevich
Tsinman, Ios Moshkovich
Tsinman, Itsko Moshkovich

Shatsman, Itsko Fishelevich
Shatsman, Shmul Itskovich
Shvartsburd, Abram Shoylovich
Shvartsburd, Ios Skharievich
Shtipelman, Yankel Moshkovich
Shtipelman, Duvid Yokelevich
Shmukler, Abramko Moshkovich
Shafirovich, Khaim-Itsek Yankelevich
Shamis, Yankel Gershkovich
Shitenman, Abram-Shlioma Mendelevich

Shcherb, Khaim Yankelevich

Eyzelman, Volko Itkovich

Volkovintsy
Arbetman, Zelman Eylakhovich

Brotskiy, Nakhman Leybovich

Goldshteyn, Azril Moshkovich
Gerner, Berko-Moshko Godevich

Koyfman, Duvid Srulevich

Palatnik, Abram Moshkovich

Rubinshteyn, Nakhman Abramovich

Butsnevtsy
Bezumniy, Shulim Khaimovich

Vul, Moshko Gershkovich
Vanberg, Simkha Froimovich

Gruz, Nukhim Ayzikovich
Gruz, Shlema Ayzikovich

Zilbermints, Shimon Pinkasovich

Makogon, Aron Peysakhovich

Shekhtman, Nukhim Shimonovich

Estis, Srul Volkovich

Yaroshevskiy, Srul Itskovich

Beyla Grubshteyn Trakhtenberg, ca. 1915.
Beyla is listed in several business directories as owning a hardware store in Letichev. She is shown holding her daughter Millie. Courtesy of Sonya Breidbart.

1913 business directory[57]

LETICHEV TOWN

Community Rabbi:
Malkiman, Ioil Ar.

Synagogues for Prayer:
In the homes of 7 Jews

Agent:
Berozovskiy, Nikl. Sem. ("Barshavskoe Strakh. o-bo")
Perelmiter, Ios. Srul. ("Strakhov o-bo Yakor") [Anchor Insurance Co.]
Sigal, Duv. Yank. ("2-e Rossiskoe Strakh. o-bo") [Secondary Russian Insurance Co.]

Midwives:
Burshteyn, M.
Dulgier, El. Iv.
Levin, L. I.
Levin, S.
Puler, S. L.

Pharmacy:
Kozlovskaya, Mar. Adam.

Pharmaceutical Products:
Perelmiter, Gersh Duv.
Perelmiter, Ios. Srul.
Sigal, Duvid Yank.
Cherkasskiy, Ovsey Froim.

Groceries:
Bilik, Elka Srul.
Burshteyn, Ios.
Burshteyn, Feyga Aron.
Burshteyn, Yank. Volk.
Veksler, Gilel Khaim.
Koyfman, Modko Khaim.
Kurtsman, Mendel
Kurtsman, Khantsya Shmul.
Malkiman, Nukhim Aron.
Merants, Yank. Nut.
Pendler, Yokheved Duv.
Rabinovich, Shulim Shliom.
Rapoport, Yakhtsya Shmul.
Rukhlis, Volf Gershk.
Satsin, Ios. Srul.
Tovbis, Mindlya
Tretyak, Duvid Ios.
Feldshteyn, Motel Moshk.
Flit, Deya Aizik.
Fuks, Moshko Ios.

Bakeries:
Omer, Ak Makhmed-Ogzi.
Royfman, Mordko Shmul.

Wine / Vineyards:
Tsudichkis, Froim and Volko

Wine Stores: Nos. 541, 542

Wine Shop: Products:
Khranivich, Sigizm. Timof.

Seltser and Mineral Waters:
Ratner, Gindlya Shmul.

Doctors:
Gabay, Grig. Sol.
Polyakovskiy, Aldr. Iv.
Khadorskiy, Vlad. Ev.
Khadorskiy, Evg. Grig.

Dentists:
Levin, G. A.
Kitsis - Finkelshteyn

Veternarian:
Puchkovskiy, Iv. Frants.

Haberdashery Stores:
Barats, Froim Iosev.
Bar, Sura Leyb.
Vaynshtok, Moisey Ios.
Kurtsman, Leyba Ovshiev.
Palti, Gersh Abram.
Soydelman, Shulim Aron.
Shamis, Sura Moshk.

Cigarette paper:
Zonis, Abr.

Hotels:
Galperin, Ides.
Goldentul, Mordko Zeylik.
Grebelskiy, Shmul and Abram
Kupershmidt, Duv. Yank.
Sigal, Duv. Yank.

Hardware:
Burshteyn, Mordko Ios.
Trakhtenberg, Beyla Abram.
Flomenfeld, Khana Pesakh.
Shvarts, El Adam.

Bookstores:
Kigel, Srul Ovshiev.
Yavits, Gitlya Leib.

Leather Goods (tannery):
Volzon, Borukh
Groysman, Yudlya Manus.
Iolis, Zislya Mendel.
Risiss, Abrum Froim.

Sausage Products:
Olshanskaya, Anna Osip.

Credit Offices: 2

Lumberyards:

Sigal, Aizik Duvid.
Yozefov, Ios. Motel.

Manufacturing:
Ayzenberg, Duvid-Ber
Barsuk, Pinkhas
Burshteyn, Mirtsya
Geniov, V. and Krisman, T.
Gertsenshteyn, S. and A.
Gershinovich, Bluma Elev.
Gluz, Yank. Simkh.
Dinets, Zelman Simkh.
Dodek, Khaya
Doner, Rukhlya Khaim.
Zak, Kava Srul.
Kigel, Yudlya Shmul.
Kodner, Rivka
Kreyman, Ester
Leybzon, Sura Zelm.
Mandel, Baba Naftul.
Margulis, Maryam
Kigel, Yudlya Shmul.
Kodner, Rivka
Kreyman, Ester
Leybzon, Srul Zelm.
Mandel, Baba Naftul.
Margulis, Maryam
Mendelevich, Benyamin
Pinilis, Leya Abram.
Pishkiman, Makhlya Abram.
Rozenblit, Ita Menash.
Ronishnik, Ayzik Alter.
Risis, Gershko Froim.
Ulman, Froim Ikkil.
Finkelshteyn, Shimshon Srul.
Frayman, Naftula Itsk.
Tsubichkis, Dvoyra Gershk.
Yozefov, Khaim Volf.

Honey Factory:
Burshteyn, Moshko - arend.
Bik, Ar. - income 1260 rubles per year

Millers:
Kurtsman, Ester and Vaytman, Duv. (steam mill)
Morkov, Irakliy Dm. (rents water mill)

Flour:
Vaynshtok, Ios. Shmul.
Gitelman, Moshko Shmul.
Kigel, Genya Gershk.
Rokhtsiman, Yank. Yudk.

Meat Products:
Meshilekhis, Pesya Benyom.

Editor - Periodical:
Berzon, I.

Beer and Honey Factories:
Bilik, Shlema - Letichev beer factor leased from Asnis, Froim, productivity 17,834 rubles per year, 7 workers.

Stationary Products:
Kigel, Ginda Iosev.
Cherkasskiy, Ovsiy Froim.
Yavits, Brana Leyb.

Clothes Finishers:
Kersburd, Izr. and Pergament, B.
Perelmiter, Feyga Srul.

Client's Attorneys:
Perelmiter, Nus. Ber.
Puler, Bor. Khaim.
Pishinskiy, Valer. Iv.

Crockery:
Grinberg, Sura

A Jewish Family from Letichev, ca. 1910.
Courtesy of Rose Gold.

Kamrash, Khaya-Feyga
Kertsman, Ester
Pilat, Khana Shimov.
Fuks, Rivka Mordk.

Sugar Factory: in Shedrova

Glass Works / Glaziers:
Krupnik, Leyzor Shmul.

Tobacco:

Malkiman, Aron Alter. - 12,000 rubles per year, 20 workers

Telephone:
Concessionaire, engineer, electrician: Fazli, I. V.

Typographists:
Perelmiter, Gershon. Duv.
Cherkasskiy, Ovshiya Froim.

Tractors:
Kozakerich, Platon Iv.
Korchakovskiy, Frants Voits.
Verzhbitskiy, K.
Rozenberg.

Bread Grain:
Rukhlin, Gershko Froim.
Rukhlin, Ios Froim.

Watch:
Likhttser, Khayka Itsk.

Ladies Hats:
Palti, Gersh Abram.

Export Agents:
Filtershteyn, Khaim Moshk.

Fairs:
June 20, October 10, and December 6.

Bazaar:
On Sundays and Thursdays every 2 weeks.

BARANOVKA, village in Zinkovskaya volost; population 570. 60 versts from Letichev, 38 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 8 versts from post office and medical care in Zinkov.

Water Mill:
Veruman, Mordko Gersh.
God, Perem

BAKHMATOVTSY, village in Bakhmatovetskaya volost; population 1298. 32 versts from Letichev, 16 versts from train station and medical care in Bagdanovtsy, 18 versts from post office in Medzhibozh.

Bank:
Selskiy

Wine Store No. 478

Lumber Merchants:
Bilenkiy, Luk.
Korol, Emel.
Korol, Zakh.
Rozenberg, Leybish
Yagronyok, Pav.

BOZHIKOVTSY, village in Zhenishkovetskaya volost; population 1340. 38 versts from Letichev, 20 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 5 versts from post office and medical care in Zheniskkovtsy.

Wine Store No. 228

BUTSNEVA, village in Derazhnyaskaya volost; population 695. 26 versts from Letichev, 4 versts from train station, post office and medical care in Derazhnia.

Steam Mill:
Kozminskiy, Vikt. Vlad.
Butsnevskaya Millers

BUTSNEVTSY, town in Voytovetskaya volost; population 1600. 14 versts from Letichev post office and medical care, 16 versts from train station in Komarovtsy.

Jewish Study House: 1

Wine Store No. 548

Tractor:
Chernetskiy, Illar. Pavl.

Bazaar:
On Sundays every two weeks

VERBKA-MUROVANNAYA, village in Zinkovskaya volost; population 1745. 56 versts from Letichev, 34 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 10 versts from post office and medical care in Zinkov.

Water Mill:
Zeylikman, Moshko-Bents. A.

Wine Store No. 513

Phosphate Deposits:
Zeylikman, Moshko-Bents. A.

VOLKOVINTSY, town in Voytovetskaya volost; population 4065. 22 versts from Letichev, 1 verst from train station in Komarovtsy, post office and medical care in the town.

Jewish Study Houses: 3

Pharmacy:
Goldfarb, Mendel Beyrish
Radzevskiy, Germ. Karl.

Grocery:
Antonov, Mikh. Yak.
Vinokur, Beyla
Dinets, Moshko
Kazdoy, Rivka Bents.
Kurtsman, Peysakh Gersh.
Kurtsman, Sura Moshk.
Latsshun, Gitlya
Magits, Duv. Akivov.
Magits, Pesya Shoel.
Shvarts, Ovshiy Nukh.

Wine Store No. 547

Haberdashery:
Shikhman, Abr. Moshk.

Hardware:
Ronikberg, Itsko Duv.

Kerosene:
Dolgov, Iontel Srul.

Bookstore:
Gladshteyn, L. Sh.

Lumberyard:
Fishbeyn, Nuta Fishel.

Manufacturing:
Gervits, Freyda Itsk.
Livshits, D. M.
Livshits, Leyzer Shoel.
Livshits, Mordko Shoel.
Roytman, Mendel

Newspaper Editor:
Gladshteyn, L. Sh.

Tractor:
Krechko, Ilya Iv.

Bread Grain:
Nimelshteyn, Baba
Shefel, El Gdal.
Yokhtman, Srul

GOLOVCHINTSY, village in Medzhibozhskaya volost; population 357. 13 versts from Letichev, 22 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 5 versts from post office and medical care in Medzhibozh.

DERAZHNIA, town in Derazhnyaskaya volost; population 4499. 20 versts from Letichev, 2 verst from train station in Derazhnia, post office and medical care in the town.

Community Rabbi:
Tentserman, Gersh Leyzer.

Jewish Study Houses: 6

Jewish Schools: 2

Government Hospital:
Dr. Kashinsky, Vladm. Dan.

Factory Doctor:
Dr. Valeskiy, Bol. -Leonard Iosif.

Dentists:
Leshinskiy, N. O.
Kharif-Pisternak, E. L.

Veternarian:
Mukhin, Matv. Evdokim.

Pharmacy:
Barinberg, Itsko, Peysakh.
Barinberg, Malka Gerts.
Bronshteyn, Mendel Ovshiev.
Vaysleyb, Azril Abr.

Pharmaceutical Supplies:
Lekman, Khasya Moshk.
Rozenboym, Simkha

Grocery:
Berenzon, Srul Itsk.
Vaynshteyn, Dvoyra
Veytsblit, Malka Khaim.
Galay, Tsesya Meshulim.
Gelman, Rivka Pinkhas.
Goldfayn, Ios. Sendel.
Goldshteyn, Leyb Shaev.
Goldshteyn, Shaya Yank.
Gofshteyn, Udlya Zeyd.
Zaionchik, Abr. Mendel.
Krut, Itsko Pinkhas.
Leyderman, Basya Usher.
Lerner, Volko Srul.
Mnatsakanova, Anna Serg.
Mershon, Nukh. Azril.
Polenzer, Pesya Shaev.
Pundik, Shmul Ar. Ios.
Rabinovich, Volko Mosk.
Radbil, Ita Yank.
Frayman, Edya Mordk.
Khersonskaya, Ester Ovshiev.
Tsidulka, Malka Moshk.
Shpringel, Rukhlya Shliom.
Eykerman, Etlya Moshk.

Bakery:
Goyfman, Rakhil
Stashinkova Evg. Iv.

Paper:
Shapiro, Meer-Gersh

Buffet/Refreshments:
Zaliskaya, Emiliya

Vineyard:
Goldenberg, Malka Moshk.

Wine Stores Nos. 492, 1346

Haberdashery:
Ashkinazi, Tuba Itsk.
Gen, N.
Gen, Khaytsya
Zak, Brana Itsk.
Kogan, Borukh
Leys, Zeylik Itk.
Radbil, Sura-Brana
Roytenburd, Ar. Duv.

Hotel:
Shkaraputenko, Safr. Savel.

Hardware:
Galperin, Moshko
Rozenboym, Moshko Simkh.
Rozenboym, Khaim Simkh.

Kerosene:
Gringolts, Khaim Shimon.

Dora Singer and Chana Silver of Letichev, 1914.
Courtesy of Eddie Miller.

Maryanchik, Meer Ioyn.

Books, Writing Papers:
Gen, H.

Leathergoods:
Groynimus, Shay.
Pleser, Khaya Ios.

Credit Establishments: 2

Lumber Merchants:
Faynshteyn, Mikhel
Shteynberg, G. L.

Lumberyard:
Galay, Duv. Leyb.
Dikshteyn, Ar. Khaim.
Fridman, Ios Abr.

Manufacturing:
Berik, Volko Manus.
Bershteyn, Sheybakh Volf.
Bronshteyn, Mendel Ovshiev.
Daen, Ikhil Volk.
Zeltser, Sheyva
Kibrik, Gitlya Mordk.
Mazover, Ilish
Mazover, Moshko Shevel.
Peysatiy, Zus Zus.
Pugach, Volko Nusim.
Rubin, Srul-Ar.
Tepf, Khaya Abr.
Tolchinskaya, Sosya Alter
Finger, Moshko Leyb.
Fukelman, Sura Ar.
Shatsman, Gershko Alter.
Shoymerman, Menya Pinkhas.
Shoykhet, Itsko Khaim.
Shpitsberg, Khaim Elev.
Shuper, Baba Shabs.

Furniture:
Goldfayn, Ios. Shmul.

Brewer:
Anshin, Mordko Moshk.

Miller:
Ratsiborovskiy, V. F. (arendator)
Shusterman, I. A.

Soap:
Bronfman, Munya Khaim.
Gurvits, Tsivya
Klig, Itsko Duv.

Clothing Finisher:
Fudim, Borukh Moshk.

Judge/Notary:
Vaker, Vldm. Vik.

Private Judge/Notary:
Gershgorin, Sam. Yakovl.
Chernousov, Fed. Petr.

Crockery:
Freynkel, Srul Shaev.

Sugar:
Rabinshteyn, Khaim Volev.

Tractor:
Varanitsa, Vas.

Transport:
Katsi, Ios and Motel
Rozenblit, Ruvin Ios.

Bread Grain:
Geyfen, Shlema Srul.
Peysatiy, Khuna Leyb.

Bazaar:

On Thursdays every 2 weeks

ZHENISHKOVTSY, village in Zhenishkovtskaya volost; population 2623. 45 versts from Letichev, 25 versts from train station in Derazhnia, post office and medical care in the village.

Wine Store No. 227

Grocery:
Meerovich, Borukh
Meerovich, Leyba
Mestman, Dvosya Shmul.
Payok, Dan. Safr.
Podgorodetskiy, Ant. Yak.

ZINKOV, town in Zinkovskaya volost; population 7054. 55 versts from Letichev, 35 versts from train station in Derazhnia, post office and medical care in the town.

Jewish Study Houses: 7

Government Hospital:
Dr. Chaykovskiy, Lyodv.-Pet. Tit.

Factory Doctor:
Dr. Gorbatovskiy, Ign. Aldr.

Pharmacy:
Vitis, Beyla Gerts.
Royzen, Feyga Meer.
Erentlikh, Gersh. Ikhil.

Pharmaceutical Supplies:
Roytburd, Ita Ovshiev.
Trakhtenberg, Moshko Ios.

Grocery:
Bar, Yank. Moshk.
Bezborodkaya, Rakhil Iovel.
Vertsman, Mordko Gersh.
Gelman, Itsko Shmul.
Gorenshteyn, Shmul Mordk.
Zaltsman, Velya Ios.
Kogan, Ezra Ar.
Kreymerman, Gitlya
Kurtsman, Leya Moshk.
Lakhterman, Rukhlya Abr.
Lisiy, Abr. Duv.
Malamud, Tsipoyra Moshk.
Medzhibozhskaya, Beyla Pinkhas.
Nesis, Mordko Vigdor.
Reydman, Mot Gersh.
Rozenblit, Ios Shaev.
Faerman, Moshko Iovel.
Felman, Itsko Iosev.
Shafran, Enya Itsk.
Shvarts, Feyga
Shor, Khaim Grig.
Shraybman, Rukhlya

Vinyard:
Zeylikman, Gersh Leyzer.
Rapoport, Tsivya Avner.
Sadikov, Itsko Ios.
Sadikova, Sura Leyz.
Fukelman, Ikhel Shlem.
Shor, Shlema Mendel.

Wine Stores Nos. 508, 510

Haberdashery:
Vuler, Khaim Moshk.
Kuzminer, Rukhlya Iovel.
Segal, Gersh Zusev.

Hotel:
Shportilo, El. Lukiyan.

Hardware:
Grinman, Maryam Leyb.
Zeerman, Ovshiy Khaim.
Ioshpa, Beyla

Leather Goods:
Groysman, Ios. Leyz.
Shor, Duv. Shlem.

Credit Establishments: 2

Lumber Merchants:
Bar, Yank.
Bezborodko, Nus.
Gertsenshteyn, Malya
Divishek, Vatsl.
Zeylikman, Duv.
Katsenelenboygen, Ya.

Lumberyard:
Kibrik, Moshko Gersh.
Rutberg, Bents. Leyzer.

Manufacturing:
Blifeld, Rukhlya Berk.
Vertsman, Eynis Mordk.
Volfbeyn, Itsko Ios.
Vuler, Moshko
Galperin, Malka Shulim.
Dekhtyarev, Khuna Abr.
Zeylikman, Leyba Ios.
Krotman, Enya Nukh.
Munblat, Tsil Leyb.
Rozenblit, Duv.
Segal, Baba Khunov.
Teyman, Itsko Zelman.
Khusid, Moshko Borukh.
Shapiro, Leya
Shvarts, Berko Gersh.
Shor, Moshko Shlem.
Shor, Shmul Shliomov.
Shpitsberg, Ayzik Yank.
Eydelshteyn, Ester

Watermill:
Kurtsman, Borukh Alter.
Faerman, Khana Iovel.

Soap:
Bilokamen, Moshko Shmul.
Milshteyn, Nuta Mordk.

Beer/Brewery:
Divishek, Vatsl.

Writing papers:
Gladshteyn, Volf Leyb.

Inn:
Mandel, Liber Ios.

Tractor:
Divishek, Vatsl. Iv.
Markovskiy, K. G.

Bread Grains:
Nesis, Khuna Yank.
Presel, Ios.

Bazaar:
On Tuesdays every 2 weeks

ZGAROK village in Voytovetskaya volost; population 695. 18 versts from Letichev, 5 versts from train station in Komarovtsy, 5 versts from post office and medical care in Volkovintsy.

Wine Store No. 162:
Kozminskiy, S. K.

KORZHOVTSY, village in Mikhalpolskaya volost; population 1727. 35 versts from Letichev, 10 versts from train station, post office and medical care in Derazhnia.

KRUTOBOROD, village in Zinkovskaya volost; population 577. 56 versts from Letichev, 36 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 6 versts from post office and medical care in Zinkov.

Water mill, phosphates:
Meller, Zurikh Gersh

Phosphate deposits:
Galperin, Ios. Avr.
Drozhnitsa, Iv. Kasper.

MARKOVTSY, village in Susloveskaya volost; population 480. 12 versts from Letichev, 25 versts from train station id Derazhnia, 10 versts from post office and medical care in Medzhibozh.

Wine Store No. 59:
Liders-Veymarn, Fed. Aldr.

MEDZHIBOZH, town in Medzhibozhskaya volost; population 8125. 16 versts from Letichev, 20 versts from train station in Derazhnia, post office and medical care in the town.

Community Rabbi:
Shvartsman, Ios. Leib.

Jewish Study Houses: 9

Government Hospital:
Dr. Fedorova, Klavdiya Nikl.
Fishman, Mois. Mikh.

Pharmacy:
Krizhanovskaya, Oekla Adolf.

Pharmaceutical supplies:
Gervits, Yank. Eliev.
Kitsis, Ios. Fayvel.
Pochtar, Malka Ios.

Grocery:
Bogomilniy, Peysakh Shmerel.
Galbershtut, Khaim Gersh.
Gekht, Gersh M.
Dantsig, Luzer Shimshon.
Diamant, Malka Gersh.
Ketser, Yodko Gersh.
Landa, Leyb Eliov.
Milis, Itsko Mordk.
Milis, Rukhlya Berk.
Polyak, Golda Mendel.
Royzboym, Khana Khunev.
Rubinshteyn, Alter Mend.
Sigal, Menya Gersh.
Fishman, Elya and Ios.
Khodorovi, Leyba and Ios.
Tsukerman, Khaim Mordk.
Shekhtman, Khaya Abr.
Yolis, Leyb Gersh.
Yolis, Paya Zelman

Bakery:
Gleyzer, Moshko Bents.
Sigal, Shlema Simkh.

Vinyard:
Zamikhovskiy, Shulim Ios.
Khodorov, Leyba Mordk.

Wine Stores Nos. 515, 1356

Doctors:
Kerm, Germ. Georg.
Kokh, Stan. Iv.
Kudrzhinskiy, Mikh. Andr.

Haberdashery:
Vaserman, Khana Abr.
Galperin, Khana Ios.
Goldbarg, Leyba Moshk.
Krayzer, Shendlaya Berk.
Margulis, Khana Nukh.
Polishuk, Beyla Abr.
Rozenberg, Srul Yank.
Slavutskaya, Enya Leyb.
Tsukerman, Khaim Mordk.

Hotel:
Goykhberg, Gersh.

Lisso, Rukhlya Itsk.
Shteynberg, Ovshiy Moshk.

Tar:
Udler, Basya Ar.-Duv.

Metalworks:
Boker, Elya Berk.
Goykhberg, Khana Abr.
Zeltser, Yank. Leyb.
Kogan, Dvoyra Duv.
Serebrier, Moshko Pinkhas.
Khmilnitskaya, Rivka Yank.
Khmilnitskaya, Khaytsya

Lime:
Kuptsov, Itsko Ar.

Bookstore:
Somikh, Kh.
Fuks, M.

Leathergoods:
Bokserboym, M. K.
Vayntrub, Zakhar Pinkhas.
Gelman, Gersh Itsk.
Grinberg, Duv. Volk.
Gurfinkel, Livsha Ikhil.
Irilevich, Shlema Itsk.
Platker, Feyga Srul
Segal, Berko Beniam.

Sausage:
Marks, Fr. Ant.
Marushak, Iv. Luk.

Credit Institution: 1

Lumber merchants:
Galperin, Eykel
Entelis, Srul
Lev, Yank.
Sonich, Shulim
Khodorov, Ios.
Khodorov, Leyba
Shvartsman, Fayvel
Sherman, Yodko
Shpitaler, Borukh

Lumberyards:
Krut, Berko Pinkhas.
Litvak, Leya Simkh.
Serebrier, Frima Nukh.
Udler, Mordko Ar.-Duv.

Manufacturing:
Bleter, Tuba Ikhil.
Bronshteyn, Ester Kelman.
Gaba, Ikhel Leyb.
Grinfeld, Froim Abr.
Zak, Shendlya Pinkhas.
Kanun, Baba Srul.
Kleynman, Ginda Nukhim.
Klurfeld, Reyzya Srul.
Land, Pesya Khaim.
Latman, Leyzer Abr.
Moreynis, Dvoyra Itsk.
Mosenkis, Rukhlya Benyam.
Muskatblit, Sura Alter.
Rozenberg, Yank. Leyzer.
Serebrier, Sheyva Berk.
Ulinetskiy, Bents. Mordk.
Khalemer, Pinkhas Shamov.
Khaskelberg, Khaya Mikhel.
Shmukler, Dvoyra Mendel.
Yolis, Abr. Gersh.

Furniture:
Gekht, Gersh M.
Tsukerman, Khaim Mordk.

Watermill:
Gervits, Charna and Pechuk, Gitlya Shulim

Soap:
Dekhtyar, Beyla Khaim.
Zilberman, Rukhlya Nukh.
Kats, Khaim Ios.
Moreynis, Shmul Duv.
Rabinovich, Sosya Berk.
Khmilnitskiy, Simkha Iosev.

Oakum:
Grinberg, Gitlya Berk.

Brewery:
Shterntas, Gersh God.

Beer:
Shvartsman, Leybi

Writing papers:
Brind, Moshko Ayzik.
Somin, Rivka Ios.
Fuks, Malka Shimon.

Clothing finishers:
Grinbarg, Moshko Itsk.

Judge/notary:
Mikhalskiy, Ios. Ios.

Crockery:
Mordkovich, Duv. Ios.

Fish:
Derevicher, Nakhm. Zeylik.
Zisels, Sheyva Ioynov.

Printer:
Brind, M. A.

Tractor:
Sitnichenko, Leont. Yakov.

Bread grain:
Gelfand, Mordko Abr.
Sherman, Fishel Peysakh.

Shpituler, Rivka Borukh.
Shraybman, Khaim Pinkhas.

Watches:
Kreymer, Zeyda
Yanivker, Dina Itsk.

Hats:
Shaevich, Ovshiy Borukh.

Jeweler:
Grinberg, Itsko Mendel.

Village Fairs: 3

Bazaar:
On Tuesdays every 2 weeks.

MIKHALPOL, town in Mikhalpolskaya volost; population 2430. 42 versts from Letichev, 22 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 15 versts from medical care in Zinkov, post office within the town.

Community Rabbi:
Trakhtenberg, Moshko Ios.

Jewish Study Houses: 2

Doctor:
Yakubovskiy, Martseliy Sever.

Pharmacy:
Zhurbinskiy, Ikhil-Itsk. Duv.

Pharmaceutical supplies:
Kluber, Sheyva Izrail.

Grocery:
Barats, Sura Abr.
Lerner, A. G.

Vinyard:
Roytman, Shlema Mordk.

Wine Store No. 1348

Derazhnia Tradesmen Artel, Feb. 18, 1936.
1. Ezra Zeltser, 2. Isak Goldshteyn, 3. Moshe Gubernik, 4. Moshe Gak, 5. Kos Tsimmerman, 6. Duvid Shtik, 7. Zelig Bierman, 8. Aizik Kushnir, 9. Nukhum Yankelevich, 10. Avrum Polyak, 11. Yosel Zats, 12. Manya Sigelman, 13. Srul Grach, 14. Srul Sigelman, 15. Faitel Litenetsky, 16. Khana Zats, 17. Nekha Kreimer, 18. Luza Zats, 19. Manya Zats, 20. Leyzer Brenner, 21. Leva Sigelman, 22. Fanya Nudel, 23. Enya Shtik. Courtesy of Simyon and Eta Bik.

Hotel:
Divishek, Vatsl. Iv.

Manufacturing:
Gendzelman, Zakh Abr.
Zilberberg, Feyga Z.
Zilberberg, Enya Menash.
Langman, Shlema Ios.
Malkiman, El Ar.
Royzen, Shmul Berk.
Rubinshteyn, Shama.
Rubinshteyn, Shlema Abr.
Soroker, Itsko Yank.
Frenkel, Duv. Ioyn.

Bazaar:
On Tuesdays every 2 weeks.

MONASTIREK, village in Mikhalpolskaya volosk; population 746. 40 versts from Letichev, 8 versts from train station and medical care in Bogdanovtsy, 18 versts from post office in Proskurov.

Wine Store No. 507

NETECHINTSY-NOVIE, village in Zhenishkovetskaya volost; population 1070. 45 versts from Letichev, 25 versts from train station in Derazhnia, 3 versts from post office and medical care in Zhenishkovtsy .

Wine Store No. 233

SNITKOV, village in Voytovetskaya volost; population 1564. 10 versts from Letichev, 10 versts from train station, medical care and post office in Derazhnia.

Jewish Study House: 1

Wine Store No. 546

SUSLOVTSY, village in Suslovetskaya volost; population 1370. 6 versts from medical care and post office in Letichev, 26 versts from train station in Derazhnia.

Wine Store No. 535

Town Bank

SHCHEDROVA, village in Suslovetskaya volost; population 850. 4 versts from post office and medical care in Letichev, 24 versts from train station in Derazhnia.

Water Mill:
Diambekova, Eliz. Nikl.

Sugar Factory

YANKOVTSY, village in Mikhalpolskaya volost; population 596. 40 versts from Letichev, 15 versts from train station, post office and medical care in Derazhnia.

Priest:
Bershkovskiy, Ign.

Government Doctor:
Morozaba, Nat. Vldm.

* * * * *

Jewish Millers in Letichev District, 1904-1911

In the *Calendar for Millers*, St. Petersburg, 1904:

Shlema Moshkovich Vainshtok (Letichev)
Nusim Mendelevich (Zinkov)
Beniumen Landa and Volf Yuzefov (Letichev) were listed as the heirs of Moshka Pechuk and Charna Gervitsova (Medzhibozh)

From a list of flour mills, 1908:

Volf Motelevich Yuzefov, Iosia Motelevich Yuzefov (village of Zavolsk)
Lina Gringelts and Leyba Grebelsky (Derazhnia)

In the journal "Russian Miller" (issue 12, p. 608) 1911:

Listing of the mill of S.R. Kurtsman of Letichev. A new engine from the Warsaw engine factory "Perkun" was to be installed.

* * * * *

Jewish Butchers in Medzhibozh[58]

1) Shlomo Shokhet, died about 1897. He had two sons, also butchers, Avraham and Shmuel.

2) Avraham Shokhet, born about 1860, the son of Shlomo Shokhet.

3) Shmuel Shokhet, who died in 1908, the son of Shlomo Shokhet.

4) Another Avraham Shokhet, younger than Shlomo Shochet's son Avraham, born in the 1920s.

5) Shulem Shokhet.

6) Khaikel Shokhet, died about 1918.

7) Yitskhak Shokhet, son of Khaikel Shokhet.

Chapter Notes:

1. See Chapter 1, "Early History".

2. Horn, Mauryey, 1993, "The Chronology and Distribution of Jewish Craft Guilds in Old Poland, 1613-1795," in Antony Polonsky, editor, *The Jews in Old Poland*: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., London, p. 249-266; see also, Baron, Salo Witmayer, 1976, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, Volume XVI: Poland-Lithuania 1500-1650*: Columbia University Press, p. 262.

3. Balinski, Michal, 1886, *Tymoteusza Lipinski*: Starozynta Polska, volume 2, Warsaw, p. 1000-1002.

4. Baron, Salo Witmayer, 1976, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, Volume XVI: Poland-Lithuania 1500-1650*: Columbia University Press, p. 272.

5. Baron, Salo, and Kahan, Arcadius, 1976, *Economic History of the Jews*: Schocken Books, New York, p.126.

6. Rosman, M.J., 1990, *The Lords' Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the 18th Century*: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 117.

7. Levine, Hillel, 1991, *Economic Origins of AntiSemitism: Poland and Its Jews in the Early Modern Period*: Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 141.

8. See Opalski, Magdelena, 1986, *The Jewish Tavern-Keeper and his Tavern in Nineteenth-Century Polish Literature*: The Zalman Shazar Center, Jerusalem.

9. See Chapter 9, "The Jewish Farmers of Podolia."

10. Malkin, Carole, 1981, *The Journeys of David Toback*: Schocken Books, New York, p. 59-60.

11. Rubinow, Isaac M., 1975, *Economic Condition of the Jews of Russia*: Arno Press, New York, p. 526.

12. Ibid, p. 527.

13. See chapter 4, "Health and Welfare".

14. Quoted in Roger Weiss, editor, Arcadius Kahan, Essays in Jewish Social and Economic History, University of Chicago Press, 1986, p. 59.

15. Walford, Cornelius, 1883, *Fairs: Past and Present*: London, p. 284.

16. Ibid.

17. Guldman, V., 1889, *Podolskaya Gubernia*: Kamenets-Podolsky, p. 184-185.

18. Beauvois, Daniel, 1991, *The Noble, The Serf, and the Revizor*: Harwood Academic Publishers, London, p. 157-158. For additional information and photos, see Stefan Kieniewicz, "Jews in Jarmolince", in *Polin*, Basil Blackwell for the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, Oxford, Volume 4, 1991, p. 310-312.

19. Guldman, V., 1889, *Podolskaya Gubernia*: Kamenets-Podolski, p. 184-188.

20. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives*: Excelsior, Boston, p. 38-42.

21. Ibid, p. 21.

22. Family stories based on various interviews within the Zimmerman family by Pauline Zimmerman Chapin.

23. Interview with Asher Fishman, 1996.

24. Rieber, Alfred J., 1982, *Merchants and Entrepeneurs in Imperial Russia*: University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, p. 58.

25. Ibid, p. 57.

26. Veitzblit, I., 1929, *Derazhnia-sovremennoe evreiskoe mestechko*: Moscow-Leningrad. Researched and translated by Elena Tsvetkova.

27. Rosman, M.J., 1990, *The Lords' Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the 18th Century*: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 115.

28. Herlihy, Patricia, 1986, *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914*: Harvard University Press, p. 64-65, 69.

29. Personal communication, Stephen Silverman and Vladimir Goykher, 1994.

30. Veitzblit, I., 1929, *Derazhnia-sovremennoe evreiskoe mestechko*: Moscow-Leningrad. Researched and translated by Elena Tsvetkova.

31. Pesotta, Rose, 1958, *Days of Our Lives*: Excelsior, Boston, p. 53-55.

32. *Istoria Mist i Sil Ukrainskoi RSR: Podillya*: Institut Istorit Akademit Nauk URSR, Kiev, 1971, p. 217.

33. See chapter 12,"Pogroms".

34. Westwood, J.N., 1964, *A History of Russian Railways*: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, p. 103.

35. Ibid, p. 96.

36. Veitzblit, I., 1929, *Derazhnia-sovremennoe evreiskoe mestechko*: Moscow-Leningrad. Researched and translated by Elena Tsvetkova.

37. Ibid.

38. *HaMelits*, June 22/July 4, 1887, issue 136, p. 3-4. Translated by J. Michoel Ronn.

39. Count Iliarion Vorontsov-Dashkov was Chief of His Majesty's security forces, including the palace guards, the secret police, and the Sacred Guard.

40, Westwood, J.N., 1964, *A History of Russian Railways*: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, p. 97.

41. Sholom Aleichem, 1948, *Tevye's Daughters*: translated by Frances Butwin, Crown Publ., NY, 1948. Reprinted by permission of the Sholom Aleichem Family Partnership.

42. Ahasheurus was the king of Persia and friend to the Jews, in the stories that are the basis for the Jewish holiday of Purim.

43. Probably meaning Yiddish, which is a Germanic language.

44. Full translation of BC(*Biblioteka Czartoryski*) 4114, the 1758 Miedzyboz list of Jewish taxpayers. The total list is 321 names, which is comprised of: entries #1-247, Medzhibozh; and #248-321, the settlement known as "Slobod." This settlement is undocumented. It was probably absorbed into Trebukhovtsy. In fact, in the margin of #301-308, there is a marking "Trebukhovtsy". Translated by Ben Weinstock.

45. Marczynski, X., 1820, *Statystyka Gubernii Podolskiey*, Vilna, v. 1.

46. RSHA, St. Petersburg, fond 1187, inv.8, file 488, p. 5, map of Letichev Town. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

47. Researched by Anatoliy Ilyich Chayesh, translated from Russian by David Chapin.

48. RSHA, St. Petersburg, fond 18. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova, Gita Lipson, and Natalia Pavlova.

49. RSHA, fond 386, inventory 1, file 263: Interim Administrative Committee on the Arangement of Southern Settlements, pages 6-23. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

50. Researched by Anatoli I. Chayesh, 1995.

51. *Vsiia Rossia*, 1895. Translated by David Chapin and Ben Weinstock.

52. *Vsiia Rossia*, 1903. Translated by Ben Weinstock and David Chapin.

53. Addition to the #81 Podolski Gubernski Vedomosty, October 12, 1905, Researched by Anatoli Ilyich Chayesh. Translated from Russian by David Chapin and Ben Weinstock.

54. Addition to the #61 *Podolski Gubernski Vedomosty*, August 4, 1912, List of Jews who have the right to participate in the poll for the state Duma Voters of Letichev *Uezd*, Podolia *Guberniya*, Researched by Anatoli Ilyich Chayesh, Translated from Russian by Ben Weinstock and David Chapin.

55. Anatoliy I. Chayesh, personal correspondence, 1995.

56. *Vsiia Rossia*, 1913. Translated by Ben Weinstock.

57. Russian Business Directory for the Southern Territories 1914, *Ves Yugo Zapadniy Krai*, Translated by Ben Weinstock and Vladimir Goykher.

58. Rabbi Moishe Bick's recollections from the early 1920s, recorded by Michael Gerver. Note: *Shokhet* was not necessarily the family name but was the occupational name meaning butcher.

9

The Jewish Farmers of Podolia

by Ben Weinstock and Louis J. Goldman

Introduction

Down The Road from Letichev flowed the foodstuffs for the rest of Europe. Ukraine in general and Podolia in particular served as the breadbasket for this part of Europe. Sprouting in this rich black loam came many cash crops: sugar beets which produced a large sugar industry; mulberry trees which supported the silk industry; tobacco; and fruit orchards, among others. Grain production was perhaps most important to fill the bellies of countless multitudes.

Traditionally, Jews were excluded from agriculture in this part of Europe. There were perhaps two reasons for this. First, Jews were generally not allowed to be landowners or nobility. Thus they were not allowed to own serfs, the agricultural workforce. Second, Jews were generally not considered serfs themselves. Rather, they were more important in the feudal structure as merchants, craftsmen and middleman.

However, Jews were no strangers to the agriculture business. Most Jews maintained small "kitchen gardens" at their homes, and many Jews owned small amounts of livestock for their family food supply. Chickens, geese, ducks, cows, and goats were often owned in small quantities by *shtetl* Jews. For example, it was said that if one owned a cow and some chickens, one can feed an entire family with milk and eggs.[1]

In addition to their personal small-scale agricultural activities, Jews also served as middlemen in the agriculture business. They were often the town millers. They

A Jewish Grain Merchant.
From a century-old Russian postcard.

served as resellers and peddlers of the farm products. However, large scale agricultural growing was generally out of their reach and in the realm of the local nobility. That changed with an unusual experiment in Tsarist politics—the rise of the Jewish colonization movement.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF JEWISH COLONIZATION

It is difficult to ascertain where and when the first Jews of Podolia participated in agriculture. Most likely there were some Jews who rented farms under Polish rule. However, under Tsarist jurisdiction, Jews were forbidden to own land. As reformists of the late 1700s and early 1800s preached the necessity of assimilating Jews into Russian culture the idea of turning Jews into farmers took hold. The *Ukase* (Statute) of December 9, 1804 allowed the purchase and settlement of land by Jews. They were also allowed to engage in animal husbandry. In exchange for becoming "agriculturists," Jews were given exemption from military service for 25 or 50 years, tax abatements, and the offer of land at reduced prices. Jews who could not afford to buy land applied for the right to settle on state-owned lands.

The reasons for this special treatment was that it was a means of elevating the Jews into Russian culture (because farming was a "glorified" occupation) and this stemmed from the Russian anti-Semitic attitude that Jews were generally considered as being "useless parasites" who engaged in liquor trades, taking money from the peasants and intoxicating them with vodka. Agriculture

was a way of breaking these Jewish traditions, of encouraging more of them to become more "useful", and to integrate the Jews into the Russian agrarian cultural tradition.

Immediately upon the issuance of the *Ukase* of 1804, thousands of Jews applied for the chance to become settlers. The lands available for colonization were located in *Novorusski Krai,* "the new Russian territories" of Ekaterinslav and Kherson provinces. This was done to help settle these relatively underpopulated areas and to lay claim to the area so as to defend the southern territories from the Turkish threat. The Jews who were selected undertook the long journeys to their new homes. Althought the majority of the earliest settlers were from the northwestern provinces, there were a few Jews from Podolia as well.[2] Unfortunately, each wave of colonization was characterized by gross inefficiency by Russian bureaucrats. Jews soon found themselves stranded in settlements without any of the promised supplies needed for building homes; most of the farm implements and seeds were stolen by local officials. However, many Jews persevered despite the numerous hardships and became dedicated farmers.

In 1830 fifty-two Jews in Podolia participated in agriculture, probably on small parcels of land.[3] There were no established farm colonies in Podolia as of yet. However, after the unsuccessful 1830-31 Polish Uprising the Russian authorities began to strip the Poles who supported the Uprising of their landholdings.[4] Consequently, a great deal of land in the District of Letichev (in fact, in all districts of western Russia, including those of Podolia) became available to the Tsarist government in the late 1830s and early 1840s. In the Letichev district alone, twenty farms were confiscated from Prince Adam Czartoryski in 1831 and were put under the control of the Ministry of Finance until April of 1836, when the properties were taken over by the War Ministry. In 1838 the farms were given to retired Russian military officers.

Family of David Vaynshtok.
Photo taken in Yiddish Meidan in 1913.
Courtesy of Betty Levinson.

Within a decade of the Uprising, the Jews of Podolia had to deal with new *ukases.* Jews who lived within a fifty *verst*

zone[5] of the Austria-Hungarian border were ordered to move east. It was believed that the illegal smuggling of goods from Russia to the Austro-Hungarian Empire could be decreased by ridding the border territories of Jews.[6] Many Jews were forced to move from the western districts, such as Proskurov and Kamenets-Podolsky, to eastern adjacent districts, such as Letichev. These newcomers to the Letichev District vied for placement on the newly available tracts of land confiscated from, or to be sold by, the Polish magnates. In the 1840s a proposal known as *Razbor* gained strength among Russian officials to classify Jews as "useful" or "useless" subjects. Over 10,000 families promptly applied for colonist status, but only 205 were allowed to purchase land.[7] It was during this time frame that the colonies of Podolia, Volhynia, and Kiev provinces were founded. Between 1844 and 1852, a total of 19 colonies were established in Podolia.[8]

KOLONIA STARO ZAKREVSKY MEIDAN

The pre-colonial history of the colony

The farm, which later became known as Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan ("The Colony of the Old Zakrevsky Farm"), was probably settled in the seventeenth century. In all likelihood 'Zakrevsky' was Nikolai Zakrevsky, an official of the Kamenets-Podolsky fortress in the 1450s.[9] Early documentation of the farm is very sparse. In 1764 it was noted that ten Jews lived there; they were probably employed to manage the farms.[10]

In 1779 the owner, Adam Poninski, sold the farm (and surrounding villages, including Derazhnia) to banker Peter Tepper.[11] An old church was demolished there in 1806.[12] Sometime in the 1820s the farm passed to the Polish noble family of Belke, and the settlement became known as "Belke Meidan".[13] By the early 1830s it was owned by Ivan Teofilovich Belke, a retired Lieutenant-Colonel.[14] A decisive battle was fought in Belke Meidan in May of 1831 between Tsarist forces and Polish rebels resulted in the defeat of the Poles from this area.[15] Belke did not immediately lose his farm, but was probably pressured by officials into selling it during the years following the Uprising.[16] He then moved to the Kiev province, taking his serfs with him.[17]

The early Jewish colonists

Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, the first Jewish agricultural colony in Podolia, was founded in 1844. The deed of purchase is dated May 3, 1844, and was signed by a merchant named Yankel Sobol on behalf of the Jews. However, another source gives the date of the purchase of the town by the Jews as March 20, 1844.[18] The cost of the colony has been reported as 6,000 rubles (*Kievlianin*, 1876) 11,000 rubles[19] and 15,000 rubles.[20] A story passed down in the Zinshteyn

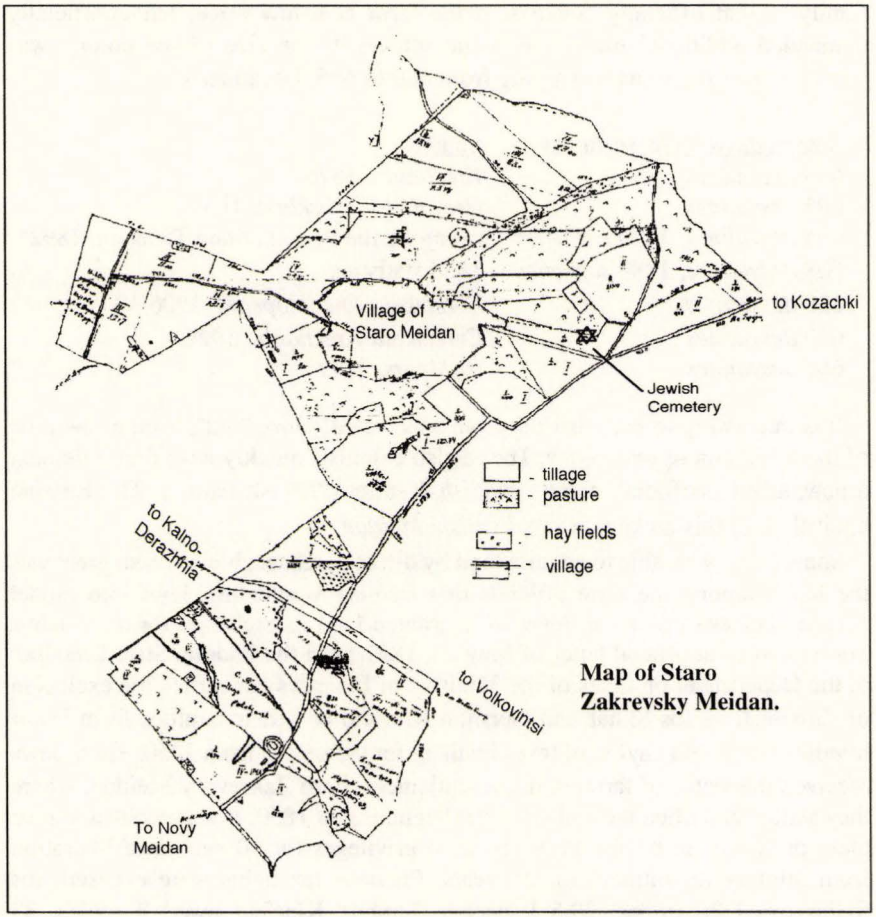
family is that officially Belke sold the farm at a low price, but unofficially demanded additional money from the settlers.[21] The size of the colony was recorded over the years as varying from 600 to 665 desyatines:[22]

Size in *desyatines, sazhenes*	Source
600 *desyatines*	*Kievlianin,* 1876
605 *desyatines*	*Ned. Khron. Voskhod,* 1887
605 *desyatines,* 1400 *sazhenes*	ruling by the Podolia State Treasury, 1892
608 *desyatines,* 1289 *sazhenes*	1858 statistics
620 *desyatines*	*Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia,* 1906-13
640 *desyatines*	*Evreiskaia Krestianin,* 1926
665 *desyatines*	*HaMelits,* 1897

It is interesting to note that the town was called *Staro,* "old", even at the time of the formation of the colony. The Jewish colonists quickly gave the settlement a new, albeit unofficial, name : *Yiddish Meidan* ("Jewish Farm"). The Russian equivalent of this nickname was *Evreiski Meidan.* [23]

Some Jews were able to acquire land by direct purchase; however, so great was the belief among the state officials that farming would turn Jews into model Russian citizens that some Jews were granted land in exchange for their debts. For example, an official letter of May 25, 1851 from the Podolia State Chamber to the Department of Taxes of the Ministry of Finances concerned the exclusion of Zinkov Jews Ios Skliar and Gershon Klurfeld and their families from lower middle classes and paying of taxes by them for the period from 1850. These Jews received the status of farmers in the settlement Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, where they settled and tilled the soil since the beginning of 1850. It was decided to give them privileges in paying taxes, *zemstvo* privileges for 10 years and liberation from military recruitment for 25 years. Previous tax debts were excused: Ios Skliar owed 20 rubles, 20.5 kopecks; Gershon Klurfeld owed 9 rubles, 33 kopecks.[24] Derazhnia Jews Ios Bleyvas and Mikhel Bleyvas were excluded from the lower middle classes since 1853, since they were reckoned among landowners of land "Pasleni" in Kalno Derazhnia. They were attached to landowners of the neighboring settlement of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan. They had tax arrears of 491 silver rubles which was forgiven.[25] The debt of the Bleyvas family was probably in conjunction with their involvement in the ruling against the Derazhnia Jewish community due to their actions with the bandit Ustim Karmaluk.[26] Sixty-two families (comprising 303 souls) settled into the colony by 1846, but the number of families dropped over the next few years.

The Jewish farmers were closely scrutinized--if one of them left the colony and was not present during an official inspection, a manhunt would ensue. Several reports were made in 1855 by the Governor's office to police officers of different districts because Volko Nirenberg and Moshko Shvets were missing from the colony. The police finally located Shvets in Bar, where he was going for



Map of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan.

treatments for tuberculosis. Nirenberg was found in Ulanov. The police enforced the Governor's order to bring the colonists back to Staro Zakrevsky Meidan.[27]

The following summary of the 1854 town census provides us with the towns of origin of the heads of the families of the colony.[28] Approximately 60% of the settlers were from the western districts of Proskurov or Kamenets-Podolsky; approximatey 20% were from the District of Letichev; approximately 15% were from other districts of Podolia; approximately 5% were from towns in Volhynia Province:

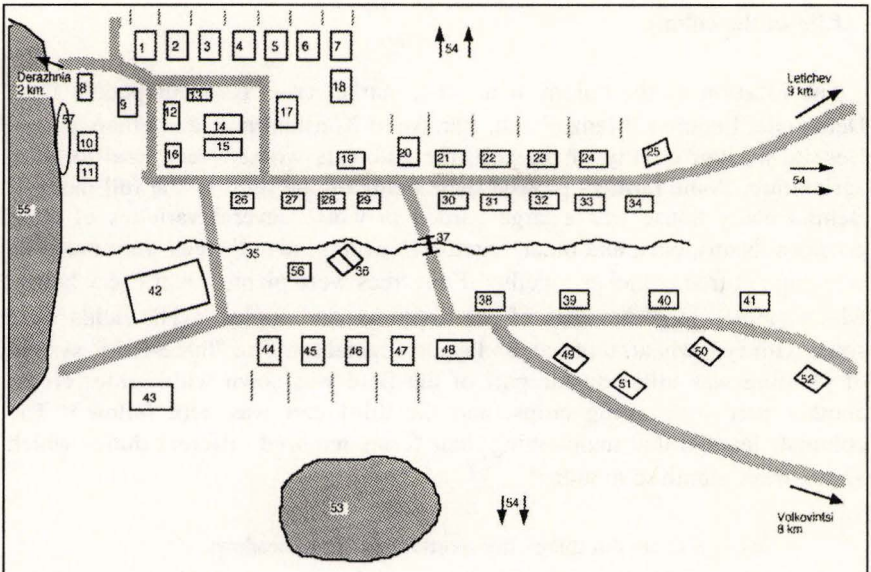
1. Vol Malis : from Proskurov.
2. Leybish Ivankovetskiy : from Proskurov.[29]
3. Abrum Tenzer : from Shepetovka, Volhynia Province.
4. Abish Rozhichner : from Proskurov.
5. Berko Marants : from Proskurov.

6. Khaim Pelspur : from Proskurov.
7. Shlema Rozenblit : from Proskurov.
8. Duvid Rozenberg : from Proskurov.
9. Abrum Gonik : from Satanov, Proskurov district.
10. Volf Safir : from Satanov, Proskurov district.
11. Borukh Saschin : from Satanov, Proskurov district.
12. Srul Finkel : from Yarmolintsy, Proskurov district.
13. Itsko Diment : from Yarmolintsy, Proskurov district.
14. Aizik Reizengurt : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.[30]
15. Nukhim Gorenshteyn : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
16. Elya Grubshteyn : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
17. Ios Epelboym : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
18. Moshko Epelboym : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.[31]
19. Khaim Zilberg : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
20. Elya- Ios Perelmiter : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
21. Beinish Grinman : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
22. Froim Goldenshteyn : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
23. Gersh Fiks : from Sharovka, Proskurov district.
24. Aron Shapiro : from Zinkov, Letichev district.
25. Gersh Bashkov : from Derazhnia, Letichev district.
26. Feybish Bashkov : from Derazhnia, Letichev district.
27. Feiga Bashkov : from Derazhnia, Letichev district.
28. Ios Feynshteyn : from Derazhnia, Letichev district.
29. Reuven Feynshteyn : from Derazhnia, Letichev district.
30. Khaim Feynshteyn : from Derazhnia, Letichev district.
31. Srul Ostrakh : from Cherno Ostrov, Proskurov district.
32. Khaim Ryzhy : from Mezhirov, Litin district.
33. Volko Nirenberg : from Vinnitsa.
34. Gersh Bekman : from Vinnitsa.
35. Moshko Shvets : from Yaltushkov, Mogilev-Podolsky district.
36. Ios Shafirman : from Vonkovtsy, Novaya Ushitsa district.
37. Volko Gorenbeyn : from Yaltushkov, Mogilev-Podolsky district.
38. Ios Passer : from Zamekhov, Novaya Ushitsa district.
39. Gersh Kats : from Grudka, Kamenets-Podolsky district.
40. Moshko Brodsky : from Kamenets-Podolsky.
41. Avrum Kalina : from Belogorodka, Volhynia Province.
42. Shlema Koifman : from Butsnevtsy, Letichev district.
43. Aron Zinshteyn : from Felshtin, Proskurov district.
44. Moshko Zinshteyn : from Felshtin, Proskurov district.
45. Srul Zinshteyn : from Felshtin, Proskurov district.
46. Leizer Brailovsky : from Brailov, Vinnitsa district.
47. Ios Skliar : from Zinkov, Letichev district.
48. Gershon Klurfeld : from Zinkov, Letichev district.
49. Munish Ioshta : from Zinkov, Letichev district.
50. Berko Dinisman : from Satanov, Proskurov district.
51. Meyer Vaynberg : from Staro Konstantinov, Volhynia Province.
52. Nakhmin Pervin : from Proskurov.

Tsiril Feldberg.
Great-granddaughter of Elya Grubshteyn, who is listed in the 1854 census. Courtesy of Ben Weinstock.

Avrum Zinshteyn.
Son of Aron Zinshteyn who is listed in the 1854 census. Photo taken around 1925. Courtesy of Bernard Stein.

The Kalina family.
Photo taken ca. 1917. Notice the tree-branch fence in the background. Courtesy of Roza Vaks.



Map of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan Village: circa 1920 - 1930
Based upon the memories of Yefrem Mankovetsky, Alexander Grubshteyn, and Shika Charnis.

Legend:

1 - Feldberg / Gervits
2 - Tenzer
3 - Mankovetsky
4 - Zalevsky
5 - Bleyvas
6 - Paperman
7 - Dinisman
8 - Nukhim Mozaver
9 - Sanya Grubshteyn
10 - Srul Grubshteyn
11 - Yankel Bleyvas
12 - Gorenshteyn
13 - Rifchun
14 - Tenzer
15 - Tenzer
16 - Gudzinsky
17 - Kaliner
18 - Mozaver
19 - Mozaver
20. Gilovits
21 - Tsiril Tenzer
22 - Tenzer
23 - Gershgoren
24 - Khaim Pervin
25 - Shaya Gorenshteyn
26 - Mozaver
27 - Bleyvas
28 - Charnis
29 - Pervin
30 - Petrov
31 - Ostracher
32 - Kalina's Store
33 - Kalina's Store
34 - Velvel Fuks
35 - Stream
36 - Mikvah, Bathhouse
37 - Footbridge
38 - Diment
39 - School
40 - Galarsky
41 - Feynshteyn
42 - Synagogue
43 - Mill
44 - Galarsky
45 - Zalevsky
46 - Bleyvas
47 - Milshteyn
48 - Shimon Shatsman
49 - Simkha Katechkes
50 - Shneyderman
51 - Gleyzer
52 - Kleyman
53 - Grubshteyn's Forest (pre-1917)
54 - Fields / Farms
55 - Large Forest
56 - Blacksmith's Shop
57 - Gypsy Camp (approx. 10 families who lived in dugouts)

Life in the colony

The location of the colony made it a market crossroads for people from Derazhnia, Letichev, Medzhibozh, Bar, Staro Konstantinov, and others towns. Despite the fair quality of the soil, the colonists worked very hard to learn agriculture. Some farmers plowed their fields by the light of the full moon.[32] Behind every house was a large garden in which several varieties of corn, potatoes, beans, oats, and other vegetables were grown. Fences were made by weaving cut tree branches together. Fruit trees were planted near every house, which yielded large harvests of pears, plums, and apples.[33] The fields were sown with rye, wheat, tobacco, and some vegetables. The "three-field" system of planting was utilized: one part of the field was sown with winter crops; another part with spring crops; and the third part was kept fallow.[34] The colonists learned that maintaining their farms required different duties which varied from month to month:[35]

January: Grain threshing; transporting hay from meadows.

February: Continuation of January activities; preparation of a reserve of flour.

March: Repairing of agricultural implements; cleaning off of snow.

April: Repairing of fences; threshing of grain for spring seed; planting of wheat, peas, oats, and garden vegetables; feeding of cattle on grazing areas.

May: Planting of oats, millet, part of the barley; plowing of gardens; cattle moved to fallow land strips.

June: Planting of buckwheat and the remainder of the barley; manure transport to fallow land strips; preparation for hay-cutting.

July: Hay mowing; gathering of hay; beginning of rye harvest.

August: Threshing of grain for seed; planting of winter grain; harvesting of wheat, barley, other grains.

September: Harvesting continues; finishing of planting of winter grains.

October: Plowing of harvested rye fields for next spring grains and spring wheat; distribution of fertilizer on fields; gathering of firewood.

November: Threshing; firewood transportation; slaughtering of cattle, ducks, chickens for sale; repairing of sleighs; trading of harvest.

December: Threshing; trading of harvest.

In the early days of the colony, between 40-50 houses were built. Some of the homes were big enough to accomodate several families. The typical house was painted white both inside and out; had floors made of a mixture of dirt, clay, and cow dung; the roof was made of straw. There was only one house that had a shingled roof and wooden parquet floors -- the Grubshteyn house.[36] (It would not be

until the 1920s that most homes had shingled roofs; others had tiled roofs, and a few were made of tin.[37]) Food storage was accomplished by means of a small ditch or cellar which was dug in one room of a typical home. The ditch was lined with bricks; this kept food warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Two stoves were usually built, one for food preparation and another for heating the house in the winter.

Due to the difficulties of making a living, many of the colonists participated in other types of ventures. For example, a brickworks was established. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire in 1872.[38] A mill was constructed and was utilized not only by the colonists, but by people from nearby villages as well. The Dinismans and a few other families concentrated their efforts into raising cattle. Moshe Zinshteyn had a wine cellar (*shenk*), and sold Bessarabian wine to the locals. His daughter Galla received his business as part of the dowry when she married Dovid Yekheskal Vaynshtok in 1875. Many of the women became excellent seamstresses.[39] The enterprising Kalina family established a store in the colony, as well as an inn (*kartchma*) on the road to Derazhnia. Some colonists had several professions. Mordekhai ("Mutti") Zinshteyn worked as a cattle trader, wine seller, Rabbi, and teacher in the *kheder.* He was also one of the town's "letter writers" and became famous for writing a letter to the Tsar, and for receiving a reply.[40] Unfortunately, some colonists resorted to illegal methods of obtaining funds: in 1884 three colonists were arrested for running an illegal distillery, and there were several cases of false promises of matrimony to obtain dowries (see Chapter 11 , "Law and Order".)

In 1876 an unflattering and inaccurate portrait of life in the colony was published in the anti-Semitic newspaper *Kievlianin:* [41]

> Lately in the south they have spoken about Jewish settlements again due to desire among Perslavl Jews to give up tavern keeping to buy land and to become farmers. However desirable it is to believe the complete sincerity of such Jewish aspirations, unfortunately the facts say just the opposite. All attempts of Jews have failed. The Letichev correspondent of the St. Petersburg *Vedemosty* gives the following examples as evidence : 15 *versts* from Letichev there is the Jewish settlement of Zakrevsky Meidan. Here is an instructive story about this settlement. In 1847 (sic) , 43 Jewish families (120 people in total) bought 600 desyatines of land from Colonel Belkin (sic) in Zakrevsky Meidan. This land which had woods and so on, was purchased for the most insignificant sum according to prices of that time, of only 6,000 rubles,i.e. 10 rubles for one *desyatine.* Since serfdom existed at that time, Colonel Belkin moved the peasants, who lived on the land, to Kiev. Jews bought this land to till the soil. The government regarded this idea sympathetically and gave more than a few privileges to the settlers of Zakrevsky Meidan, and released them from taxes for 25 years and from military recruitment for 50 years. All the conditions seemed to be extremely favorable : the land was bought for almost nothing, privileges

were received from the government, the usual Jewish family (an average number of members--3 persons) would get up to 15 *desyatines* of quality land each. However, in spite of all these advantages the primordial virtues and habits of Jews prevailed over everything. Almost 30 years have passed since the founding of this settlement and here is what we see now : the population has increased to 333 people, i.e. it has almost tripled, but the Jews have not become farmers yet. Only about 10 families cultivated their kitchen-gardens. The rest of the land has been rented to peasants. The outside appearance of the settlement resembles a poor Jewish town with the same kind of Jewish construction.

Eleven years later, a much more positive description of the colony appeared in *Nedelenia Khronika Voskhod.* It is interesting to note that there are references to "Mr. Suvorin" and "Mr. Pichno", the editors of anti-Semitic newspapers, such as *Kievlianin:* [42]

In the early 50's of this century, thanks to circumstances granted by the late Tsar Nikolai, many wealthy Jewish families from Letichev District purchased with their own funds from a certain landowner, 390 *desyatines* of good farm land, 130 *desyatines* of forest, and 85 *desyatines* of fields for 15,000 rubles. They used this land to build a small colony. Pioneers from this colony, after building homes, bought the needed supplies and livestock, utilizing help from a Jewish philanthropist who gave them an unspecified amount of money interest-free.[43] The settlers named this colony "Evreiski Meidan". In the first ten years, the landowners of this settlement experienced hard times because of their lack of knowledge of farming and of not being used to hard labor, but these times have passed, and the settlers finally got used to all of the problems which constantly plague the landowner, and their lives took on an ordinary turn. Presently, most of the forefathers of this colony have passed on. Their energetic and strong descendents, who since childhood were used to hard labor, were able to obtain everything that is needed for farming and renovated their homes according to new plans. The settlement consists of 43 families and 40 homes. Each family has 9 *desyatines* of farm land, 3 *desyatines* of forest, and 2 *desyatines* of fields. The economic conditions of this settlement significantly worsened in the past four years after droughts and poor harvests. The poverty of the settlers led them to cut down their valuable forest and sell the lumber to neighboring towns. However, the perseverance of these Russian Jewish farmers gives us hope that they can survive through bad times. It is most probable, that in the near future, even Mr. Suvorin, Mr. Pikhno, and company, after observing these energetic people would have to admit that when Jews are not persecuted they can work successfully as farmers.

The following lines describe the life in the colony. Here, like anywhere else, are located all of the institutions which are common in every established Jewish town: synagogue, school, *mikvah,* altar (on which the profits from the sale of wheat and candles are placed), and one butchery, where livestock and fowl are prepared. This settlement does not have a meat tax,[44] which pleases everyone, and this reflects positively on the moral and physical condition of the settlers: 3 *funt* of meat,[45] without bones, costs here a maximum of 15 kopeks and all of the settlers have an opportunity to eat meat, even on weekdays. A special collection fund, which until now contained 200 rubles, serves as a source of payments for repairs to community houses and to assist impoverished families of this settlement. The settlers, along with gentile farmers, belong to the Voitovets Volost of Letichev District, where they serve in the army and pay taxes.[46] Permission for traveling are also obtained in Voitovets, but documents proving their good character are provided by the elders of the settlement who are elected by the settlers. The town affairs are handled by a commission of an elder, an assistant of the Letichev Rabbi, and two more elected men. Traditional schools can be found here, as if in any town. The settlement has three schools, in which fifty boys and fifteen girls are taught according to tradition. A good thing is that the children are taught in these schools only until they are 12-13 years old; after this age the children are returned to their families and are turned into farmers. The schools, however, have an example of the intellectual community. This is a young, cultured man, with great knowledge in Russian and new Jewish literature, who spreads his knowledge to the youngsters, teaching them Hebrew and Russian. The young people, who with his help were introduced to Hebrew literature, put together a small library, where you can find works by Levinsohn, Shulman, Smolenskin, Gottlober, etc.[47] Feeling the need to obtain additional knowedge but not having the resources to obtain all necessary books, a circle of young people, three years ago, contacted "The Society for the Dissemination of Knowedge among the Jews of Russia" with a request for Hebrew and Russian books. The "Society" immediately sent them 18 Hebrew and Russian books, which are read without stop. Along with this , the circle subscribes to two Jewish published works and one political newspaper. These current events are not liked by some people of the settlement, who view these developments as a waste of time. They even wanted to burn the new books, but the times have caught up with these people and they allowed the will of the youths to continue.

It is ironic that such an optimistic portrayal of life in the colony was written in the early months of 1887. Just six months later, a dispute began between the colonists and the Ministry of Finances which threatened the very existence of the colony, and the survival of the colonists themselves.

The land tax case

In August 1887 the Letichev District police department (the local institution of the Ministry of Finances) gave the colonists the tax account for 1887, a total sum of 177 rubles and 24 kopecks, and an order to also pay the arrears of land taxes since 1867. The police claimed that the colonists falsified the actual amount of taxable land in the colony. The total of the arrears was over 350 rubles. When the colonists claimed that they did not have to pay these land taxes, the police department promptly inventoried and sold all of the cattle and equipment in Staro Zakrevsky Meidan. This led to an immediate and total destruction of the economy of the colony. However, this frightful and drastic measure forced the colonists to fight back.

The farmers decided to elect two representatives who would contact the appropriate authorities; Shmul Meierovich Gorenshteyn and Moshe-Khaim Shaevich Zilberg were elected. They drafted a petition to the Minister of Finance in which they said that the levying of taxes was incorrect for several reasons. As the settlement was under the jurisdiction of the Voitovetski Volost government of the Letichev District, information had always been provided regarding the size of the colony to the governmental authorities in Letichev. Therefore, the claim that the colonists were concealing evidence about the true size of the colony was false. Although the colonists had regularly paid land taxes to the Department of State Property from the early days of the settlement until the 1860s, they had not been required to pay any taxes in the past ten years. Moreover, the claim that the sum of taxes was based on the size of the colony -- 608 *desyatines* and 1289 square *sazhenes* -- was also incorrect. The settlement produced a plan with a detailed explanation and certificate of the district surveyor. According to these documents, it was seen that the colonists had only 237 *desyatines* of land in its possession. Therefore, the amount of taxes due was also incorrect.

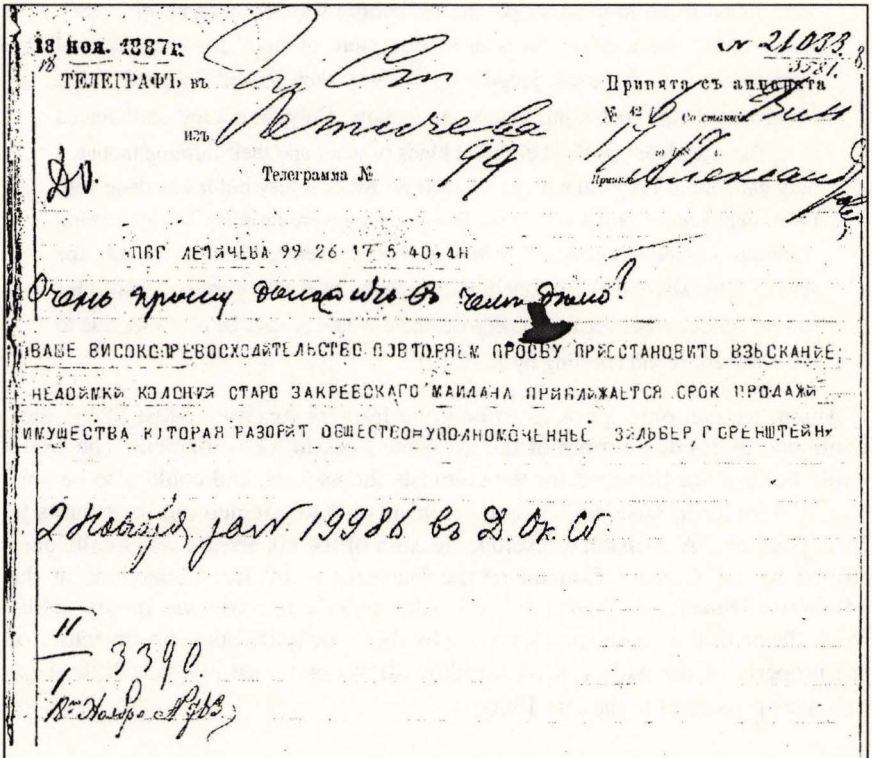
The petition was signed by the twenty-seven homeowners who had a right to vote on the decision.[48] The homeowners who signed the petition included a few of the original colonists. However, most of those who voted were sons of the original settlers (as were the two elected representatives) :

(1) Volko Malis
(2) Srul Tenzer
(3) San Orinshteyn
(4) Mordko Grubshteyn
(5) Reuven Kalina
(6) Abrum Goldenshteyn
(7) Srul Saschin
(8) Volko Epelboym
(9) Moshko Fainshteyn
(10) Khaskel Fuks
(11) Abrum Zinshteyn
(12) Moshko Ostrakh
(13) Khaim Kats
(14) Itsko Bleyvas
(15) Ios Bleyvas
(16) Khaskel Gorenshteyn
(17) Volko Gorenbeyn
(18) Simkha Saschin
(19) Itsko Bashkov
(20) Srul Kleyman
(21) Ios Tenzer
(22) Moshko Diment
(23) Avigdor Bashkov
(24) Mordko Dinisman
(25) Ios Diment
(26) Volko Rozenblit
(27) Elya Dinisman

The telegram was sent to the Minister of Finance; this resulted in numerous telegrams being sent between the Minister of Podolia, the Department of Tax Collection at the Ministry of Finances, the Podolia Provincial Governor, and the Podolia State Treasury.

The colonists received some satisfaction when they were notified that the levying of arrears would be suspended. However, in November the police again came to the colony and took all of the settlers' grain stores, including what the colonists needed for feeding themselves and for sowing spring corn. It is not known how the colonists survived the winter.

The case dragged on for years. Eventually the colonists were informed that the taxes that they had paid from 1844 until the 1860s had not been required. The official decision on the tax arrears was still pending. Concerning the size of the colony, the Podolia State Treasury ruled that the size of the colony was as follows: 237 *desyatines* and 400 square *sazhenes* of useful land, 350 *desyatines* and 231 *sazhenes* of forest, and 17 *desyatines* and 1090 square *sazhenes* of non-useable land, giving a total of 605 *desyatines* and 1400 *sazhenes*. As the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ТЕЛЕГРАФЪ въ
изъ
Телеграмма №
Принята съ аппарата
№ 42
Со станціи
Принял
ПВГ ЛЕТИЧЕВА 99 26 17 5 40,4Н
Очень прошу доложить въ чемъ дѣло?
ВАШЕ ВИСОКОПРЕВОСХОДИТЕЛЬСТВО ПОВТОРЯЕМ ПРОСБУ ПРИОСТАНОВИТЬ ВЗЫСКАНІЕ НЕДОИМКИ КОЛОНІИ СТАРО ЗАКРЕВСКАГО МАЙДАНА ПРИБЛИЖАЕТСЯ СРОК ПРОДАЖИ ИМУЩЕСТВА КІТОРАЯ РАЗОРИТ ОБЩЕСТВО=УПОЛНОМОЧЕННЫЕ ЗИЛЬБЕР, ГОРЕНШТЕЙН
2 Ноября за № 19986 въ Д. Ок. Сб.
II/I 3390.

Telegram from Staro Zakrevsky Meidan.
This telegram, dated 1887 (sent from the Letichev telegraph office), was sent by colonists begging authorities for the release of their confiscated grain stores.

55 house holds of the colony[49] continued their to struggle to keep their farms viable, they faced another very difficult challenge—a famine.

The continued years of struggle

Although there had been episodes of droughts and short-lived famines which affected the colonists, probably the worst famine occurred in 1891-1892. Droughts which probably affected the colonists up until this point were recorded in 1855, 1875, 1885, and 1889.[50] A great deal of information has been written about the effect of the famine on the central and eastern provinces of Russia;[51] however, the severe winter cold of 1891 and spring and summer drought of 1892 also significantly decreased wheat and rye crops in Podolia as well. Some farmers in Podolia received government assistance due to the failure of their crops in 1892.[52] By 1894 the difficulties of maintaining the farms became evident to anti-Semitic government farm inspectors who blamed the poor conditions of the colony on the colonists themselves:[53]

> In the colony of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, though almost all agriculturists were found to be in good shape, the agriculture was found to be miserable. Every owner has a cellar but with a scant store of flour. Most agricultural instruments were not used, judging by the way they looked. In general, the colonists did not care too much about agriculture. Only the poorest participated in it. The wealthier practiced different kinds of work and their farming included only gardening. They did not sow on their farms, or if they did it was done with much negligence, mostly for pretending that they were farming. The governing committee found it necessary to hire a special overseer who could rule the Jewish colonists, and observe them following the rules that were established for Jewish agriculturists because otherwise 'there would always be obstacles due to the evasiveness and cheating by Jews.'

Again, we can only guess as to how the farmers survived. Most likely, they continued to cut down more of the available trees in the settlement. The wood could be used for firewood for the colonists themselves, and could also be sold locally in order to raise cash. Some colonists probably rented out their farms to local peasants. A decision to exclude the sum of the tax arrears was finally confirmed by the General Council of the Department of Tax Collections at the Ministry of Finance on April 24, 1896. Although the tax case was finally settled in the favor of the colonists, they were by this time quite poor. An inventory of the property of the widow Rosa Bashkov allows us to see just how little these colonists possessed in the late 1800s:[54]

> Land (4 *desyatines,* 1,300 *sotkas;*[55] worth 155 rubles):

1. The land under the house and attached building and vegetable garden : one *desyatine*; worth 40 rubles.

2. Arable land from the village of Zgarok, bordering the lands of Avigdor Bashkov and Fishel Gervits : 1,150 *sotkas*; worth 25 rubles.

3. Arable land from the village of Kozachki in one plot bordering the lands of Iudka Koifman and Moshe Zinshteyn : 600 sotkas; worth 15 rubles.

4. Arable land from the village of Kalna-Derazhnia in one plot bordering the land of Moshe Zilberg : 1,150 *sotkas;* worth 25 rubles.

5. Land of the hayfield and forest good for firewood, hoops and brush-wood, in one plot bordering the lands of Sam Gorenshteyn and Borukh Diment: 2 *desyatines;* worth 35 rubles.

6. Lands under the shrubbery near the farm of Pasleni, in one plot bordering the lands of Moshe Fainshteyn and Khaim Kats : 800 *sotkas;* worth 15 rubles.

Buildings (worth 35 rubles):

1.House : 20 *arshin* by 11 *arshin*[56]; wooden; one-story; tiled roof; earthen floor; 2 rooms; 2 kitchens; 2 warming stoves; 2 stoves for food preparation; 3 doors; windows in the house are broken : worth 30 rubles.

2.Wooden shed for cattle: 10.5 arshin by 5 arshin; straw roof; one door: worth 5 rubles.

Movable property (worth 23 rubles, 80 kopeks):

1. Old, simple, wooden (ash) table with a drawer : worth 50 kopeks.

2. Old, simple, wooden (ash) table without a drawer : worth 30 kopeks.

3. Old, polished , wooden (ash) bed with back: worth 1 ruble.

4. Old, uncovered, simple wooden (oak) sofa : worth 30 kopeks.

5. Old, broken, wooden (lime tree) closet, painted black : worth 1 ruble.

6. Old, simple, wooden (alder) trestle-bed : worth 60 kopeks.

7. Two old oak barrels with wooden hoops : worth 60 kopeks.

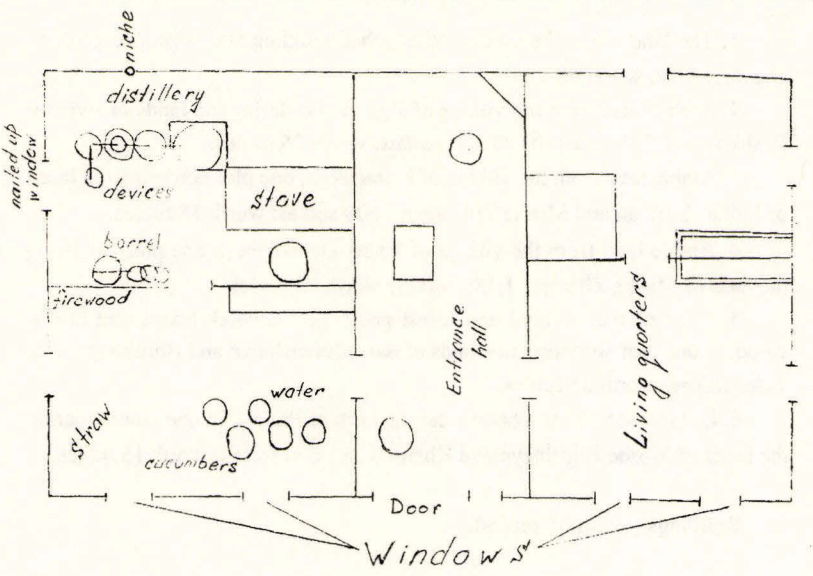
8. Old, wooden (pine) chute : worth 50 kopeks.

9. Two down yellow pillows, with grey-striped pillow cases : worth 6 rubles.[57]

10. One down yellow pillow with a red calico sewed on the front side , with a grey striped pillow case : worth 3 rubles.

11. Yellow feather bed : worth 5 rubles.

12. Grey feather bed : worth 5 rubles.



House plan from Meidan.
This was a floor plan of Rosa Bashkova's house in 1884, according to police records. Notice the illegal distillery in the back of the house and the boarded up windows to hide the illegal activiity. Plan translated to English by Elena Tsvetkova.

In 1897 several reports appeared in *HaMelits* from Volkovintsy describing the hardships of local farmers. In July it was reported that many people, "steeped in poverty," were planting tobacco, which in the past had some measures of success. But excessive rain at the beginning of the summer ruined many of the plants which were young and fragile. In August, when the tobacco was becoming "ripe," heavy hailstorms came, destroying more plants. Extraordinary rains also affected the other crops of the area, resulting in daily increases in the price of bread. Fruit merchants also suffered as overall yields were low. The plum business (the main business for many in the area) was especially poor.[58] Evidently it was only with the help of ORT[59] and ORPME[60] that the inhabitants of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan were able to manage through the harsh weather which hurt the 1897 crops, according to an article written by Y.Sh. Rappoport of Volkovintsy:[61]

> A short distance from our town of Volkovintsy is the Jewish colony of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, which was founded in the time of Nicholas I. The land of 665 *desyatines* (sic) was settled by 50 households. In those days agriculture was considered to be the lowest level of work. Now, however, the situation is

better in that the current owners (the children of the original settlers) see the blessing of the fruits of their labor. They are skilled at opening and plowing the land, and have their hearts' desire to sanctify their efforts and bring forth bread. Unfortunately their poverty has control of them, like a curse of Satan. They do not have the capability to buy tools and horses for their work. Because of their poverty they have been forced to give over the land to be rented to Gentile peasants for one-third or one-fourth of its worth. The Jews have their arms folded without work to do. Just as their material situation is poor, their spiritual situation is poor. Their children are growing up without Torah and without occupations. The children are ignorant because their parents do not have the capability to pay teachers.

Borris Weinstock in 1896.
Borris left Meidan for Kishinev (where this photo was taken), only to barely survive the pogrom there in 1903. Shortly thereafter, he emigrated to New York. Photo courtesy of Ben Weinstock.

Here, in Volkovintsy, two groups distinguish themselves in their efforts to bestow an enlivining dew upon the dry bones of the colony, and to elevate the physical and spiritual situation of the colonists. A committee to support this colony was founded by Reb Sh. Polyakov,[62] in order to support those who work the land and to provide small amounts of money to buy seed. This group is called "The Society for the Promotion of Crafts and Agriculture Among the Jews of Russia". The other group which provides support is ORPME. The ultimate goal is to improve the situation of the young through education (the shining ray of light) for all those who are downtrodden. The efforts of the two groups are for improving the Hebrew school in the colony. United to carry out the one purpose of helping tens of poor families, who live in poverty like Greek peasants, shows the level of these two honorable groups who already started their efforts in the winter. The first support for the colonists will come before

the planting of seeds, and the second support will come before the start of the school year. The giving of charity brings forth peace.

In 1904 representatives of the Jewish Colonization Association visited the colony and reported that "The ground is of poor quality, being rich in clay. The land is divided into three parts, and each year only one part is used for sowing; the other two are allowed to rest. On the sections where the forest was before, the land is sown without rest. In the past, the townspeople have been engaged in selling livestock, but lately they are more involved in agriculture. [Only] eight families are producing bread."[63] Obviously, the forest was by this time decimated. Lumber was generally purchased in nearby towns. Most families had members who had moved to larger local towns (such as Letichev, Derazhnia, or Bar) or to cities (such as Proskurov, Kamenets-Podolsky, or Kishinev) to make a living.

By the early 1900s, there were still many tenacious farmers who continued their struggle to farm the land. Approximately one-third of the original settlers had descendents in the colony. One can only admire the attitude of these dedicated men and women who resisted the temptation to pursue other lives in other towns. However, the poverty of the colony forced many to leave. Joseph Stein, born Yosef Zinshteyn in 1895, recalled that before the first World War the homes were extremely dilapidated, farmwork was back-breaking and crop yields were inconsistent.[64] Life was extremely difficult; the high ideals of "plowing the land" were held by very few. Even the wealthy families of Grubshteyn, Tenzer, Zinshteyn, and Dinisman had children who left for America, France, or England.

Variations in the reported population of Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan[65]

Year	Total population	Source
1846	303	*Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia,* 1906-13
1847	120	*Kievlianin,* 1876[66]
1854	200 male congregants	Synagogue lists, 1854
1858	484	statistics, 1858
1876	333	*Kievlianin,* 1876
1893	720	Gul'dman, 1893
1897	595	*Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia,* 1906-13

The government attempted to keep track of the relocation of Jewish colonists. In particular, officials were interested in reclassifying the colonists to appropriate classes when they moved out of the colony. For example, the following individuals relocated from Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan between 1883-90:[67]

1. Mortko Moshkovich Grinman registered as Bar bourgeois
2. Leizor Kleiman registered as Letichev bourgeois
3. Mortko Leizorovich Kleiman registered as Kamenets-Podolsk bourgeois.
4. Moshko Grinman registered as Bar bourgeois
5. Ios Marants registered as Kalyus bourgeois
6. Gersh Volf Fainshtein registered as Bar bourgeois

7. Avrum Leizor Leizerovich Bekman registered as Nemirov bourgeois
8. Srul Leibovich Berezhansky registered as Peschanka bourgeois

OTHER COLONIES IN THE LETICHEV DISTRICT

Little information exists about the other Jewish agricutural colonies in the district: Buzovo, Vasilenka, and a small parcel of land in Kalno Derazhnia known as Pasleni. The anti-Semitic newspaper *Kievlianin*[68] described the fate of Buzovo and Vasilenka: "About two *versts* away from Zakrevsky Meidan there is another settlement—Buzovo. It exists according to the right of land rental. This settlement was founded in 1857-1858, consisted of 25 families and 300 *desyatines* of land. However it was disbanded after about 10 years and Jewish settlers were evicted for not paying rent to the landowner. The settlement of Vasilenka suffered the same fate. It was founded in 1853, and consisted of 25 families. 250 *desyatines* of land belonged to this settlement. But after 10 years the settlement was closed down and Jewish settlers were evicted by demand of the landowner for non-payment of rent." It is documented that in 1855 three Bzovo colonists, Aizik Kantselman, Borukh Polishuk, and Duvid Safyan, escaped from the colony and were hunted by the police.[69] The farm of Pasleni in Kalno Derazhnia was founded in 1853 and was 61 *desyatinas* and 1762 *sazhenes* in size. It was farmed by only one family, Bleyvas of Derazhnia, which in 1858 was comprised of twelve men and seven women. Several years later the Bleyvas family moved to Kolonia Staro Zakrevsky Meidan. By 1904 three families lived in Pasleni.[70]

The Bleyvas Family.
They farmed in the colony Pasleni. Later they moved to Meidan, where this photo was taken around 1920. Courtesy of Ben Weinstock.

Map of Podolia showing Jewish farm colonies.
The triangles show the location of 16 of the Jewish farm colonies in Podolia in the mid to late 1800s. They are: 1. Kulachevka, 2. Pokutina, 3. Manshurova, 4. Bogachevka, 5. Chabanovo, 6. Gelbinova, 7. Gershunova, 8. Abazovka, 9. Volyarka, 10. Goloche, 11. Kilyanovka, 12. Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, 13. Kalno Derazhnia, 14. Buzovo, 15. Kuzminki, 16. Bolshoi Bereg. Map modified from *Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia,* 1906-13.

The Balta colonies

Between 1849 and 1852, twelve colonies were established on state land in the district of Balta. These colonies were comprised of Jewish settlers from many different parts of the provinces of Volhynia, Podolia, Kiev, Kherson, Bessarabia, and even a few from the northwestern provinces. From 1852 to 1854 many Jews from the Letichev District were sent to these colonies. For example, twenty-eight from Letichev were sent to Manshurova, along with six from Zinkov and four from Medzhibozh; five Letichevers went to Gelbinova; and twenty-five from Derazhnia were sent to Goloche and other settlements. All of these Jews had their previous tax debts excused in return for becoming colonists.[71] In all likelihood,

Letichev district Jews became colonists in the Balta district during the earlier years as well, i.e. from 1849 to 1851.

Unfortunately, the thousands of people who settled these farms experienced the same type of bureaucratic nightmares that affected the colonists of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan. Within a few years many of the Balta colonists abandoned their farms and took up work in the larger towns of southern Podolia, such as Balta, Ladyzhin, Krivero-Ozero, and Gaysin. It was not uncommon for the Jews to rent out their parcels of land to local peasants. As usual, government officials blamed the plight of the colonists on the colonists themselves, calling them unfit for farm work. The colonists were described as "birds which appeared in the summer to use the land and disappeared by the fall. Nobody counted them as nobody counts the birds." The lack of cooperation and outright corruption by local officials was rarely recorded. However, in several revealing government documents from 1859, it was reported that many parcels of land were never given out to Jews, thus depriving the Treasury of taxes to be paid by the colonists. As the Treasury demanded immediate action to be taken (i.e., the distribution of over 200 parcels of land to be given to Jewish families), it was sarcastically noted that "after twelve years the [local officials] suddenly started to show an interest in protecting the Treasury." The Department of Ministry confirmed in 1865 that the Treasury was negligent for not paying close attention to the rightful distribution of land.[72]

Many colonies suffered from extremely low crop yields. In the late 1860s there was widespread hunger in the colonies of Manshurova and Pokutina. To make matters worse, the low profitabilty of these and the other Balta colonies resulted in the decision by the government to confiscate 20,000 desyatines of arable land from the Jewish settlers in the early 1870s. A considerable portion of the population had to leave the settlements. In *Pismo iz Bogopol (o kolonistakh Baltskaga uezd),* (Letter from Bogopol, about colonists in Balta District) printed in *Voskhod* in 1887, we learn the story of the loss of land:[73]

> In the Balta district, there were 12 farm colonies in which no one could read or write Russian. There was resistance in the colonies to sign petitions brought by government officials because they feared that they would lose their land. They needed leadership from the "intelligentsia" to explain the government documents. Twenty-thousand desyatines were taken away from 10 colonies. This left less than 150 *desyatines* for each colony, not more than 1 to 1 1/4 *desyatine* per family. The land was distributed to retired generals and landowners who shared the land with local bureaucrats. The colonists were intimidated -- the land was taken by force within an eight year period. Hard working farmers were left without land and without anything else to do; they left the area in search of other means of support. Only in 1880 did the colonists learn what happened to them. They were forced to sign a document, giving up the land. The colonists wanted to bring the case to court but did not know how

to do this. After a year of discussion they selected one representative from each colony to go to Kamenets-Podolsky. They talked to a bureaucrat, Goldshmit, who took the case. They paid him 3,000 rubles and promised him two rubles for each desyatine of land that he could get back, if he won the case. Goldshmit asked the Ministry of State Properties if they knew that land had been taken from the Jewish farmers. They reported that they did not know anything about this. Goldshmit brought the case to the Kamenets-Podolsky District Court. Witnesses came from villages close to the colonies were called to testify. The district court said that the case was not in their jurisdiction and should be taken to a higher court. In the meantime, Goldshmit disappeared (some say he went abroad) with all the papers pertaining to the case. Moreover, the colonists were

The Jewish farm colonies of Podolia, recorded October 2, 1858[74]

Colony	District	Families	Males	Females	*Desyatines*	*Sazhenes*
Pokutino	Balta	60	407	297	1107	13
Bogachevka	Balta	90	637	445	172	85
Kulachevka	Balta	68	502	282	1235	8
Gelbinova	Balta	150	911	688	2700	----
Manshurova	Balta	100	491	382	2181	4
Chabanova	Balta	50	340	237	916	72
Goloche	Balta	150	865	577	2760	----
Gershanovka	Balta	100	568	439	2064	50
Volyarka	Balta	55	294	210	1188	90
Abazovka	Balta	125	599	407	2800	----
Kuzminkacha	Olgopol	50	356	255	1019	42
St. Zakrev. Meidan	Letichev	52	257	227	608	1289
Pasleni	Letichev	1	12	7	61	1762
Bzova	Letichev	21	81	86	272	27
Dubovi Stav	Proskurov	1	6	6	16	----
Kilyanovka	Litin	11	71	71	184	912
near Tereshpol	Litin	1	5	2	16	1430
near Kalyos[75]	Ushitsa	23	77	65	400	----

required to pay 5,000 rubles for court costs. There are probably decent Jewish lawyers that could speak up and defend the rights of the colonists...

World War I: the end of the Balta colonies

The years of turmoil (1914-1921) brought deprivation to most of the colonies, and one pogrom in Staro Zakrevsky Meidan in June of 1919. After the war, Staro Zakrevsky Meidan was the only one of the original Jewish agricultural colonies of Podolia to remain—the residents of the small Balta colonies probably went to nearby towns, either selling or abandoning their farms. Eventually, Staro Zakrevsky Meidan was turned into a *kolkhoz* (a collective farm) in 1928. Jews worked in the *kolkhoz* until Nazis exterminated them in 1942.[76]

Chapter Notes:

1. Told to Pauline Zimmerman Chapin by her mother Dena Singer Zimmerman from Letichev. The daily summer routine for the hoofstock was as follows: one person (usually a Gentile) picked up all the town's animals from each home at dawn and herded them to the meadows. At the end of the day, he would bring them back. The cows, so accustomed to this routine, would know exactly which house to return to.

2. Dubnow, S., 1971, *History of the Jews , Volume IV:* Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, New Jersey, p. 738.

3. Stanislawski, M., 1983, *Tsar Nicholas 1 and the Jews: The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia 1825-1855:* The Jewish Publication Society of America, p. 168.

4. See Chapter 10, "Military".

5. One *verst* equals .6629 mile, or 1.06 kilometer. Fifty *versts* equals approximately 50 kilometers or 33 miles.

6. For more information about the 1843 law and laws pertaining to Jewish colonists, see Levanda, V.O., 1874, *Polnii Khronoloicheskii Sbornik Zakonov i Polozhenii Kasayoshkhsya Evreev, 1649-1873:* St. Petersburg.

7. Greenberg, L., 1976, *The Jews in Russia:* Schocken Books, New York, p. 46.

8. From 1804 until the discontinuance of the program of colonization in 1865, between 400 and 500 Jewish colonies were established throughout the Pale of Settlement. Nikitin, V., 1889, *Evrei Zemledelts:* St.Petersburg.

9. *Arkhiv Yugo Zapadnai Rossia* , Kiev, 1893-1894, Chast 8, Tom 1, p. 16.

10. Antonowicz, W., 1890, *Arkhiv Yugo-Zapadnai Krai:* Part 5, Volume 2, Kiev.

11. Aftanazy, Roman, 1996, *Dzieje rezydencji na dawnych kresach Rzeczypospolitej, Tom 9, Vojewodztwo podolskie*: Wroslaw, p. 73.

12. Setsinsky, E., 1901, *Prikhod i Tserki Podolskoi Gubernii:* Kamenets-Podolsky, p. 506 - 507.

13. The Belke family traced their noble status back to the early 1730s; several Belkes were in the Polish military ; another was a clergyman in Letichev; a certain Gustaw Belke was a geologist, writer, and assistant to Prince Czartoryski in Medzhibozh. Uruski, Herbarz, 1935, "Gustaw Belke," *Polski Slownik Bograficzny:* Krakow, Tome 1, p. 404–405.

14. A "Jan" Teofilovich Belke has been documented as serving with Napoleon in Russia. This might be the same person as "Ivan" Teofilovich Belke. Uruski, Herbarz, 1935, "Gustaw Belke," *Polski Slownik Bograficzny:* Krakow, Tome 1, p. 404—405.

15. See chapter 10 "Military".

16. Several members of Belke family participated in the Uprising.

17. *Kievlianin:* "Evrei-zemlediltsi v Letich. uezd, Kiev gub." (Jewish farmers in Letichev district and in Kiev gubernia), June 29, 1876, issue 77, p.2.

18. Kamenets-Podolsky archive, Fond 676, "Podolskii gubernskii komitet o poselenii evreev," Opis 1, delo 37, line 22.

19. *Sbornik Materialov ob Ekonomicheskom Polozhenii Evreev v Rossii:* Book 1, Jewish Colonization Society, St. Petersburg, 1904.

20. *Nedelia Khronika Voskhod,* 1887.

21. James Stein, personal communication, 1995.

22. One *desyatine* equals 2.7 acres, or 2400 square *sazhenes.* One *sazhene* equals 7 feet, or 2.134 meters.

23. In the early 1920s the town was known as Staro Zhidovski Meidan. The word *zhid,* usually the derogatory term for "Jew," was apparently not used as such in this context, according to a 1994 interview with Yefrem Mankovetsky, a former resident.

24. Russian State Historical Archives (RSHA), St. Petersburg, Russia, fond 571, inventory 1, p. 57–58, file #1794. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova and Anatoliy Chayesh.

25. RSHA, Department of Taxes of the Ministry of Finances, file 177, p. 85. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova and Anatoliy Chayesh.

26. See Chapter 11, "Law and Order."

27. Kamenets-Podolsky archive, fond 676, inventory 1, file 37, p. 61-80.

28. Kamenets-Podolsky archive, fond 676, inventory 1, file 18.

29. Served as Gabbay. See: Deych, Genreich, 1992, *Archivnii Materiali Po Istorii i Genealogii Evreev b Rossii:* New York, p. 175.

30. A Leib Aizik Reizengurt served as treasurer. See: Deych, Genrich, 1992, *Archivnii Materiali Po Istorii i Genealogii Evreev b Rossii:* New York, p. 175.

31. His son Yankel Epelboym served as Rabbi. See: Deych, Genrich, 1992, *Archivnii Materiali Po Istorii i Genealogii Evreev b Rossii:* New York, p. 175.

32. Interview, Roza Vaks, 1995.

33. "Aporto" apples, a large variety, were grown in the colony. This interesting fact was told to my father David Weinstock by his father, Borris Weinstock (Vaynshtok) many years ago, and was verified by a former resident of the town, Roza Vaks, in 1993.

34. *Kievlianin,* "O zemlevdalinii evreev v Pod. Gub." (On Jewish agriculture in Podolsk gubernia) , issue #10, 1883.

35. Cahan, Arcadius, 1985, *The Plow, The Hammer, and The Knout: An Economic History of Eighteenth-Century Russia:* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 47-48, "The Agricultural Routine"

36. Pers. Interviews with Joseph Stein, 1981-1989.

37. Pers Interviews with Yefrem Mankovetsky 1993-1994.

38. Personal comm., Yulia Zevelev, Jewish Preservation Committee of Ukraine, July 1997.

39. A calamity erupted in the colony just prior to a wedding as someone accidently stepped on the bride's dress while she was preparing for the ceremony, causing the dress to tear. Galla Vaynshtok, known as the best seamstress in the town, quickly and expertly repaired the dress. It was remembered that "no one could tell that the dress had been torn." Rae Weinstock, personal communication, 1989.

40. Julius Weinstock, personal communication, 1986; verified by Joseph Stein, 1986.

41. *Kievlianin:* "Evrei-zemlediltsi v Letich. uezd, Kiev gub." (Jewish farmers in Letichev district and in Kiev gubernia), June 29, 1876, issue 77, p.2. Translated from Russian by Elena Tsvetkova.

42. *Nedelenia Khronika Voskhod,* "Pismo iz Kolonii Evreiskii Maidan, Pod. Gub." (Letter from colony Jewish Meidan, Podolsk gubernia), February 26, 1887, #11. Translated from Russian by Marik Feldman.

43. There were numerous attempts by philanthropists to help colonists. One program was started by Baron Ginsburg. Jewish colonists who excelled at farming (i.e., producing a greater crop than a designated amount) were given silver medal and 250 rubles. Few Podolian colonists were granted awards. See: *Voskhod,* "Spisok Evreev—zemledeltsev, poluchivshikh premii E.G. Gintsburg" (List of Jewish farmers who have received awards from E.G. Ginsburg); 1888, #42 ; RSHA, fond 398, inventory 27, file 10216, Department of Agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

44. For a discussion of the meat tax *(korobka)*, see Chapter 5, "Food"

45. One *funt* equals 400 grams.

46. It is possible that the military exemption for the colonists expired in the late 1860s or early 1870s.

47. These men were leading writers of the Haskaklah. See Chapter 6, "Education."

48. There were also thirty three other households in the colony at the time. However, as they were not part of the original group of settlers, they did not have the right to vote.

49. Gul'dman, V.K., 1889, *Podolskaya Guberniya:* Kamenets-Podolsky, 1889, p. 117, footnote 137.

50. Arcadius Kahan (edited by Roger Weiss), 1989, *Russian Economic History: The Nineteenth Century:* University of Chicago Press, p. 140.

51. Robbins, Richard G., Jr., 1975, *Famine in Russia, 1891-1892:* Columbia University Press, New York.

52. Arcadius Kahan (edited by Roger Weiss), 1989, *Russian Economic History: The Nineteenth Century:* University of Chicago Press, p. 112.

53. Nikitin, V.N. 1894, *Evreiskaya Poselenia:* St. Petersburg, p. 116. Translated from Russian by Kate Shubova.

54. This inventory was recorded by the Letichev police on February 28, 1884 in connection with Rosa's arrest for having an illegal distillery in her house. Kamenets-Podolsky Archives, fond 144, inventory 8, file 3, p. 68-69. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova. For more information , see Chapter 11, "Law and Order"

55. One *sotka* = 100 square meters.

56. One *arshin* equals approximately 28 inches.

57. It is interesting to note that her bedding was among her most valuable personal posessions.

58. *HaMelits,* 3(15) July 1897, #148, p.2; 6(18) August 1897, #176, p.2. Translated from Hebrew by J. Michoel Ronn.

59. These initials stand for *Obschestvo Remeslennago i Zemledcheskago Truda Sredi Evreev v Rossii,* "Society for the Promotion of Crafts and Agriculture Among the Jews of Russia."

60. These initials stand for *Obschestva Rasprostaneniya Prosvescheniya Mezhdu Evreyami Rossii,* "The Society for the Dissemination of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia."

61. *HaMelits,* 14(26) Dec. 1897, # 272, p.5. Translated from Hebrew by J. Michoel Ronn.

62. Samuel Polyakov, 1836-1888, one of the founders of ORT.

63. *Sbornik Materialov ob Ekonomicheskom Polozhenii Evreev v Rossii,* book 1, Jewish Colonization Society, St. Petersburg, 1904 , Table #34. Translated from Russian by Kate Shubova.

64. Joseph Stein, interview, 1980.

65. The figures for 1846, 1858, 1893, 1897, and 1905 include Jews and non Jews. There were approximately ten non-Jewish families in the town, comprised of Ukrainians and gypsies.

66. The facts and figures in the 1876 *Kievlianin* article were probably inaccurate.

67. Kamenets-Podolsky archive.

68. June 29, 1876, # 77, p. 2. The colony of Vasilenka was also known as Veselets. It was located four versts from Karichintsi-Rimoviye. For a history of this colony, see: V. Lyubchenko, "Do Istorii Evreiskoi Zemlerobsckoi Kolonii Veselets Letichivsogo Poviti Podilskoi Gubernii (1850-1862 rr.)", in *Evreiska Istoria Ta Kultura v Ukraini*, Kiev, 1995. Thanks to Vadim Altskan for bringing this to our attention.

69. Kamenets-Podolsky archive, fond 676, inventory 1, file 37, p. 61-80.

70. *Sbornik Materialov ob Ekonomicheskom Polozhenii Evreev v Rossii,* Book 1, Jewish Colonization Society, St. Petersburg, 1904, Table #34.

71. RSHA, fond 571, inventory 1, file 177, p. 62-565. Researched by Elena Tsvetkova.

72. V. Nikitin, 1894, *Evreiski Poselenie 1835-1890,* p. 154-157. Translated by Greg Adamovsky.

73. *Voskhod,* 1887, #10. Translated by Greg Adamovsky.

74. Nikitin, V., 1894, *Evreiskia Poselenia:* St. Petersburg.

75. The 1904 report by the Jewish Colonization society identifies this colony as Bolshoi Bereg.

76. For the post-WWI history of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan, see Chapters 12, 15, and 16 "Pogroms"; "Pogrom Aftermath and Soviet Rule" (including return trips by Stein, Weinstock, etc.); and "Holocaust."

10

Military

by Ben Weinstock

Early References

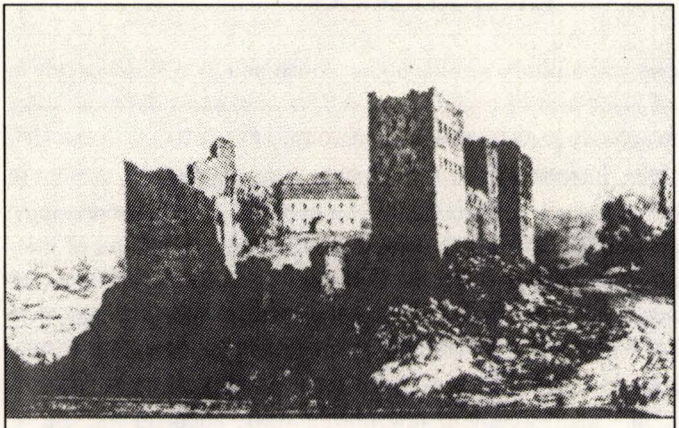
The story of Jews and military service under Polish and then Russian rule is mixed with tales of pride and of humiliation. A few scattered references exist about the Jews who actively participated in the defense of their towns in the 15th through 17th centuries. Interestingly, a 16th century gunner's manual, written in Yiddish, was used to educate Jewish soldiers.[1] Not only did Jews cover one-third to one-half of the expenditures for defense (such as for the acquisition of gunpowder and lead), but they also participated in the construction of fortresses for the town (and synagogue-fortresses for their co-religionists) and participated in military training.[2] A visitor to Polish Ukraine in the late 1500s marveled at how the Jews of the region bore arms, swords, were self-assured, and were not subject to discrimination.[3] Interestingly, a few brazen Jews, adept in the use of weapons, joined the Cossacks.[4] Rabbi Joel Sirkes noted that they were generally outcasts from the community, or apostates.[5]

The Road From Letichev was known as "the bloody road" for generations. Even after the 16th and 17th century massacres by Tatars and Cossacks, the attacks of the Haidamaks, and the attacks that occurred after the Confederation of Bar, Medzhibozh was still occasionally terrorized by bands of Cossacks in the late 18th century. Prince Adam Czartoryski recalled that:

> At [Medzhibozh] we met a large detachment of Cossacks, which gave us the idea of constructing a sort of fortress and feigning attacks upon it. My tutor shut himself up in the fortress with my brother; the besiegers were under the command of Colonel Molski, to whom I acted as *aide-de-camp*. When the day for the attack came, there was much noise and fighting on horseback. M. Siehen, mounted on a very spirited horse and riding at full gallop, encountered one of the Cossacks, and the shock was so violent that Siehen fell from his horse and became insensible. When he recovered consciousness, he had completely lost his memory, and did not recollect what had happened until several days afterwards. The Cossack escaped with a few contusions. Soon after there was almost a real battle between the Cossacks and the inhabitants of the village. I assisted at this fight on horseback.[6]

The Polish military was ineffective in maintaining control of the country in 1793. Poland suffered its second partition and Podolia became part of the Russian Empire.

No compulsory draft had existed under Polish rule. However, under Russian rule, Jews were ineligible for conscription, as they were believed to be mentally and physically unfit for the army. They were forced to pay a compulsory exemption tax of 500 rubles per man in lieu of military service.



Zinkov Castle.
Painted in the mid 1800s by Napoleon Orda.

Standard military bases, and military "colonies" (in which soldiers were allowed to build homes and farm small parcels of land when they were not performing their military duties) were breeding grounds for anti-government (and anti-Semitic) feelings. Officers in different regions secretly plotted to overthrow the Tsar. The "Southern Society"(part of a group later known as "Decembrists"), headquartered in Tulchin, Podolia, had followers throughout the Ukraine. The philosophy of this society was to have a violent revolution and kill the royal family; the new government was to be controlled by the military. Interestingly, one of the leaders

of the Decembrist movement in St. Petersburg was Grigorii Peretts, a radical with Jewish roots. He had been educated by Lev Nevakhovich of Letichev and by Mendel Lefin of Satanov.[7] Another little known part of the Decembrist's plan was the deportation to Asia Minor of all Jews who refused to assimilate. Fortunately for the unenlightened Jews of the Pale of Settlement, the Decembrists were unsuccessful in their 1825 attempted revolution.[8]

The 1827 Military Decree and Forced Conscription

The Recruitment Statute of Jews came into effect on August 26, 1827. There were over one hundred and fifty articles to this law; in subsequent years there would be over one hundred amendments to the original document. A confidential memo written by Tsar Nicholas I stated that "the chief benefit to be derived from the drafting of Jews is the certainty that it will move them most effectively to change their religion; [young recruits are preferred as] the derision of their Christian comrades will influence them more readily to abandon their superstitions than if they were adults."[9] The main points of this law were that:

- Between four and eight Jews were to be recruited from each thousand names taken from the tax lists;
- The recruits could be between the ages of 10 and 25. Those who were over the age of 18 were to serve twenty-five years. Those under 18 were to be taken to special camps, called "Cantonist Units," where they were to serve until they were 25; afterwards, their full military term of twenty-five years was to commence;
- Each recruit was to swear an oath of allegiance to the Tsarist government in Hebrew, while wearing a white robe, prayer shawl and phylacteries, and facing the Holy Ark. The ceremony was to take place in a synagogue with witnesses from the Jewish community and the local government. *Shofar* blasts marked the end of each ceremony.
- The responsibility for the administration of the new law - filling the required quota of recruits - was to be carried out by the elected representative body (i.e. the *kahal*) of each Jewish community. Community leaders who failed to cooperate would receive swift and severe punishments themselves.

Kahal members were allowed to draft vagrants, those who did not pay taxes, and other "undesirables." In later years, those found traveling without passports could be *khapped* - "grabbed," in Yiddish - and be added to those needed for the recruitment list of each community. *Kehalim* began to employ *khappers*, "grabbers," to snatch boys, undesirables, and travelers so as to meet the quotas. These *khappers* were usually petty criminals who were known for their strong-arm tactics. They, and their cohorts, were known to blackmail the Jewish communities for their illegalities. In southern Podolia in 1836, several blackmailers were murdered on orders of the Jewish community leaders.[10] In

Staro Konstantinov, Bershad, and other places, impoverished Jews became violent—breaking the windows of *kahal* members, fearing that the underclass of the town would be those first chosen to serve in the military. The Chasidim of Staro Konstantinov wrote an appeal to God, hoping that divine intervention would lead to the rescinding of the decree; the appeal was "inserted...into the hand of a corpse, so that it would be transmitted to its destination. A wail of woe in the synagogues and a complaint to the Heavenly King against the earthly king could be the only form of a Jewish 'mutiny' at that time."[11] However, it was to be a Chasidic rabbi of Staro Konstantinov who tricked non-Chasidic children into the draft by claiming that the conscription law was being repealed.[12]

Rose Pesotta of Derazhnia recalled that in the early 1900s,

> Elderly men and women told how in their childhood, during the reign of Nikolai I, Jewish boys were kidnapped and kept far away from their families. Later they were thrust into the army and made to serve until they were gray and worn out. Some were persuaded or forced to adopt the Greek Orthodox faith. Released after long, bitter years, veterans would be dumped bodily within the Pale, the authorities not even bothering to find out where they belonged. These men, literally lost souls, were known as *Nikolaever soldaten*, and wandered about in a daze, trying to locate their kindred, whom they remembered only dimly. Our environment was strange to them, and, as Jews, they were not acceptable to the Russians.[13]

Tragic descriptions of young boys taken away from their families are heart-wrenching, such as Herzen's description of a group of children being taken to a military base:

> They brought the children and formed them into regular ranks; it was one of the most awful sight I have ever seen, those poor, poor children ! Boys of twelve or thirteen might somehow have survived it, but little fellows of eight and ten...Pale, exhausted, with frightened faces, they stood in thick, clumsy, soldiers' overcoats, with stand-up collars, fixing helpless, pitiful eyes on the garrison soldiers who were roughly getting them into ranks...And these sick children, without care or kindness...were going to their graves.[14]

However, the detailed story of the brutal lives of these small boys has yet to be fully translated from the Russian. For example, Viktor Nikitin, who would later gain fame as the chronicler of Jewish agricultural colonies,[15] was himself a survivor of the cantonist system and detailed the horrors in his 1873 book *Mnogostradal'nye* ("The Long-suffering"), and in other works. He described how the children became "state property" and were subjected to innumerable tortures

not only in order to have them submit to baptism, but also many times merely for the amusement of their superiors. These boys were forced to stand on broken pieces of bricks; to kneel, holding a heavy weight with outstretched arms, while being whipped; made to endure days of starvation; and other cruelties. It was not uncommon for boys to be sexually abused by older soldiers. Many of the victims contracted venereal disease. During tours of inspection the injured and diseased children were concealed in stables.

Escapes from the military camps were tried, but unsuccessful attempts resulted in severe beatings. After ten attempted escapes the punishment was 4,000 lashes with birch rods. Some boys, noncompliant with military regulations, were actually relieved to be sentenced to forced labor for eight years after surviving the ordeals of the cantonist system: life in a convict labor-gang was actually easier than being a cantonist. Another means of escape from the cantonist life was, sadly, through suicide. Nikitin wrote of an eleven year old Jewish boy who was abused for five months and then forcibly baptized. The boy said, "Who will now take care of me? My mother, is she even alive? ...I've been baptized, I've rejected my family...there's nothing to live for," before hanging himself.[16]

It was rumored that some boys who grew up in the military and underwent baptism eventually rose to high ranks. For example, General Oranovsky was in charge of the military in Medzhibozh from the 1880s until the time of the Russo-Japanese War. He protected the Jews during the time of the pogroms. There had been talk that he was in fact Jewish, but was taken into the Tsar's army as a youth and had been forced to convert. It was said that he was so beloved by the Jews of the town that even the most religious Jews of the Medzhibozh removed their hats at his funeral. Even after his death rumors of his Jewish ancestry persisted; Jews often visited his grave in the Christian cemetery when they took walks on the Sabbath.[17] However, these types of stories of "Jewish roots" were almost always false, as even baptized Jews faced significant discrimination by their superiors and were not allowed to be promoted in the military.[18]

Overall, the tragedy of the *rekrutshchina*, or conscription system, was that it forced Jewish leaders to discriminate against certain Jews (mainly poor youths) who were sacrificed for the greater good of each community. Juvenile conscription was finally banned in 1857, early in the reign of Tsar Alexander II. It has been estimated that of the roughly 70,000 conscripts from 1827 to the mid 1850s, 50,000 of them were minors.[19]

The Last of the Great Czartoryskis

Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770-1861)

An understanding of the Jewish history of Letichev District is incomplete without understanding the role the Polish nobles played in the overall history of the region. No single Polish noble had a greater impact than Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski. Prince Adam was a tragic figure in the history of Poland during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He was heir to the fabulously wealthy

Czartoryski-Sieniawa families—among the wealthiest and most powerful noble family in all of Europe. This noble family owned the towns of Medzhibozh and Zinkov, and had vast estates throughout Podolia. His family was generally benevolent to the Jews and through his ancestors' wise rule of the region, the Jews prospered under Czartoryski family protection.[20]

Polish historians often judge Prince Adam as a traitor rather than a hero.[21] That is probably an unfair evaluation, since throughout his eventful life, Prince Adam was caught in the midst of powerful political forces. When he was in his 20s, he was considered a contender for the Polish throne (which was a noble-elected position). However, before he could ascend the throne, the weak Polish King Stanislaw August Poniatowski was maneuvered into partitioning the Polish Commonwealth by Tsarina Catherine the Great.

Shortly before these events, in 1768 several Polish noble families rose up to challenge the weak leadership in Poland. The Confederation of Bar was led by Jozef Pulaski and his son Casimir Pulaski (later to become a hero in the American War of Independence). Skirmishes in this revolt continued until it was crushed in 1772. Battles took place in the Podolian towns of Bar, Pogorele, Staro Konstantinov, Vinnitsa, Okupy and Tluste. A second insurrection occurred in 1794. This time it was led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko (also a hero of the American War of Independence). The second insurrection was crushed by Polish national forces after only a few months.[22] The nobles who joined the Confederation of Bar and Insurrection of 1794 are sometimes judged by historians as patriots who attempted to regain control and leadership from the weak Polish central government in an attempt to stem the pressures of Russian expansionism. The powerful Czartoryski family stayed on the sidelines during these insurrections. It is still widely believed that if they joined the Confederation of Bar or the Insurrection of 1794, the rebellion would have succeeded and Poland would have remained independent.[23]

After the final partition of Poland in 1795, 25 year old Prince Adam went to St. Petersburg to petition the royal court to recover family property lost in both the Insurrection of 1794 and the takeover of Poland by Russia. There he became friendly with the grand duke and other members of the court. When Alexander I was crowned Tsar in 1801, Prince Adam was called upon to serve, first as Russia's deputy minister of foreign affairs in 1802, then as foreign minister in 1804. During his term, he established close ties between Russia and Britain. However, against Prince Adam's advice, the Tsar sent an expeditionary force to fight alongside Britain in 1805 against Napoleon. The force was defeated, and Prince Adam was blamed for the debacle. In 1806, he was dismissed from his office.[24]

Prince Adam's interest in Jewish matters probably stemmed from his family's close association with Jews on his Podolian estates. Called upon by the Tsar to help formulate a policy concerning the large population of Jews newly-acquired by the Russian Empire, Prince Adam was a member of the Jewish reform committees in

1802, 1806 and 1807. In this role, he advocated a liberal policy of Jewish assimilation. This was considered anti-Jewish at the time. For instance, he denied a request for permission to publish a Yiddish newspaper in Vilna because he felt that Jews should use the Russian language to bring them closer to their neighbors. His radical views about assimilation of the Jews were modified over the years. He ultimately supported Jewish emancipation, at first only after Jews underwent a process of assimilation. Later, he unconditionally supported Jewish emancipation on equal terms with the emancipation of Polish serfs. In his later years, he helped promote various leaders of the Jewish Haskalah movement, including Mendel Lefin Satanover, who also served as a tutor for his children.[25]

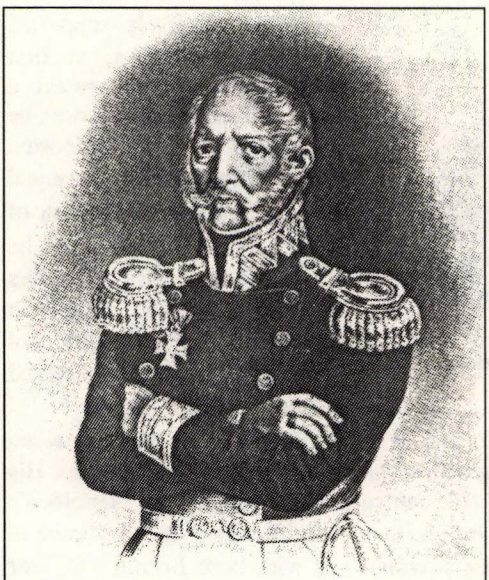
Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski.

During Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, Prince Adam secretly sided with Napoleon against Russia, along with several other Polish noble families. His dream of a Poland independent of Russian rule was crushed with Napoleon's defeat. As the chief spokesman for Polish interests in the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and benefitting from his close personal ties with both Britain and Tsar Alexander I, he obtained nominal independence of the Kingdom of Poland through the establishment of a parliament (the *Sejm*). However, Prince Adam's vision of Polish independence was a hollow one, as his friend the Tsar forced the *Sejm* to be merely a puppet government of Russia. Disillusioned, Prince Adam resigned from public life in 1816 and returned to his vast estates.[26]

THE POLISH UPRISING

From the time of his ascension to the throne in 1825, Tsar Nicholas I ruled the Kingdom of Poland with an iron hand. Nicholas had himself crowned King of Poland in May of 1829. In a move which further infuriated the Poles, Prince Constantine (the brother of the Tsar) was appointed governor of Warsaw. His despotic rule led to numerous secret parties of conspirators who planned to fight Russia and to give birth to a new independent Poland. The spirit of patriotism burst forth in Warsaw on November 29, 1830 with an attempt to assassinate Constantine. The young officers of the Polish militia, along with older veterans of the wars of Napoleon, organized over 80,000 men in the war against Russia.

The Polish *Sejm* voted for the dethronement of Tsar Nicholas in January 1831. Sixty-one year old Prince Adam Czartoryski, who eight years earlier had entertained Tsar Alexander and his wife at a country house in Volosovtsy (near Medzhibozh), reluctantly was recruited to lead the opposition to break away from the Russian government. Prince Adam was to be the head of the newly formed Polish government.[27] In early successes, the new Polish army defended Warsaw against Russian troops, and insurgents in Lithuania and the Ukraine also planned to march towards Warsaw.



General Bernard Kolyszko.
Leader of the rebel Polish army in Podolia.

Initially the Polish rebels of Podolia gathered in Granov in the manor of Czartoryski. Approximately 3,000 rebels (divided into 17 squadrons and two companies of riflemen) were commanded by the eighty-two year old General Bernard Kolyszko. In April the insurgents moved their base of operations to the stately manor of the Potockis in Dashev, two miles away. As huge sums of money and supplies from the rich landowning families of Czartoryski, Potoki, Sobanski, Elovitski and others poured into Dashev, the soldier recruits practiced shooting, fencing, and military maneuvers.

Czartoryski made the horses from his stud farm available. Music sounded on the square everyday; barrels of beer were brought ; young ladies came to dance with the rebels. Each day a clerk went to the square and enrolled all those who wished to join the army. These men received five rubles, a pair of black pants, a glass of vodka, and a hat with blue feathers (blue being the national color of Poland) and were registered in the Polish army. This festive and optimistic mood led to proclamations that Jews were exempt from military service. However, a few Jews in Dashev actually joined the volunteers. Old Believers also supported the Polish insurgents. In other points in Podolia (and other parts of the Ukraine), Poles were cajoled to join the Uprising. Erasmus Dobrovolski was administrator of the estates of Czartoryski in Stavnitsa. In an attempt to get the local peasants to rise up, he "summoned ten retainers and lied to them, that Czartoryski had become the king of Poland and demanded their aid. They agreed to join the rising but the lesser *szlachta* were not as eager." After

giving the tenant *szlachta* six rubles each, he noted that "but for shame I must record here that some were so base that they took the money, but when it came time to mounting on a horse there was not a sign of them."[28]

A great celebration was organized in Dashev during the week of Easter. The Polish youths spent nights on drinking sprees. One party led to another, and the Poles delayed the day of starting a movement towards Warsaw. These delays, combined with lack of training, experience, and manpower, would prove to be fatal for the Uprising.

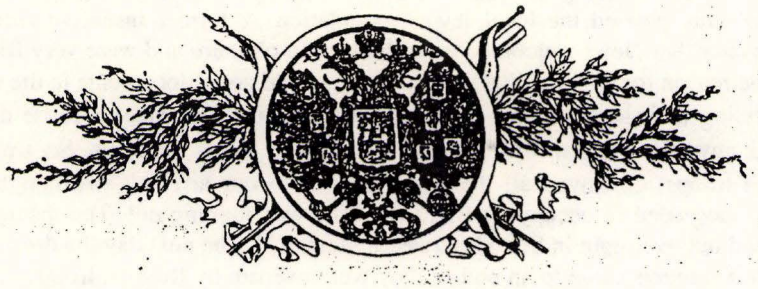
Commander Ben Rott of the 5th Russian infantry corps of Bessarabia received orders to preserve law and order in Podolia. With several additional detachments, he hastily sent troops through Kamenets-Podolsky, to Shargorod, Ladyzhin, Gaysin, Granov, and on to Dashev. There, on May 14, hundreds of surprised Polish rebels were killed by artillery fire and in hand to hand fighting. Others drowned in the Soba River and in a small nearby pond. Fields and roads were studded with the corpses of insurgents. A small number of rebels managed to hide in Jewish-owned inns, attics, and cellars.

Surviving rebel troops succeeded in escaping north towards Letichev. However, an uprising of 400 rebels was put down by the Russian militia of Letichev on May 18. On May 22 the Polish troops were able to take control of the municipal building of Bar, where they destroyed local government documents. This pleased the local Jewish population. A former insurgent recalled years later that "Jews welcomed us with extreme pleasure and were very friendly. The reason for this was that there were some old court documents in the town describing their legal dispute between them and the government. These documents gave the Russian officials the authority to extort the Jews. So we (the Polish troops) destroyed all the documents upon our arrival."[29] Although the Poles succeeded in occupying Bar, their time was running out. The insurgents camped out overnight in Staro Zakrevsky Meidan.[30] The next day the dreams of the Polish rebels came to an end as they were overrun by Russian troops. Three hundred rebels were killed in the bloodiest Podolian battle of the Uprising. The Polish Major Orlikowski, "beholding the defeat, threw down the sword with which he had defended the cannon to the last, and shot himself in the presence of the victorious army.'[31] General Rott's regiments moved towards Khmelnik and Medzhibozh in order to block the way to Volhynia, preventing any northern movements of the scattered bands of surviving rebels. Seven hundred wounded and shaken rebels regrouped and decided to attempt an escape to Poland. They made their way through western Podolia via Sharovka and Satanov. In Austria many were captured, but some actually did succeed in escaping to Poland. General Kolyszko was imprisoned . He died ten months later in Lvov. The summer months proved disastrous for both the Poles and the Russians as the cholera epidemic swept through military camps and hospitals. The movement of troops was another vector for the spread of the disease, and thousands of soldiers died on both sides.[32]

By the end of 1831 the Polish Uprising was crushed, with Russia victorious. Prince Adam Czartoryski, sentenced to death by the Tsar, avoided punishment by fleeing to Paris. He spent the rest of his life in self-imposed exile in his Paris home "Hotel Lambert," which became a center of Polish political activities.[33] Tens of thousands of Polish families (including five thousand in Podolia) were stripped of all of their landholdings, reclassified as serfs, and were exiled to Siberia or the Caucasus. Podolian rebels who were captured in Austria were interred at Czortkow, Czernowitz and Sanok. In 1833 Russian officials, fearing the proximity of these Polish patriots, demanded that they be exiled. Within the next two years they were taken to Trieste where they were put on frigates bound for America.[34]

MEDZHIBOZH: A NEW MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

In 1837 the Russian Military Department took control over vast amounts of land in Podolia. The estates of Czartoryski and other supporters of the Uprising reached the final stage of confiscation.



Russian Empire Military Insignia.

Czartoryski alone lost over 37,000 acres of land and over 15,000 serfs.[35] Some confiscated lands were sold to Jews who participated in the government program of Jewish agricultural colonization. By the late 1830s, Medzhibozh, Goloskov, Davidkovtsy, Tereshovtsy, Shrubkovo, Molomalintsy, Panikovtsy, and Peregovtsy became Russian military colonies in the Letichev District.[36] New houses were constructed and the soldiers began to farm small parcels of land. Most military personnel, headquartered in Letichev, moved to the new headquarters in Medzhibozh. Although a fair amount of information exists about the military presence in Medzhibozh, little information exists about the state of affairs in the smaller military colonies. However, it has been documented that there were uprisings amongst the troops stationed in Goloskov. The harsh, regimented life of the soldier-farmers prompted a riot in 1842. After a visit from a

certain Count Nikitin, 65 families were removed from Goloskov and sent to Kherson. Another uprising in 1844 resulted in the removal of another 20 families. Dissension continued until 1857, when all of the soldier-farmers of Goloskov were taken out of the military colonies and were reclassified as serfs.[37]

No new military colonies were established after 1861. In 1884 more barracks were built in Medzhibozh, with beautiful domiciles for officers.[38] From 1869 until 1930, Medzhibozh was the summer training camp not only for the 12th Infantry division,[39] but also for the entire Kiev military district. Over the years, the influx of military personnel had stimulated the economic growth of the town. Many Jews had moved to Medzhibozh, where they found work as traders and craftsmen.[40]

Zina Celniker remembered the military regiment of Medzhibozh in the late 1880s:

> A military regiment was permanently stationed in our town. To the townspeople, it provided a diversion and enlivened the town in many ways. Of special interest was the occasional parade of soldiers accompanied with military music. This was a treat to the children and adults, alike. The only other music ever heard in the town occurred at weddings--a rare occurrence in a town as small as Medzhibozh. Another object of attraction were the fashionably dressed officers and their families, usually seen in the business section of the town. It provided a colorful touch to the drabness of the town and to the majority of the poorly-dressed citizens. One more top attraction was the horse races held frequently during the summer months. It was a highlight for me in particular. It used to fascinate me to watch the sleek horses trotting gracefully to the tune of military marches, with their elegantly dressed riders on their backs.
>
> My admiration for the elegant officers ended abruptly one fine day. I was a bystander when I happened to witness the heavy hand of authority upon a subordinate. I could never erase from my memory the scene I witnessed. As a young as I was (about six or seven) I nevertheless sensed the injustice of it. One fine sunny day I was standing near my grandmother's store idly watching the officers doing their daily shopping while soldiers waited to carry home their goods. I noticed that one of the officers was instructing a young soldier to purchase some plums for him in the open market where fruits and vegetables were being sold. Within a short time the soldier returned carrying a quantity of plums in the folded end of his coat. Judging by what followed, the purchase was not satisfactory to the officer as you could see by the savage expression upon his face. The officer commanded the soldier to attention in front of a crowd of people who watched with both indignation and sympathy for the soldier. The officer then started to pick the plums, one-by-one, and with evident relish threw them into the soldier's face. His marksmanship was perfect, and the number of plums seemed inexhaustible. To augment his pleasure, the officer did his deed

in a leisurely fashion. He did this not only to prolong the soldier's agony but also the shame before a crowd of onlookers.

The soldier dared not wink an eye nor turn his head away—he was as immobile as a wooden statue. But the officer seemed to enjoy his display of authority, looking around smiling cruelly for approval from the crowd. I presume that even he could hardly fail to notice the horror in the people's eyes. Still, he shamelessly continued his performance. After all, what did he care? The people's eyes watching him rated no higher in his estimation than did the soldier he was humiliating. I was a mere child, yet without understanding the entire situation, the humiliating act impressed me so deeply that I can still visualize the entire scene in every detail. This was my first initiation into a world of man's inhumanity to man, and it never faded from my memory. The passage of nearly seventy years has failed to dim the image of the humiliated expression on the soldier's face and the cruel glee in the officer's eyes. In later years whenever I was tempted to indulge myself in some ridicule of anyone, no matter how trivial, I immediately stopped myself by recalling the memory of this particular day in my childhood.[41]

Dora Zichroni recalled some soldiers in Medzhibozh around the time of the first World War:

Before the Revolution the Tsar's army was in town. They sent in a large amount of soldiers because perhaps they expected trouble. So a lot of soldiers came to Medzhibozh and there was no more room at the soldiers' barracks. So they came into town to find places to sleep. Three soldiers came to our house. They said that they had no place to sleep. My mother said, " I have five children, I don't know where I'm going to put you." The soldiers said, " We don't care."

They were musicians--part of the army band. My mother gave them the big room where my brothers slept. In that room there were two couches and a very large table. They put their instruments on the table. My mother gave them the food that she had. My entire family slept in a small bedroom without windows for as long as they stayed—a few days. The soldiers were very nice. They let me and my little brother go into their room. They played their big drum and other instruments and we were always allowed to listen to them when they were rehearsing.

In those days we were not afraid of these soldiers. They were not killers and they didn't come to harm the Jews[42]

THE DRAFT LOTTERY: 1874 AND LATER

Dos yohr hot sikh nor avekgerykt
Un do yohr hot nor ongeheiben zu geihn,--
Asei hot men mir a Powiestke araingeschickt,
As ikh darf haintigs yohr zum Prisyv steihn.

Der Tate mit der Mamen geihen ba die saiten
Un klogen : " Zum Prisyv fihrt men dikh azynd !"
Bittere geschreinen, oy, her ikh vun vaiten
"Bet a gut quittel far main kind !"

Eider ikh hob nokh dem nummer " siebezehn" arausgezeigen,
Asei is mir finster gevoren in maine eigen;
Die thir auf arauszugeihn,
Oy, hob ikh schoin nit gefunnen,
As ikh hob gehert vun die eltern
Dos weiinen un brummen !

The year was just barely over,
The new year had just begun,--
When I received a notification
That I was being called to the draft lottery.

My mother and father don't leave my side
And lament : "You're being drafted now !"
Bitter cries I hear in the distance :
"Pray for a good number for my child !"

Even before I had drawn the number "seventeen,"
Everything went black before my eyes;
I couldn't find the exit door,
When I heard my parents crying and wailing ![43]

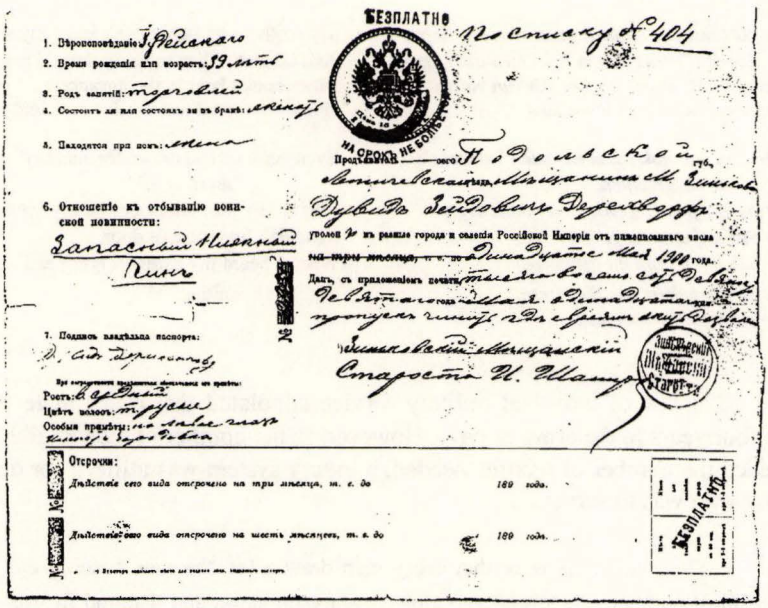
The 1874 law of universal military service stipulated that every male must serve four years in the army or navy. However, as the number of men eligible far exceeded the number of recruits needed, a lottery system was utilized for determining who was to serve:

> ...the regulations were that every man draw a lot; the man holding the smallest number was to undergo a physical examination and if found fit was to serve in the army or navy; the next who drew the next larger number was also examined, and enrolled as a soldier if the examination was satisfactory, and this was continued until the necessary number of men needed for the army and navy was secured. The remainder must stay at home as a reserve...Such an arrangement was a just one, and no fault could be found with these regulations; but there was another order attached to it, pertaining to the Jews, that subjected them to injustice and suffering...an order came from the Ministry of the Interior, giving the officials upon whom rested the responsibility of drafting men into the army the full power to summon any Jew whose record of age they doubted, to appear before them and determine his age according to their own judgement.[44]

There were two times for the military "call-up" each year : in early March and in late November. The number of men taken into the army varied from town to town and from year to year. The news that no males were drafted was a cause for celebration; for example, a correspondent from Zinkov happily proclaimed in the Hebrew language newspaper *HaMelits* in 1883 that "none of our boys aged 21 and under were called to army duty this past year."[45] Not only did young Jewish

men and their families feel apprehensive about the draft, but tavern keepers and other residents also worried, as Meir Kantorshtik reported in 1896:

> This is the time for calling up young men here in Letichev. Since many young gentiles were called to serve in the army, all of the drinking establish-



Russian Military Passport.
This document permits Duvid Derekhvorf to travel in certain parts of Russia. Courtesy of Irvin Darivoff.

Left Side

1. Religion: Jewish
2. Age: 39
3. Occupation: Commerce
4. Married: Yes
5. Accompanied by: Wife
6. Liability to be called to Army Reserve duty: Eligible as a basic soldier
7. Signature: Duvid Derekhvorf
(In case of illiteracy mark)
Height: A little bit higher than middle
Hair color: dark blond
Special marks: small wart on left eye lid.

Right Side

Bearer: from the shtetl Zinkov in the district of Letichev in the Province of Podolia is a petty bourgeois named Durid Zaidovich (son of Zaido) Derekhvorf who may travel to various towns and cities until May 11, 1900. This document was sealed on May 11, 1899. However, he may only visit places where Jewish people are allowed to live.

signed by the head of the shtetl
Shapiro

No Fee

ments were closed here during the call-up period. It was feared that they would become intoxicated and cause problems, like they do every year.[46]

The lists of who was to be considered for military service were based upon local tax records and birth registers. If the lists were not updated, as in the case of a boy whose death was not officially recorded, the family was still held responsible for producing a recruit. If the replacement (such as a brother of the deceased) could not be found, the family was to pay a fine of 300 rubles. The Russian historian Kulisher wrote of the case of Yakov Rozenblat of Letichev, who was killed in a pogrom. Rozenblat was later called for the army. His family underwent a bureaucratic nightmare for years trying to prove that he was in fact deceased.[47] Another reporter commented that:

> ...these conscription lists were compiled upon the basis of the village or district registers. The way in which these are kept in itself suggests a whole chapter on Russian administration. It is enough here to point out that that at its birth every male child is put on the registers by the doctor, but if he dies his name can only be taken off by the certificate of the village priest or pope. This affords one of the means of livelihood which the pope watches most closely and employs most profitably. Unless the dead urchin's name is removed from the register, the family is liable to produce him, or an equivalent, as a recruit when the twenty-one years have elapsed. But in the case of Jews the pope cannot certify to the death of a child. The parent must apply in person for a death certificate to the Governor of the province and bring witnesses. This means a long journey and great expense, which not one in a score can afford. The result is that many names are carried on in the registers to the military age of Jewish boys who died in infancy.[48]

Moreover, a simple clerical error, such as the misspelling of a boy's name, could lead to disastrous results:

> ....it must be noted that the Russian authorities, whilst forbidding the Jews to give Slav names to their children, are but little acquainted with Hebraic pronomens, and therefore the same young man may be described twice over, both under his actual name and surname, or under his actual name, and the same name wrongly written. Or a name having been badly spelled in a certificate of death, the deceased may be summoned to appear, and his father will be called upon to pay the usual fine of 300 rubles for a defaulter...[49]

In Medzhibozh in 1881, the conscription list was accurate:

> In our town of Medzhibozh the call-up has ended. All Jews, with the exception of three, appeared. They were classified into 1st and 2nd categories. Mr.

> Denisov, assistant of the mayor, had lists of Jews who were subject to the selection. Due to this measure all deceased individuals were stricken from the list of those who were to be selected for service.[50]

However, the situation was different in 1884:

> The current call up for Jews has an unsatisfactory finish; the call-up lists were poorly kept. There were persons who had already gone to meet their ancestors. For example, a certain "N.", had a brother who died at the age of 4 months. Although 100 people testified that his brother had died, "N." was deprived of military deferment.[51]

THE LIFE OF THE JEWISH SOLDIER

Although the Jews constituted only 3.95% of the population of European Russia, the army conscriptions for a period of twelve years (1875-1886) showed that Jewish soldiers made up 5.97% of the army, a disproportionate number.[52] A writer in the early 1890s reported:

> Yet there is no lie of which Russian writers and apologists are more fond of than that the Jews continually evade their military duties. The truth is that, by a device of counting dead men, they are called upon for much more than their proper share of the annual recruiting force, and the very operation of this trick is made a reproach to them. As for asking for military enthusiasm among the Jews, let it not be forgotten that no Jew can become an officer in the Russian army, or even an officer's servant, and that the Military Regulations are studded thick with insulting and injurious references to and restrictions upon him and his religion.[53]

All soldiers struggled with the stress of military life. Military camps were often breeding grounds for a wide variety of epidemic diseases. The endless hours of exhausting drills led to frequent mistakes, which were usually dealt with by superiors in the form of corporal punishment. Overall, there were few significant improvements in the emotional and physical health conditions of soldiers in the nineteenth-century.[54] Here is a description of the harsh life of a typical Jewish soldier:

> Next day the selection of men for the different regiments of the army and navy began. They were segregated according to height, weight, etc. This work was generally done by the clerks first; later, the officer in command examined the men by looking over each man separately.

Abraham stood in line with those assigned to the navy.

The commander passed along the line, examining the men. He stopped and looked at Greenburg.

"Are you a Jew?" asked the officer.

"Yes, Your Honor," came the reply.

"Two steps forward," came the command.

Greenburg obeyed.

Turning to one of the clerks, the officer called, "Stepanov, you are a blockhead! It is time for you to know that Jews are not allowed in our navy."

There is no particular reason why Jew should be kept out of the navy, except that in the navy the pay is higher, the food better, and also the clothing. So Greenburg was assigned to one of the division regiments...Three days later all the recruits started on a seventy-five verst march...

Greenburg could not at first eat the food, because pork was used in it, and it was repulsive to him to swallow it. He tried to live on bread alone, but it was noticed by the [sergeant], who promptly slapped his face, and told him that he must eat the food or he would be reported to the superiors, and punishment would surely follow. So he was compelled to eat the food...

The [sergeant] was drilling the recruits. The first lessons were just plain evolutions, such as "Right, left, right, left,"etc. It was very simple, but the peasants next to Greenburg on both sides did not know or could not remember when told, which was right or left, and they were constantly bumping against him and spoiling everything. The [sergeant] cursed and delivered blows to the guilty and innocent alike.

The drilling over, the recruits were put to work, cleaning up their quarters, which consisted of scrubbing, and general housework.

The uniforms distributed to the recruits were all shabby and patched, and it was required of every man to mend his own uniform, shine the buttons, blacken his own boots, and wash his own clothes. When the rifles were distributed to them, they were made to keep the bayonets shining and greasy, using the fat of a candle for that purpose, the candles being bought with the recruit's own money.

In the evening, the [sergeant] instructed them in *Sloviestnost*. This means that every soldier must memorize the names of the whole royal family, from Tsar and Tsarina down...some of the names and titles were of German origin, and could be traced to the time of Elizabeth, and were an impossibility for the Russian peasants to pronounce. All the recruits were ordered to stand in line in front of the benches...each was asked all the names and titles of the immediate family of the Tsar and Tsarina. That was easy, but when it came to more distant members of the Royal family,—that was different. Should he fail to answer correctly, the next man to him was told to hit him squarely in the jaw, and knock

him down. Should the second man in line fail in his answer, then [he would receive the same punishment]...and so it was kept up a whole evening; at the end of the lessons, nearly all of the recruits were badly bruised...

In the summer, the whole regiment went to [another camp], the vicinity around this place being suitable for maneuvers. This was the hardest work, drilling and marching all day and everyday, carrying the knapsacks stuffed with underwear, boots, etc., the heavy gray overcoat rolled up and put across the shoulder, two leather-covered boxes about six inches long, three inches wide, and three inches deep, filled with cartridges attached to a leather belt, and the "Berdanka," a sixteen pound breech-loading rifle. These maneuvers continued for about three months each summer...so continued the monotonous life in the army from day to day, and month to month...

Letters came from his family from time to time, but they were very disheartening...in addition to the hard struggle the family was having to support themselves, they also had to send Greenburg money from time to time, because the money he received from the government, 90 kopecks, every four months, was a mere stipend, and not sufficient to provide the current miscellaneous articles that were necessary to every soldier...[55]

THE AVOIDANCE OF MILITARY SERVICE

Military service was avoided in several ways: by going on the run; by physical mutilation;by bribery; by the dividing of families; or by participating in government programs. Those in the Letichev District who were declared exempt from service were given red or green certificates, and had to report to Kamenets-Podolsky, escorted by soldiers, to verify their exemption.[56]

• *Dodging the draft.* Going on the run was possibly the most common way for conscripts to avoid duty. In recognition of this problem, the government ruled in 1828 that state peasants who went into hiding should be sent to recruiting stations as soon as they were caught. Further legislation in 1831 forced all runaways, regardless of the standard height, weight, and other physical requirements, into service. A subsequent law penalized communities which hid runaway conscripts: for every missing recruit, two were ordered to serve. Moreover, individuals who failed to provide the men for the new quota were to be fined, whipped, or sent to Siberia. However, despite all of theses laws, dodging the draft continued.[57] Some from Podolia fled to Bessarabia, where there was no draft for most of the 19th century.[58] Many left the Russian Empire for North and South America to avoid military service.

• *Physical mutilation.* In order to be declared physically unfit for military service some men contacted local "fixers," who knew how to produce physical impairments. It is not known who these people were. Some may have been feldshers; others may have been ex-soldiers. They had some basic knowledge of human anatomy, military regulations, and how to produce disabilities. It appears that just about every community had someone who served this purpose. Yosef Zinshteyn of Staro Zakrevsky Meidan remembered a man from a nearby village who knew how to puncture eardrums, pull out a sufficient number of teeth, and deform trigger fingers;[59] Dora Zichroni's grandfather, Moshe Pollack, served a similar function in Medzhibozh;[60] and Acey Saxon of Zinkov told of a local man who knew how to "make a knee" by shooting into the joint. However, these methods were not without risk. Saxon remembered a boy who died from gangrene after having his knee "made."[61] Leib Singer, a gifted Talmudic scholar who lived in Zinkov in the early 1900s, was "protected" from the draft in a similar manner. His eardrum was perforated, rendering him deaf in one ear. He paid for his successful avoidance of the draft by being hard of hearing for the rest of his life.[62] If deliberate mutilations were discovered by the authorities, the unlucky man could be forced to run a gauntlet of hundreds of blows. If he survived this he would be assigned a regimental duty of which he was physically capable of performing. If he was unfit for any job, he would be sent to Siberia.[63]

Rose Pesotta spoke about elderly soldiers at the turn of the century:

> In my time in Derazhnia, there were old men in the town with a thumb missing, an eye gone, an ear-drum perforated, or a foot maimed--injuries self-inflicted to avoid being drafted for four years of military service required of every male in Russia at the age of twenty-one. They had preferred going through life handicapped to serving in an army where Jewish conscripts, and Russians as well, were treated like cattle...[64]

• *Bribery.* From the time of the 1827 law until the abolition of *kehalim* in 1844, wealthy Jewish families were able to bribe *kahal* members to avoid military service for their sons. Afterwards, it was either Jewish name-list compilers or Russian officials who received graft to provide exemptions. As the overwhelming majority of the Jewish (and non-Jewish) population was destitute, bribery as a means of avoiding documentation, and therefore military service, could not be practiced by the poor. Numerous cases of abuses by Jewish representatives authorized to accurately record the population for taxation and for the military were discovered in Letichev the late 1840s. The following people had tried to avoid documentation: Moshka Shunblat, Shloma Giltman, Leiba Fixman, Shmarka Fies, Moshe Kats, Berka Gabai, Gershka Grinberg, Gershka Fudim, Abrashka Rabin, Sh. Veitsbukh, Eliukim Bik, Shmul Gertsman, Aron Rifman, Khaim Makogan, Srul Sagan. Their appeal to avoid fines was denied by the Ministry of Finance and by the Military Governor of Kamenets-Podolsky[65]

The frustration of the impoverished is revealed in an 1852 letter written by a man of Chichelnik (southeastern Podolia) to the Minister of the Interior Bibikov:

> We write to you with our tears. Those rich people are to blame. We've already given two recruits each, but our money and our souls are being wiped out... the richest in Chichelnik...all have big families, with three or four working members in each. But what happens when there's a draft call?
>
> ...The richest man in town...and his two sons pay less in taxes than the poorest one of us. Besides, one of his sons should have been drafted a long time ago, but he had his younger son listed on the census as being much younger than he is and now the other son cut off his toe [to avoid the draft]. And even though we reported this right away to the bailiff, he too is on their payroll and he hushed the whole thing up...Please take pity on us. Read our words carefully and be sure to report it to Kamenets...[66]

In 1914 Letichev became known as a place where military exemptions could be purchased. A scandal erupted when a military commander, General Bistrovsky, a district police officer, and other officials were arrested after an investigation revealed that they were releasing men from the draft for large sums of money. In addition, several doctors were discharged from their duties after it was found that they had been been bribed to give false reports on draftees.[67]

• *Dividing of families.* As the law permitted exemption for only sons, families with two or more sons tried to have childless or son-less families legally adopt one of their boys. In 1828 it was permitted for Jewish families to be "divided" from large ones to small ones. This gave rise to countless situations in which brothers could each have different surnames. Applications had to be made to the Minister of Finance detailing the request for the proposed split of families. One such application from Letichev in 1857 was signed by the leaders of the Letichev Jewish community: Nukhil (?) Kurtsman, Itsko Karafin, Ios Tabak, Shmuil Kortschmon, starosta Goldisman, and Crown Rabbi Nusin Burshteyn.[68]

• *Early marriages.* Until the 1835 "Statute on the Jews" forbidding males from marrying until the age of 18, many early marriages took place; single recruits were favored over married recruits :

> The Jews were known to marry very young; at eighteen, boys had to be married--that was the custom. The order that married people were exempt from service in the army meant that all Jewish boys over eighteen years were exempt from service. Naturally, boys at the age of seventeen were within the danger zone. Now if eighteen-year old boys were eligible to marry, why not stretch a

point, in case of emergency, and marry at seventeen? The government did not interfere, or lay any rules regarding Jewish marriages. The ceremony was very simple and could be performed by any rabbi. So, seventeen-year-old boys were married in a hurry, then, sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, and finally, thirteen year old boys were married; that is,--the ceremony was performed, the girl was lead home by her parents, and in a few days or weeks the couple forgot that they were married, and often both of them were soundly spanked by their respective parents for some mischief...[69]

• *Participation in government-sponsored programs.* In recognition for participating in government programs which aimed to "Russify" the population, Jews who became agricultural colonists where excused from military service for twenty-five or fifty years. Jews who joined one of the three merchant guilds, or became members of state artisan guilds, were also exempt. Another means of avoiding military service was to be enrolled in a state school. Many traditional Jewish parents, who resisted secular educations for their sons, reconsidered their positions after the 1874 military reform which significantly reduced the length of military service for those who attained high educational degrees. The number of Jewish students in gymnasiams doubled between 1870 and 1879.[70] Rabbis were also exempt from the draft, possibly because it was assumed that their cooperation would be needed to help administer the call-ups.

CARE OF JEWISH SOLDIERS

Oy, Fraitig, oy, Fraitig var nakht	Oh, Friday, Sabbath Eve,
Sainen mir gesessen all vartrakht;	We were all sitting deep in thought;
Mir vollten gegangen zu a Yiden af Shabbes,--	We would have gone to some Jew for the Sabbath,
hot der Feldfebel a Povyerke gemakht.	But the Sergeant-Major ordered an inspection.
Oy, Shabbes, oy, Shabbes ganz frie	Oh, on the Sabbath,on the Sabbath, quite early
Hot men gegeben a geshrei :	Someone screamed :
"Na utschenye vykhodi !"	"Basic training!"
Zi hot men gegessen, zi hot men getrunken ?--	Did we even eat, did we even drink?
A patsch khapt men derzy.	And on top of that, we were slapped around.
Oy, brider, oy, brider,	Oh brothers, oh brothers,
Mir sainen Soldaten, mir sainen in frem de hand;	We are soldiers, we are in strange hands;
Oy, brider,oy brider,	Oh brothers, oh brothers,
Mir hoben varspielt unser velt !	We have forfeited our world ![71]

Care of the Jewish soldiers stationed in Medzhibozh was of great concern to Rabbi Heshel and other leaders of the town. Yakov Tselniker stated, "It pleases us to report that so many people came forward and donated money to help

support the Jewish soldiers " in his 1881 article in *HaMelits*.[72] One of Rabbi Heshel's disciples reported in 1885 that:

> ...over 600 Jewish soldiers stationed in the army are forced to eat forbidden foods during the entire week. When they come into town on the weekends for the Sabbath or for Jewish holidays, they suffer from malnutrition. The people of our town invite the soldiers to share their food with them. There are also people who go around town in order to feed the soldiers. But much to their disappointment, they are unable to collect much money. During the past year when Rabbi Yisraelik (Heshel) tried to collect money, he was not very successful either. The soldiers ate very bad food--it was not kosher, and dirty; the bread was dry and spoiled.[73]

In 1884 Rabbi Heshel had spent approximately 1,000 rubles of his own money to purchase kosher food for the soldiers.[74] For five kopecks, a Jewish soldier could purchase cabbage soup, cereal, with 200 grams of bread in the "inexpensive kitchen" of Medzhibozh.[75] On Nov. 15, 1884, forty-five Jews appeared at the call-up commission in Medzhibozh; however, only ten men were needed. Each of the men picked received 200 rubles from the community of Medzhibozh.[76]

It was very common for local Jews to take Jewish soldiers into their homes as guests. Rose Pesotta recalled a house guest in the family home in Derazhnia in the late 1890s:

> Friday night, on the eve of the Sabbath, we had a guest for supper. Dad brought home from the synagogue a young Jewish soldier who was stationed at an army base in the interior of Russia... Bashful and painfully polite when he first sat down, he relaxed after he had wine and food. Father began drawing him out. The soldier came from another city in Ukraine. His family were merchants... His tongue loosened, the boy talked readily. "I can't complain. We're treated like the rest of them. The food is not bad. I've been lucky--being a musician in the band--I play the flute. But they talk of other camps where the officers make life miserable for Jews."[77]

PROUD SOLDIERS

Despite all of the hardships against Jews in the military, there are also stories of the Jews who took their military duties seriously despite all of the hardships placed in front of them. The *maskil* Israel Aksenfeld of Nemirov, Podolia wrote a play in 1861 on this theme, entitled *Der Ershter Yidisher Rekrut* (The First Jewish Recruit). Aksenfeld proposed that Jews should not run from military

service, as it was actually a sign that Jews had the potential to participate as equals with other ethnic groups of the Russian Empire.[78]

Isaak Peisoty of Derazhnia had served four years in a military camp in Litin. He believed that military duty was beneficial as it taught men how to defend themselves, and their own people:

> Every young Jew ought to make the most of his opportunity in his four years of Army service. Those who are alert must learn a trade--though many of them don't. Even if a soldier has no training before--unless he expects to join his family in business--with a little stamina and will power he can become a skilled barber, tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, or blacksmith, while working at one of these skills in the Army. But above all, the young men must learn their own strength and how to use the weapons at hand in self-defense. I know this from practical experience. For the only language the Russian authorities can understand, and always respect, is their own language--strength, force, and power.[79]

Isaak Peisoty ca. 1913.

Berel Sedulsky (named changed to Barnett Sedell after he came to America) was born in Medzhibozh in 1857, and was proud to be one of the few Jews who served in the Russian cavalry. When he was asked by his children how he had managed without kosher food, he replied "I ate *trafe*, it tasted just as good."[80]

The following was recalled by Dena Singer Zimmerman of Letichev:

> Sam Zimmerman, my brother-in-law, was particularly proud of his army duty. He had reason to be, since he had a relatively easy life as an orderly for a high-ranking Russian officer. He was also fortunate to be stationed near his hometown of Letichev, so he could return to his parents house on weekends. Sometime during the winter of either 1901 or 1902 he was the horse-sleigh driver for his commander, who was attending a lavish formal ball at a nearby manor house. During the evening, while he waited outside in the cold for the party to end, Sam decided to have some fun. He secretly drove the sleigh over the snowbound ROAD FROM LETICHEV and into our town to picked up his brother Morris (my husband) and me for a joy ride. Wrapping ourselves up in the officer's luxurious furs, Sam drove the two of us to the manor house. Surreptitiously, we peaked through the windows to watch the party. Inside, officers wore their finest dress uniforms with capes over one shoulder. Everyone wore white gloves. After each dance, servants would come to each man and give them a new pair of white gloves. The opulence impressed me very much. Before the night was over, Sam secretly returned us to our Letichev home. Sam's officer never knew the incident took place. But we remembered it for the rest of our lives.[81]

Jews were documented as being exemplary soldiers in the Crimean War in 1864, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78,[82] the Russo-Japanese War of 1905,[83] and in the first World War. General Aleksei Aleksieevich Brussilov, leader of troops in Podolia during World War I, commented on the unfortunate situation of Jews in the military:

Members of the Grubshteyn family of Letichev, c. 1905.
From left to right: Moshe ("Munya"), Dvoyra, Elya, Rivka. Courtesy of Sonya Breidbart.

> I should like to say something of the Jews in our ranks. I have no prejudice,one way or the other, about this race, and during the war I studied them as soldiers from various points of view. Beyond question most of the Jews made only middling fighting-men, many of them even bad ones. Some of them were very willing to be made prisoners, and, judging from the stories told by men who escaped, they were treated well in captivity. The Germans and Austrians set them in authority over their Russian comrades, whom they ridiculed and treated contemptuously, and often even cruelly. But there were other cases--not many, it is true—where Hebrews displayed noble feelings and a real love for Russia. I will give some examples.
>
> During our halt on the Bug, when I was going over our positions, a Jew was brought to me as the best scout, not only in his regiment, but in the whole of the division. He had been in the ranks since the outbreak of hostilities, had fought brilliantly in all the battles, had been wounded three times, and had each time returned quickly to the line before the need to have done so; he took part in the most daring and dangerous reconnaisances, and had covered himself with glory on account of his bravery and his intelligence. As a reward he had received four medals and three St. George's Crosses, and had indeed earned the Cross of the first Class. His Army corps Commander, however, informed me that since it was

forbidden to promote Hebrews to the rank of under-*praporshchik*,[84] he did not dare bestow on him this high decoration, because it automatically brought with it promotion to that rank. He added that, although by reason of the many decorations he had won he ought long ago to have been gazetted as a non-commissioned officer, he was still a private. To the credit of this Jewish soldier it must be added that the unjust treatment he had received had in no way affected his desire to continue his war service bravely and honourably. Naturally, I embraced him publicly before the whole of his company, and, although it was contrary to regulations, promoted him then and there to the rank of under-*praporshchik*, and pinned the Cross of the First Class on his breast.

Another example, even more unjust, was as follows. About the time of the previous incident a *praporshchik* of the Orthodox religion joined the regiment. He displayed zeal and courage, received various war decorations, and after an engagement in which he had particularly distinguished himself, was recommended for the Order of St. Vladimir of the Fourth Class with swords and ribbon. It was then discovered in the course of particularly careful scrutiny of his papers that he was a baptized Hebrew, and that, according to the law, he had no right to enter an Officers' Training Corps, much less to be promoted to the rank of officer. All his superior officers were very much distressed at this incident, for they regarded this young man as a model officer. They decided, however, that not only could they not reward him for his brilliant war services, but he must be degraded, and his Army Corps Commander made me a proposal to that effect. I did not agree with this view of the case, and ordered that the question should not be raised, but that the recommendation for the award should be forwarded, adding that if the matter was discovered, I would take the entire responsibility.

From these two instances it will be realized that the Jews had no reason to fight for life or death on behalf of a country that treated them like a step-mother. Accordingly I did not blame them if most of them proved poor fighting-men. The career of arms, it has always seemed to me, demands strict justice, and these people were treated like pariahs. It wold be interesting to learn how the Jews behaved in the German Army, and above all in that of Austria-Hungary, where Jews enjoyed the full rights of citizenship.[85]

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David A. Chapin

David Chapin traces his Letichev region roots through his maternal ancestors. David is a geophysicist who operates an instrumentation company in Austin, Texas. He enjoys history, traveling, camping and biking.

Ben Weinstock

Ben Weinstock can trace his Letichev region roots back over 250 years on both sides of his family. Ben is a physical therapist and computer consultant. In his free time, this New York resident enjoys traveling, sketching, and staying fit.

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