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PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE TERRITORIES OF THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF KHERSON PROVINCE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH – BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract. The article examines the socio-political life of the Jewish community in the northern counties of the Kherson province (in particular, the Yelysavetgrad region) at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Based on archival materials from the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine and the State Archive of the Kirovograd region, the functioning of public self-government institutions (kagal), the development of charitable organizations, and the participation of Jews in the revolutionary movement are analyzed.

Particular attention is paid to the activities of the Yelysavetgrad Committee for Assistance to Victims of the Pogroms of 1881–1882, as well as the political involvement of representatives of the Jewish community of county cities in all-Russian parties and organizations (RSDRP, SRs, anarchists, Bund, Poalei-Zion). The attitude of the tsarist authorities to the Jewish question, Black Hundreds organizations, and all-Russian political forces is highlighted. The conclusion is made about the high level of self-organization of the Jewish community and its active role in the socio-political processes of the region.

Key words: Jewish community, Poale Zion, "Bund", Talmud-Torah, social democrats, anarchists, pogroms.

Introduction. In the second half of the 19th century, the Jewish community faced many forms of oppression in the Russian Empire. Among the negative factors influencing the life of the Jewish community, one should mention the “settlement strip” of Jews, the infamous pogroms. Since Elisavetgrad had been part of the Yekaterinoslav Governorate since 1795, it was automatically included in the border of Jewish settlement. As a result, the number of Jewish population in the city grew significantly. The description of Elisavetgrad, made by the magistrate during the General Delimitation of the city in 1796, states the exact number of Jews living in the settlement: merchants – 3 men and 2 women, townspeople – 177 men and 241 women (DAKirO, F.833, Descr. 2, File 869, sheet 5).

Main text. In Elisavetgrad, the Jews created their own bodies of city self-government. Thus, by 1842, there was a Jewish kahal in the city, which performed spiritual, general educational and administrative functions. The kahal carried out self-imposition of taxes on Jews for public needs and managed public funds. Such powers became the basis for abuses, and they fell as a significant burden on the shoulders of the poorest sections of the Jewish population, since the leading positions in the kahal were held by representatives of the elite. The kahals were officially liquidated in 1844 and the Jews became subordinate to the city administration and police of Elisavetgrad. However, de facto, the Qahals continued to exist, since Jewish recruitment stations were still maintained, and the Jews themselves remained taxpayers (DAKirO, F.833, Descr. 2, file 869, sheet 9).

Due to the significant percentage of Jewish residents among the townspeople (by the middle of the 19th century, almost every third resident of Yelysavetgrad was of Jewish nationality), in cases of self-organization in the face of natural disasters and epidemics, both city-wide and purely Jewish committees for combating disasters were formed (DAKirO, F.833, Descr. 2, File 869, sheet 10).

Jewish charity began to develop around the 1860s, it was during this period that the wealthiest representatives of the national minority began to donate their fortunes and make wills in favor of

the city administration. The money was deposited in a perpetual contribution to the State Bank, so that the interest on it would be given to Jewish schools, the public Talmud-Torah and to the poorest townspeople of the Jewish faith or to the Jewish almshouse. In the 1880s, a new Jewish almshouse with an attached hospital was opened in Yelysavetgrad. Among the most developed Jewish charitable societies of the early 20th century, it is worth noting the "Society for Helping Poor Jews", which established a dining room where free meals were provided and loans were issued on the most favorable terms of that time. At the same time, a free Jewish library was opened in the city, the budget of which was made up of voluntary contributions and donations. In 1912, the library's book collection amounted to almost 2,386 accounting units. books, there were 254 subscribers, books were delivered to homes free of charge (DAKirO, F.833, Descr. 2, File 869, sheets 20–21).

One of the most prominent representatives of the public and political movement in Yelysavetgrad from among the Jewish population was Isaak Vulfovich Shklovsky, an employee of Odessa newspapers, who distinguished himself with numerous feuilletons, scientific reviews and theatrical notes. After returning from Odessa to his hometown of Yelysavetgrad, he immediately came under police investigation in the case of the Yelysavetgrad People's Volunteer Circle. The case ended with I.V. Shklovsky in 1886 being sentenced to exile to Eastern Siberia under police supervision for 5 years. While serving his sentence, I.V. Shklovsky, according to the penal authorities, "resisted the prison administration, the military guard and the police", for which he was additionally subjected to repressions (DAKirO, F.833, Descr. 2, File 869, sheet 21).

One of the most tragic pages of the Jewish people in the territory of Ukrainian lands are pogroms. Misunderstandings between representatives of different ethnic groups and the desire for easy profit during the robbery of national minorities became the basis for such bloody events, which also took place in the Yelysavetgrad district. For example, on the night of April 15 (27) to 16 (28) of 1881, a pogrom occurred in Yelysavetgrad during the Orthodox Easter week. As a result, the Yelysavetgrad city authorities sent 30 foot soldiers and 12 horsemen and a squadron of the Belarusian hussar regiment to the city police to maintain public order. These events prompted the Jewish population to escape the threat of physical violence by fleeing the city. According to the data of the Yelysavetgrad city council, 105 people left Yelysavetgrad from April to September 1881. Later, pogroms occurred in three more cities, two towns, at the railway station and 40 rural settlements of the Kherson province. They spread to the Ekaterinoslav province (DAKirO). F. 78. Descr. 13. File 8. Sheet 6–6-reverse, 77).

At the same time, the Jewish community also demonstrated other, more organized activities to overcome the consequences of the pogroms, in addition to fleeing from dangerous regions. For example, there was the Yelysavetgrad Committee for Aid to Jews Affected by the Pogroms of 1881–1882. This organization was founded by citizens of the city, whose names could not be fully established: doctors Tsetkin, Zagorsky and Rosenstein, associate attorneys Pokrasov and Berenstein, merchants Solomon, Semen and Abram Reiser (father and two sons), Tarnopolsky, Lev Levovich Shklovsky, Saveliy Osipovich Ginzburg, Gorfinkel, Grigory Leontiyovich and Alexander Leontiyovich Kogan, merchants Slobodsky and Zolotarev, Jonah Tyomkin (father of Zinovy Tyomkin, later a famous public and political figure, first as a social democrat, and then on the side of revisionist Zionism). The city authorities approved of the creation of the committee, and the mayor, Alexander Pashutin, immediately turned to the governor of Erdeli with a request to authorize the creation of the committee and its activities under the direct leadership of the city council, which was done (Yashin, 2009, pp. 29–30).

The committee's work consisted of providing diverse assistance to the victims. For example, in May 1881, the committee was transferred by rail from the capital's co-religionists four poods of old clothing collected for the benefit of the Jews of Yelysavetgrad, which was later repeated. Part of the funds collected by the committee were used to pay for the travel of Jews from Yelysavetgrad to other cities, in particular within the province: to Olviopol, Oleksandria, Novoukrainka, Znamenka, and others. As emergency assistance in the first post-pogrom days, the victims were provided with

food supplies of flour and baked bread. When the committee more accurately established the number of victims, targeted cash payments began (Yashin, 2009, pp. 31–32).

The committee members themselves showed a special approach to aid. Thus, G. Kogan (the committee's treasurer and a merchant by profession) purchased flour at discounts to help the victims. Doctors Zetkin, Zagorsky and Rosenstein provided free medicine for the victims "at the expense of the committee" (Yashin, 2009, p. 33).

Contacts were established with Jewish charitable organizations in other cities, which responded to the call for help. Thus, in May 1881, the Ladies' Committee of the Jewish Orphanage in St. Petersburg sent another aid, consisting of "five bales of old and new things: clothes and linen." Thanks to the measures, it was possible to avoid hunger and diseases among the victims, who found themselves in a difficult situation (robbed, without means of subsistence and without guarantees of daily food) (Yashyn, 2009, p. 31).

An example of politically motivated violence against the Jews of Yelysavetgrad can be traced in the activities of the Black Hundreds party "Union of the Russian People". As is known, it was characterized by ultra-right terror, which aimed to intimidate not only opposition figures against the Russian autocracy, but also the population in general (DAKirO. DIF. Newspaper "Nash Put". March 13, 1907, No. 1. Inv. No. 2047. Sheet 4.). The participants themselves admitted to their chauvinistic views regarding all peoples living in the territories of the then Russian Empire, where Jews were particularly criticized (DAKirO. DIF. Newspaper "Union". February 24, 1907, No. 8. Inv. No. 1960. Sheet 2–3.). The factor of oppression of Jews by the local population and the authorities was one of the reasons for their more active involvement in the political life of society and the radicalization of some of its representatives, who found their niche among the left radicals (Bolsheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, anarchists, and others).

In their publication "Union", representatives of this Black Hundreds party actively criticized their opponents from the moderate centrists, democratic students, left-wing figures, and representatives of Jewish nationality. Often these attacks were combined and quite clearly showed in the rhetoric those accents that were shared by the participants of the organization. Thus, according to their report on the strike on February 21, 1907 at the Yelysavetgrad Real School, the organizer was a Jewish student who, as the Black Hundreds stated, received a sympathetic response from his Russian classmates, to their shame. In their appeals, the "allies" actively appealed to the authority of God (in the context of protecting the conservative ideals of society), criticized liberal newspapers (as the main opponents in the struggle for influence on the younger generation) and, in conclusion, called for defending the dominance of the Russian people in the multinational empire against the so-called invasion by foreigners, although the question of who is the invader is largely distorted by the Black Hundreds (DAKirO, DIF, newspaper "Soyuz" 24.02.1907, No. 8, inv. No. 1960, Sheet 2–3).

The gendarmerie also had a distrustful and rather meticulous attitude towards Jews. For example, in the report of the non-commissioned officer of the additional staff of the Kherson provincial gendarmerie department in the Yelysavetgrad district dated August 26, 1906, No. 58, the issues of revolutionary agitation by the left among the population were considered. Namely, leaflets of a social-democratic orientation were found on the part of the employee of the Golfeld dairy farm. It is also noted in the case materials that the employee Tkachenko (accused of agitation) not only gathered around him a crowd of soldiers of the garrison for anti-government conversations, but also people of Jewish nationality (such attention of the gendarme looks rather tendentious). Quite important is the distrustful attitude towards Golfeld himself (the owner of the dairy farm), whom the gendarmes also call politically unreliable (TsDIAK F.353. Descr. 1. File 1. Sheets 1–1 reverse).

At the same time, this case also mentions a search not only in the room of the arrested Tkachenko, but also in Golfeld's apartment as a whole. No provocative materials were found in anyone except Tkachenko (TsDIAK F.353. Descr. 1. File 1, sheets 4–5 reverse).

Also, according to the materials of the fund of the assistant chief of the Kherson gendarmerie department in Yelysavetgrad district, you can see a list and information about the most famous political figures who were under surveillance at the time of 1908. Thus, among the 9 unreliable individuals on the list, one can single out the anarchist Shlyoma Mykovich of Zhytomyr (he lived in the city of Yelysavetgrad, a burgher, without a specific occupation), who was a representative of the Jewish community and joined the libertarian left movements (TsDIAK F.353. Descr. 1. File 2, Sheets 3–40). Regarding the history of Jews in the anarchist movement, one cannot ignore such a figure as Judah Grossman. He was born in 1883 in the town of Novoukrainka, Yelysavetgrad district, into a wealthy Jewish merchant family. Like many of his comrades in the anarchist movement, he began his public and political career in social democratic circles. In 1897, he joined the "South Russian Workers' Union" in Yelysavetgrad, created and led by his older brother Abram. But the following year, he was arrested together with his brother. From 1899, Judah lived in Novoukrainka and was under police supervision. In 1902, he emigrated to Europe, where his views changed radically. He finally moved away from social democracy and in 1903 switched to the anarchist platform, which was then led in London by Peter Kropotkin, one of the most influential figures of the left-libertarian movement. Yu. Grossman was a brilliant orator, "arguing with the Bundists and Socialist Revolutionaries. No one could defeat him in a debate." He included in the organization of his federation anarchists known in the Ukrainian provinces K. Erdelevsky, O. Taratuta and others, which gave him the opportunity to organize groups of the "Black Flag" in many cities of Ukraine: Odessa, Mykolaiv, Yelysavetgrad, Lutsk, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Rivne, Zhytomyr, Berdychiv, Kyiv, Katerynoslav, Kamiansk, Nikopol, Simferopol, Sevastopol, Novozybkov (Savchenko, 2017, pp. 14–15).

As a result of the political assassination of Alexander II by members of the revolutionary organization "Narodna Volya", a significant part of the population turned its attention to the Jewish minority as the main culprit due to the established stereotype and partial representation of Jews among the revolutionaries. Kherson province as a whole and Yelysavetgrad in particular were no exception to this rule. Since the 1870s, another factor in the socio-political life of society has been added to the already existing manifestations of anti-Semitism on the part of state policy - the active involvement of Jewish youth in various parties and organizations. As an example, in 1905, another Jewish pogrom occurred in the city. This time, even a public safety committee was created in response to anti-Semitic violence. At the same time, a connection was observed between revolutionary events and Jewish pogroms. The socio-economic dissatisfaction of the most vulnerable segments of the population was sometimes skillfully channeled into anti-Semitic speeches (DAKirO, F.833. Descr. 2. File 869. Sheets 15–16).

Regarding the political involvement of Jews and the attitude towards them by various parties, it is also worth mentioning the position of the All-Russian Social Democracy. In the leaflets of the Yelysavetgrad Committee of the RSDLP, one could see frequent mention not only of the factor of the Jewish population in the life of the entire society of the region, but also voiced specific demands of representatives of their people.

For example, in 1899, according to a leaflet prepared by the Yelysavetgrad branch of the RSDLP, there was dissatisfaction with working conditions among printing workers in the city. Among the most frequent complaints are: saving on lamps in the premises (as a result, workers' eyesight quickly deteriorated), low wages during a long working day, a policy of fines for being late for such "work", forced overtime and unpaid shifts, lack of medical insurance, lack of high-quality ventilation of work premises, etc. Special attention is paid to the requirements for working hours, in particular, before all annual holidays it was required to stop work half a day before the holiday, among which the "Jewish New Year" is mentioned. There was also a requirement to finish work at 4 o'clock on Friday for Jewish workers (for other nationalities - on Saturday with an afternoon break of one hour) due to the special role of the Sabbath in their religion. This moment is a rather important marker for the direction of national policy in the Social Democrats (TsDIAK, F. 838. Descr. 1. File 1178. Sheets 1–3).

In a leaflet (issued in 3,000 copies) dated July 3, 1905, the Yelysavetgrad branch of the RSDLP addressed its negative attitude to the “criminal act” of the workers of the Elvorti factory. This accusation arose on the basis that during protests and strikes they submitted a loyal petition to the emperor regarding “restrictions on the rights of Jewish workers”. The specific text of this petition is not given in the leaflet. The text of the leaflet quite seriously criticizes the policy of inciting one nationality against another and anti-Semitism in particular. At the same time, a kind of appeal is made to the workers of the Elvorti factory “to honestly and seriously discuss their act” in order to reveal that they had become victims of “the scoundrels of the Bobrovnitsky priests, the sworn attorneys of the Ivanovs and other enemies of the people”, who aim to strengthen the positions of the autocracy. According to the author of the leaflet, such a policy leads only to fratricide (in the social sense), when the titular nations will be hostile not only to Jews, but also to Armenians, the intelligentsia, and the Social Democrats in particular (TsDIAK, F.838. Descr. 1. File 1182. Sheet 1).

The Socialist-Revolutionaries of Yelysavetgrad also paid attention to Jews in their propaganda materials. Thus, in November 1906, they published one of the leaflets entitled “Why have goods become more expensive?”, in which, atypically for left-wing radical forces, they justified Jewish merchants in raising the prices of goods. In most other leaflets of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, which do not concern the display of their individual terror and “executions” of various tyrants, the economic and social issue is described quite generally and without sufficient specificity in certain areas of life (the issue of the property system, which was simply unjust from their point of view, and the approach to its management by privileged categories of the population was most often raised). They made the capitalists, landowners, Black Hundreds and the tsarist government the main culprits. They were separately accused of Jewish pogroms and inciting the majority of the population against other nationalities (TsDIAK, F.838. Descr. 2. File 579. Sheet 1).

In Yelysavetgrad there were also supporters of Zionist ideas and Bundists. For example, during the elections to the Yelysavetgrad Council of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies in the fall of 1917, the following voting pattern emerged.

Table 1

Voting results in the Yelysavetgrad Council of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies at the end of 1917

№	Party name	Voices of civilians	Voices of military personnel
1	Clergy	305	17
2	"Union of the Russian People"	127	20
3	German Nationalists	85	16
4	Socialist Revolutionaries	1013	2097
5	Cadets	3719	417
6	Poalei-Zion	94	3
7	Social Democrats (United)	1279	74
8	Ukrainian Social Democrats	3640	1000
9	Bolsheviks	1740	1440
10	Bund	7289	88
11	Co-operators	180	26
12	Growers	77	5

Despite being the second most popular political party among the residents of Yelysavetgrad, the Jewish bloc of left-wing parties (united around the Bundists) did not become a complete monopolist of attention from the Jewish community. Thus, a number of its representatives joined the socio-political movement as part of other groups, especially all-Russian parties. For example, among the members

of the Yelysavetgrad organization of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party were K. Dergold, A. Broylan, D. Lekhman and others (DAKirO, F.833. Descr. 2. File 869. Sheet 25).

Conclusions. Thus, the socio-political life of the Jewish community of the northern counties of the Kherson province in the late 19th and early 20th centuries developed in conditions of a combination of imperial restrictions on the part of the authorities (settlement zone, discriminatory legislation, pogroms) and a high level of internal self-organization. The Jewish community of the Yelysavetgrad region, despite the official abolition of the kagal, preserved the mechanisms of self-government and created an extensive system of charitable institutions (the Society for Aid to Poor Jews, a free library, an almshouse with a hospital), which provided social protection for the poorest strata. At the same time, representatives of Jewish youth actively joined revolutionary movements - from the "Narodnaya Volya" (I. Shklovsky) to the anarchists (Yu. Grossman), and also supported national parties (Bund, Poalei-Zion). The pogroms of 1881 became a catalyst for both emigration and the creation of effective self-help mechanisms (the Yelysavetgrad Committee for Aid to Victims of Jewish War). An important role was also played by the all-Russian left parties, which in their agitation consistently opposed anti-Semitism and included demands for taking into account the religious characteristics of Jewish workers. Thus, the Jewish community of the region appears not as a passive object of state policy, but as an active subject of socio-political processes, capable of self-organization, solidarity, and various forms of political participation.

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