

# Dnipro

An Entangled  
History  
of a European  
City

Ukrainian Studies

**Series Editor:** Vitaly Chernetsky (University of Kansas)





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History  
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*To Kathrin*

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# Contents

Introduction: “The Unfinished City” and Its Histories	9
1. The Potemkin City	17
2. Manchester on the Dnipro	59
3. The Symphony of Revolutions	122
4. The Soviet Dnipropetrovsk	169
5. A City at War	215
6. Brezhnev’s Capital	266
Epilogue:	312
Neither the City Number One nor the City Number Two	
Bibliography	334
Index	371



# Introduction

## “The Unfinished City” and Its Histories

How could we, historians, combine the general (total) history approach with the microhistory of one location—one city without a single national majority, well-established self-identification, or a broadly recognizable mythology? And how, in attempting to produce such a story, could we evade the typical traps of methodological nationalism, static and teleological, imperial or Marxist-Leninist ideology, or any other reductionist generic approach? What would an entangled history of a particular place could look like? And how do prevailing views on “central” historical events (World Wars, Revolutions of 1917–1921, the establishment and the collapse of the Soviet Union) and “big” topics such as modernity, nationalism, migration be subjected to revision and re-thinking through in-depth analysis and proper contextualization in the light of local evidence and data? The ambition of this book is to face these questions by proposing a synthesis of the history of one city in present-day Ukraine.

The protagonist of this book—the city of Dnipro—is quite young (its entire history is just several hundred years old) and has undergone quite a few names changes. In the late eighteenth century, it was called *Katerynoslav* (that is, a city named in honor of Catherine the Great). In 1926, it was renamed *Dnipropetrovsk* after a local Bolshevik, and in 2016, it was renamed again, this time into *Dnipro*. Some recognizable names of the city never became official—the first and oldest “Sicheslav” reflected the mythology of the Zaporozhian Cossacks (which will be discussed more than once throughout this book). Along with the official names, there were also metaphorical ones: “the new Athens,” “southern Manchester,” “the heart of Ukraine.” Additionally, when describing this city, which has never had metropolitan status, the image of *Potemkin’s capital* or *Brezhnev’s capital* (also called “the capital of stagnation”), as well as “the Jewish capital of Ukraine” was used quite often. The difficulty in capturing the essence of this city

in light of its changing history is reflected in the difficulty of giving it a proper name.

Another important dimension of my analysis is the complexity of human experiences. In locating Katerynoslav-Dnipropetrovsk-Dnipro in a wider regional, national, and transnational context and exploring the interaction between global processes and everyday routines of urban life, special attention will be paid to the narratives of certain individuals such as the local enthusiast of industrialization Oleksandr Pol', the Princess Vera Urusova (who reflected on the complexity of revolutionary events 1917–1921 in her French-language diary), the Ukrainian historian and writer Viktor Petrov (Domontovych) who strived to capture the city's mythology in his intellectual prose, and Menachem Mendel Ussishkin—the devoted leader of the Zionist movement.

In paying attention to a spectrum of individual voices, this book aims at approaching the city as a whole.<sup>1</sup> To achieve this goal, I have structured this book in such a way that every chapter focuses on a number of key threads in the modern history of Europe: the imperial colonization and industrialization, the war and the revolution in the borderlands, the everyday life and mythology of a Soviet “closed” city, and the transformations of post-Soviet Ukraine. The city's biography in this book is an interdisciplinary undertaking with local and transnational dimensions, and with a special focus on the effects that prominent (sometimes global) historical events had at a local, municipal level.

In the first chapter, I discuss the emergence of the city's project in the lower reaches of the Dnipro River as the transition zone between the steppe and the wooded area, and between a settled culture and nomadism that had been lacking urban development for centuries. Features of nature (primarily the openness of the steppe and the presence of rapids on the lower Dnipro, which made navigation impossible), as well as the specificity of the Russian imperial imagination of the late eighteenth century, are among the main themes of this chapter. Only about 250 years ago, the territory of present-day south-eastern Ukraine stopped being “the Wild Field,” when the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceded their control over the region to Russia. At the same time, the construction of the city named after the Empress Catherine II began in the area that used to be home to several Cossack settlements. So, the interplay

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1 Compare Shahe Ewen, *What is Urban History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), and Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling. Ethics for the City* (London: Penguin Books, 2019).



between the imperial and the Cossack, as well as the decline of the “new Athens” project will be analyzed in detail.

In the late nineteenth century, Katerynoslav was transformed into a city that became known as the “Manchester of the South,” thanks to rapid industrialization. With this change, came foreign investments over the deposits of iron ore and coal found in the region; a new railroad was built, as well as a bridge over the Dnipro River. The city now looked—to both local and foreign writers— “more like some mining town in south Germany or Belgium.”<sup>2</sup> The entire complexity of rapid industrialization, the problems of migrants and suburbs, of imperial “multi-culturalism,” and emerging modern notions of Ukrainianness, Russianness, Jewishness, of urban riot and inter-ethnic-violence are addressed in the second chapter of this book.

In 1917–1921, the years of the revolutions and civil wars in southern Ukraine, the city of Katerynoslav experienced kaleidoscopic changes of power: Ukrainian socialist government was replaced by the Austrian-German-backed Hetmanate, and Nestor Makhno—with his rural anarchists—was replaced by Bolsheviks. These perturbations are analyzed in the third chapter, where I pay special attention to survival strategies and behavior patterns exhibited by different groups of city-dwellers. Some of these contradictory efforts corresponded to competing political forces that hoped to establish a legitimate rule and to adapt their political programs to expectations of the local population. I trace these trajectories back to the city’s experience during the First World War and approach this problem from a perspective of imperial situation.

In the 1920s, Dnipropetrovsk became a Soviet industrial center and experienced all modifications brought by the Soviet policies: from the “Ukrainization” of paperwork and education to the enforced collectivization of agriculture, as well as the purges and persecutions of the 1930s (all analyzed in the fourth chapter). Special attention here is given to the micro-historical analysis of such events as the Great Famine 1932–33 and the Soviet nation-building, each of which is the subject of intense politicization and simplification.

In the fifth chapter, I discuss the experiences of Dnipropetrovsk during the Second World War, particularly during the time of the Nazi occupation (from late August 1941 until late October 1943). The diverse experience of the German colonial rule, the policies of the “final solution of the Jewish question,” the strategies of survival, and religious and cultural life “under the Germans” are explored. Additionally, I introduce uncovered archival sources of valuable

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2 Ves' Ekaterinoslav. Spravochnaia kniga (Ekaterinoslav: L. I. Satanovskii, 1913), 104.

German-language personal accounts and documentary materials. The re-establishment of the Soviet rule is also analyzed.

After the Second World War in 1959, Dnipropetrovsk was closed for foreigners (including visitors from other socialist countries) on account of a ballistic missile production facility operating there. The biggest among Soviet Ukraine's eleven "closed" cities, by the late 1970s Dnipropetrovsk became a "millionaire"—a city with a million-plus population. In the sixth chapter, I review the dimensions and paradoxes of the "closedness": the KGB's tight control over the city; the prestige of the Dnipropetrovsk University; the better centralized food supply in comparison with other industrial cities; the ninth ward of the regional mental asylum, with more than sixty patients diagnosed as "sluggish schizophrenics" and convicted for "anti-Soviet activities." Many residents of Dnipropetrovsk attributed the city's "closedness" to the myth that the city was especially favored by Leonid Brezhnev, who began his career as a Communist functionary in the city in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Brezhnev mythology, as well as the Soviet nationality's policy and its implications for Ukrainian and Jewish cultural life in the city are also analyzed.

In 1987, the period of city's "closedness" came to an end and by late 1991, the Soviet Union itself ceased to exist. How were the city's appearance and images affected by the unexpected "openness" and decline in the missile production sector, the demographic and economic crises, the necessity to retarget from Moscow to Kyiv, and the search for its own place in the independent Ukraine? These questions are addressed in the Epilogue which is deliberately concise, partly because I have decided to refrain from describing the events I have myself participated in, and partly because such important and controversial contemporary issues deserve special anthropological, sociological, and political studies research.

Still, there is one major issue I could not avoid. Post-Soviet Dnipropetrovsk was initially perceived as a part of the stereotypical "eastern Ukraine," but after the Euromaidan protests in 2013–2014 and the start of the armed conflict in the neighboring Donbas region, Dnipropetrovsk began to be conceptualized as the center of Ukrainian political loyalty and resistance to pro-Russian separatism. The striking difference between the post-Maidan political trajectories of Dnipropetrovsk, on the one hand, and those of Donetsk and Luhansk, on the other, has been often explained in the terms of regional "identity" or "values."<sup>3</sup> In this

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3 On the risks of theleologization of "identity" and possibilities to avoid it see Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 1–47. On the

book, I offer a different approach, based firstly on an analysis of the situational responses by local elites and civil society.

The existing histories of Dnipropetrovsk, and Eastern Europe in general, are dominated by narratives in which society is presented as neatly grouped into clearly defined and stable nations.<sup>4</sup> Less attention is devoted to writing about ethnic or ideological “indifference,” indeterminacy, or hybridity.<sup>5</sup> Can these qualities be addressed not just as a relic, or an instance of underdevelopment, but as a form of response to different political and cultural challenges?

The researchers’ reluctance to address the phenomenon of ideological indifference has a narrative twin in the late Soviet and post-Soviet historiography of Dnipro(petrovsk)—the practice of ignoring the city’s complex Jewish history. In the early twentieth century, Jews accounted for up to 40% of Katerynoslav’s population. Despite the prominence of present-day Jewish life and the construction of Europe’s biggest Jewish community center (called Menorah) in the center of Dnipro, the most recent locally published books of the city’s history avoid any detailed analysis of the variety of Jewish social life. Indeed, they barely mention Jews at all.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the Jewish past is singled out in a number of special publications,<sup>7</sup> which sometimes lack a broader contextual approach and tend to narratively reproduce the stereotypical notion of an almost complete separation of Jewish and non-Jewish groups in Katerynoslav.

How do we avoid the arbitrary assignment of belonging to a “national group” and, simultaneously, how do we take care not to underestimate the religious

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applicability of “values-based” interpretations and their traps see Mykola Riabchuk, *Dolania ambivalentnosti. Dykhotomiia ukrains’koi national’noi identychnosti—istorychni prychyny ta politychni naslidky* (Kyiv: Instytut politychnykh i etnonatsional’nykh doslidzhen’ imeni I. F. Kurasa, 2019), 190–199.

- 4 See an insightful critic of such a methodological nationalism in: Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism, the Social Sciences, and the Study of Migration: An Essay in Historical Epistemology,” *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 576–610. Compare Ilya Gerasimov, “When Neighbors Begin to Hate,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2019): 123–156.
- 5 Compare important observations on the perspectives of researching “national indifference” in Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119.
- 6 See, for example, A. H. Bolebruch, ed., *Istoriia mista Dnipropetrovs’ka* (Dnipropetrovsk: Grani, 2006).
- 7 See, for instance, O. Iu. Rostovtsev, *Ievrei Dnipropetrovshchyny: istoriia ta suchasnist’* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Pres, 2012); Aleksandra Loshak and Valentyn “Starostyn,” *Sinagogi Ekaterinoslava* (Dnipro: Herda, 2019).

and/or ethnic self-definitions in writing the city's history? How do we depict the dynamic nature of group (self-) understanding and the changing character of the very notion of "nationality" as well as its competing and hybrid forms? Critical reflection on such research tasks could help us respond to Andreas Kappeler's request that he made in his discussion of Mark von Hagen's path-breaking essay "Does Ukraine Have a History?": "case studies of cities, universities and smaller regions should analyze the reality of polyethnicity and the complexities of cultural, social and political interactions in several historical periods."<sup>8</sup>

By underscoring my ambition to fulfill Kappeler's request, I would also like to mention my desire to include as much local scholarship (so-called *kraieznavstvo*) as possible, and have these sources interact with sources in English, German, and Polish that themselves were barely used in the analysis of Dnipro's history. At the same time, this book is not a *kraieznavstvo* piece. It is an attempt at a critical entangled history. My ambition in writing this book is to propose a complex and transparent narrative, open for critical (re-)interpretations. Hopefully, my methodological concerns and proposals are adequately reflected in the very choice of terminology used, topics raised, sources analyzed, perspectives taken (or avoided).

The complex issues of multiethnicity and dynamic political identifications have become particularly demanding when it comes to consistent transliteration of Cyrillic names. Every responsible research publication should find a middle way between the Scylla of inevitable reduction of historical complexity (or even unwilling nationalization of certain phenomena), and the Charybdis of getting lost in competing ideological denominations. In order to make the text readable, names of geographical locations on the territory of present-day Ukraine are transliterated from Ukrainian, so it will be Katerynoslav (not Ekaterinoslav or Yekaterinoslav) and Dnipro (not Dnieper or Dnepr), even though the Russian form is always given when first mentioned and preserved in citations. Names of historical figures are transliterated phonetically with the exception of already established forms in English publications: that is why we have Yavornytsky and not Iavornyts'kyi (even though the phonetical transliteration is preserved in the bibliographic endnotes). Archival sources are quoted with the preservation of originally used denominations (*opys*—*sprava*—*arkush* in Ukrainian, and *opis'*—*delo*—*list* in Russian) so one can easily find them if needed.

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8 Andreas Kappeler, "Ukrainian History from a German Perspective," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (1995): 700.

I am well aware of what Raymond Aron observed in 1938, that “historical understanding cannot be separated from the position and limits of the person seeking that understanding and that a consciousness of one’s own place in the process one is seeking to describe and explains both deepens and restricts the scope of all such explanation.”<sup>9</sup>

The writing of this book was preceded by a long period of preparation (including archival work and cataloguing some oral historical accounts). When, upon my graduation from Dnipropetrovsk University, I left my hometown and studied in Warsaw, Trier and Lviv, I every now and then discovered new facts of my home city’s history.

I first presented my vision of a book about Dnipropetrovsk in the winter of 2012 in Kyiv (a public lecture by the Polit.ua web-portal) and at the University of Cambridge (where I delivered the Tenth Stasiuk Lecture in Ukrainian studies, *Lieu de non-memoir. A Ukrainian City and its Russian, Soviet and Jewish traces*). I owe the debt of gratitude to the Institute of Advanced Study (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin), Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Marion Dönhoff Stiftung, Landis & Gyr Stiftung in Zug, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna—the organizations whose stipends and support enabled me to write this book and discuss its main points with the colleagues all around the world. I finished the main part of my manuscript while working at the University of Geneva in the project “Divided Memories, Shared Memories. Ukraine/Russia/Poland (20th–21st Centuries): An Entangled History” supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The structure of my book and my choice of arguments were greatly influenced by the conversations and discussions with my colleagues in Eastern European history and Slavic studies, as well as my students at the European University Viadrina (Frankfurt/Oder), University of Potsdam, Humboldt University of Berlin, Free University Berlin, Free University of Brussels, University of Basel, SciencesPo Paris and SciencesPo Lyon.

I am deeply grateful to Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro and personally Kateryna Hryshchenko, Museum “Memory of Jewish People and the Holocaust in Ukraine” and personally Yehor Vradiy for providing valuable illustrations to my book. The same applies to Denys Shatalov who eagerly shared unique photos from his private archive.

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9 Raymond Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie de l’histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986). Quoted and commented in Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility. Blum, Camus, Aron, and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 140.

I could not properly express my gratitude to my first teachers in historical research from Dnipro: the late Svitlana Abrosymova, Liudmyla Harkusha, and Anatolii Holub. The same applies to the supervisor of my PhD dissertation, my dearest teacher from Lviv, Yaroslav Isaievych. I could also not stop thinking about Boris Dubin, Mark von Hagen, and Arsenii Roginskii who waited for this book to be finished and whose living memory helped me tremendously in fulfilling my promise.

Of paramount importance for me was the help and support of my sister and colleague, Tetiana Portnova, who works at the Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro. We prepared together several publications on various aspects of the history of our hometown—in particular, about its Jewish past and the semiotics of the city's two anniversaries, imperial and “Brezhnevian.”<sup>10</sup>

I am also grateful to Oleh Kotsyuba and Ekaterina Yanduganova who brought this book, after so many years, to the publisher, and to the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe at the University of St. Gallen for financial support of the publication. Three peer-reviewers of my manuscript provided exceptionally helpful and insightful critics that substantially contributed to improving my argumentation and convinced me to re-write the introduction. Gratefully acknowledging their assistance, I confirm that all final decisions, conclusions, suggestions, inconsistencies and mistakes in this book are mine.

My wife Olesia and daughter Nadiia-Oresta gave me their priceless help when I was working on the book. Their love, understanding, and patience made this research finally alive.

*Kyiv—Berlin—Zug—Łódź—Vienna—Dnipro, 2012–2022*

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10 Andrii Portnov and Tetiana Portnova, “Die ‘jüdische Hauptstadt der Ukraine’. Erinnerung und Gegenwart in Dnipropetrovsk,” *Osteuropa* 10 (2012): 25–40; idem, “The ‘Imperial’ and the ‘Cossack’ in the Semiotics of Ekaterinoslav-Dnipropetrovsk: The Controversies of the Foundation Myth,” in *Urban Semiotics: The City as a Cultural-Historical Phenomenon*, ed. Igor Pilshchikov (Tallinn: TLU Press, 2015), 223–250; idem, “Soviet Ukrainian Historiography in Brezhnev’s Closed City: Mykola/Nikolai Kovalsky and His ‘School’ at the Dnipropetrovsk University,” *Ab Imperio* 4 (2017): 265–291; idem, “‘Bez pochvy’ Viktora Petrova i ‘Sobor’ Olesia Honchara: dve istorii ukrainskoi literatury XX veka,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 2 (2019): 116–133.

# The Potemkin City

There are intentional and unintentional cities.

Fyodor Dostoevsky,  
*Notes from the Underground*

Like Saint Petersburg, Katerynoslav (in Russian, Ekaterinoslav) is an example of an intentional city. It arose almost one hundred years later than its northern rival as part of the Russian Empire's ambitions to expand southward that included the conquest of territories known as the Byzantine birthplace of eastern Christianity. But unlike St. Petersburg, almost all endeavors envisaged by the founders of Katerynoslav—Catherine II and Prince Potemkin—remained on paper as an unrealized dream of the “new Athens.” The city we will be talking about, however, did not appear out of the blue. In many respects, it was based on and, at the same time, symbolically opposed to the previous settlements (first of all the Cossack ones) in the region defined by such natural forces as Big River with the rapids and the Wild Steppe.

The River Dnipro can be called the main artery of Ukrainian history, which for centuries served also as a political border (hence such concepts as Right-Bank and Left-Bank Ukraine).<sup>1</sup> Because of a series of rapids—huge rocks and waterfalls—in its lower reaches, the Dnipro was almost impossible to navigate and, accordingly, its southern banks and the inflow of the river into the Black Sea remained sparsely populated for centuries. This was further facilitated by the natural geography of the region—the vast open areas of the steppe were an ideal space for a variety of nomadic peoples. The difficulty in settling the land explains

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1 I am using a Ukrainian-language word “Dnipro,” which is also considered an official name of the river for international usage. Compare Roman Adrian Cybriwsky, *Along Ukraine's River. A Social and Environmental History of the Dnipro* (Budapest: Central University Press, 2018).



the belated urbanization of this region and provides a natural setting for the play of history there.

## The Dnipro and Its Rapids

The Dnipro (in Russian, Dnepr, which gave birth to the wide-spread English form Dnieper), is one of Europe's largest rivers. It was mentioned by Herodotus in his description of the events of 512 B.C. as Borysthenes (*Βορυσθένης*—"northern river"). Dnipro is described in the old Rus' chronicles, written in the early twelfth century in Kyiv (in Russian, Kiev), as the main artery in the history of Rus'. It was also a part of the trade route metaphorically called "from the Varagians to the Greeks" (for example, the route taken from Scandinavia across the Dnipro and the Black Sea to the Byzantine Empire), first mentioned in the "Primary Chronicle" in the context of Andrew the Apostle's legendary voyage, which presumably led up the Dnipro to Kyiv and Novgorod, even though historians still argue about the precise charting of the route, as well as about the time period when it was pioneered.<sup>2</sup>

Such a journey involved fighting one's way through the rapids, whose names were first mentioned in a work by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *On the Governance of the Empire* (*De Administrando Imperio*).<sup>3</sup> In the seventeenth-century French engineer, Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan compiled *Description d'Ukraine* (first published in 1651, reissued in 1660), where he gave the following description of the rapids defining them with the Ukrainian term *Porohy*:

This *Porohy* is a ridge of such stones reaching quite cross the river, where-of some are under water, others level with the surface, and others eight or ten foot above it. They are as big as a house, and very close to one another, so that it resembles a dam or bank to stop the course of the river, which then falls down five or six foot in some places, and six or seven in others.<sup>4</sup>

2 For details see Gerhard Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1982).

3 On linguistic debates about the names of the rapids given in the emperor's book see Andriy Danylenko, "The Names of the Dnieper Rapids in Constantine Porphyrogenitus Revisited. An Attempt at Linguistic Attribution," *Die Welt der Slaven* 46 (2001): 43–62; V. G. Skliarenko, *Rus' i variaty: Istoryko-etymolohichne doslidzhennia* (Kyiv: Dovira, 2006), 75–92.

4 Guillaume le Vasseur de Beauplan, "A Description of Ukraine, Containing Several Provinces of the Kingdom of Poland," in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now First Printed from*





FIGURE 1.  
The rapids on  
the Dnipro. Early  
twentieth-century  
postcard.  
Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History  
Museum of Dnipro.

Attempts to dig canals for flooding the outcrops protruding from the water almost failed and the rapids remained an impressive sight. As the mid mid-nineteenth century ethnographer Oleksandr/Alexander Afanasev wrote,

Imagine ranges of rocks strewn across the river, from one bank to another, in several rows, each one lower than the previous, and this will give you a picture of the rapids. In a downward rush, the stream races through the openings between the rocks and froths with a deafening sound.<sup>5</sup>

The rapids stretched for ninety kilometers, covering the territory between the present-day cities of Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia. The biggest among the nine main rapids, Nenasytets, reached a length of more than two kilometers, while the height of the waterfall was about five meters.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the rapids, the lower Dnipro had more than sixty rocks and islets including Monastyrsky (Monastery) Island, which had never experienced a flood. This circumstance, apparently, gave rise to legends stating that this piece of land had been used in olden times as a camping site by Rus' armies on their way to Constantinople.

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*Original Manuscripts in 4 volumes*, vol. 1 (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1704), 579.

5 A. S. Afanas'ev (Chuzhbinskii), *Poezdka v Iuzhnuiu Rossiiu. Ocherki Dnepra* (St. Petersburg: German Goppe, 1893), 84.

6 More on the rapids see in D. I. Iavornytskyi, *Dniprovi porohy. Heohrafichno-istorychnyi narys* (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukraïny, 1928) and A. Loboda, V. Petrov, eds, *Materialy do vyvchennia vyrobnychykh ob'iednan'.* Issue 1. *Dniprovs'ki lotsmany* (Kyïv: Etnohrafichna komisiia VUAN, 1929).

The raging rapids presented the most difficult obstacle for boats on the Dni-pro. The majority of the boats were able to make their way only during the spring when the snow melted and all rapids except the biggest one, Nenasytets (this name derives from *nenasytny*—insatiable) were covered with water.

Past the rapids lay the Dni-pro flood plains—a veritable labyrinth of in-lets and islets covered with thick but low-grown forests. The above mentioned French cartographer Beauplan was fascinated by the abundance of flood plains, pelicans and cranes, the “unheard-of wealth” of fish (including sturgeons), numerous herds of wild goats and horses, “legions” of flies and mosquitoes as well as “throngs of locust” eclipsing the sun.<sup>7</sup> Later accounts confirmed the truthfulness of his portrayal of the scenery in the lower reaches of the Dni-pro. References to the abundance of sturgeons, wild she-goats, and big-sized fowl can be found in the descriptions of Ukrainian steppes written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at the request of the Russian imperial administration.<sup>8</sup> In the early twentieth century, a visiting hunter, in reflecting with sadness on the disappearance of big animals and birds from the banks of the Dni-pro, introduced pelicans as an illustrative case in his narrative: “pelicans are no longer nesting down the Dni-pro either, although some of them even nowadays reach Kiev and Poltava at times, as rare vagrant guests.”<sup>9</sup>

## The Wild Field

Historians often refer to the region near the lower reaches of the Dni-pro as the Great Frontier—an area situated between a wooded steppe and a bare steppe, where settled people and nomads, as well as people of different religions (Christianity and Islam) co-existed together. For centuries, this region was a contact zone rather than an impervious barrier. The so-called Wild Field or Wild Steppe was a space where settled and nomadic lifestyles not only confronted but complemented each other.<sup>10</sup>

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7 Beauplan, *A Description of Ukraine*, 580–583.

8 Anatoliï Boiko, ed., *Opysy Stepovoi Ukraïny ostann'oi chverti XVIII–pochatku XIX stolittia*, (Zaporizhzhia: Zaporiz'kyi natsional'nyi universytet, 2009), 138, 142, 289.

9 L. A. Portenko, *Dnepr i Podneprov'e. Iz zapisok okhotnika-ëkskursanta v raione srednego tekheniia Dnepra* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928), 179. Compare D. Humenna, “Lysty iz Stepovoi Ukraïny,” *Pluh* no. 10 (1928): 39–61; *Ibid.*, no. 11 (1928): 33–49.

10 For details see Ia. R. Dashkevich, “Bol'shaia granitsa Ukrainy. Ètnicheskiï bar'er ili ètnokontaknaia zona,” in *Ètnokontaknye zony v Evropeïskoï chasti SSSR. Geografiia*,

The economic life of Eastern Europe in the ninth and the tenth centuries was dominated by slave trade, which gave birth to several communities that can be tentatively called “trading companies.”<sup>11</sup> The superior position of one of these trading communities in the Dnipro region, which was sparsely populated by Slavic tribes, gave birth to the Christian state metaphorically called “Kyivan (Kievan) Rus’”—an invented book term, which appeared many centuries after Rus’ went into decline on the banks of the Dnipro.<sup>12</sup>

Down the Dnipro, Rus’ had a permanent neighbor—the steppe. Practically free of forests, this area stretched from the Dnipro’s left bank to the Caucasus Mountains, with its sweltering heat in the summer and piercing cold in the winter. It was home to different nomadic communities. The longtime neighbors of Rus’ were nomads referred to as Torkils, Pechenegs, and Cumans (or Polovtians) in historical chronicles. Each of these appellations refers to ethnically and religiously heterogeneous communities who lived without a structured statehood in the steppe.

None of these groups was interested in taking over one or another piece of land but all of them conducted regular raids into settled areas in order to collect things they needed (first of all, slaves). The raids notwithstanding, the contacts between Rus’ and the nomads were not purely confrontational. Their relationship was also shaped by ongoing trade, gift exchanges, military service, marriages, and numerous cultural influences.<sup>13</sup> The destructive component of the

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*dinamika, metody izucheniia*, ed. I. I. Krupnik (Moscow: Moskovskii filial Geograficheskogo obshchestva SSSR, 1989), 7–21. Compare Ihor Chornovol, *Komparatyvni frontyry: svitovyi i vitchyznianiï vymir* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2015). A comprehensive analysis of the Ukrainian steppe frontier could be found in Denys Shatalov, “Ukrains’kyi stepovyï kordon (druga polovyna XV–persha polovyna XVII st.): viïna i zdobych” (Master’s diss., Dnipropetrovs’k National University, 2015).

- 11 Alekseï Tolochko, *Ocherki nachal’noi Rusi* (Kyiv: Laurus, 2015), 11.
- 12 More on Old Rus’ see in: I. N. Danilevskii, *Drevniaia Rus’ glazami sovremennikov i potomkov (IX–XII vv.)* (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1998); A. V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus’ na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki kul’turnykh, torgovykh i politicheskikh sviazei IX–XII vv.* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoï kultury, 2001); O. P. Tolochko and P. P. Tolochko, *Kyivs’ka Rus’* (Kyiv: Al’ternatyvy, 1998).
- 13 For details on Rus’-Steppe relations see Thomas S. Noonan, “Rus’, Pechenegs, and Polovtsy, Economic Interaction along the Steppe Frontier in the pre-Mongol Era,” *Russian History* 19, no. 1–4 (1992): 301–327; Peter B. Golden, “Aspects of the Nomadic Factor in the Economic Development of Kievan Rus’,” in *Ukrainian Economic History: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Ivan S. Koroptyckyj (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 58–101; Omeljan Pritsak, “The Polovcians and Rus’,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982): 321–380; O. B. Bubenok, *Iasy i brodniki v stepiakh Vostochnoi Evropy VI–nachalo XIII vv.* (Kyiv: Logos, 1997).

steppe's proximity was strongly exaggerated in the old Rus' chronicles and in the historical scholarship that later drew on them. Modern researchers assume as an axiom that the feuds between the princes were much more disastrous for Rus' than the nomads' raids; indeed, the princes "were second to none in devastating the Rus' lands."<sup>14</sup>

The symbiosis between Rus' and the Wild Field ended when the armies of the Mongol empire invaded the lands, and this series of invasions led to several forces of Rus' principalities and the Cumans joining forces in 1223. This debacle signaled the beginning of the end of the old Rus' and secured the Mongols' hold on its territory which included the bustling city of Kyiv).

The communities living in the steppe in the tenth to twelfth centuries left for greener pastures the stone idols in the Wild Field, which could be easily found even in the late eighteenth century<sup>15</sup> alongside with nomads' burial mounds. Throughout the nineteenth century, these statues were used en-masse as a source of stone for all sorts of construction projects, which led to the disappearance of thousands, maybe even tens thousands of the idols.<sup>16</sup> Dedicated collections of the remaining stone statues were formed only at the end of the nineteenth century, and presently are exhibited in Dnipro, Berdiansk, and Luhansk.

## The Zaporozhian Cossacks and the Tatars

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, most the lands of old Rus' that are now a part of Ukraine and Belarus were incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, which after the 1569 Union of Lublin formed the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Great Frontier, mentioned above, remained in the lower Dnipro region. Slave trade, too, continued to be the staple of the region's economy. According to the researchers of the

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14 Noonan, "Rus', Pechenegs, and Polovtsy," 302. Compare to the point that "it would be hard to show that any Rus' prince spent much more time campaigning against the Nomads than against his own kin within the dynastic lands." Maureen Perrie, ed., *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 89.

15 *Puteshestvennye zapiski Vasil'ia Zueva ot Sankt-Peterburga do Khersona v 1781 i 1782 godu* (Saint-Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1787), 261.

16 S. A. Pletneva, *Polovetskie kamennye izvaianiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974); Ia. Dashkevich and E. Tryiarski, *Kamennye baby prichernomorskikh stepei* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo PAN, 1982).

topic, “one can safely conclude that until 1700 the Black Sea slave trade was fully comparable in size with the Atlantic slave trade.”<sup>17</sup>

This was now the zone of contact not between Rus', the Cumans and Pechenegs, but between various groups of people from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate. Slave trade continued to be the lynchpin of Crimea's economy and was practiced by far more than just one ethnic or religious group. Overall, at least two million residents of the borderlands were taken captive.<sup>18</sup> Their lives in the Ottoman Empire followed different trajectories, but it is obvious that the permanent threat of raids was an obstacle to the colonization of the south-eastern extremities of the Commonwealth.

The first settlers appeared in the area around the lower reaches of the Dniipro already in the fifteenth century. These pioneers were Cossacks—also the product of the Great Frontier.<sup>19</sup> “Cossack” is a Turkic word, meaning an outlaw, a guard, a free man, a brigand. The Cossacks were called Zaporozhian because the community came into its own in a region lying beyond the rapids (*porohy*), on the flood plains near the Dniipro that are hard to reach and rich in fowl. The Cossacks referred to these plains as the Great Meadow. The Cossacks wore Turkic clothes, had their heads shaved leaving only the characteristic (and also Oriental) lock of hair on top of the head falling down on the brow, and generally embraced the Turkic customs of everyday life and terms (including the famous *maidan*).<sup>20</sup>

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- 17 Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, “Slave Hunting and Slave Redemption as a Business Enterprise: The Northern Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries,” *Oriente Moderno. Nuova serie* 25, no. 1 (2006): 152.
  - 18 Ia. R. Dashkevych, “Iasyr z Ukraïny (XV–persha polovyna XVII st.) iak istoryko-demohrafichna problema,” in *Ukraïns'kyi arkhoeohrafichnyi shchorichnyk. Nova seriia* 2 (1993): 40–47.
  - 19 Natalia Iakovenko, *Narys istorii seredn'ovichnoi ta rann'omodernoï Ukraïny*, 2nd ed. (Kyïv: Krytyka, 2005), 180–182. See also V. A. Smoliï, ed., *Istoriia ukraïns'koho kozatstva. Narysy u 2-kh tomakh*, (Kyïv: Kyievo-Mohylians'ka Akademiia, 2006); Serhii Lep'iavko, *Kozats'ki viïny kintsia XVI st. v Ukraïni* (Chernihiv: Siverians'ka dumka, 1996); Serhii Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Viktor Brekhunenko, *Kozaky na stepovomu kordoni Ievropy* (Kyïv: Instytut ukraïns'koï arkhoeohrafiï ta dzhereloznavstva im. M. S. Hrushevs'koho, 2011).
  - 20 More on the Cossack reception of the Ottoman tradition as well as comparisons between the Zaporozhians and the men unions in Caucasus and Central Asia see in Oleksandr Halenko, “Luk i rushnytsia v lytsars'kii symvolitsi ukraïns'koho kozatstva: paradoksy kozats'koï ideolohii i problema skhidnoho vplyvu,” in *Mediaevalia Ucrainica: mental'nist' ta istoriia idei*

Even if we accept the argument that the Cossack communities were formed spontaneously from fugitive peasants, the crucial role in the institutionalization of the new phenomenon was played by large landowners—Christian Orthodox Ukrainian noblemen such as Dmytro Vyshnevetsky and Ostap Dashkevych. Initially, the Cossacks were practitioners of a certain way of life rather than a social group. This style of living consisted in “steppe trades”: from providing security services for trade caravans to plundering these very same caravans or the Ottoman coastline. The gradual institutionalization of the Cossacks gave birth to fortified settlements called *sichs* that women were prohibited from entering.

A *sich* compound, at least in the early eighteenth century, had barracks where the Cossacks lived (*kurin'*), a Christian Orthodox church, and administrative as well as utility outbuildings. A *sich* was not regarded as a town, although it was enclosed with a rampart. Outside it, married Cossacks lived in single-homestead settlements (so called *zymivnyky*). This factor introduced an element of arable farming into their undertaking of colonizing the steppe.

The Cossacks' relations with the Steppe were not limited solely to armed confrontation. Reciprocated plundering raids alternated with military alliances (the most significant of which was the participation of a Crimean Tatar cavalry in Bohdan Khmelnytsky's battles against the Polish troops).<sup>21</sup> But the most essential component was the obvious interdependency of Cossack and Turkic communities' in the Wild Field. The best proof of this assumption is the fact that the Zaporozhian Sich and the Crimean Khanate were gone from the map of Europe almost simultaneously—in 1775 and 1783, respectively. Both communities were destroyed in the course of the imperial unification carried out by Russian Empress Catherine II.

In Ukrainian popular tradition, Cossacks were perceived as an embodiment of freedom and self-government as opposed to the power of nobility in Poland and autocracy in Russia. This popular mythology was supported and developed by Ukrainian writers in the ninetieth century, particularly, by Taras Shevchenko, born as a peasant-serf who became the most prominent Ukrainian poet and

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5 (1998): 93–110; V. V. Hrybovs'kyi, “Zaporoz'ke kozatsvo i cholovichi soiuzu Kavkazu ta Tsentral'noi Azii v komparatyvnyi perspektyvi,” *Hileia: naukovyi visnyk* 52 (2011): 116–130.

21 The analysis of the Crimean Tatar cavalry from the point of view of military history could be found in I. S. Storozhenko, *Bohdan Khmel'nytskyi i voienne mystetstvo u Vyzvol'ni viini ukrains'koho narodu seredyny XVII st.* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Vydavnytstvo Dnipropetrovs'koho Universytetu, 1996).



created the complex Cossack myth of Ukraine.<sup>22</sup> Among the popularizers of the Cossack myth and researchers of the Cossack past, Dmytro Yavornytsky (in Russian, Dmitry Evarnitsky) played a particular role. It was no coincidence that Yavornytsky, often called “the Cossack’s father” lived for decades in Katerynoslav and served as a director of the local museum. The Cossack past of the region, which then became a springboard of imperial imagination and expansion to the south, will remain an important factor in local history and self-perception.

## Polish Kodak

The Cossacks’ communities, as they proliferated near the lower Dnipro, quickly found themselves in confrontation with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On the one hand, Warsaw was interested in the Cossacks as defenders of the south-eastern borderlands against the Tatar raiders. On the other hand, the Cossacks’ raids into the Ottoman Empire very soon brought Warsaw and Istanbul to the brink of war. The sultans protested against the Zaporozhians’ acts of brigandage and asked the Polish king to bring them to order. The importance of keeping peace with the Ottomans was at the backbone of the argument advanced by the Grand Crown Hetman Stanisław Koniecpolski when he made his case for the construction of a Polish fort near the Dnipro’s rapids.

In 1635, when the Koniecpolski project was being discussed, de Beauplan visited the region near the lower Dnipro. It was decided to build the fort, designed by Beauplan, near the first rapid—Kodatsky. So, the fort was called Kodak (in Polish, Kudak). Raised quickly in the summer of 1635, the quadrangular fort with bastions was used to accommodate a garrison commanded by the French officer Jean de Marion. Beauplan left Kodak just in time before troubles began, but Marion was less fortunate. In the autumn of 1635, a Cossack detachment under the command of Ivan Sulyma, heading on their way home from a Crimean raid, easily took by storm the unfinished Polish fortress, which they saw as an annoying obstacle intended to prevent them from gaining control over the lower Dnipro.

Koniecpolski did not tolerate this grasp of power and ordered the building of a new and more secure fort near the Kodatsky rapid. This plan was endorsed

22 On Shevchenko’s poetry and its importance for Ukrainian national movement see George G. Grabowicz, *The Poet as Mythmaker: A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Shevchenko* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1982); Jeny Alwart, *Mit Taras Ševčenko Staat machen. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik in der Ukraine vor und nach 1991* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012).

both by the Sejm and King Władysław IV Vasa, who were both eager to ensure that the Cossacks would not work the sea. New Kodak was erected next to the site of the destroyed fort, following the design of a German engineer, Friedrich Getkant. With an improved structure, the fort could accommodate up to 600 soldiers and was planned to be thrice bigger than its predecessor. A wooden Dominican chapel was built as well. The construction of the second Kodak was completed in 1639. According to a legend, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who was present at the opening, said in Latin: “there is nothing created by a man’s hand that cannot be brought to ruin.”<sup>23</sup>

And so this ruin came to pass less than a decade later, in 1648, when Khmelnytsky assumed the command of the Cossack forces in an uprising that turned into the biggest Cossack war against Poland. The “improved” Kodak, even when it found itself far behind the front lines of Khmelnytsky’s war, put up stubborn resistance, but capitulated in the autumn of 1648 at a time when its supplies had been already running out.<sup>24</sup>

A Polish historian pompously called Kodak “an oasis of civilized life amidst the sea of steppe,” “the border stone of Catholicism in the east,” arguing that its mission “was to lay the road for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the south, to the waters of the Black Sea.”<sup>25</sup> However, the fort’s history revealed the limitations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’s ability to control the lower Dnipro region and intervene into the relations on the Wild Field.

Kodak became a trophy of the Zaporozhians. In the Pereiaslav Treaty of 1654, the Khmelnytsky’s agreement with the tsar of Muscovy stated in the final, twenty-third article that “Kodak—the town on the border with Crimea,” was a responsibility that the Cossacks asked the Moscow’s tsar to assume.<sup>26</sup>

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23 O. I. Levitskii, ed., *Letopis' Samovidtsa po novootkrytym spiskam* (Kyiv: Tipografia K. N. Milevskogo, 1878), 218.

24 The first special publication on Polish Kudak is Maryan Dubiecki, *Kudak. Twierdza kresowa i jej okolice* (Warsaw: Gebethner i Wolff, 1900). Dubiecki (1838–1926) was an amateur historian, who participated in of the Polish uprising of 1863. In 1874–1880 he lived in Katerynoslav. More on Dubiecki see in V. S. Moroz, “Istoryk Maryan Dubiecki: naukova ta hromads'ka diial'nist',” *Naddniprians'ka Ukraïna: istorychni protsesy, podii, postati* 11 (2013): 85–95. See also Aleksander Czołowski, *Kudak: przyczynki do założenia i upadku twierdzy* (Lwów: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1926). Czołowski’s work corrects numerous inaccuracies in Dubiecki’s book and includes new archival sources.

25 Dubiecki, *Kudak. Twierdza kresowa i jej okolice*, 81, 108, 115.

26 D. I. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, 4th ed. (Kyiv: Iuzhno-russkoe knigoizdatel'stvo F. A. Iogansona, 1903), 534.



Under the 1711 Treaty of the Pruth, the fort was demolished by the Russian troops. After the 1730s, the site was known as inhabited by Cossacks. The fort later became a state settlement in 1775. The Cossack villages Novi and Stari Kaidaky, located near the ruins of the fort, later played an important role in the history of Katerynoslav-Dnipro(petrovs'k). In 1944, on Kodak's former site, a granite quarry was established, erasing almost all traces of the stronghold whose existence may be regarded as an example of *pre-urbanization* of the lower Dnipro.

### Russian Empire in the Late Eighteenth Century as “an Enlightened Police State”

Tsar Peter the First assumed the title of emperor in 1721. By the 1750s, Russia's neighbors recognized it as an empire. However, even after Peter the First's brutal reforms, the colossal state—situated partially in Europe and stretching all the way to the seemingly boundless Asia—was perceived as “a northern country” desperately fighting to secure a part for itself in the European symphony.

After the 1762 coup d'état against the Emperor Peter III, the Russian crown was passed down to his wife Catherine the Second (who later became known as Catherin the Great) née Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg—a daughter of the governor of the city of Stettin (now Szczecin in Poland). Formally, Catherine did not have any rights to the Russian throne. Being aware of this limitation, the empress, while she was a wife to the soon-to-be-overthrown Peter III, applied maximum effort to master the Russian language and to persuade everyone in court and beyond that she was a faithful Orthodox Christian. Inspired by the French Enlightenment thinkers, the empress was motivated by the wish to show that a vast empire could also as “a lawful state.”<sup>27</sup>

Catherine imagined Russia as an example of enlightened absolutism—a regular state with an estate system governed by fundamental laws, which the monarch and his subjects equally obeyed. In the Enlightenment doctrine, the absolute monarch was the establisher of universal harmony, while the state was the object of poetic admiration and philosophical reflections precisely because it was the custodian of the order under the sun.<sup>28</sup>

27 Il'ia Gerasimov, ed., *Novaia imperskaia istoriia Severnoi Evrazii. Chast' 2. Balansirovanie imperskoï situatsii: XVIII–XX vv.* (Kazan': Ab Imperio, 2017), 96–97.

28 V. M. Zhivov, “Gosudarstvennyi mif v èpokhu Prosveshcheniia i ego narushenie v Rossii kontsa XVIII veka,” in V. M. Zhivov, *Razyskaniia v oblasti istorii i predystorii russkoï kul'tury* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoï kul'tury, 2002), 442–443.

The Russian Empire claimed that its expansion was bringing order to the South as well as to the West. In particular, the idea that an enlightened state would regulate even the natural world found its way into Russian politics on the territories “newly acquired from Poland” (present-day Belarus) after the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’s first partition in 1772. The Russian Empire portrayed itself as a demiurge creating *order* out of *chaos* (“chaos” was one of the clichés used during the Age of Reason to describe the Polish political setup). The adoption of this political course was presented in the so-called “Catherinian alleys” where the main roadways were flanked with densely planted birch trees, which created for strollers an impression of walking in a park. Other novelties included the mounting of mileposts as well as the construction of standardized mail offices and uniform administrative buildings in cities.<sup>29</sup>

Memoirs of a certain Gavriil Dobrynin, a Russian official sent to a province in Belarus to work as a mid-rank clerk, contain an interesting account of his first impressions of the new governorates: “Having rolled over to the newly acquired Belarussian country, we were astonished to see that the endless alley along which we were riding had on either side two rows of birches.”<sup>30</sup> This picture of the advancement of civilization led Dobrynin to conclude that “upon arrival to the first Belarusian town, Rogachev, we shall see splendid edifices,” but instead he found himself “in an ordinary village looking like a cattle yard.” Immediately after moving into a rented apartment, he was disgusted by the amount of cockroaches visible to the naked eye. The office, housed in an ordinary log hut, was teeming with them as well.<sup>31</sup>

The promotion of the idea of Russian civilization as advanced and mighty was only a façade—that much was quite clear. But the idea that the enlightened absolutism brought “blissful rewards” and “the sweetness of freedom” was an important (self)-justification of territorial expansion. As for the already acquired territories, enlightened absolutism inevitably presupposed that they would simply merge into the state. It was part of the declared strategy of streamlining management and introducing “general” order. This logic led to the ultimate abolishment of the Ukrainian hetmanate in 1764, and in 1765 brought an end

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29 Wojciech Boberski, “Architektura ziem i zaboru rosyjskiego,” in *Kultura i polityka: Wpływ polityki rusyfikacyjnej na kulturę zachodnich rubieży Imperium Rosyjskiego (1772–1915)*, ed. Dariusz Konstantynów and Piotr Paszkiewicz (Warsaw: Instytut sztuki PAN, 1994), 43–60.

30 Gavriil I. Dobrynin, “Istinnoe povestvovanie ili zhizn', im samim pisannaia. Chast' 1. 1752–1777,” *Russkaia starina* 4 (1871): 1.

31 Ibid., 2–6.

to many of the Cossack regiments in Ukraine. Similarly, a ban was established on peasant travel, prohibiting them from moving from one landowner to another in Ukrainian (or “Little Russian”) governorates (in Russia proper this ban was formalized already in 1649).<sup>32</sup>

Whereas the police state in Central and Western Europe contributed to the development of individual initiative and structuration of society, in Russia the contradiction between surveillance, centralization, and the ideals of private initiative was never resolved.<sup>33</sup> Dobrynin’s observations cited above confirm what has been observed long ago: in Russia in the late eighteenth century, there was no direct link between the state’s ideology and the real mechanism of state governance.<sup>34</sup>

## The Greek Project

The southern direction of Russian politics was directly linked to the western (Polish) one. The first Russo-Turkish War in 1768–1774 was caused by Russia’s interference in Poland’s affairs, which made the sultan feel threatened. The unexpectedly successful war on Russia’s side allowed Russia to gain control over the entire northern section of the Black Sea region, for which they declared Crimea as independent from the Ottoman Empire (but it was only in ten years that Russia completely annexed the peninsula). These developments paved the way for the rise of Katerynoslav’s prestige and geographical importance, which also helped raise the foundation and status other cities in the northern section of the Black Sea region and near the lower Dnipro.

The successful military campaign prioritized the so-called “Greek project,” which led to the transformation of the supposedly Turk-free section of the Ottoman Empire into a resurrected and Russia-friendly Byzantine Empire, not (as Voltaire proposed in his letters to Empress Catherine II) in the transfer of the Russian Empire’s capital to Constantinople. In Catherine II’s grand

32 More on the “Ukrainian” politics of the Russian Empire in late eighteenth century see Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s–1830s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1988); Volodymyr Sklokin, *Rosīis’ka imperiia i Slobids’ka Ukraīna u druhii polovyni XVIII st.: Prosvichenyi absolutyzm, impers’ka intehratsiia, lokal’ne suspil’stvo* (L’viv: Vydavnytstvo Ukraīns’koho Katolyts’koho Universytetu, 2019).

33 Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State. Social and Institutional Change Through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 250, 252.

34 Zhivov, “Gosudarstvennyi mif v ėpokhu Prosveshcheniia,” 448.

vision, her grandson Constantine (born in 1779) was to ascend to the throne in Constantinople,<sup>35</sup> and her grandson Alexander (born in 1777) was to ascend to the throne in St. Petersburg. Constantine's heirs, meanwhile, would have to abandon forever any claims to the Russian throne. So, the "Greek project" was rooted in the idea that a complex historical line of succession linked Byzantium and Russia, as well as the utopian belief in an inter-imperial brotherly union on the basis of the common Christian Orthodox faith.<sup>36</sup>

The "Greek project" added a southern dimension and sphere of influence to the Russian Empire. The Black Sea region and Crimea offered more than just "the empire's best climate."<sup>37</sup> The southern expansion inspired a feeling of triumph in the Russian empire, as Russia's new territory incorporated ancient monuments and reached the region which was presumably the cradle of Christianity in Rus'. The point of reference here was the baptism of the Kyivan Prince Volodimer the Great in 988 (in Ukrainian, Volodymyr; in Russian, Vladimir) in Chersonesus, the town presently located in Sevastopol in Crimea.

Perhaps the critical role in Russia's "southward turn" was played by Grigory Potemkin, who rose along the ranks of the Russian political elite during the mid-1770s. "The most enduring" of at least twenty of Catherine's lovers during her thirty-four-year-long reign, Potemkin became a breathing legend on account of his bold projects and ideas. His contemporaries noted that Potemkin "accommodated in his head a project of destruction of the Ottoman Empire along with a palace construction project in St. Petersburg, or a project of new uniforms for the entire army along with an order to prepare a basket of flowers for his nieces." He was also declared a paragon of "huge physical might, perversity, lust" and "the world's strangest man: now capricious, then forgiving, now lazy, then astonishingly active," often in thrall to every imaginable "whimsical passion."<sup>38</sup>

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35 The very name of Catherine's grandson was not accidental. He was supposed to become the successor of the last Byzantine Emperor Konstantinos XI Palaiologos, who was killed in 1453 during the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans.

36 For details of the "Greek project" see Edgar Hösch, "Das sogenannte 'griechische Projekt' Katharinas II: Ideologie und Wirklichkeit der russischen Orientpolitik in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 12 (1964): 168–206; Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla. Literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiya v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII–pervoï treti XIX v.* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 35–45.

37 G. Vernadskii, "Stikhi kn. G. A. Potëmkin-Tavricheskogo na osnovanie Ekaterinoslava," *Izvestiia Tavricheskoi Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii*, no. 56 (1919): 127–130.

38 Memoirs and opinions on Potemkin are collected in Z. E. Zhuravleva, ed., G. A. Potëmkin. *Ot vakhmistra do fel'dmarshala. Vospominaniia. Dnevnik. Pis'ma* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo

In 1775, Potemkin was appointed governor general of the newly formed Azov and Novorossia Governorates. The word “Novorossia” (New Russia) was later used to define all territories incorporated into the Russian Empire in Crimea and the northern Black Sea region. The “novelty” in the invented name of the region indicated not only the recent acquisition of the territory. This was also evidence of the ambition to create a completely new reality for a place where history allegedly broke off shortly after the dusk of antiquity and simultaneously received a logical continuation in the grandiose “Greek project.” Potemkin, personally represented the state in the South, which came as its own empire of cities and foreign colonies, and he declared the objective of populating the steppes as his main priority.

### The Town in Russia in the Late Eighteenth Century

In the eighteenth-century Russian Empire, settlements were named “towns” which had little to do with the size of the settlements and more to do with their accorded status. About 45% of Russia’s towns numbered fewer than 500 residents, whereas urban population accounted for no more than 2% of the payers of the per capita tax. The town-dwellers were liable to conscription, paid the per capita tax at a higher rate than the peasant, and were obliged to live in a town where they were officially domiciled.<sup>39</sup>

Sure enough, these limitations did not apply to nobles. The wealthy were free to live in towns of their choosing and own property where they saw fit. This right was enshrined in the “Charter for the Rights, Freedoms, and Privileges of the Noble Russian Gentry,” which was issued in 1785. This document reaffirmed that the gentry was exempt from the obligation to work in civil service and from corporal punishment, and guaranteed the nobility’s right to leave Russia freely. Most essentially, the Charter enshrined the gentry’s practically unlimited rights of ownership regarding their serfs, who could be sold, exchanged, or sent to a penal servitude camp at the behest of their enslavers.

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Pushkinskogo fonda, 2002); Idem, ed., *G. A. Potëmkin. Poslednie Gody. Vospominaniia. Dnevnik. Pis'ma* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Pushkinskogo fonda, 2003). See also Marc Raeff, “Der Stil der russischen Reichspolitik und Fürst G. A. Potemkin,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 16, no. 2 (1968): 161–193; O. I. Eliseeva, *Geopoliticheskie proekty G. A. Potëmkina* (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2000).

39 Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 155, 158.

In 1782, just a few years before the establishment in the Charter, Catherine II issued the *Charter of Good Discipline*—or the *Police Charter*—which divided towns into sections of 200–700 courtyards each, and further segmented the sections into neighborhoods consisting of fifty to one hundred courtyards each. A police chief was appointed for each section, while every neighborhood had also its own guardian of public order. The policemen and guardians reported to the municipal public discipline authority, who was responsible for controlling commerce, capturing of fugitive serfs, repairing of roads and streets, enforcing anti-gambling operations, constructing bathhouses.<sup>40</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, the power of a state was believed depend directly on the number of the state's subjects, and an enlightened monarch was expected to take care of the "augmentation of population" before all.<sup>41</sup> Not surprisingly, right after the conclusion of a peace treaty with the Ottomans in 1774, Potemkin ordered the construction of the cities of Kherson (the name is a direct allusion to Chersonesus and the origin of Christianity in Rus') and Slaviansk (the location was immediately put on maps, but the city began to be built only in 1779 and never became a major urban center).<sup>42</sup> The rationale for the construction of Kherson was to establish a shipbuilding yard and harbor closer to the Black Sea. No money was spared on the idea of founding a "new St. Petersburg," and Potemkin invested much time and care into this project by devoting a considerable amount of imperial resources to this grand-scale construction process.<sup>43</sup>

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40 Aleksandr Kamenskiĭ, *Rossiiskaia imperiia v XVIII veke: Traditsiia i modernizatsiia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1999), 246.

41 For an overview of the colonisation politics see E. I. Druzhinina, *Severnoe Prichernomor'e v 1775–1800 gg.* (Moscow: Institut istorii AN SSSR, 1959). Important corrections and new sources were collected in V. M. Kabuzan, *Zaselenie Novorossii v XVIII–pervoĭ polovine XIX veka (1719–1858 gg.)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976). See also N. D. Polons'ka-Vasylenko, *The Settlement of the Southern Ukraine (1750–1775)* (New York: The Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S., 1955); Hans Auerbach, *Die Besiedlung der Südukraine in den Jahren 1774–1787* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965).

42 More on Slaviansk see in O. S. Hrushevs'kyĭ, *Notatky do temy "Zaselennia Khersonshchyny i Katerynoslavshchyny,"* Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv Ukraïny [TsDIAUK, Central State Archive of Ukraine], fond 1235, opys 1, sprava 1219, arkushi 27–37. I would like to thank Viktoriia Serhiienko who drew my attention to this source.

43 D. I. Bagaleĭ, *Kolonizatsiia Novorosiiskogo kraia i pervye shagi ego po puti kul'tury* (Kyiv: Tipografiia G. T. Korchak-Novitskogo, 1889), 35–39.

## Katerynoslav-I

Kherson was envisaged as Russia's most important port located at the lowest point of the Dnipro. The construction of the capital of a governorate, to be named after Catherine the Second (Kateryno-slav, "glory of Catherine"), was planned in conjunction with the establishment of the Azov Governorate in 1775. In the spring of 1776, the Azov governor, lieutenant general Vasily Chertkov, personally selected the site for the city—at the place of the Loshakovka village, where the Kilchen River joined the Dnipro's left tributary, the Samara River.<sup>44</sup> Katerynoslav was built as a stronghold with two forts.<sup>45</sup> Already four years later, the town had 2,194 residents, four churches (Russian Orthodox, Greek, Catholic, and Armenian), and two vocational schools. Other new buildings included the provincial government's office, the governor general's house, and the army barracks.

It soon turned out that the site for the city was a very poor choice, since the lowland was flooded each spring, with the stagnant water that caused epidemics. Even worse, there were times when the river was so flooded that not a single distantly decent boat could approach the town. In 1782, the chief army doctor Chevfogel stated that the Katerynoslav construction site was "pernicious to health, inconvenient, and destructive for the burghers' economic development."<sup>46</sup>

It became obvious that Katerynoslav-I, or Katerynoslav on the Kilchen, could not become the capital of a governorate. In 1786, it was renamed into Novomoskovsk, and by 1791, most of its dwellers moved to other settlements and the administration was transferred to Novi Kaidaky (in Russian, Novye Kaidaki). In 1793, Novomoskovsk was relocated up the Samara River at the site of a Cossack settlement called Novoselytsia. Once deserted, Katerynoslav-I became a ghost city. Antiquarians who visited it in 1887 found that locals were taking apart the governor's house brick by brick for the sole purpose of using the stone in the construction of their own homes, and "a flock of sheep was

44 *Raport gubernatora Azovskoi gubernii V. Chertkova Potëmkinu ob izgotovlenii proekta i sostavlenii smet na stroitel'stvo gubernskogo goroda Ekaterinoslava*, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov [RGADA, Russian State Archive of the Old Acts], fond 16, opis' 1, delo 690, list 3.

45 The reconstruction of the architectural appearance of the first Ekaterinoslav could be found in S. B. Revskii, *Ekaterinoslav Kil'chenskii: Istoriko-arkhitekturnyi ocherk* (Dnipropetrovs'k: DISI, 1974).

46 Aleksandr Egorov, *Ekaterinoslavskoe blukanie (1777–1791)* (Katerynoslav: Pechatnia S. P. Iakovleva, 1887), 5.



roaming” about what used to be the town square.<sup>47</sup> After the construction of the Dnipro Hydroelectric Station in 1930s was completed, the site of Katerynoslav-I was partly flooded, its central section forming what now is Samarsky Island, turned into a home to summer cottages with gardens.

### Novi Kaidaky as a “Provisional” Katerynoslav

After the decline of Katerynoslav-I, Novi Kaidaky became a makeshift Katerynoslav. In documents issued in the late 1740s, this Cossack settlement was referred to as a “town,” and the St. Nicholas Church, a “cathedral.” As the most modest estimates assume, by the 1770s Novi Kaidaky numbered up to 3,000 dwellers. According to an written nineteenth century account by a Zaporozhian called Mykyta Korzh, in Novi Kaidaky “a fort was built in a singular and quaint Zaporozhian style” with three wooden towers and an earth wall.<sup>48</sup> In official papers, produced in 1787–1791, Novi Kaidaky was called “the town of Ekaterinoslav.”<sup>49</sup> Throughout the early nineteenth century, Novi Kaidaky had 125 homes, including five administrative stone buildings, as well as two stone and three wooden Christian Orthodox churches, an Old Believers’ chapel, and a synagogue.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, the site for the new Katerynoslav was chosen by Potemkin himself. This time, the city was to be located on an elevation that was home to a Zaporozhian settlement called Polovytsia (in Russian, Polovitsa). Polovytsia’s population in the 1770s numbered more than 100 courtyards, that is, approximately 800 people.<sup>51</sup>

47 M. V[ladimirov], “Poezdka na staryi Ekaterinoslav,” *Ekaterinoslavskii iubileinyi listok*, no. 1, April 9, 1887, 5.

48 *Ustnoe povestvovanie byvshego zaporozhtsa, zhitelia Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii i uezda, seleniia Mihailovki, Nikity Leont'evicha Korzha* (Odesa: Gorodskaiia tipografia, 1842), 88. The history of Korzh’s oral story recording and its analysis could be found in Vasyl’ Bidnov, “*Ustnoe povestvovanie zaporozhtsa N. L. Korzha*” ta ioho pokhodzhennia i znachinnia (Prague: Ukraïns’ke Istorychno-Filolohichne Tovarystvo, 1925).

49 Feodosii Makarevskii, *Materialy dlia istoriko-statisticheskogo opisaniia Ekaterinoslavskoi Eparkhii: Tserkvi i prikhody proshedshego XVIII stoletiia* (Katerynoslav: Tipografia Ia. M. Chauskogo, 1880), 139; Egorov, *Ekaterinoslavskoe blukanie*, 8. Compare a recent publication: O. Repan, V. Starostin, and O. Kharlan, *Palimpsest. Korinnia mista: poselennia XVII–XVIII st. v istorii Dnipropetrovs’ka* (Kyiv: Ukraïns’ki propilei, 2008).

50 *Opysy Stepovoï Ukraïny*, 305.

51 M. E. Kavun, “Dynamika depopuliatsii slobody Polovytsi v protsesi urbohenezu Katerynoslava (1789–1797): istoriko-demografichna rekonstruktsiia,” *Istoriia i kul'tura Prydniprov'ia. Nevidomi ta malovidomi storinky* 8 (2011): 31.



In October 1786, Potemkin ordered the Katerynoslav governor Ivan Sinelnikov “to immediately begin stocking up necessary supplies in the vicinity of the site where the Polovitsa village now sits, and to take steps to ensure that nothing would handicap the beginning and conduct of construction works in the new city.”<sup>52</sup>

In September 1784, an edict established a university in Katerynoslav, which was itself already under construction. The university-in-the-making was “to teach not only sciences but arts as well, both for the subjects of the Russian Empire and the subjects of neighboring states.”<sup>53</sup> In February 1785, Potemkin asked Catherine II to send a court musician named Khandoshkin to the south of the empire because he believed the university in Katerynoslav “should have a music conservatory.”<sup>54</sup> Even before he had an approved plan for the city in his hands, Potemkin had already hired and paid salaries to professors—in particular, to famed composer Giuseppe Sarti, to economics professor Livanov, to agriculture professor Prokopovich, to professors of painting Neretin and Bukharov, and to historiographer de Guienne, all of whom were contracted to work in the future university.<sup>55</sup>

The seriousness of the Katerynoslav construction project was to be “guaranteed” by the personal presence of the empress, her courtiers, and foreign guests at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the new city’s main church. Planned quite spontaneously, this ceremony was included into the schedule of the empress’s 1787 visit to Crimea.

### Catherine II’s Journey to Crimea and the Laying of the Foundation Stone for the Transfiguration Cathedral in 1787

During her reign, Catherine II made several tours to her possessions. Immediately after her coronation, she set out on an eleven-day-long journey by foot to Rostov; in the summer of 1764, she visited the Baltic provinces; in 1767, she cruised the Volga from Tver to Simbirsk (foreign diplomats were invited to join

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52 Quoted in Gavriil (V.F. Rozanov), *Otryvok povestvovaniia o Novorossiiskom krae iz original'nykh istochnikov pocherpnutyi* (Odesa: Gorodskaiia tipografiia, 1851), 52–53.

53 Apollon Skal'kovskii, *Khronologicheskoe obozrenie istorii Novorossiiskogo kraia 1731–1823. Chast' I (1731–1796)* (Odesa: Gorodskaiia tipografiia, 1836), 186.

54 V.S. Lopatin, ed., *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin. Lichnaia perepiska 1769–1791* (Moscow: Nauka, 1997), 199.

55 Bagalei, *Kolonizatsiia Novorossiiskogo kraia*, 46.

for the first time); in 1780, she traveled around Belarusian governorates “newly acquired from Poland” (on that trip, in Mahilyov, she first met with the Austrian emperor Joseph II); and in 1783, she visited Finland.<sup>56</sup> The 1787 journey to Crimea was the farthest, the longest, the most grandiose, and had the largest number of attendants following the empress.

Catherine’s southward journey had a double meaning. On the one hand, the Russian Empire was symbolically ‘returning to its roots,’ to the cradle of Christianity. This was a rediscovery of the old route from the Varangians to the Greeks. On the other hand, Russia was originating the transformation “of an uninhabited land into a blooming garden,” in the style of the Age of Reason. And in this sense the journey was not at all introductory—it was meant to *demonstrate* certain things as well.<sup>57</sup>

The big Crimean tour began in January 1787 from St. Petersburg. Catherine was accompanied by courtiers as well as British, French, and Austrian ambassadors.<sup>58</sup> The entire company waited three months in Kyiv until the ice melted so that they could travel down the Dnipro on specially built galleys. In April 1787 in Kaniv (in Russian, Kanev), at what was then the Russo-Polish border, Catherine II met with Stanisław August Poniatowski, King of Poland and her former lover. Meanwhile, Austrian Emperor Joseph II, who, as was his wont, was traveling under the name of Count of Falkenstein, had already arrived at Kherson. When Catherine II’s flotilla reached Kremenchuk, the empress headed off to meet with Joseph II by land. The two monarchs met near Novi Kaidaky, where a provisional wooden palace was built for Catherine in advance.

On May 9, 1787, the cornerstone for the principal church of Katerynoslav and entire southern Russia was laid. This is how the event was described in the *Travel Journal* published in 1787 in Moscow:

56 On the travels of Catherine II around Russia see N. V. Bessarabova, *Puteshestviia Ekateriny II po Rossii* (Moscow: MGI im. E. R. Dashkovoï, 2005); N. I. Pavlenko, *Ekaterina Velikaia* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2003), 214–241. On Catherine’s travel of 1767 by the Volga River see Guido Hausmann, *Mütterchen Wolga. Ein Fluss als Erinnerungsort vom 16. bis frühe 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2010), 163–196.

57 Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Compare Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

58 A detailed, day-to-day description of the Crimean journey could be found in *Zhurnal Vysochaishego Puteshestviia Eë Velichestva Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Ekateriny II Samoderzhitsy Vserossiiskoi v Poludennnye Strany Rossii v 1787 godu* (Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia u N. Novikova, 1787). See also N. Barsukov, ed., *Dnevnik A. V. Khrapovitskogo, 1782–1793* (St. Petersburg: Universitetskaia Tipografiia u N. Novikova, 1874).

At 9 o'clock in the morning Her Imperial Highness, together with Count of Falkenstein and certain individuals from her entourage, set out on the road to Kherson. Three *verstas* off Kaidaki the party made a halt on the spot chosen for the construction of Ekaterinoslav, the capital of the governorate; the Most Gracious Empress, in a regiment's church, deigned to listen to a liturgy performed by Ambrose the Archbishop of Ekaterinoslav and Chersonesus Taurica, after which the cornerstone for the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord was laid, to mark the beginning of the construction of the city, in the presence of the most distinguished guest.<sup>59</sup>

It was also recorded by the French ambassador de Ségur, who shared the following memories:

On May 9 we camped out in tents, eight *verstas* off Kaidak, on the site where the empress wanted to build Ekaterinoslav. A prayer service was performed in the empress's tent, and the monarchs in the presence of the archbishop laid the cornerstone for the new city's cathedral amidst the most beautiful scenery. The city was to be built on an elevation affording a long view of the meandering Dnieper with its forested islands which liven up its stream in this place. We dined in the local governor's mansion thereupon.<sup>60</sup>

Equally interesting are memoirs of a former Zaporozhian Cossack, Mykyta Korzh, published in 1842. Korzh recalled "the interior setup of the tent" serving as a regiment's prayer house, "myriads of all manner of people" at the service, but he also noted that "the builders failed to dig a trench for the foundation on a short notice, so they dug the ditches already after the empress's arrival."<sup>61</sup>

History writers often quote skeptical pronouncements made by Catherine II's foreign guests. Joseph II presumably said right after the laying of the cornerstone for the Transfiguration Cathedral: "I have done a great work—Her Majesty has laid the first, and I the last stone to a city."<sup>62</sup> De Ségur presumably

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59 *Zhurnal Vysochaishhego Puteshestviia*, 62–63.

60 *Zapiski grafa Segiura o prebyvanii ego v Rossii v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II (1785–1789)* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. N. Maikova, 1865), 196.

61 *Ustnoe povestvovanie byvshego zaporozhtsa*, 68–69.

62 Theresia Adamczyk, "Die Reise Katharinas II. nach Südrussland im Jahre 1787," *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven* 6, no. 1 (1930): 43–44.

prophesied that a prayer service would never be performed in the giant cathedral whose construction had just been started.<sup>63</sup>

Such “prophesies” perfectly fit into the by-now paradigmatic narrative of “the Potemkin villages” as something arranged specially in order to create an illusion of abundance. The phrase “Potemkin villages” originated from Potemkin’s biography published in a Hamburg magazine called *Minerva*. Signed by an anonymous writer, the account is believed to have been written by G. A. Helbig, a one-time secretary of Saxony’s diplomatic mission in Russia.<sup>64</sup> The pamphlet’s writer claims that the settlements in the southern desert beheld by the empress’s retinue were nothing more than decorations specially designed by Potemkin to impress his tsarina. Modern historians tend to stress that “Potemkin indeed dressed up real villages but the dressing was so opulent that the viewers doubted their authenticity or even that what truly existed.”<sup>65</sup>

## Plans for Katerynoslav-II

The new Katerynoslav was to be different from its failed predecessor on the Kilchen. Whereas Katerynoslav-I was built as a fortress, in the second version, a defense function was absent and a regular layout replaced fortifications.<sup>66</sup>

The plan of the “famed” city “consisting of splendid edifices” and sitting on lands that were “still in their infancy” to the empress by Potemkin a year before the journey in October 1786:

First, we envisage here a splendid cathedral in the mold of the St. Paul outside Rome, dedicated to the Transfiguration of Our Lord, to signal that this country with its sterile steppes has been transfigured by your ministrations into a plentiful garden, and an abode of animals—into a hospitable refuge for people streaming from all countries.<sup>67</sup>

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63 D. Cherniavs’kyi, “Dva iuvilei—150-littia Katerynoslava I-ho i 140-littia Katerynoslava II-ho (Dnipropetrovs’ka),” *Zoria* 4–5 (1927): 43.

64 “Potemkin, der Taurier,” *Minerva* (1797–1800).

65 Kamenskii, *Rossiiskaia imperiia v XVIII veke*, 275.

66 M. E. Kavun, “Dva Katerynoslavy: Do problemy istorychnoho kontynuitetu v rozvytku mis’kykh poselen’ Pivdnia Ukraïny XVIII–pershoï polovyny XIX st.,” *Visnyk Dnipropetrovs’koho universytetu. Istoriia ta arkhеolohiia* 6 (2001): 147–153.

67 Lopatin, *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potëmkin. Lichnaia perepiska*, 209.



FIGURE 2. The Potemkin Palace. Early twentieth-century postcard.  
Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

This is what Potemkin planned for Katerynoslav: “a court of law in the mold of ancient basilicas,” “semi-circular stands, like the Propylaea or the entrance to the Acropolis of Athens, with a stock exchange and a theatre in the center,” “the Royal House in the ancient Greek and Roman styles, where the governor general will reside,” an archdiocese with a religious school, the governor’s house, the noblemen’s house and a pharmacy, a University with an academy of music, “a house of invalids with all conceivable amenities and all due splendor, as well as a wool mill and a silk mill.”<sup>68</sup> The latter were opened even before populating an unbuilt city. “Ekaterinoslavskaiia” wool mill in 1786–1794 was located in the town of Dubrowna in Mahilyov province, and “Ekaterinoslavskaiia” silk mill—in the village of Kupavna near Moscow.<sup>69</sup> In 1794, not only the factory equipment was transferred to Katerynoslav from Dubrowna, but also the working people attached to the factory—649 men and women.<sup>70</sup>

Potemkin’s plan for Katerynoslav was copied, sometimes word for word, in an Atlas of Katerynoslav Vicegerents, prepared in 1787, which contains this passage:

68 Ibid.

69 See more in Druzhinina, *Severnoe Prichernomor’e v 1775–1800 gg.*, 229–239.

70 H. K. Shvyd’ko, “Katerynoslavs’ka sukonna fabryka iak mistoutvoriuiuchyï faktor (kinets’ XVIII–persha tretyna XIX st.),” *Prydniprov’ia: istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 8 (2010): 66.

This city is to be built on the Dnieper's right bank at the riverside, near the state village Polovitsa, across from the island called Monastyrsky and the stone breakwater leading to it from the river's bank, on an elevation with quite an expansive site that can accommodate many edifices.<sup>71</sup>

One should pay attention to the phrase “near Polovytsia.” Many early historiographers of Katerynoslav went so far as to write about building the city “in the Polovitsa settlement” or even “officially renaming the Polovitsa village into Ekaterinoslav, the capital of the governorate.”<sup>72</sup> However, such references did not contain any hidden political message neither for Potemkin nor the empress, and not even for many nineteenth-century Russian historians. For them, the existence of Polovytsia did not put the imperial narrative of “cultivating a desert country” into question. An example of the latter proved to be the gardens of a Polovytsia resident Lazar Globa, a former Zaporozhian Cossack captain, who lived for more than a hundred years. One of his gardens developed into the Potemkin Park (presently the Shevchenko Park), another was used as a foundation for the City Garden (now the Globa Park).<sup>73</sup>

### The “Southern Capital”?

Was Katerynoslav conceived as the southern capital of the Russian Empire? According to one of the first historians of the region, archbishop Gavriil (Rozanov), the objective of Katerynoslav was clearly indicated in its “lofty appellation”—to extol Catherine II and “to concentrate the might, the riches and the public education of the entire southern region of one's state.”<sup>74</sup> Potemkin himself wrote about the plans for the new city of Katerynoslav: “I, my dearest, pray you to look at this place as the one where your greatness is original and where you do not share it with your predecessors: here you are not treading a trail that someone else has blazed already.”<sup>75</sup>

71 Rossiiskii voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv [Russian Military Historical Archive], fond VUA, delo 18725, list 8.

72 Makarevskii, *Materialy dlia istoriko-statisticheskogo opisaniia*, 139; Skal'kovskii, *Khronologicheskoe obozrenie istorii Novorossiiskogo kraia. Chast' 1*, 189.

73 More on parks of Ekaterinoslav see in M. E. Kavun, *Sady i parki v istorii Ekaterinoslava-Dnepropetrovska*, vol. 1 (Dnipropetrovs'k: Gerda, 2009).

74 Gavriil (V. F. Rozanov), “Prodolzhenie ocherka o Novorossiiskom krae. Period s 1787 po 1857 god,” *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei* 5 (1863): 426.

75 Quoted in D. I. Evarnitskii, *Ocherki po istorii zaporozhskikh kazakov i Novorossiiskogo kraia* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia I. N. Skorokhodova, 1889), 37.



On the one hand, we have “original greatness” and the incorporation of the empress’s name into the city’s appellation. On the other hand, neither Potemkin nor the empress nor the foreign guests accompanying her on the 1787 journey applied the word “capital” to Katerynoslav. This is all the more curious considering that in a letter to Catherine in the summer of 1783 (when the Katerynoslav-II plan was yet non-existent) Potemkin directly called Kherson, which he founded, a “capital”:

Saint Petersburg, at the Baltic coast, is Russia’s northern capital; the middle capital is Moscow; and may Kherson Akhtyiarsky be the meridional capital of my empress. Let everyone see for himself which monarch has made the best choice.<sup>76</sup>

Was Katerynoslav, like Kherson, the city founded earlier, conceived as “a rival to Saint Petersburg”?<sup>77</sup> This question appears pertinent, first of all, in light of the haste and pompousness that accompanied the city-building project in the southern steppe. Indeed, the circumstances of Katerynoslav’s appearance can be compared with the emphatic “irrationality” of the founding of St. Petersburg in 1703 in an uninhabited and, equally important, “non-historical” area.

In 1712, when the city of Peter, founded less than ten years ago on the outer parts of mighty Sweden, became the capital, this event produced nearly the same effect as the capture of Stockholm.<sup>78</sup> The city built *in defiance of nature* symbolized the victory of reason over natural forces, as well as the determination, on the part of Peter the First’s Russian Empire, to become a European state.

St. Petersburg was a “new Rome” made of stone, built in opposition to the typical at that time Russian wooden houses (in 1714 Peter I even prohibited building stone houses outside the capital).<sup>79</sup> And cities in “New Russia”—the name Catherine II chose for the governorate with the center in Kremenchuk, pieced together in 1764 from the former colonies of Serbs near the Zaporozhian

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76 Lopatin, *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potëmkin. Lichnaia perepiska*, 172.

77 A. M. Panchenko, “Potëmkinskie derevni’ kak kul’turnyi mif,” in A. M. Panchenko, *Russkaia istoriia i kul’tura. Raboty raznykh let* (St. Petersburg: Iuna, 1999), 473.

78 Gerasimov, *Novaia imperskaia istoriia Severnoi Evrazii. Chast’ 2*, 47–49. Compare Iu. M. Lotman, “Simvolika Peterburga i problemy semiotiki goroda,” in Iu. M. Lotman, *Izbrannye stat’i v 3-kh tt.*, vol. 1 (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1992), 9–21.

79 Iu. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskii, “Otvuki kontseptsii ‘Moskva—tretii Rim’ v ideologii Petra Pervogo (K probleme srednevekovoi traditsii v kul’ture barokko),” in Iu. M. Lotman, *Izbrannye stat’i v 3-kh tt.*, vol. 3 (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1992), 210.

Sich—were described as New Athens. This name was applied both to Katerynoslav and, for instance, to Mykolaiv (in Russian, Nikolaev),<sup>80</sup> founded in 1788. “New Athens” was pit against the narrative of Constantinople as the “second Rome”—within this logic Kherson, as well as Katerynoslav and Mykolaiv, contained allusions to pre-Roman Christianity and indicated that Russia was now in possession of its own antiquity.

In any case, Catherine saw herself as both a rival and successor to Peter the Great. This ambition was expressed in St. Petersburg’s first monument, unveiled in 1782, Étienne Falconet’s bronze equestrian statue of Peter the Great, which thanks to Pushkin became widely known as the “Bronze Horseman.” The inscription cut into the pedestal—“PETRO primo CATHARINA secunda”—unequivocally demonstrated whom Catherine II considered as her predecessor.<sup>81</sup>

There is no clear answer to the question about the empress’s and Potemkin’s further intentions regarding Katerynoslav. But the plan itself, alongside with the funds allocated for the construction of the city, unequivocally indicates a *phenomenally* grandiose scale of the project. As fortune would have it (or in agreement “with the laws of history”), all these plans were to remain within the realm of a dream about an imperial city.

In September 1787, literally several months after the laying of the cornerstone for the Transfiguration Cathedral, the Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia. It was rumored that the sultan felt insulted by Catherine’s visit to Crimea, as well as by an arch with an inscription “Road to Constantinople,” which was mounted in her honor in Kherson. During the war, the construction of “new Athens” was suspended. In the summer of 1788, the governor of Katerynoslav Ivan Sinelnikov was mortally wounded near Ochakov.<sup>82</sup> In October 1791, on a road from Iași to Mykolaiv, Potemkin passed away. A shattered Catherine wrote to baron von Grimm: “Nobody controlled him, but he had a wonderful

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80 Compare Rainer Lindner, “Die Stadt als Symbol. Ekaterinoslav und die imperial Integration Neurusslands im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Kultur in der Geschichte Russlands. Räume, Medien, Identitäten, Lebenswelten*, ed. Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 224–246.

81 More about this monument see in Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*.

82 On Sinel’nikov see an article written on the basis of his family archive: D. I. Evarnitskii, “Ivan Maksimovich Sinel’nikov, 1748–1788,” in Evarnitskii, *Ocherki po istorii zaporozhskikh kazakov*, 1–47.



faculty to control others . . . Count Potemkin with his death played a bad joke on me. Now the total burden of control is on me.”<sup>83</sup>

### St. Peter or St. Paul?

Potemkin’s plans for Katerynoslav remained on dreams etched out on paper. Left unfulfilled in the lower Dnipro region, in researchers’ imagination these plans however looked increasingly grandiose. The attraction of the capital city mythology around Katerynoslav sometimes turned quite straightforward historical information into a mess. An example of this is the confusion over the question of which church in Rome was chosen as the model for the Transfiguration Cathedral whose construction was begun by Catherine II.

Most writers in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries answered this question by naming St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome as the chosen model for the Transfiguration Cathedral. Nevertheless, Potemkin clearly stated in his project: “a splendid cathedral in the mold of the St. Paul outside Rome.”<sup>84</sup> The Basilica of St. Paul, no matter how “splendid,” did not match the historiographers’ expectations in respect of Potemkin’s “gigantic” plans. The cathedral he envisioned was to be Europe’s largest, “just one *arshin*”<sup>85</sup> taller than St. Peter’s Basilica, considered to be the largest church in the world.

Surprisingly, historians (including many contemporary researchers who champion critical approach to sources) leaned on the anonymous writer of what turned out to be an unbelievably impactful letter to the *Russkii Arkhiv* [Russian Archive] magazine. This writer claimed that he witnessed in 1848 the authentic planning process of Katerynoslav. The letter features the legend about “just one *arshin*” as well as the comparison with the Latin Quarter in Paris, which has been taken by some historians literally. Presumably, there were plans to use the Monastyrsky Island “as the site for a university, observatory, dwellings for professors and students—in a word, to found something in the mode of *quartier latin* [the Latin Quarter] in Paris—outside the city but connected to it with a bridge across the Dnieper’s arm.”<sup>86</sup>

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83 Quoted in G. A. Potëmkin, *Poslednie gody*, 217.

84 Lopatin, *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potëmkin. Lichnaia perepiska*, 209.

85 [n. a.], “Zametki na stat’i Russkogo Arkhiva,” *Russkii Arkhiv* 7 (1865): 868.

86 Ibid.

In the sources of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries one cannot find a single reference to St. Peter's Basilica as the model for the Transfiguration Cathedral. The contemporaries pointed to the immensity of the planned edifice. In the late 1850s archbishop Gavriil (Rozanov) wrote: "the edifice for the sanctuary in Ekaterinoslav, as it was planned, would have the largest floor to ceiling height and its inner space would be equal in size perhaps only to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome."<sup>87</sup> So Rozanov focuses only on the size, without making any references to the emulation of the form. An equally cautious statement in this respect was made by Yavornytsky, who in the late nineteenth century mentioned a cathedral "whose size was then unique in the whole world."<sup>88</sup>

However, such lack of details did not suit many historians. Dmytro Bahaliy (in Russian, Dmitry Bagalei), for instance, decided to correct the original source. In his rendition, the quote from the Potemkin project reads like this: "in the mold of the St. Paul in Rome (apparently Potemkin meant 'the St. Peter')."<sup>89</sup> The historian not only replaced "Paul" with "Peter," but also twisted Potemkin's unequivocal phrase "outside Rome" (the Basilica of St. Paul was located outside the city walls, this is why even today it is called *fuori le mura*), claiming that the prince meant "in Rome." Another researcher, Andreas Schoenle, initially provides a correct quote from Potemkin, but then takes "the St. Peter myth" for granted and concludes: "for some reason the model was later changed to the St. Peter Cathedral in Rome, without much loss for the paradisaal theme, since St. Peter is thought to hold keys to heaven."<sup>90</sup>

It turned out that historians could not only find a rationale for their own errors in interpretation of original sources but also invent the non-existent 'Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul'. In one of the first printed works on the history of "New Russia," which was released in 1836, Apollon Skalkovsky wrote about the Transfiguration Cathedral's project that "in terms of its size was to compete with the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome."<sup>91</sup> The same invented cathedral comes up in a letter written from Katerynoslav, ten years later in 1846, by the

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87 Gavriil (V. F. Rozanov), *Prodolzhenie ocherka o Novorossiiskom krae*, 433.

88 Evarnitskiĭ, *Ocherki po istorii zaporozhskikh kazakov*, 40. Compare D. I. Iavornitskiĭ, *Istoriia goroda Ekaterinoslava*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovs'k: Sich, 1996), 54.

89 Bagalei, *Kolonizatsiia Novorossiiskogo kraia i pervye shagi ego po puti kul'tury*, 45.

90 Andreas Schoenle, "Garden of the Empire: Catherine's Appropriation of the Crimea," *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (2001): 9.

91 Skal'kovskiĭ, *Khronologicheskoe obozrenie istorii Novorossiiskogo kraia 1731–1823. Chast' 1*, 190.

Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky. According to him, Potemkin presumably wished to build an edifice which would be “a whole *arshin* wider than the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome.”<sup>92</sup>

Potemkin quite possibly knew the topography of Rome better than his biographers. Natalia Polonska-Vasylenko was the first to pay attention to the latter researchers’ insistence on the erroneous interpretation (even in defiance of the clear language of Potemkin’s letter to Catherine II). Moreover, she persuasively argued that it was not by accident that Potemkin took notice of the majestic Basilica of St. Paul, whose antique exterior ideally matched “New Russia” and the “Greek project.”<sup>93</sup> Moreover, at the time when Potemkin was articulating his plans, St. Paul’s Cathedral had retained its original appearance since Roman times (it was later destroyed by fire in 1832) and it was the same building that in the fifth century was larger than St. Peter’s Cathedral.

### Novorossiisk Instead of Katerynoslav

The construction of Katerynoslav came to a halt before it really began, owing mostly to the shifted focus on the new war with the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the project was dealt a critical blow by Potemkin’s death in 1791. Soon afterwards, Catherine II demanded to become acquainted with the plans for the construction works. The head of the Katerynoslav Vice-Governorship Vasily Kakhovsky replied that initially the cathedral was supposed to be built according to Claude Gueroi’s design, but in 1788 Potemkin had ordered the temporal termination of the works and recruited a new designer—Ivan Starov. Starov, now considered the founder of Russian classicism, was responsible for the erection of Potemkin’s Taurida Palace in St. Petersburg as well as the Trinity Cathedral at the Aleksandr Nevsky Laura.<sup>94</sup> Kakhovsky’s search for the Starov project did not bring any results, and he reported that the construction site was standing idle.

In November 1796, Catherine II died. She was succeeded on the throne by her son Paul I, who hated his mother. In the same month of her death, Paul ordered to make the state’s general treasury responsible for all Katerynoslav-re-

92 V. G. Belinskiĭ, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniĭ*, vol. 12 (Moscow: Institut russkoĭ literatury AN SSSR, 1956), 291.

93 Nataliia Polons'ka-Vasylenko, “Nezdīisnenyĭ arkhitekturnyĭ proekt (Do istoriĭ Katerynoslava),” in N. Polons'ka-Vasylenko, *Zaporizhzhia XVIII stolittia ta ŭoho spadshchyna*, vol. 2 (Munich: Dniprovi khvyli, 1967), 170–177.

94 Ibid., 175.

lated expenditures, thus ending the financing of the Potemkin projects. What is even more, in December he renamed Katerynoslav to Novorossiisk.

Thereafter, the construction of the city was stopped for good. The supplies of stone were used to build a canal for boats in the lower Dnipro, which, however, soon turned out to be a poor conduit. To use a metaphor uttered by the archbishop Gavriil (Rozanov): “in the shortest time possible everything was taken away from Ekaterinoslav, which hoped to shine with gold but was now turned into a clay jug or the very same primitive Polovitsa on whose site it was built.”<sup>95</sup>

What was Novorossiisk like? Very early in the nineteenth century Pavel Sumarokov saw it as:

Novorossiisk is nothing else but a tricky puzzle, which every traveler across the town should try to thoughtfully solve. The traveler would see the capital of a governorate, located half-*versta* off the Dnieper, in a plain steppe, at the foot of a hill rising over it like a cliff. He would see about thirty homes with clay coating, where gentlemen and merchants lived, two churches, a row of wooden stalls, fairly wide and poorly designed streets, an emptiness typical for monasteries, a dull isolation, and the entire town neither wider nor prettier-looking than a decent village: this is Novorossiisk today.<sup>96</sup>

Sumarokov inspected the foundation of the Transfiguration Cathedral, a wool mill, a hosiery mill set up by Potemkin (the former existed until 1836, the latter was shut down practically immediately), and an out-of-town German Mennonite settlement, which astonished him with its orderliness and cleanliness.

In March 1801, Paul I was assassinated during the course of a coup. One year later, in autumn, the new emperor Alexander I—Catherine I’s grandson—returned to Russia’s map the Katerynoslav Governorate with the name Katerynoslav ascribed to its capital. However, continuing the construction of “the new Athens” was out of question.

As a result of the botched planning, the city was not located on top of the high hill where Catherine II had laid the foundation for the cathedral and Potemkin had envisaged the construction of “splendid” buildings. On the contrary, it sat at the foot of the hill. Until the 1840s, neighborhoods close to the city’s

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95 Gavriil (V. F. Rozanov), *Prodolzhenie ocherka o Novorossiiskom krae*, 459.

96 Pavel Sumarokov, *Dosugi krymskogo sud'i ili vtoroe puteshestvie v Tavridu. Chast' 1* (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Tipografia, 1803), 68.

main streets had kitchen gardens and orchards, and the streets themselves were often used as pastures for cattle, with the soil becoming a hard-to-get-through boggy mess during the spells of inclement weather. Vissarion Belinsky, who visited Katerynoslav in 1846, noted in letters to his wife: “The city is highly original; the streets are straight and broad; some homes have a decent look, but most are clay-coated; pigs, piglets, and hamshackled horses are roaming the streets.”<sup>97</sup> If there was anything that astonished the guest from St. Petersburg, it was the abundance “of trees, which cannot grow in Moscow climate and which Kharkov [Kharkiv] does not have either (although there are only 200 *verstas* from Kharkov to Ekaterinoslav)—for instance, mulberry.”<sup>98</sup>



FIGURE 3. The Katerynynsky Avenue (Prospekt).  
Early twentieth-century postcard. Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

Traces of the Potemkin plans were visible in the exterior of the provincial Katerynoslav, first of all, in the unusual width (“nearly the same as Nevsky Avenue’s”)<sup>99</sup> of the main thoroughfare—Katerynynskiy (in Russian, Ekaterininskii) Avenue. Nonetheless, the majestic edifices on its sides never materialized,

<sup>97</sup> Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochineniĭ*, vol. 12, 291.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Afanas'ev (Chuzhbinskii), *Poezdka v Iuzhnuu Rossiiu. Ocherki Dnepra*, 57.

and during 1800–1850 the avenue was used, “among other things, as a pasture for the cattle, and the residents did not make any bones about it.”<sup>100</sup> Dnipro’s main thoroughfare (renamed after Karl Marx in Soviet times and after the historian Dmytro Yavornytsky in post-Maidan Ukraine) now keeps the same width as was originally planned.

## The Potemkin Ruins

The author of one of the first articles about the history of Katerynoslav wrote in 1887 that “after Potemkin’s death the city lost its patron, was built not following his design, and for a long time was vegetating rather than living.”<sup>101</sup> Its population in 1804 numbered slightly less than 6,000 citizens, and in 1825, slightly less than 8,000.<sup>102</sup> For all that, the small city was the administrative center of the vast Katerynoslav Governorate, which had nearly 550,000 residents in 1821.<sup>103</sup>

According to an account of a certain A. M. Fadeev, who lived in the city in 1815–1834 and was a member of Novorossiiia’s Board of Foreigners’ Settlements in Russia, Potemkin’s unfinished palace was a sad spectacle:

I saw it when it already had a damaged roof, no windows, no doors; one of the rooms was swamped with piles of paper kept in the Potemkin archive when the prince was the governor of Novorossiiia. Nobody was taking care of this archive, and there was not even a single guard in sight near the palace . . . Several years later these stacks of paper, which undoubtedly contained a lot of interesting information, were gone altogether, and only shreds of the documents were scattered around the garden surrounding the palace.<sup>104</sup>

The remains of Catherine II’s Katerynoslav provoked thoughts about futility and negligibility of human existence in the travelers’ minds inclined to indulge in romantic fantasies fashionable throughout the early nineteenth century. This is what Ivan Vernet wrote about the same unfinished Potemkin palace:

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100 A. M. Fadeev, *Vospominaniia. 1790–1867 gg. Chast’ I* (Odesa: Tipografiia Iuzhno-russkogo obshchestva pechatnogo dela, 1897), 42.

101 Egorov, *Ekaterinoslavskoe blukanie*, 21.

102 M. M. Vladimirov, *Pervoe stoletie g. Ekaterinoslava, 1787–9 maia 1887 g.* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia Ia. M. Chausskogo, 1887), 212–213.

103 *Opysy Stepovoi Ukraïny*, 285.

104 Egorov, *Ekaterinoslavskoe blukanie*, 21.



What did I see in the palace? I saw a soldier patching up his threadbare uniform, I saw some cattle . . . Generally speaking, everything in this world is a kind of fantasy, a shadow's shadow! All our life—I'm ready to repeat these one hundred times is but one swiftly passing day; and we use it for building air castles; we are chasing dreams and soap bubbles without thinking about death forever standing behind our shoulders.<sup>105</sup>

Aleksandr Voeikov's description was in line with Vernet's: "a semi-dilapidated palace, a garden overgrown with nettle and wormwood, an unfinished church with huge slabs of granite scattered around the place—all this lends the uninhabited town in a steppe a regal, solemn feel."<sup>106</sup>

The word "steppe" comes up in the quote above quite intentionally. It was steppe that stunned and frightened guests from St. Petersburg. A travelogue written in 1799 outlines: "everywhere is a plain, nearly monotonous surface; the fields are untouched by the plough, and the absence of people makes the traveler feel somewhat despondent."<sup>107</sup>

The traveler visiting the province in the first third of the nineteenth century described his feelings in the following manner: "Moving from a capital city to a steppe means being carried from a community of true knowledge to the primitive stage of the man and the nature."<sup>108</sup> Voeikov, already quoted here, wrote about the "uninhabited" steppes

where the traveler embraces a green tree as he would a friend whom he has not seen for a long time and whom he has not hoped to meet here; where a well with a cold water is guarded like a treasure, grey-haired feather grass ripples like a boundless ocean, ugly stone idols look

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105 I. F. Vernet, "Eshchë neskol'ko moikh vospominanii," *Ukrainskii vestnik* 3 (1816): 176–177. See also K. P. Shalikhov, "Ekaterinoslavl'," *Aglaia, izdavaemaia K. P. Shalikhovym* 1 (1812): 42–64. Compare M. E. Kavun, "'Obshirnyi zamyslami vel'mozha': obraz G. O. Pot'omkina v literaturnykh retseptsiiakh rann'ioho Katerynoslava (kinets' XVIII–persha chvert' XIX st.)," *Istoriia i kul'tura Prydniprov'ia. Nevidomi ta malovidomi storinky* 11 (2014): 5–14.

106 A. F. Voeikov, "Ekaterinoslav (Iz zapisok russkogo puteshestvennika)," *Novosti literatury* 13, no. 9 (1825): 143–144.

107 Pavel Sumarokov, *Puteshestvie po vsemu Krymu i Bessarabii v 1799 godu* (Moscow: Universitetskaya tipografiia u Ridigera i Klavdiia, 1800), 5.

108 *Zapiski russkogo puteshestvennika Andreia Glagoleva s 1823 po 1827 god. Chast' 1* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoï Rossiïskoï Akademii, 1837), 50. Compare the analysis of the travelogue literature in Alekseï Tolochko, *Kievskaiia Rus' i Malorossiiia v XIX veke* (Kyïv: Laurus, 2012), 47–133. See also Andreas Schoenle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790–1840* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

frightening, and the mounds, rising like islands, are the only sites on which your eyes can take a respite.<sup>109</sup>

In 1855 the German traveler Alexander Petzholdt described Katerynoslav as a “pretty long” town with exceptionally broad main avenue “that juts into the steppe,” and reminded of unrealized grandiose plans in the spirit of an old Latin saying: *Sie transit Gloria mundi*.<sup>110</sup>

In contrast to the descriptions suffused with a sense of boredom and isolation, Grigory Titov in 1849 portrayed “New Russia” as “a ship of nations” on which one can meet “intelligent and lean Germans” who left “their narrow and stuffy Germany,” as well as “the progeny of Socrates and Plato” (that is, Greeks), Serbs, Bulgarians, Kalmyks, “the sons of industrial Italy,” and Armenians.<sup>111</sup> Titov also mentioned Jews and Crimean Karaites (a small ethnic group derived from Turkic-speaking adherents of Karaite Judaism, a movement that recognizes the written Torah as the supreme authority):

Jews are especially fond of towns on the banks of the Dnieper, and Ekaterinoslav numbers them almost in thousands. In addition to ordinary Jews, or *Talmudists*, we also have another sort, presently known as *Karaites*. Their real homeland is Crimea, but for a while they have been coming to Ekaterinoslav as well, opening here pricey stores and conducting a lively business . . .<sup>112</sup>

After the three partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire found itself home to 5,000–7,000 Jews. Practically immediately and already in the late eighteenth century, the empire curtailed the Jews’ rights, in particular, the right to choose a place of residence. The imperial decree issued on December 23, 1791 prohibited Jewish merchants from living outside Belarus, which had been recently annexed from Poland, but allowed them to register as merchants in the Katerynoslav Governorate and Crimea.<sup>113</sup> This

109 A. F. Voeikov, “Ekaterinoslav,” *Letopis’ Ekaterinoslavskoï Uchenoi Arkhivnoi Komissii* 10 (1915): 271.

110 Alexander Petzholdt, *Reise im westlichen und südlichen europäischen Russland im Jahre 1855* (Gera: C. B. Griesbach, 1864), 131–134.

111 Grigorii Titov, *Pis’ma iz Ekaterinoslava* (Odesa: Tipografiia Brauna i Ko, 1849), 6–9.

112 Ibid., 8.

113 John D. Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews. The Origins of the “Jewish Question” in Russia, 1772–1825* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 75.



regulation was a step towards the establishment of the so-called Pale of Settlement for Jews in Russia—this pale included the territories of “Western Russia” (“the governorates acquired from Poland”) and “Novorossia.”

### What Town is to be the “New Athens”?

Grigory Potemkin established quite a number of cities. Some of these projects materialized (Kherson, founded in 1774; Mariupol, founded in 1779; Mykolaiv, founded in 1788). But not even one among them fulfilled his and Catherine II’s grandiose imperial ambitions. According to a historian, nothing “but a handful” of the fairy-tale-like projects “were actually realized.”<sup>114</sup> So what happened to the Potemkin cities? How did they fare after the Prince of Taurida’s death?

When the building of Katerynoslav started, Kherson was already “a construction project in the making,” numbering about 3,000 residents.<sup>115</sup> Quite quickly it became obvious that the site of Kherson was not the best choice for a big port. Foreign travelers were paying attention to “unbearable dust” and “disgustful wines” in the city, as well as its state of sanitation, which was conducive to epidemics.<sup>116</sup> After a visit to Kherson in 1787, Catherine II wrote to Grimm that although the city was younger than eight years, it could be “considered as one of the Empire’s best military and commercial cities” where “one can obtain anything just like in St. Petersburg.”<sup>117</sup> Foreign ambassadors were astonished by the pace of construction of the Russian southern port, but, as Count de Ségur wrote, “the fascination was gone soon, and our astonishment was somewhat cooled on second thought,” especially when it was noticed that the site for Kherson was “poorly chosen,” and “boats simply cannot move up the Dnipro without a cargo.”<sup>118</sup>

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114 D. P. Miller, *Zaselenie Novorossiiskogo kraia i Potëmkin* (Kharkiv: Parovaia tipo-litografiia M. Zil’benberg i synov’ia, 1901), 35.

115 Zhil’ber Romm, *Puteshestvie v Krym v 1786 godu* (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1941), 26.

116 Graf de Liudol’f, “Pis’ma o Kryme,” *Russkoe obozrenie* 2 (1892): 176–178. See also a special research on the construction of Kherson and the first decade of city’s history: Hans Halm, *Gründung und erstes Jahrzehnt von Festung und Stadt Cherson (1778–1788)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1961) and a travelogue: Johann Wilhelm Möller, *Reise von Volhynien nach Cherson in Russland im Jahre 1787* (Hamburg: August Campe, 1802).

117 Quoted in Zhuravlëva, G. A. *Potëmkin. Poslednie gody*, 213.

118 *Zapiski grafa Segiura o prebyvanii ego v Rossii*, 198.

Already in the early nineteenth century it became obvious that Odesa (in Russian, Odessa)—founded in 1794 on the site of erstwhile settlement Khadjibey—“altogether humbled”<sup>119</sup> Kherson, as well as Katerynoslav and Mykolaiv, ruining nearly all of their trade prospects. The reasons for Odesa’s quick rise to prominence included its convenient location (a deep port immune to freezing in the winter) and careful layout, the city’s appeal for foreigners, and a continuous growth of international trade.<sup>120</sup> Soon, all of this was complemented by cultural myths of “Russia’s most European city.”

Another factor of Odesa’s speedy advancement was its a sustainable economy that made up for any whimsical turns in imperial politics. The mid-nineteenth-century writers did not doubt that “foreign trade undeniably has been and remains the single and most essential driver of the prosperity of the entire New Russia region and Bessarabia.”<sup>121</sup>

Katerynoslav, meanwhile, was not to become a big port. The amateur engineers in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries proved unable to flood the Dnipro rapids or build a special bypass canal.<sup>122</sup> Potemkin’s associates were dreaming about shipping grain by the Dnipro but could not foresee that a southern steppe would prove more fertile than northern provinces, let alone the fact that the Wild Field would soon become the empire’s breadbasket, the produce of which would be shipped by land, steering clear of the Dnipro’s stone outcrops.<sup>123</sup>

### Commemoration of Catherine in the City Founded in Her Honor

Not so much Katerynoslav itself as its initial project emblemized the sweep of Catherine II’s imperial imagination. But symbols and urban space of the provincial capital of a governorate were dominated by the empress. The city’s main thoroughfare was named after her: Katerynynskyi Avenue. On August 2, 1811, the city’s coat of arms was approved:

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119 Sumarokov, *Puteshestvie po vsemu Krymu i Bessarabii*, 24.

120 For details see Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1991).

121 Nikolai Murzakevich, *Ocherk uspehov Novorossiiskogo kraia i Bessarabii v istekshee dvadtsatiletie, t. e. s 1820-go po 1846-i god* (Odesa: n. p., 1846), 47.

122 *Puteshestvennye zapiski Vasil'ia Zueva*, 256–258.

123 Robert E. Jones, “The Dnieper Trade Route in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: A Note,” *The International History Review* 11, no. 2 (May 1989): 303–312.

On a sky-blue field, the golden initials of Empress Catherine II stand amidst the digits of the year when the city of Ekaterinoslav was founded. Around the initials, there are nine stars, symbolizing the deceased Catherine II's resettlement to the realm of eternal bliss and glory. The escutcheon features the imperial crown, indicating that this governorate enjoyed a special protection on the part of Her Highness.<sup>124</sup>

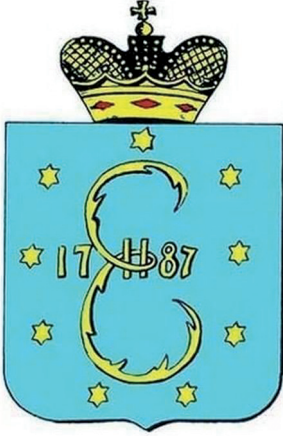


FIGURE 4.  
The coat of arms of imperial  
Katerynoslav. Source:  
dp.informator.ua

Only fencing for the might-have-been church, planted along the periphery of its foundation, was there to remind onlookers about the grandiosity of Potemkin's vision of the Transfiguration Cathedral. On May 22, 1830, the cornerstone for the new Transfiguration Cathedral was finally laid, and was consecrated four years later. Prior to 1830, Katerynoslav had only two dilapidated wooden churches. In August 1829, Emperor Nicholas I decided that the site for the new cathedral was to be where Catherine II had stood; he wrote: "I believe that the site where the Empress attended the cornerstone ceremony is the best. The temporary separation (of the cathedral) from the city's

residential quarters is not an obstacle."<sup>125</sup> The Transfiguration Cathedral was built on the site chosen by Potemkin but to a much more modest design—as a church "not wide but magnificent and attractive," whose chief attraction, many believed, was its location on a hill above the majestic Dnipro.<sup>126</sup>

Potemkin had plans to mount a bronze statue of Catherine II near the cathedral, as he wrote to the empress in February 1785: "This is now being accomplished by the statue of Your Imperial Highness, which will be mounted in front of the noblemen's house in the new capital of the governorate."<sup>127</sup> However, the manufacturing of the statue ordered in Berlin was not finished by the time of the empress's visit in 1787. Instead, following Potemkin's order, on the day of

124 Vladimirov, *Pervoe stoletie g. Ekaterinoslava*, 24.

125 Gavriil (V. F. Rozanov), *Prodolzhenie ocherka o Novorossiiskom krae*, 482.

126 Ibid., 485.

127 Lopatin, *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potëmkin. Lichnaia perepiska*, 199.



FIGURE 5. The Transfiguration Cathedral.  
Early twentieth-century postcard. Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

the cornerstone ceremony for the Transfiguration Cathedral, the area near the site was equipped with a so-called “*tsaritsina milia* [tsarina’s mile]”—one of the stone posts that used to be planted all along the road leading to Crimea.<sup>128</sup>

In 1834, when the new Transfiguration Cathedral was consecrated, archbishop Gavriil (Rozanov) mounted what might be called a monument to Catherine II—a column he found in Crimean Chersonesus, representing a clear allusion to the idea of the empire’s movement southward, to the birthplace of Orthodox Christianity.

Ultimately, in 1846, more than fifty years after the Transfiguration Cathedral cornerstone ceremony, the Catherine statue, manufactured in Berlin, was mounted in the square in front of the church. Its travel to Katerynoslav was not an easy one. In Germany, it was put up for auction and bought by a Russian traveler named Afanasy Goncharov, who owned facilities producing sails and cloth in the Kaluga Governorate. His granddaughter Natalia was betrothed to Aleksandr Pushkin, who proposed to buy the statue from the

128 See more in M. E. Kavun, “*Ekaterininskaia milia*”: istoriia pamiatnika puteshestviiia Ekateriny II v 1787 g. i osnovanii Ekaterinoslava (Dnipropetrovsk: Gerda, 2012).



FIGURE 6. The monument to Catherine the Great in Katerynoslav.

Early twentieth-century postcard. Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

treasury.<sup>129</sup> Already after the poet's death in 1837, the statue was bought by a foundry owned by commercial counselor Frantz Berg in St. Petersburg. In 1846, Katerynoslav noblemen bought the statue and secured permission to have it mounted near the Transfiguration Cathedral.<sup>130</sup> Shortly before the 1917 Revolution, the Catherine

statue was moved to a square between the Historical Museum and the Mining Institute. It was later kicked down from the pedestal by the demonstrators after in 1917, and was then hidden in the museum's garden by the historian Dmytro Yavornytsky. Under the German occupation of Dnipropetrovsk in 1941–1943, the statue disappeared without a trace.

129 Pushkin himself happened to come to Ekaterinoslav before the bronze statue he unsuccessfully tried to sell. Pushkin lived a couple of weeks in Ekaterinoslav in 1820 and was remembered in the city legends by his appearance at the governor-general's dinner in muslin trousers without underwear, after which the governor's wife immediately "removed the daughters from the drawing-room": Fadeev, *Vospominaniia 1790–1867 gg.*, 78. Compare Iu. Niemchenko, *O. S. Pushkin v Katerynoslavi* (Dnipropetrovsk: Dnipropetrovsk'e knyzhkovye vydavnytstvo, 1959), 33. See also H. Novolipin, "Pushkin i Katerynoslav, istoryko-literaturnyi narys," *Shturm* 11–12 (1936): 63–143, and V. Ia. Rogov, *Daleche ot beregov Nevy... Zametki o prebyvanii A. S. Pushkina v Ekaterinoslave v 1820 g.* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1984). In a letter to Piotr Viazemskii, Pushkin described the story of writing his poem *Brat'ia razboiniki* [The Brother Robbers]: "In 1820, when I was in Ekaterinoslav, two robbers, shackled together, swam across the Dnieper and were rescued. Their rest on the island, the sinking of one of the guards, were not invented by me..." A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1937), 74. In 1901, Ekaterinoslav saw the unveiling of the bust of Pushkin made by Il'ia Ginzburg (1859–1939).

130 Iavornitskii, *Istoriia goroda Ekaterinoslava*, 157–163.



## Katerynoslav as an Imperial Dream

The French ambassador de Ségur insisted that it was only under Catherine II that Russia became “a European state,” one of the arguments being that “up to 300 villages were turned into cities” under the empress’ command.<sup>131</sup> In the empire’s newly acquired southern provinces, Catherine and Potemkin founded several new cities, including the ones that never eventually materialized (for instance, Voznesensk). Katerynoslav—designed to glorify the empress’s name—did not take off at first and never became the center of “New Russia.” The imperial city was not the first “wandering” settlement in the lower Dnipro region. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Polish fortress Kodak had changed several locations as well.

Why did a city not take hold by the Dnipro earlier? The most essential factor was the steppe and the Great Frontier around the Lower Dnipro, between nomadic and settled cultures. For centuries, this frontier had thwarted all attempts at urbanization. Russia’s annexation of the southern steppes and Crimea signaled the death of the Great Frontier and the rapid development of an imperial urbanistic tradition. Katerynoslav had many predecessors. They included, first of all, the Cossack villages Polovytsia, Stari Kaidaky, and Novi Kaidaky, which were incorporated into the new capital of the governorate and played a role in shaping its appearance. However, none of these settlements alone became a sustainable urban organism or a rival to the imperial project.

Should an ideal artificial city be deprived of a history?<sup>132</sup> At ideological level, Russia’s southward expansion, on the one hand, symbolized the way back to the birthplace of Orthodox Christianity. On the other hand, it was extolled as bringing order to chaos and civilization to a desert country. The fact that the “desert” was home to Cossack settlements, which turned into the strongholds of the imperial urbanization, did not in the least detract from the “novelty” of the imperial project in the eyes of its masterminds.

Nikolai Karamzin, discussing agencies of government under Catherine II, argued that “the choice was made not in favor of the best but in favor of what had the most beautiful appearance.”<sup>133</sup> Emperor Paul I presumably described

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131 *Zapiski grafa Segiura o prebyvanii ego v Rossii*, 25.

132 Lotman, *Simvolika Peterburga i problemy semiotiki goroda*, 13.

133 N. M. Karamzin, *O drevnei i novoï Rossii v ee politicheskoi i grazhdanskoi otnoshenii* (Moscow: Zhizn’ i mysl’, 2002), 394–395.



FIGURE 7. The Transfiguration Cathedral and the Catherine's Mile nowadays.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

Potemkin as a man who “started everything, followed through on nothing.”<sup>134</sup> A cultural historian Aleksandr Panchenko also stated that “If there is such thing as the Potemkin villages, they include only Ekaterinoslav—the mirage of a city on the Dnieper’s bank.”<sup>135</sup>

In the early nineteenth century it appeared, indeed, that the city was melting into the steppe rather than bringing it to heel, or at least resisting its envelopment into the steppe. Yet the seeming victory of the “primitive” nature over Potemkin’s grandiose plans did not in the least detract from but, rather, enhanced the appeal of the imperial dream about “new Athens.” Until the second half of the nineteenth century, Katerynoslav was vegetating—the settlement, but not the idea of translating Catherine II’s glory into a splendid urban center in the steppe. It was precisely the unfeasibility of the Catherinian dream that fascinated the posterity and was the best testimony to the scale of her initiative.

134 Druzhinina, *Severnoe Prichernomor’e v 1775–1800 gg.*, 31.

135 Panchenko, “Potëmkinskie derevni” kak kul’turnyi mif, 471.

The idea of Katerynoslav, it turned out, survived both the city's descent into provincial torpor and the attempt to rename it into Novorossiisk. The crucial factor in the tenacity and allure of the Catherinian myth was perhaps its intrinsic *imperial optimism*—the determination, albeit never making it past the level of a phantasy, to turn “a desert” into a “plentiful garden,” without considering either the funds available or the vagaries of the weather.



# Manchester on the Dnipro

There is no beauty and no picturesqueness in Ekaterinoslav, but there is an air of genuine activity and business which is very unusual in the Tsar's dominions. It is a town which may already stand comparison with some of the great industrial centres of Germany or England; it is a business town existing solely for business.

Luigi Villari,  
*Russia under the Great Shadow*, 1905

In 1836, the state cloth manufacture founded in Katerynoslav by Potemkin was shut down.<sup>1</sup> In describing this event, the archbishop Gavriil (Rozanov) in 1857 said that the center of the governorate “no longer had any manufacturing workshops at all.”<sup>2</sup> Government official A. M. Fadeev believed industry in the region could develop “only if the obstacle to navigation on the Dnieper—the rapids—is eliminated.”<sup>3</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century, it was hard to imagine that fifty years later the region would be home to dozens of large industrial facilities, and Katerynoslav would turn into one of the biggest industrial centers of the Russian Empire. The factory whistle awakened the city from its provincial lethargy, while

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- 1 For details see: E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina v 1800–1825 gg.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), 264–276; E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina v period krizisa feodalizma 1825–1860 gg.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 98–111; A. K. Shvyd'ko, “Iz istorii Ekaterinoslavskoï kazënnoï sukonnoï manufaktury nakanune eï uprazhdeniia,” in *Rabochii klass Pridneprov'ia. Formirovanie, traditsii, sotsial'nyi oblik* (Dnipropetrovs'k: DGU, 1989), 109–118.
  - 2 Gavriil (V. F. Rozanov), “Prodolzhenie ocherka o Novorossiiskom krae. Period s 1787 po 1857 god,” *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei V* (1863): 445.
  - 3 A. M. Fadeev, *Vospominaniia. 1790–1867 gg.*, vol. 1 (Odessa: Tipografia Iuzhno-russkogo obshchestva pechatnogo dela, 1897), 44.

allusions to Western European and American industrial centers became its new self-identification.

## Manchester and Its Adherents

Cities as symbols of a dynamic development as well as circulation of people, ideas, and goods are often described as places where modernity is born and urbanization develops, marked by the formation of a denser network of human relationships.<sup>4</sup> Between 1850 and 1910, Europe experienced the highest rates of urban population growth in its entire history.<sup>5</sup> The nineteenth century, especially its second half, saw technological discoveries that changed everyday life, the speed and method of communication as well as notions of authenticity and mutual dependence within the world. The technological development was shaped by railroads, automobiles, electric trams, telegraph, telephone, cinema, daily press, national archives and museums, statistics, and the adoption of Greenwich Mean Time.

Manchester became one of the symbols of the century of modernization: a hub of the textile industry and an archetypical example of a boom town whose population grew, from 81,000 to 400,000 people during the years of 1800–1850. It was described as “the first exclusively industrial city,” which demonstrated to its shocked contemporaries the sharp contradictions in the industrial century: the opportunities to get rich quickly and the depth of social inequality; overcrowded working-class neighborhoods; the taste of money and the smoke from factory chimneys; high disease and crime rates.<sup>6</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, “Manchester” became a generic term applied, first of all, to new industrial centers dominated by textile

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4 Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World. A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 245. Compare Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 1975); Boris Mironov, *Sotsial'naiia istoriia Rossii perioda imperii (XVIII–nachalo XX veka)*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003); Andrzej Chwalba, *Historia Polski 1795–1918* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001).

5 See more in: Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750–1914* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Friedrich Lenger, *European Cities in the Modern Era, 1850–1914* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820–1940* (Brattleboro: Echo Point Books and Media, 2014).

6 Alan Kidd, *Manchester: A History* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2008).

industry.<sup>7</sup> In the Russian Empire, several locations were called “Manchesters,” nearly all of them on the country’s periphery. Łódź became “a Polish Manchester”—the city that rose practically out of nothing, its population reached the number of less than 20,000 in 1840, and nearly 500,000 in 1914.<sup>8</sup> An absolute majority of the city’s workers (74.3% in 1875) were illiterate and the ethnic groups inhabiting it in 1894 included Poles (38.4%), Germans (35.3%), Jews (25.4%), and Russians (0.8%).<sup>9</sup>

Tammerfors (presently Tampere) was called “a Finnish Manchester,” and the connotations were not at all positive.<sup>10</sup> Founded in 1871, Ivanovo-Voznesensk—with a population of 147,000 by 1913—was called the “Russian Manchester.” It was, however, not exactly a town but rather an “agglomeration of villages” lacking public transportation, and the majority of houses were log cabins (up to 90%).<sup>11</sup>

The “Manchesters,” which brought into the spotlight the era’s contradictions, were viewed by many as a laboratory of a future revolution. Perhaps it was not for nothing that allegedly Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx met in Manchester in one of its libraries, and Stalin first met Lenin at the conference of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (RSDRP), in December 1905 in Tammerfors.<sup>12</sup>

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7 Robina McNeil, “The Manchesters of the World,” *Patrimoine de l’industrie / Industrial Patrimony* 10 (2003): 27–40.

8 For details see: Stanisław Liszewski and Craig Young, eds., *A Comparative Study of Łódź and Manchester: Geographies of European Cities in Transito* (Łódź: University of Łódź Press, 1997); Anna Żarnowska, *Klasa robotnicza Królestwa Polskiego 1870–1914* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974); Maria Nietyksza, *Rozwój miast i aglomeracji miejsko-przemysłowych w Królestwie Polskim 1865–1914* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986). I am grateful to Michał Kopczyński for his advises on Polish language historiography of the city of Łódź.

9 Julian Janczak, *Ludność Łodzi przemysłowej 1820–1914* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1982), 175–176, 127.

10 I. L. Slavkina, “Za fabrichnoi zastavoï: Tampere kak Manchester,” in *Proekt “Manchester.” Proshloe, nastoiashchee i budushchee industrial’nogo goroda*, ed. M. Iu. Timofeeva (Ivanovo: Ivanovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2012), 32.

11 A. V. Stepanov, “Odná imperiia, tri puti razvitiia,” in *Proekt “Manchester.” Proshloe, nastoiashchee i budushchee industrial’nogo goroda*, 19.

12 *Proekt “Manchester.” Proshloe, nastoiashchee i budushchee industrial’nogo goroda*, 14, 37.

Katerynoslav does not always get a mention in discussions of the “Manchesters.”<sup>13</sup> Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that it was neither a center of textile industry nor a single-industry town. And yet, Katerynoslav was one of the examples of the Russian Empire’s industrialization, and, as it turned out later, it did not have rivals contending for the status of “a Ukrainian Manchester.” The following characterization—“some sort of a jolly Ukrainian Manchester”—was given to Katerynoslav by the most well-known local historian Dmytro Yavornytsky in his account of the city’s history, written in the second half of the 1930s.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, it was not Yavornytsky who pioneered the Manchester metaphor in relation to the city. In the early twentieth century, the Ukrainian writer Fedir Matushevsky described his visit to Katerynoslav: “And here is our Manchester. The Brianskyi factories are issuing smoke. Smoke, spread in front of us, envelops all of Katerynoslav. It makes barely visible the black, sooty, grey, and chestnut brown houses. Without smoke, Katerynoslav would even look pretty to an onlooker on the deck of a ship.”<sup>15</sup>

### Oleksandr Pol’: A Visionary of the Region’s Industrial Future

The industrial potential of Katerynoslav was first put to use by Oleksandr/Aleksandr Pol’—a local landowner, a graduate of the University of Dorpat (nowadays Estonian Tartu), and an enthusiastic researcher of local history and archaeology.<sup>16</sup> In 1866, as he was walking along the right bank of the Saksahan River near the Dubova Balka area, Pol’ discovered a deposit of ore (a reddish-black variety). People had long been assuming that the region was rich in natural re-

13 For instance, Katerynoslav is not mentioned in McNeil, “*The Manchesters of the World*.” Her list of Manchesters include the German Chemnitz, the French Lille and Rouen, the Belgian Ghent, and the Spanish (Catalan) Barcelona.

14 D. I. Iavornitskii, *Istoriia goroda Ekaterinoslava*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovs’k: Sich, 1996), 146.

15 Quoted in Mykola Chaban, ed., *U staromu Katerynoslavi (1905–1920 rr.). Khrestomatiia. Misto na Dnipro ochyma ukrains’kykh pys’mennykiv, publitsystiv i hromads’kykh diiachiv* (Dnipropetrovs’k: IMA-Pres, 2001), 36.

16 More on Pol’ see in A. Siniavskii, “A. N. Pol’ (biograficheskii ocherk k otkrytiiu zdaniia ego muzeia),” *Letopis’ Ekaterinoslavskoï uchënoï arkhivnoï komissii* 1 (1904): XII–XXXIV; G. N. Romanchenko, “Aleksandr Nikolaevich Pol’,” *Trudy Instituta istorii estestvoznaniia i tekhniki: Istoriia gornoï tekhniki i metallurgii* 33 (1960): 123–141; Rainer Lindner, *Unternehmer und Stadt in der Ukraine, 1860–1914. Industrialisierung und soziale Kommunikation im südlichen Zarenreich* (Konstanz: UvK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006), 196–212. Compare Ihor Kocherhin, *Oleksandr Pol’: mriï, spravy, spadshchyna* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Natsional’na hirnycha akademiia Ukraïny, 2002).

sources. However, it was Pol' who set about studying the question systematically. In order to have the ore specimens examined, Pol' went to the Mining Academy of Freiberg where he hired two professors and introduced them to local gentry as enthusiasts of hunting and archaeology. Using the results of the fieldwork, Leo Strippelmann produced a monograph on magnetic ironstone and

iron glance deposits in Katerynoslav region, which Pol' translated himself into Russian and printed in 1873 in St. Petersburg, sending out its copies to the empire's top officials.<sup>17</sup>

Upon examination of the iron ore discovered by Pol', the German researchers found out that the rocks contained more than 70% of iron. These rocks were probably superior to the ore mined in the Urals, where Russia had been producing iron since the end of the eighteenth century. Pol' immediately bought a countryseat in Dubova Balka and signed a land lease agreement with peasants from a village called Kryvyi Rih (in Russian, Krivoi Rog), thus obtaining exclusive mining rights to the land for fifty-nine years. All these investments left Pol' on the verge of bankruptcy, his possessions were mortgaged, and his letters to governmental agencies full of pleas for



FIGURE 8.  
Oleksandr Pol'. Photo from the  
collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

a large-scale investment remained unanswered. The empire's bureaucrats viewed Pol' as a strange enthusiast. State officials sent a letter of inquiry to a local police

17 Leo Strippelmann, *Iuzhno-russkie mestorozhdeniia zheleznykh rud i zhelezного bleska v Ekaterinoslavskoi (Verkhnedneprovskogo uezda) i Khersonskoi guberniiakh* (St. Petersburg: n. p., 1873). The German edition: Leo Strippelmann, *Süd-Russlands Magneteisenstein- und Eisenglanzlagertstätten in den Gouvernements Jekaterinoslaw (Kreis Werkhnednjeprowsk) und Cherson nebst praktischen Gesichtspunkten für deren Entwicklungsfähigkeit und Bedeutung für die Südrussische Eisenindustrie* (Halle: n. p., 1873).

chief, to which the latter calmly responded that Pol' was "somewhat mentally unbalanced."<sup>18</sup>

After his failure to secure the government's support, Pol' turned to foreign investors (French and Belgian capitalists, to be exact), who played a key role in the development of Russian iron and steel industry in the 1870s and the 1880s.<sup>19</sup> By the mid-1870s, Belgium was Europe's most industrialized country due to its rich coal deposits as well as a developed network of railroads and channels. The first Belgian industrialist to come to Russia was George Chaudoir—in 1876 he set up a metal processing plant workshop producing flues in St. Petersburg and in 1890 he founded a Society of Russian Pipe Plants, which opened a pipe plant in Katerynoslav.<sup>20</sup>

After a round of difficult negotiations, in December 1880, in Paris, Pol' signed a deal with the French railway company Paris-Lyon and the Magnetic Iron Ore Society, setting up a privately held corporation for eighty years with stockholders' equity of 5 million francs.<sup>21</sup> Initially, ore mining in the Kryvyi Rih region was a money drainer due to the fact that there were no well functioning channels of distribution.

Pol' understood very well the crucial role of communications for the development of industry, but his proposals to build a railroad were turned down. Other proposals of that kind, submitted as early as the 1850s and the 1860s, were met with a similar reception. At that time, the local government of the Katerynoslav governorate was convinced that "steam railroads were economically

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18 Quoted in I. F. Vertogradov, *Pamiaty A. N. Polia (Po povodu 20-letiia so dnia ego smerti)* (Katerynoslav: N. I. Buchman, 1910), 12. Compare with a passage from Iosif Kolyshko's memoir, in which the memoirist expresses undisguised hostility to Pol', calling him "a nervous fanatic" and "eccentric" keen on "turning the Ekaterinoslavskaiia Governorate into another Belgium": I. I. Kolyshko, *Velikii raspad. Vospominaniia* (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2009), 67. In the same text, the life in Katerynoslav in the 1880s is described as an unending succession of banquets in the mansions of noblemen whose genial disposition could not be shaken by Pol's ambitious projects. *Ibid.*, 66.

19 See more in John P. McKay, *Pioneers for Profit. Foreign Entrepreneurship and Russian Industrialization, 1885–1913* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970); Susan P. McCaffray, *The Politics of Industrialization in Tsarist Russia. The Association of Southern Coal and Steel Producers, 1874–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996).

20 V. I. Bovykin, ed., *Inostrannoe predprinimatel'stvo i zagranichnye investitsii v Rossii. Ocherki* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1997), 184, 186. Compare to: V. I. Lazebnik, "Bel'hiis'kyi pidpriemnyts'kyi kapital u promyslovosti ta transporti Katerynoslavs'koi hubernii," *Prydniprov'ia. Istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 11 (2012–2013): 228–245.

21 Lindner, *Unternehmer und Stadt in der Ukraine*, 206.

unviable for Russia,” and the first industrial plants to use local raw materials—in Luhansk (1876) and Lysychansk (1866)—were shut down as unprofitable.<sup>22</sup> In November 1873, the first section of the railroad, Lozova—Oleksandrivsk (in Russian, Aleksandrovsk, later, Zaporizhzhia), that is, from north to south), was opened, with a branch line to Nyzhniodniprovsk (in Russian, Nizhnedneprovsk), a township on the Dnipro’s left bank, opposite Katerynoslav. However, in later years, this line proved to have no crucial economic importance for Dnipro, from which it was separated by a wide stream.

Prospecting iron ore in Kryvyi Rih began in 1881. Three years later, the Katerynynska railroad crossed the city (from east to west) and a two-tier bridge across the Dnipro was built. This bridge was awarded a gold medal at a world’s fair, Exposition Universelle, in Paris, in 1889. Curiously, in a popular publication on the railroad’s history, issued in 1903, it was claimed that “Ekaterinoslav owes its tremendous level of development to Krivoi Rog” because “the long row of iron-casting facilities and ironworks along the railroad was built precisely to exploit the mineral wealth of Krivoi Rog.”<sup>23</sup>

Less than ten years after its launch, the Katerynynska railroad became a big enterprise handling more cargo shipments than any other railway in the empire and employing tens of thousands of blue-collar and white-collar workers.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the administrative center of the governorate became “a railway hub, wedged in between the area’s coal mining and ore mining districts, and started sprouting plants and factories at an almost miraculous speed.”<sup>25</sup>

The railroad connected Katerynoslav and Kryvyi Rih with the Donets River’s coal basin. An important figure in the history of prospecting in the Donets region was the Welsh engineer John Hughes, who, in 1868, bought a concession from Prince Kochubei to build a cast-iron foundry and a rail-making plant in a practically unpopulated area. That was the beginning of Iuzovka [Hughes-ovka]—future Donetsk.<sup>26</sup>

22 V. M. Kulagin et al., *Pridneprovskaia zheleznaia doroga* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin’, 1973), 10–11, 13–14.

23 *Po Ekaterininskoi zheleznoi doroge*, vol. 1 (Katerynoslav: Pechatnia S. P. Iakovleva, 1903), 37.

24 See more in: Fritjof B. Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne: Mobilität und sozialer Raum im Eisenbahnzeitalter* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2014).

25 *Ves’ Ekaterinoslav. Spravochnaia kniga* (Katerynoslav: L. I. Satanovskii, 1913), 111.

26 It should be noted that until 1917 Iuzovka (like Donbas’s other residential areas except Luhansk) did not have the status of a town and the corresponding type of administration. The coal miners’ residential area counting more than 50,000 residents was categorized



In the late 1880s, Pol' enjoyed recognition but not profits. In 1887, he was granted an honorary citizenship of Katerynoslav. Less than three years later, however, he died prematurely at age fifty-seven from a heart attack. His inheritance included a mortgaged country seat, debts, and a collection of antiquities. He did not live to see the fruits of his discovery. Already by 1900, Kryvyi Rih accounted for more than 56% of the Russian Empire's entire iron ore production.<sup>27</sup>

## The Centennial of Katerynoslav

The mining of iron ore in the vicinity of Kryvyi Rih was linked to industrial prospects of Katerynoslav's future. Most probably, references to these prospects were used in the city's centennial celebration initiated by the local nobility. The year of reference for the anniversary—1787, when Catherine II laid the foundation stone of the Transfiguration Cathedral—became not only a reminder of the city's thwarted ambitions to become an imperial center but also a sign that in its new, industrial reincarnation the city, which “was since its birth destined to serve the great purposes of the state,”<sup>28</sup> would finally fulfill its mission. Thus, the centennial provided the first convenient opportunity, and triggered the first attempts to reflect on the city's history.

The period of the run-up to the celebration saw the publication of a historical report about “the first one hundred years”<sup>29</sup> as well as the release of twenty-five issues of *The Ekaterinoslav Anniversary Herald*. The latter publication, according to a local historian, “showcased a new, never previously practiced in Russia mode of celebrating an anniversary.”<sup>30</sup> Focused on the region's history,

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as a village in the Russian Empire. For details see: Theodore H. Freidgut, *Iuzovka and Revolution. Life and Work in Russia's Donbass, 1869–1924*, vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Theodore H. Freidgut, *Politics and Revolution in Russia's Donbass, 1869–1924*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Russian-Ukrainian Borderland, 1870s–1990s* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

27 Charters Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms. The Donbass-Dnepr Bend in Late Imperial Russia, 1870–1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 18.

28 *Ekaterinoslavskii iubileinyi listok* [*ELuL*], no. 11, May 9, 1887, 131.

29 M. M. Vladimirov, *Pervoe stoletie g. Ekaterinoslava, 1787–1887* (Katerynoslav: Tipografia Ia. M. Chausskogo, 1887).

30 O. V. Leonova, “Pershyi iuvilei Katerynoslava iak istoriohrafichne iavyshche,” *Istoriia i kul'tura Prydniprov'ia: nevidomi ta malovidomi storinky* 8 (2011): 198. See also I. Kocherhin, “Sviatkuvannia 100-richchia mista Katerynoslava iak element formuvannia impers'koï



the *Herald* was intended to “provoke interest” in the subject among the educated public.<sup>31</sup>

This text is also interesting for its references to the Cossack settlement and for highlighting the contrasts between the settlement’s mundanity and the “great glory” of Catherine II’s project. The commemorative publications did not ignore the fact that Katerynoslav was built “on the site of a Zaporozhian village Polovitsa.”<sup>32</sup> However, the writers stressed the transformational aspect—the transformation of “an uninhabited land,” “a deserted steppe”:

A land where a Tatar, a stepson of nature  
Was roaming in a wild, desert steppe  
With a spear and a bow on a stolen horse, alone;  
  
On the banks of the Dnieper River,  
Where a fisherman was throwing a cast net,  
A miserable haul was his scarce hope for so long;  
  
Where Zaporozhian Cossacks, a rugged lot,  
Were suddenly raiding the Tatars  
Or, sailing their death-bringing boats,  
  
Made swaying the Dnieper waters a lot,  
A new city now stands on the river banks,  
It is Ekaterinoslav!<sup>33</sup>

In his appeal to the city-dwellers on the occasion of Katerynoslav’s anniversary, the mayor Ivan Iakovlev described it as “one of the localities to be populated and to introduce culture and civic consciousness across the entire New Russia region.”<sup>34</sup> The attractiveness of Catherine II’s project, albeit unrealized,

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urbanistychnoi tradytsii,” *Naukovi zapysky Instytutu ukrains’koï arheografii ta dzhereloznavstva im. M. Hrushevskoho NAN Ukraïny. Zbirnyk prats’ molodykh vchenykh ta aspirantiv* 18 (2009), 248–255.

31 “Doklad Ekaterinoslavskoï gorodskoï upravy po voprosu o neobkhodimosti izdat’ ‘Ekaterinoslavskii iubileinyi listok’ s 1 apreliia po 1 iunია 1887 g.,” *ELuL*, no. 1, April 9, 1887, 1.

32 *ELuL*, no. 1, April 9, 1887, 2.

33 [Uchashchiisia], “Na stoletie Ekaterinoslava,” *ELuL*, no. 13, May 6, 1887, 118–119. Translated into English from Russian by Viktoriia Serhiienko.

34 I. M. Iakovlev, “Ot Ekaterinoslavskogo Gorodskogo Golovy grazhdanam goroda Ekaterinoslava. Vozzvanie,” *ELuL*, no. 12, May 3, 1887, 101.

was directly related to rhetoric of the conquest and acculturation of the southern steppe. Iakovlev, in his speech delivered on May 9, 1887, emphasized that “one hundred years ago on the site where Ekaterinoslav stands there was a barren land surrounded on all sides with the vast and nearly uninhabited expanses of the steppe.”<sup>35</sup> *The Ekaterinoslav Anniversary Herald* echoed the city’s mayor: “a second Athens was to expect to rise amidst a wild and nearly uninhabited country.”<sup>36</sup>

The centennial was celebrated in Katerynoslav on May 9th and 10th<sup>37</sup> with festivities typical for the Russian Empire. On the eve of the celebration, on May 8th, a memorial liturgy for all departed local priests, administrators, and commoners was performed in every church, prayer house, and synagogue. On the morning of May 9th, a memorial service for Catherine II took place at the Transfiguration Cathedral. At the opening of the city council’s special meeting in Potemkin’s palace (the Potemkin palace itself was renovated and “assumed a decent appearance” only after it had been gifted, in the 1830s, to the whole of Ekaterinoslav’s nobility) the mayor delivered a speech and read out the humble address to the emperor, which was “immediately sent to the telegraph office.”<sup>38</sup>

In the afternoon “a free for all folk festival with music and fireworks” was held in the Potemkin Garden. That day saw also the laying of the foundation stone of a cheap eating-house run by a local charity for poor people.<sup>39</sup> In the evening, “at about ten o’clock, on the square near the gymnasium, the public was treated to a magic lantern show (laterna magica) with explanations . . . the pictures featured Empress Catherine the Great’s journey, portraits of some of Ekaterinoslav’s governors and archbishops, and so forth. The crowd responded to the show enthusiastically.”<sup>40</sup>

The texts published in the run-up to the celebration often mentioned a fundraising campaign concerning the prospective opening of a public library which would “become an imperishable nucleus of intellectual and moral curiosity of

35 “Rech’, proiznesënniaia g. Ekaterinoslavskim gorodskim golovoï, Dvora Ego Velichestva kamer-iunkerom I. Iakovlevym, v torzhestvennom zasedanii Dumy 9 maia 1887 goda,” *EIuL*, no. 16, May 12, 1887, 145.

36 *EIuL*, no. 15, May 9, 1887, 130.

37 “Programma prazdnovaniia stoletnego iubileia g. Ekaterinoslava,” *EIuL*, no. 12, May 3, 1887, 102–103.

38 “Prazdnestvo stoletiiia goroda Ekaterinoslava,” *Istoricheskiï vestnik* 27 (1887): 220.

39 N. P. Ballin, “Vnimaniiu obshchestva i blagotvoritelei,” *EIuL*, no. 15, May 9, 1887, 132.

40 “Prazdnestvo stoletiiia goroda Ekaterinoslava,” 221.

all the townsfolk.”<sup>41</sup> However, the fund-raising for the library was unsuccessful. Instead, May 10, 1887 saw the launch of the first blast furnace “in the ironworks with tripled capacity, built on the city’s land by the Brianskyi (in Russian, Brianskii) Society.”<sup>42</sup> The organizers of the centennial celebration were right in their forecasts concerning the city’s future, emphasizing the prospect of “the discovery and exploration of the diverse treasures of the soil.”<sup>43</sup>

## The Industrial Face of the City

By the late nineteenth century, Katerynoslav became a management center of mining as well as iron and steel industries in the south of the Russian Empire. By 1900, the region accounted for the Russian Empire’s 57.6% of iron ore, 51.7% of cast iron, and 53.7% of metalwork.<sup>44</sup> At that time in Russia, the word “city” only applied to officially recognized settlements with very limited elements of self-governance where non-agricultural trades were not necessarily key activities.<sup>45</sup> Katerynoslav was effectively the sole urbanized spot of the huge governorate. It was not just an industrial plant or a cluster of mines with workers living nearby. The development of industries, which as a process was mostly propelled by foreign investment—90% in iron and steel production and 63% in coal production in the Katerynoslav Governorate<sup>46</sup>—was positively influenced by favorable market conditions, such as public contracts for, first of all, railway construction.<sup>47</sup>

Correspondingly, Katerynoslav was one of the empire’s most rapidly developing cities. In 1880, it had forty-nine plants employing 572 workers, and in 1903—194 plants with more than 10,000 workers.<sup>48</sup>

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41 *ELuL*, no. 15, May 9, 1887, 131.

42 “Rech’, proiznesënniaia g. Ekaterinoslavskim gorodskim golovoï,” 146.

43 *ELuL*, no. 15, May 9, 1887, 131.

44 Rainer Lindner, “Prevrashchenie iz ‘Iuzhnogo Peterburga’ v gorod predprinimatelei: Ekaterinoslav i dinamika simvolov,” *Humanitarnyi zhurnal* 3–4 (2001): 41.

45 Roger L. Thiede, “Industry and Urbanization in New Russia from 1860 to 1910,” in *The City in Russian History*, ed. Michael F. Hamm (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 125–138.

46 Lindner, *Unternehmer und Stadt in der Ukraine*, 167.

47 M. Tugan-Baranovskii, *Russkaia fabrika*, 6th ed. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial’no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel’sтво, 1934), 262.

48 A. H. Bolebrukh, ed., *Dnipropetrovs’k. Vikhy istorii* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Hrani, 2001), 88.

The first industrial facility built in the city was the already mentioned Brianskyi plant, whose fixed capital was growing at a breakneck speed. In 1900, the plant had five blast furnaces, six open-hearth furnaces, and 140 coke ovens. In 1887, it employed 1,129 workers, in 1900—7,147,<sup>49</sup> and, according to police reports at the time of the unrest, as of January 1905, the plant officially employed 4,600 workers.<sup>50</sup>



FIGURE 9. The Bryansky plant. Early twentieth-century postcard.  
Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

Here is how an illustrated popular book published in 1913 characterized the Brianskyi plant:

When viewed from the Dnieper, the Brianskii plant looks like a gloomy and sooty barrack, but when you enter the plant's compound and the staff's living quarters, you feel as if you're in a small Western European town. This is an uninterrupted expanse of a garden or a grove, with

49 D. P. Poïda, "Formirovanie proletariata na Ekaterinoslavshchine i nachalo ego revoliutsionnoi bor'by," in *Rabochii klass Pridneprov'ia: formirovanie, traditsii i sotsial'nyi oblik* (Dnipropetrovs'k: DGU, 1989), 6.

50 Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti [DADO, State Archive of Dnipropetrovs'k Oblast'], fond 11, opys 1, sprava 464, arkushi 10–10 zvorot.

a neat layout of streets. Pretty little houses and majestic palace-like homes of the office workers and the director of the plant peek through the greenery.<sup>51</sup>

The city's other largest industrial enterprises were the Pipe Making Plant of the Society of the Chaudoir Brothers' Russian Pipe Making Plants, the steelworks of the Society of Katerynoslav Iron Ore and Steel Works as well as the steelworks of a Belgian joint-stock society Ezay and Co. The Society of Russian Iron and Steel Industry (formerly the Gantke Society of Ironworks) opened a plant in Nyzhniodniprovsk, on the Dnipro's left bank. In 1910, in order to showcase the region's economic achievements, Katerynoslav hosted a Southern Russian Regional Exhibition of Agriculture, Industry, and Crafts.

Most plants in the city were located off the railway station, up the Dnipro, at a distance from a hill near the river that, in Catherine II's and Potemkin's vision, was to turn into the city's center. Yet chimneys and smoke defined the entire landscape of Katerynoslav.

The writer Vladimir Gilyarovskiy, who visited the city during its industrial boom in 1899, left us this description:

I stayed in Ekaterinoslav for one day. This is a wonderful city by the Dnieper, growing by leaps and bounds for the last ten–twelve years. The main avenue, running straight, is every bit as good as the best streets of the world's capitals. Broad and lined with two boulevards and two overhead wires for electric trams, whose network covers the entire city and some of its environs, the avenue ends up on top of the hill, where the huge Potemkin garden overhangs the Dnieper's bank. In the garden, there is a Potemkin palace, which, we'll say in passing, his Highness never visited. A statue of Catherine II stands on a square near the garden. But if you walk away from the main avenue, you see streets, which are mostly dirty, you see entire neighborhoods teeming with people from whom you cannot expect cleanliness due to historical reasons . . . This is true not only for Ekaterinoslav—a city that is being hastily stitched together from different pieces . . . Here, people live, and only construction proceeds at a breakneck speed. Here every living creature strives to get his chunk of the pie, make a profit or start up a big, serious company.<sup>52</sup>

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51 *Ves' Ekaterinoslav* 1913, 115.

52 Vladimir Giliarovskii, "Zheleznaia goriachka," in Vladimir Giliarovskii, *Sochineniia*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Pravda, 1967), 117.

## The City and Its Residents

Until the mid-nineteenth century, Katerynoslav was built up from two opposite directions: down from the hill and up from the lowlands. The two parts were connected by the city's main artery—Katerynynskyi Avenue (commonly called just *Prospekt*) which was wide, as befits a capital city's thoroughfare, flanked by two boulevards with an electric tram running between them. Launched in June 1897, this was the second such tram in the entire Russian Empire.<sup>53</sup> A ride on the tram from the railway station to Soborna (Cathedral) Square, where the Preobrazhenskyi (Transfiguration) Cathedral stood, took about thirty-five minutes.<sup>54</sup> The *Prospekt* and its adjacent neighborhoods featured a bazaar named Ozernyi, the public garden, the city's biggest stores, pharmacies, inns, bookstores, a commodities exchange, the city council as well as the governor's house. What is more, the *Prospekt* and its adjacent streets were home to a Lutheran *kirche*, a Rome-Catholic *kościół*, a choral synagogue, two Orthodox cathedrals, and a Karaite *kenesa*.

The Soborna Hill, envisaged by Potemkin as the city's center, was home to the Transfiguration Cathedral with its nearby landmarks—the bronze statue of Catherine II and the Potemkin Palace with a luxurious, sweet-smelling Potemkin Garden behind it, with all of its vast territory covered with lush verdure.<sup>55</sup> A little further up the hill was the Sevastopol Cemetery—a burial ground of approximately 10,000 soldiers who died from wounds during the Crimean War of 1853–1856. The city was the main rear center of the Russian military, with twenty-three army hospitals up and running.<sup>56</sup> On the territory of this cemetery, to the west of the soldiers' graves, which quickly fell into decay, a chapel was built in the period 1863–1865. It was soon converted into a church dedicated to the resurrection of Lazarus, and a new, civilian cemetery was established around

53 The electric tram in Ekaterinoslav was put in place and operated by a Belgian company, which also launched trams in twenty-one other towns of the Russian Empire. In the very first year of its existence, the Ekaterinoslav tram network became the most profitable among municipal enterprises. See Lazebnik, “Bel’hiis’kyi pidpriemnyts’kyi kapital,” 238.

54 V. Mashukov, *Vospominaniia ob Ekaterinoslave za poslednie dvadtsat’ tri goda ego sushchestvovaniia (1887–1910 gg.)* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia gubernskogo zemstva, 1910), 53.

55 *Ves’ Ekaterinoslav. 1911 god* (Katerynoslav: L. I. Satanovskii, 1911), 96.

56 M. E. Kavun, “Problema ‘viina ta misto’: Katerynoslav chasiv Kryms’koï viiny 1853–1856 rr.,” *Zbirnyk naukovykh prats’ Kharkivs’koho natsional’noho pedahohichnoho universytetu im. H. Skovorody*, vol. 21–22 (2006): 45–49.

it. Pol' was buried in a vault under the church.<sup>57</sup> The City's Cemetery, founded in the downtown at the end of the eighteenth century, with its Resurrection Church whose construction was completed in 1837, remained the main burial ground of Katerynoslav.

For less than twenty years after the launch of the Brianskyi plant, which opened, coincidentally, when the city was celebrating its centennial, Katerynoslav experienced a demographic boom. From 1887 to 1904 its population grew from 47,000 to 156,611; from 1865 to 1917 the population increased nearly tenfold, and became almost a hundred times larger than it was in 1781.<sup>58</sup>

In January 1897, the first (and last) census of the Russian Empire was taken (with the exception of the Grand Duchy of Finland).<sup>59</sup> Its results have shown that in terms of population growth Katerynoslav "has no rivals" among the administrative centers of the governorates, and "as for big capitals of *uezds* [counties], only Łódź grows faster."<sup>60</sup> In 1912, Katerynoslav was on a list of the empire's thirty-three cities with a population over 100,000.<sup>61</sup>

The dynamics of population growth in the biggest cities of Ukrainian governorates is presented in the table below:<sup>62</sup>

City	1800	1860	1880	1900	1914
Kharkiv	9,900	57,639	101,175	173,989	244,710
Kyiv	19,000	71,000	116,424	247,723	506,000
Katerynoslav	2,194	19,000	49,876	112,839	211,070
Odesa	6,000	118,900	217,000	403,815	481,500

57 A. Avchinnikov, comp., *Iuzhno-russkaia oblastnaia vystavka v Ekaterinoslave 1910 g. S 1 iulia po 25 sentiabria. Putevoditel'* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia M. S. Kopylova, 1910), 11. I am grateful to Denys Shatalov who shared this publication with me.

58 Tetiana Portnova, *Mis'ke seredovyshche i modernizatsiia: Katerynoslav seredyny XIX–pochatku XX st.* (Dnipropetrovsk: Innovatsiia, 2008), 35.

59 See more in Juliette Cadiot, *Laboratoriia imperii: Rossiia/SSSR, 1860–1940* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), 53.

60 Quoted in V. Lazebnik, V. Pashuk, V. Platonov, *Dnipropetrovsk na rubezhi tysyacholit'* (Dnipropetrovsk: Prospekt, 2001), 21.

61 V. Lazebnik, "Naselenie goroda Ekaterinoslava (1776–1917 gg.)," *Hrani* 2 (2001): 8.

62 Lindner, *Unternehmer und Stadt in der Ukraine*, 40.



According to the 1897 census data, the population of Katerynoslav totaled 112,839 (60,770 men and 52,059 women). Katerynoslav natives made up 31.4% of urban population, 14.4% were natives of other *uezds* of the governorate, 53.4% were born in other governorates, and 0.8%—in other countries.<sup>63</sup> In other words, the demographic growth was a result of migration (labor migration, first of all). Therefore, Katerynoslav at the end of the nineteenth century could rightly be called a city of migrants. The population with migration background was predominantly young. A group of twenty to twenty-nine-year-olds made up more than 32% of the urban population.<sup>64</sup> The young age of the migrants (many of whom were former peasants) also brought down literacy rates among the urban dwellers (47.5%). As for the matters of faith, Katerynoslav had a Christian Orthodox population (65,196, or 57.8% of the entire population), Roman Catholic (3,986, or 3.53%), Lutheran (1,290, or 1.14%), Jewish (40,971, or 36.31%), and Muslim (664, or 0.58%) communities.<sup>65</sup>

With respect to the mother tongue (the census questionnaire used in the empire's European part did not contain a question about ethnicity), the Katerynoslav population included the following groups: speakers of the Russian ("Great Russian") language (47,140, or 41.77% of the entire population); "Jewish" (in fact, Yiddish language, 39,979, or 35.43%), Ukrainian ("Little Russian," 17,787, or 15.76%), Polish (3,418, or 3.02%), German (1,438, or 1.27%), "White Russian" (Belarusian, 1,383, or 1.22%).<sup>66</sup> The census linguistic data was often taken in later publications as an indication of the respondents' ethnic identification or "nationality." This can be regarded a simplistic approach since the ideological notion of "Russian" at that time could comprise native speakers of all three East Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian) or it could just as well apply only to "Great Russians" (Russians proper). We shall delve into this complex problem further on by analyzing the cultural and political life of Katerynoslav.

The table below compares language communities in the biggest cities of Ukrainian governorates:<sup>67</sup>

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63 Calculated according to *Ekaterinoslavskaiia guberniia: Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi imperii 1897 g.*, vol. XIII (St. Petersburg: n. p., 1904), 36.

64 Ibid., 10–11.

65 Ibid., 72–73.

66 Ibid., 74–75.

67 Lindner, *Unternehmer und Stadt in der Ukraine*, 41.



City	Russians ("Great Russians")	Ukrainians ("Little Russians")	Belarusians ("White Russians")	Jews	Poles
Kharkiv	109,914	45,092	612	9,848	3,696
Kyiv	134,278	55,064	2,797	29,937	16,579
Katerynoslav	47,140	17,787	1,383	39,979	3,418
Odesa	198,233	37,925	1,267	124,511	17,395

Before the First World War, in 1912, Katerynoslav already had 214,465 residents, including: 113,463 (52.90%) Christian Orthodox; 64,347 (30%) Jews; 13,445 (6.27%) Catholics; 5,185 (2.42%) Old Believers.<sup>68</sup>

The city had seventeen Christian Orthodox churches. The biggest among them were the city's tallest edifice in the second half of the nineteenth century. They included the St. Trinity Cathedral [*Troits'kyi sobor*], well seen from the Katerynynskyi Avenue, the Assumption Cathedral [*Uspens'kyi sobor*], built in 1839–1850, and Transfiguration Cathedral mentioned above.

The construction of a brick house for a choral synagogue instead of a wooden house destroyed by fire in 1833 was completed in Katerynoslav in 1843 (the wooden synagogue was built approximately in 1800). In 1912, the city had thirty-eight synagogues and prayer houses.<sup>69</sup> Most of them were small one-story buildings, blending in with the urban environment.

In 1897, Germans accounted for 1.27% of the city's overall population. Although the German Mennonites were a small group, they played a visible role in the city's economic life, owning plants and stores and distinguishing themselves as engineers and doctors.<sup>70</sup> The year 1866 saw the consecration of a one-story church building on the *Prospekt*. It was an Evangelical Lutheran prayer house dedicated to St. Catherine. The German Mennonites lived not only in the city itself but also in agricultural communes around it: in the Khortytsia colony of the Katerynoslavskyi *uezd* and the Mariupolskyi Mennonite *okrug* of the Oleksan-

68 *Ves' Ekaterinoslav* 1911, 113.

69 For details see Aleksandra Loshak, Valentin Starostin, *Sinagogi Ekaterinoslava* (Dnipro: Herda, 2019).

70 S. I. Bobyleva, "Nemetskoe i mennonitskoe naselenie Ekaterinoslava-Dnepropetrovska. Ego vklad v sotsio-kul'turnoe i ekonomicheskoe razvitiye goroda (XVIII v.–30 gg. XX v.)," *Hrani* 1 (2003): 25.

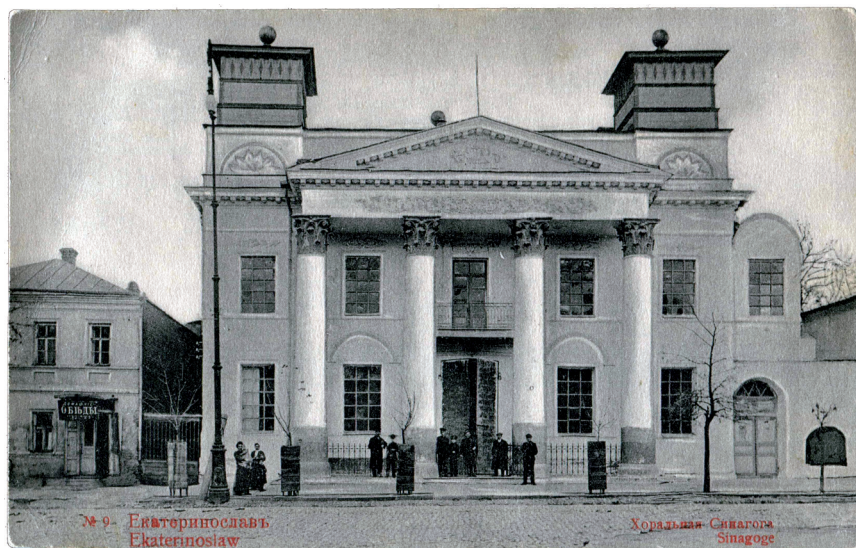


FIGURE 10. Choral Synagogue. Early twentieth-century postcard.  
Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

drivskiy uезд. In the 1870s, at least 17,000 Mennonites emigrated from Russia to America. The main reason behind the migration wave was the elimination of the perpetual exemption from military duty in the Russian Empire. Moreover, the Mennonites found themselves lacking land for establishing new colonies. Finally, they were challenged by the Russification policies of the government, which ordered that classes at school be conducted in Russian, instead of German as before.<sup>71</sup>

Poles were prominent in the city's multiethnic community. Employing many ethnic Poles, the already mentioned Gantke plant was in fact a branch of the Bernard Gantke Society of Ironworks in Warsaw.<sup>72</sup> The main center of

71 Despite emigration, the Mennonites colonies remained in southern Ukraine until 1940s. For details see Abraham Friesen, *In Defense of Privilege. Russian Mennonites and the State before and during World War I* (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2006); N. V. Ostasheva, *Na perelome epokh . . . Mennonitskoe soobshchestvo Ukrainy v 1914–1931 gg.* (Moscow: Gotika, 1998); S. I. Bobyleva, ed., *Zhivi i pomni: Istoriia mennonitskikh kolonii Ekaterinoslavshchiny* (Dnipropetrovsk: n. p., 2006); N. V. Venger, *Mennonitskoe predprinimatel'stvo v usloviakh modernizatsii Iuga Rossii: mezhdru kongregatsiei, klanom i rossiiskim obshchestvom (1789–2009)* (Dnipropetrovsk: Vydavnytstvo Dnipropetrovskoho natsional'noho universytetu, 2009).

72 Zygmunt Łukawski, *Ludność polska w Rosji. 1863–1914* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978), 58.

Polish migrant labor was Kamianske (in Russian, Kamenskoe), a village near Katerynoslav whose industrial development began in 1887 when the Warsaw steelworks were moved there. The factory was relocated together with its equipment and workers (about 600 people came to Kamianske instantaneously). By the mid-1890s, Kamianske already had more than 1,000 Poles, and by 1914—12,000.<sup>73</sup> The year 1905 saw the completion of the construction of a St. Nicholas cathedral. With its two thirty-three-meter-high gun turrets, it remains to this day one of the biggest Roman Catholic churches in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. In Katerynoslav itself, the smaller building of the Roman Catholic church dedicated to St. Joseph was located squarely in the city's center—right on the *Prospekt*, not far from the post office and the governor's house.<sup>74</sup>

Katerynoslav's another distinctive feature was its small but quite influential colony of Crimean Karaites. In 1887, forty Crimean Karaite families lived in the city. They were wealthy merchants trading in tobacco, groceries, and textiles.<sup>75</sup> A kenesa was built on Zheleznaia Street. In 1910, the city's Karaite community numbered 770.<sup>76</sup>

## Jewish Katerynoslav

*A Handbook for Travellers in Russia, Poland, and Finland*, published in 1875 in London, mentioned that “the most striking feature of the town is, perhaps, its Jewish population, which is quartered between the Dnieper and the bazaar, on either side of the floating bridge.”<sup>77</sup> Similar observations can be found in a letter a British national Amy Coles, who tutored in Katerynoslav the offspring of a local marshal of the nobility, sent to the parents in May 1879:

Can you imagine it, we have a theatre in this town and two public gardens, and yet there are not nearly so many wealthy people as there are in Leamington or such good shops. The principal feature of Ekaterinoslav

73 Ibid., 56–57.

74 More on this building see in Valentyn Starostin, *Istoriia kost'olu m. Katerynoslava* (Kharkiv: Kharkivs'kyi pryvatnyi muzei mis'koï sadyby, 2012).

75 *ELuL*, May 9, 1887, 15.

76 A. F. Rodzewich-Belevich, comp., *Iuzhno-ruskaia oblastnaia sel'skokhoziaïstvennaia promyshlennaia i kustarnaia vystavka 1910 goda v Ekaterinoslave* (Katerynoslav: Tipografia Gustav Berg, 1912), 655.

77 *Handbook for Travellers in Russia, Poland, and Finland* (London: John Murray, 1875), 345.

is its Jewish population and when we went up the Boulevard we met one Russian only, but a very great many Jews.<sup>78</sup>

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Jews were the second largest religious and ethnic group in Katerynoslav. They constituted 30–35% of the city's population. Jewish residents of the city, initially located in the Pale of Settlement, belonged to most diverse social groups: from craftsmen to industrialists and merchants. In 1897, Katerynoslav had 812 plants and factories. Jews owned 201 of them (eighteen brick plants, eleven dairies, six distilleries, two tobacco factories, and eight soap factories). Other enterprises owned by Jews included printing houses, lumber mills, grinding mills, and all drugstores of Katerynoslav.<sup>79</sup>

In the Russian Empire, by 1914 Jews accounted for 3.1% of its population.<sup>80</sup> In the Pale of Settlement they made up about 11.6%<sup>81</sup> and in the majority of the biggest cities of Pale—no less than 30% (in this retrospect Katerynoslav was not unique). On the Russian territory Jews were “the Empire's most urbanized people, nearly all of them literate.”<sup>82</sup> It should be emphasized that Jews were also one of the most discriminated population group. Alexander II's reforms somewhat relaxed the rules concerning “the Pale of Settlement” (for Jewish merchants belonging to the top guild, persons with academic degrees, doctors, artisans, and all graduates of institutions of higher learning) but by no means abolished all restrictions.

As Hans Rogger noted,

The uniqueness of the situation of the Jews was reflected in the fact that although their juridical status was that of other Russian subjects, they

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78 Nicholas Tyrras, ed., *Letters of Life in an Aristocratic Russian Household Before and After the Revolution*. Amy Coles and Princess Vera Urusov (Lewinston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 39.

79 Aleksandr Bystriakov, *Evrei Ekaterinoslava-Dnepropetrovska (XVIII–nachalo XX vv.)* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Art-Press, 2001), 28–29.

80 Aleksei Miller, “Imperiia Romanovykh i evrei,” in Aleksei Miller, *Imperiia Romanovykh i nationalizm: Èsse po metodologii istoricheskogo issledovaniia* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006), 104.

81 Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa. A Cultural History, 1794–1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 14.

82 Oleg Budnitskii, “Evrei i revoliutsiia 1905 goda v Rossii: Vstrecha s narodom,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 6 (2005): 99–104.

were also listed in the Code of Laws as one of the empire's indigeneous ethnic groups (*inorodtsy*) with a special legal status or administration . . . The very existence of the Pale . . . in no way resembled the native territories of the *inorodtsy* . . . Even inside the Pale Jews did not enjoy the rights of "natives".<sup>83</sup>

Discrimination against Jews in Russia was one of the main research subjects of the lawyer and Katerynoslav native Ilia Orshansky.<sup>84</sup> Orshansky's commentary on legal matters was very popular and influential in Russia. He did all he could to rationally challenge anti-Jewish stereotypes by showing that "in general Jews' interests stand in harmony with real interests of the rest of the population. Most importantly, Orshansky demonstrated the fallaciousness of the belief that 'Jews do nothing but work as intermediaries—they create no things of value,' while at the same time he explained that Jewish trade 'had some utility,' and debunked the myth that 'all Russian Jews make a single uniform mass.'"<sup>85</sup>

Orshansky was convinced that it was important "to consolidate and incorporate Jewry into the general life of the Russian state and people," and, as the first step in this direction, the government should abolish all restrictions by accentuating the necessity that the "the treatment of Jews should be guided by the same considerations and views which are deemed appropriate for other classes of population."<sup>86</sup>

Orshansky was one of the members of the Society for Disseminating Knowledge among Russian Jews founded in 1863. It represented the sole officially recognized Jewish organization operating in the entire Russian Empire. Above all, the Society's members were committed to disseminating Russian knowledge and culture among Jews. The Society helped Orshansky to secure an authoriza-

83 Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 26–27.

84 See more in M. G. Morgulis, *I. G. Orshanskiĭ i ego literaturnaia deiatel'nost'* (St. Petersburg: n. p., 1904); Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale. The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 317–320. On Kyiv and its Jewish population in the second half of the nineteenth century see Natan M. Meier, *Kiev. A Jewish Metropolis. A History, 1859–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). Compare Serhiy Bilenky, *Imperial Urbanism in the Borderlands. Kyiv, 1800–1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

85 I. G. Orshanskiĭ, *Evrei v Rossii. Ocherki ekonomicheskogo i obshchestvennogo byta russkikh evreev* (St. Petersburg: Tipografia O. I. Baksta, 1877), 4, 30, 38, 67, 182.

86 *Ibid.*, 182–184, 191.

tion for publishing in Odesa a newspaper called *Den'* [The Day] (1869–1871), which championed the vision of Jews blending into the Russian society.<sup>87</sup>

Arguing for the cause, Orshansky and people sharing his ideas underestimated the fact that the very act of acculturation could provoke anxiety among non-Jews. Moreover, acculturated Jews often made themselves more suspect, because they were seen as attempting to disguise their “true nature.”<sup>88</sup>

On May 27, 1871, an anti-Jewish pogrom began in Odesa, shocking Jewish intelligentsia not only with its brutality but also with the lack of willingness, among the majority of non-Jewish educated citizens, to stand up for the minority. The Jews had been often associated with industrialization and capitalism and were blamed for provoking the violence.<sup>89</sup> Immediately after the pogrom, Orshansky left Odesa and stopped publishing the *Den'* newspaper. In his essay “Characterizing the Pogrom in Odesa,” he tried to rationally analyze what he had seen—in particular, “ill feeling towards Jews prevailing among Odessa’s Christians” and, first of all, among its “educated and wealthy class.”<sup>90</sup> In his opinion, the reason for this was the deep “division” between the legal and economic realities of the Jews’ existence in the south of Russia. Legally, Jews experienced discrimination in different ways. But in fact, they played an important role in the trade-oriented economy.<sup>91</sup> In his view, “the vital nerve” of the pogrom was not “religious or other prejudices of the masses,” but “a conscious hostility of the merchant class, primarily Greeks,” and he directly criticized the naively revolutionary vision of the pogrom as a manifestation of the class struggle, emphasizing that the issue at hand was “a struggle of capital against capital, not of capital against labor.”<sup>92</sup>

Having spent a year in St. Petersburg, where he wrote one article after another, and, afterwards, having lived three years outside Russia, Orshansky sud-

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87 M. Polishchuk, *Evrei Odessy i Novorossii. Sotsial'no-politicheskaia istoriia evreev Odessy i druzhikh gorodov Novorossii 1881–1904* (Moscow: Mosty kul'tury, 2002), 213.

88 See more on this subject in Harriet Murav, *Identity Theft: The Jew in Imperial Russia and the Case of Avraam Uri Kovner* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Important contextual observations about the issue of the Jewish assimilation in Nineteenth-Century Europe could be found in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community. The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

89 Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa. A Cultural History*, 116.

90 Orshanskiĭ, *Evrei v Rossii*, 157.

91 Ibid., 163.

92 Ibid., 165, 174.



denly died in 1875, in Katerynoslav,<sup>93</sup> before a new wave of Jewish pogroms occurred in 1881. Meanwhile, his closest colleague, Mikhail Morgulis, had to explain publicly after 1881 that, in his opinion, assimilation meant fusion of externalities, not a rejection of the national spirit or the ambition to develop a nation's specific culture.<sup>94</sup>

In the spring of 1881, terrorists from People's Will [*Narodnaia Volia*] assassinated the emperor Alexander II in St. Petersburg. The months that followed saw a series of anti-Jewish pogroms in the Pale of Settlement (such events were recorded in 250 localities).<sup>95</sup> As a result, there was an upsurge of Zionism among the Jews. Katerynoslav became one of the centers of Zionism in the Russian Empire and Europe in general. The credit for this goes, first of all, to Menahem Mendel Ussishkin.<sup>96</sup> Born in 1863 into a wealthy family, he graduated from Moscow Polytechnic Institute and in 1891, immediately after a honeymoon in Palestine, moved to Katerynoslav where his wife's parents lived. Ussishkin lived there until 1906 and then moved to Odesa. During the fifteen years he spent in Katerynoslav, Ussishkin rose to a position of leadership in Russia's Zionist movement, becoming in 1899 the head of its Katerynoslav chapter, which covered all of Russia's south and the Caucasus region and had a reputation of the most well-organized structure.

Ussishkin was a visionary with a remarkably pragmatic cast of mind and a charismatic personality. It was thanks to his efforts that Shmarya Levin moved to Katerynoslav to become the Crown (*kazënniy*) Rabbi (that is, a rabbi elected by a local Jewish community and approved by the governorate's authorities). Levin describes his patron as "a true leader... an uncompromising man of great

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93 Orshanskii was buried on Old Jewish Cemetery in Katerynoslav. His resting place was topped with a tombstone featuring a pile of books—the creation of the celebrated Russian sculptor Mark Antokolsky (1843–1902). In 1947, the municipal council of Dnipropetrovsk reassigned the cemetery's site "for the construction of private homes" for retired military men. Quoted in Maksim Kavun, "Istoriia znamenitykh kladbishch goroda," accessed May 17, 2020, <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/124913>. All of the graves and tombstones without exception were destroyed. Orshanskii's tombstone was the only one whose image has been preserved on a photograph.

94 Polishchuk, *Evrei Odessy i Novorossii*, 255.

95 For details see John D. Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

96 See more in Joseph Klausner, *Menahem Ussishkin: His Life and Work* (New York: Scopus, 1942); Simcha Kling, *The Mighty Warrior. The Life-story of Menachem Ussishkin* (New York: Jonathan David, 1965); Aleksandr Bystriakov, *Ocherki istorii sionistkogo dvizheniia v Ekaterinoslave* (Dnipropetrovsk: Sokhnut-Ukraina, 2008).



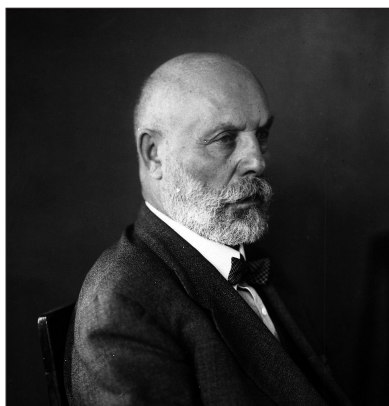


FIGURE 11.  
Menachem Mendel Ussishkin.  
Photo from the collection of Museum  
“Memory of Jewish people and  
the Holocaust in Ukraine”  
in Dnipro.

personal integrity” who “had introduced an almost military discipline among the Zionists, and he was less the leader than the imperator.”<sup>97</sup>

Ussishkin actively participated in the international Zionist movement. He challenged Theodor Herzl when the latter considered the proposal, made by certain representatives of the British elite, to relocate European Jews to Uganda in Africa. Ussishkin never doubted that “Uganda is no Zion and will never become one.”<sup>98</sup> In 1904, he published an essay titled “Our Program.” In his analysis, Ussishkin gave consideration to such factors as Zionism’s need to win over public opinion in European countries, the necessity to accumulate resources (including financial ones), the importance to revive modern Hebrew as the national language as well as specific mechanisms of colonization of territories in Palestine, which was then under Ottoman control.<sup>99</sup> Ussushkin proposed a “synthetic Zionism” combining political activism, purchase of land, resettlement to Palestine as well as systemic educational and organizational work there.<sup>100</sup> It was his approach that prevailed in the twentieth-century Zionist movement.

In addition to Ussishkin and Levin, Katerynoslav had another prominent Zionist and Jewish educator—the city’s native Hillel Zlatopolskii, who

97 Shmarya Levin, *Forward from Exile. The Autobiography* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 348.

98 Klausner, *Menahem Ussishkin: His Life and Work*, 66. See also Michael Heymann, ed., *The Uganda Controversy: Minutes of the Zionist General Council* (Tel-Aviv: Israel University Press, 1970).

99 M. Ussishkin, *Our Program* (New York: Federation of American Zionists, 1905).

100 Joseph G. Klausner, “Ussishkin, Abraham Mehanem Mendel,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 20, ed. Fred Skolnik (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 435.

cofounded, in 1907, the Society of Friends of the Hebrew Language (*Hovevei Sefat* 'Ever), and a Hebrew-language publishing house.<sup>101</sup>

Katerynoslav was characterized by "what might be called an alliance between the community's highest clerical body and the real power holders—Usishkin and his associates."<sup>102</sup> In particular, the Crown Rabbi Levin set about fighting vagrancy and took command of the *Maskil el Dal* society, which first opened in the city in 1871 to assist poor Jews from Lithuania and Belarus. It divided the city into sections, made lists of needy Jews, and distributed relief payments to them through local administrators.<sup>103</sup>

Before Levin came to Katerynoslav, the local Jewish community handled different philanthropic and civic initiatives. In 1880, the community opened a shelter for the elderly poor and a school with vocational training classes, and in 1888, a women's infirmary at the Jewish Hospital. In 1894, the hospital was moved to a new building specially bought for the purpose, to which a new wing—heated with steam and equipped with an improved ventilation system—was added in 1902. In 1895, on the initiative of a Crown Rabbi Vladimir Shakhov, a Professional Union of Jewish Teachers, with an initial membership of 135, was founded in Katerynoslav. Since 1901, annual training courses for the teachers were offered in the city.<sup>104</sup>

## Daily Life in the Manchester of the South

The traveler and writer Oleksandr/Alexander Afanasev, reminiscing about Katerynoslav, remembered "horrible oceans of mud" and "fine whitish dust hurting the eyes."<sup>105</sup> Moreover, one of the Russian Social Democrats had this to say about his first ride across the city in a horse-drawn carriage: "I've never seen such mud in my life: sometimes it was splashed all across the wheel."<sup>106</sup>

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101 Yehuda Slutsky, "Zlatopolsky, Hillel," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 21, 643.

102 Polishchuk, *Evrei Odessy i Novorossii*, 285.

103 Ibid., 193–194, 199.

104 Ibid., 46, 189, 185–186.

105 A. S. Afanas'ev (Chuzhbinskii), "Poezdka v Iuzhnyi Rossii. Ocherki Dnepra," in *Sobranie sochinenii A. S. Afanas'eva (Chuzhbinskogo)*, vol. 7 (St. Petersburg: German Goppe, 1891), 57.

106 M. A. Rubach, ed., *Istoriia Ekaterinoslavskoi sotsial-demokraticeskoi organizatsii, 1889–1903. Vospominaniia, dokumenty, literatura i khudozhestvennye materialy* (Katerynoslav: Tipolitografiia Ekaterininskoi zheleznoi dorogi, 1923), 30.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, a typical town in the south of the empire did not have water pipes or sewage pipes, nor did it practice regular cleaning of the streets. Instead, one could observe numerous of hard-to-walk-or-ride-through tracts of mud (especially in spring and autumn) and cattle grazing on its. Densely populated neighborhoods as well as the problems with water supply and local residents' habit of emptying their trash bins onto the street caused outbreaks of epidemic diseases. Due to all of the factors mentioned above, mortality rates in the city were higher than in rural areas.<sup>107</sup> Katerynoslav had outbreaks of disease practically every year: in 1901 it was scarlet fever, in 1905—typhus, from 1907–1909—cholera.<sup>108</sup> In 1910, the city's mortality rate was thirty-four per 1,000 (20.2 in Odesa, 20.6 in Kyiv, 28 in St. Petersburg, 28.8 in Moscow). Deaths of infants younger than one year of age accounted for about 50% of all deaths, and death of people aged twenty-one to thirty for about 16%. As for adults' deaths, the most common cause was tuberculosis (32.2%), and among infants, scarlet fever (12.6 %).<sup>109</sup>

Low-skill workers constituted the group most vulnerable to disease. As a local newspaper put it, “cholera almost entirely and exclusively targets impoverished workers, by virtue of either poverty or ignorance and failure to observe the elementary rules of hygiene.”<sup>110</sup> According to Matushevsky, he had not seen so many warning signs in any other city saying, “Do not drink crude water,” placed everywhere (“stuck to almost every policeman's back”).<sup>111</sup> The situation got somewhat better in 1908, after the launch of a new improved network of water pipes (the old one, a subject of numerous complaints, was built in 1869), which, however, did not cover the whole city.

The healthcare services could not catch up with the growth of the city's population. In 1891, Katerynoslav had four pharmacies, fifty doctors, thirty-four paramedics, fifty midwives, and ten hospitals with 643 beds overall.<sup>112</sup> In 1900, eighty-eight doctors (four of them women) were employed in the

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107 For details see Portnova, *Mis'ke seredovyshe i modernizatsiia*, 48–52.

108 Rodzewich-Belevich, comp., *Iuzhno-ruskaia oblastnaia sel'skokhoziaistvennaia promyshlennaia i kustarnaia vystavka*, 648.

109 Ibid., 648.

110 “Sanitarnoe sostoianie goroda,” *Iuzhnaia zaria*, no. 1216, June 13, 1910, 4.

111 Quoted in Chaban, *U staromu Katerynoslavi*, 37–38.

112 *Obzor Ekaterynoslavskoi gubernii za 1891 g.* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia gubernskogo pravleniia, 1892), 80, 82.

city,<sup>113</sup> in 1910, 144 (eleven women).<sup>114</sup> Whereas in 1880, there was one doctor for each 2,500 residents, in 1910 there was one for each 1,354.<sup>115</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, urban infrastructures in all cities in the Russian Empire were upgraded. Water supply improved, streets were paved, brick buildings were constructed in central areas and buildings to house educational institutions, banks, hospitals, theatres as well as clubs were put up. In Katerynoslav, Andrei Fabr, who held the governor's office in 1847–1857, was a big enthusiast of beautifying the city's center. He turned Katerynynskyi Avenue, the widest street in the city, into a two-lane boulevard with pyramidal poplars, maples, and lush bushes of lilac. The governor's affection for his innovation reached anecdotal proportions. He used to personally inspect the boulevard on a daily basis and “chase down those who wanted to make use of the lilac,” “waging a war against cows and pigs” on the city's main *Prospekt*.<sup>116</sup>

The *Prospekt*, especially its width befitting a capital city, was a testimony to the grandeur of Potemkin's plans for Katerynoslav. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the *Prospekt* was more of a pasture land than the city's main thoroughfare. The governor Fabr did all he could to change the situation. In 1874, the city's council prohibited building on the *Prospekt* houses other than brick ones.<sup>117</sup> In 1835, Katerynoslav had twenty-four stone buildings,<sup>118</sup> in 1862—315,<sup>119</sup> and in 1913—5,591 (overall the city had 14,565 houses).<sup>120</sup> By 1900, 48.3% of the city's streets were paved.<sup>121</sup> By 1903, the entire city was wired for electric

113 *Ekaterinoslavskaia guberniia. Pamiatnaia knizhka i adres-kalendar' na 1900 g.* (Katerynoslav: Tipolitografiia gubernskogo pravleniia, 1900), 75.

114 *Kalendar'-ezhegodnik "Pridneprov'e" na 1910 g.* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia M. S. Kopylova, 1909), 362–365.

115 Lazebnik, “Naselenie goroda Ekaterinoslava (1776–1917 gg.),” *Hrani* 2 (2002): 6.

116 Mashukov, *Vospominaniia ob Ekaterinoslave*, 32–33.

117 “Zhurnal zasedaniia 7 marta 1885 g.,” *Zhurnaly Ekaterinoslavskoi gorodskoi Dumi* (January–April 1885), 75.

118 Instytut rukopysu Natsional'noi biblioteky Ukraïny im. V. I. Vernads'koho [IR NBU, Manuscript Institute of the V. I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine], fond 5, opys 1, sprava 611, arkush 297.

119 N. P. Andrushchenko, S. E. Zubarev, and V. A. Lenchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk: Arkhitekturno-istoricheskii ocherk* (Kyïv: Budivel'nyk, 1985), 35.

120 *Dnipropetrovs'k. Vikhy istorii*, 103.

121 *Pamiatnaia knizhka i adres-kalendar' na 1901 g.* (Ekaterinoslav: Tipolitografiia gubernskogo pravleniia, 1900), 176. See also Portnova, *Mis'ke seredovyshche i modernizatsiia*, 46.

lighting. The only exception were remote suburbs where gas lamps were used. A memoirist gave credit to the city's council for the fact that "in our city electric lighting is not concentrated only on select streets—central or main roads—but reaches across the city and into remote neighborhoods, including the nearest valleys where poor folk's small cabins are huddled together."<sup>122</sup>

Yet, many felt the tensions between the center and the outskirts. This sentiment was expressed in a feuilleton printed in a newspaper, published in 1912:

The center, where most of the big shots live, has electric lighting, good pavements, sewage, telephone, a running tram—in a word, all the best amenities—whereas remote neighborhoods lack even the most basic ones . . . even pavement on their roads! And indeed, when you take a close look at how the city's councils treat these areas, you are reminded of the apocryphal story about the rich man and Lazarus.<sup>123</sup>

The accelerated industrialization, too, had a stronger social impact on the city's outskirts, driving up incidence rates of robberies, homicides, suicides, child abandonment, etc.

The responsibility for law and order in the city rested with the police department, which in 1912 disposed of 310 employees. Katerynoslav employed one policeman for 688 residents (compare with 245 in Moscow, 322 in London, 415 in Berlin, 416 in Vienna).<sup>124</sup> The police force was financed through a special tax paid by merchants and petite bourgeoisie. In the observer's opinion, this arrangement influenced its performance:

We can see that our police completely distanced itself from the task of improving the living environment in the city. This is the direct responsibility of the police; however, fulfilling it, the police is bound to meet resistance from homeowners, who, as elected members of the municipal council, make allocations for the police force in annual budgets.<sup>125</sup>

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122 Mashukov, *Vospominaniia ob Ekaterinoslave*, 56.

123 M. Lubenskii, "Tsentri i okrainy," *Russkaia pravda*, no. 1759 (November 15, 1912): 3.

124 O. A. Kutsenko, ed., *Dnipropetrovs'k: mynule i suchasne* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Dniproknynha, 2001), 459.

125 [Gorozhanin], "Gorod i politsiia," *Russkaia pravda*, no. 1741 (October 2, 1912): 3.

Overall, local commentators openly wrote about “the desperate lack of conveniences” in Katerynoslav.<sup>126</sup> Historian Dmytro Doroshenko, who came to the city in 1909, described his first impressions in a letter to his colleague:

dust, smoke, a peculiar stench, an amazing mixture of a large city’s ap-purtenances—electric lighting, tram, cafes and the like—and next to it, provincial unkemptness, filth; nature is nowhere to be seen here . . . There are industrial plants and chimneys all around, a grey smog is looming over the city all day long. Bad, in a word.<sup>127</sup>

At the same time, another letter writer who moved to Katerynoslav, Rabbi Shmarya Levin, comparing his native Lithuania with the city, unconditionally preferred the latter:

It is a city as broad, as open, as kingly, as the Dnieper itself; a city that draws its character from the mighty river and from the broad, powerful earth of Ukraine. Ekaterinoslav with its youth, its freshness and its gaiety, took my fancy by storm. The buildings, the trees, the people—all seemed radiant . . . In the virgin city of Ekaterinoslav . . . a man could still write his name into something.<sup>128</sup>

### Education and Information Exchange

Not unexpectedly, the city’s industrial profile influenced its educational establishments, which mostly provided training for engineers in the areas of mining, iron and steel industry. Symbolically, the city’s first institution of higher learning was not a university of arts and sciences envisioned by Potemkin but the Mining College, opened in 1899 (at first, in the Potemkin palace).<sup>129</sup> Soon, the Mining College moved to a new building on the Soborna Square. In 1912, it became the Emperor Peter I Mining Institute, with mining and metallurgical departments. Initially, the college granted its graduates not a degree in engineering but a technician’s diploma. It represented “something in between a secondary school and an institution of higher learning.” So, whereas graduates of the Mining Institute located in the empire’s capital went on to fill senior management positions,

126 [Stepnoi], “Iz zapisnoi knizhki,” *Russkaia pravda*, no. 1770 (November 30, 1912): 3.

127 IR NBU, fond III, odyntytsia zberihannia 36951, arkushi 1–1 zvorot.

128 Levin, *Forward from Exile*, 350.

129 For details see: H. K. Shvyd'ko, ed., *Istoriia i suchasnist' Natsional'noho hirnychoho universytetu (1899–2009 rr.)* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Lira, 2009).

graduates of the school in Katerynoslav would become key on-site workers in mines and industrial facilities.<sup>130</sup>

The year 1901 saw the opening of the College of Commerce, a private institution, named Nicholas II College of Commerce since 1906. Financed by local industrialists, it reported to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The college had 700 students (at least 70% of them Jewish) and employed forty-five teachers.<sup>131</sup> The college's director, Antin Syniavsky (in Russian, Anton Siniavskii), while holding a senior office and the rank of general (state councilor), was an open Ukrainophile.<sup>132</sup> In particular, the stateroom in the college's new, imposing edifice—"a veritable palace" representing of the architectural gems of the early twentieth-century Katerynoslav—was adorned with the portraits of Ukrainian Cossack hetmans.<sup>133</sup>

The utilitarian technical orientation of the educational system accompanied by the lack of libraries with books on humanities made Katerynoslav a fairly unsuitable place for historical research. In 1911, Vasyl Bidnov, a teacher at a local seminary and church historian, wrote: "there is a desire to work, and a lot of it, but Katerynoslav does not offer an environment conducive to academic research, so the results are negligible."<sup>134</sup>

Overall, in 1885 the city had forty-two registered educational institutions, and in 1915, already 180.<sup>135</sup> A majority of private schools and colleges were Jewish Talmud Torahs and cheders (there were about 100 of them) which were fully financed by their students' parents. Generally, secondary schools were divided along the lines of religion and gender. In vocational education, boundaries were becoming blurred but did not disappear altogether.

Despite its apparent industrial character, Katerynoslav had more than just industrial plants and factories. By 1914, the administrative center of the gover-

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130 *Ekaterinoslavskii gornyi institut imeni t. Artema-Sergeeva. K predstoiashchemu iubileiu 1899–1924 gg.* (Katerynoslav: 1-e maia, 1924), 5, 15.

131 V. M. Zaruba, *Antin Syniavs'kyi: zhyttia, naukova ta hromads'ka diial'nist'* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Lira LTD, 2003), 84.

132 On Syniavs'kyi see more in S. I. Bilokin', "Antin Syniavs'kyi i ioho doba," in *Antin Syniavs'kyi, Vybrani pratsi* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993), 3–31; V. Zaruba, *Z viroiu v ukrains'ku spravu: Antin Stepanovych Syniavs'kyi* (Kyiv: Lybid', 1993).

133 Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moï spomyyny pro davnie mynule (1901–1914 roky)* (Winnipeg: Tryzub, 1949), 119. Compare Chaban, *U staromu Katerynoslavi*, 21.

134 IR NBU, fond 175, odynytsia zberihannia 1164, arkush 9.

135 *Dnipropetrovs'k: Vikhy istorii*, 105.



norate had eight theatres. In addition, the year 1889 saw the opening of a municipal public library.

Until 1882, Katerynoslav had two newspapers—*Gubernskie vedomosti* (The Governorate Bulletin, from 1838) and *Eparkhial'nye vedomosti* (The Eparchy Bulletin, from 1872).<sup>136</sup> In 1911 there were already seventeen periodicals: liberal *Pridneprovskii krai* (The Dnipro Land); right-wing monarchists' *Russkaia pravda* (The Russian Truth); and *Iuzhnaia zaria* (The Southern Dawn), with lots of classified ads. The first telegraph office opened in 1859. A phone line was installed in the city in the 1890s, and the 1909 year saw the launch of a long-distance line connecting Kharkiv, Bakhmut, and Katerynoslav.<sup>137</sup>

## Workers and Their Everyday Life

By the start of the twentieth century, Katerynoslav and its environs (many of the biggest industrial plants were located outside the city proper) was home to 40,000 workers, 30,000 of them employed in heavy industry.<sup>138</sup> Most of them were young male peasants aged 20–35 working as seasonal workers on a temporary basis. About 80% of the regional workforce was composed of migrants, mostly natives of Russian governorates such as Orlov, Smolensk, Tver, and Kaluga.<sup>139</sup> Katerynoslav had the empire's second largest migrant workforce (St. Petersburg was number one).<sup>140</sup> According to observers' accounts, local Ukrainian peasants often disliked industrial work (in particular, underground work), and when they took jobs in industrial sector, they preferred working as street cleaners or caretakers.<sup>141</sup> Many of them, while working in the city, were dreaming about returning to their villages and viewed the necessity to make a living in industry as a strategy to save money for improving their lives as peasants.

There were three clearly identifiable groups of these workers: high-skill factory and railway workers; miners (there were few miners in Katerynoslav per se,

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136 *Ves' Ekaterinoslav* 1911, 74.

137 *Kalendar'-ezhegodnik "Pridneprov'e" na 1910 g.*, 67.

138 Tetiana Portnova, *Vykhidtsi z sela u velykomu promyslovomu misti: Na materialakh Katerynoslava kintsia XIX–pochatku XX st.*, accessed May 17, 2021. <http://www.lvivcenter.org/download.php?newsid=1077>. See also F. E. Los', *Formirovanie rabocheho klassa na Ukraine i ego revoliutsionnaia bor'ba (konets XIX v.–1904 g.)* (Kyiv: Gospolitizdat, 1955).

139 Portnova, *Vykhidtsi z sela u velykomu promyslovomu misti*.

140 Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*, 45.

141 E. I. Ragozin, *Zhelezo i ugol' na iuge Rossii* (St. Petersburg: I. Goldberg, 1895), 46.

but the Donetsk coal basin was a part of the Katerynoslav Governorate) and low-skill industrial workers; craftsmen (tailors, shoemakers, and so forth), who were mostly of Jewish origin.<sup>142</sup> A continuous shortage of high-skill workers, capable of learning and having the prospect to be paid much higher rates, was evident. The plant owners were gradually beginning to address the problem of retaining workers. Labor turnover was high. Therefore, managers at the plants were happy when one tenth of the workforce was in permanent employment.<sup>143</sup>

Working conditions were deplorable, combined with an average workday lasting twelve or thirteen hours. Housing conditions were in a not much better state. In the workers' housing estates on Katerynoslav's outskirts, such as Chechelivka, Kaidaky, as well as estates in the suburbs Amur and Nyzhniodniprovsk, heavy drinking and wall-to-wall fights occurred on a daily basis. So did also outbreaks of epidemic diseases and filth.<sup>144</sup> The Katerynoslav Governorate had one of the empire's highest homicide and rape rates.<sup>145</sup> The estates practically did not have any schools, even though one hundred workers attended the Sunday schools for adults in Katerynoslav.<sup>146</sup>

According to local ethnographers, in workers' housing estates "the national character was vanishing" and traditional culture was perceived as an alternative to total industrialization:

Chained mine carts are moving along the rails to and fro everywhere, electric lighting is shining, factory hoots are heard, there is a lot of racket, shouting and babbling. Culture did its part here in full, only smoke, soot, stench, char, garbage are not at all cultural things. Residents of these neighborhoods have altogether lost their national way of life. For this reason, studying these people from the point of view of ethnography is no longer of any interest.<sup>147</sup>

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142 Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*, 38.

143 Otto Goebel, *Entwicklungsgang der russischen Industriearbeiter bis zur ersten Revolution* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1920), 13.

144 See more in P. Smidovich, *Rabochie massy v 90-kh godakh* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1930). Compare Jeffrey Burds, *Peasant Dreams and Market Politics: Labor Migration and the Russian Village, 1861–1905* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

145 Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*, 89.

146 *Ibid.*, 75.

147 V. A. Babenko, *Ėtnograficheskiĭ ocherk narodnogo byta Ekaterinoslavskogo kraia* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia gubernskogo zemstva, 1905), 82. This quotation is noteworthy because it identifies an ethnographic interest with things "traditional" (that is, things which have sur-

Recalling the end of the nineteenth century, a Social Democrat Sergei Belkin wrote: “workers at that time were not even dreaming about asking political and social questions: their community lived in the darkness of ignorance in the full sense of the word.”<sup>148</sup> His words were echoed by a worker from the Brianskyi plant, Bolshevik Hryhory/Grigory Petrovsky:

the working-class milieu, as everything else, then was still zoological; it was dominated by beastly struggle for survival. Solidarity among workers then was nearly non-existent . . . Begging and even sycophancy were ubiquitous. I also recall how, on annual professional holidays, workers such as Belkin, Tomm, Ignatov, etc., who already had been exposed to the socialist movement, used to come to public prayers, which were followed by a drinking binge. The boss usually gave ten roubles, the foreman, a five, and workers made small contributions too, and all of this money pooled together would be drunk away.<sup>149</sup>

According to engineer Alexander Fenin, most workers in the region had irresponsible attitudes to their lives: “tedium and monotony of an exceptionally dull life,” heavy drinking after paydays, the seasonal workers’ longing for “creative work close to the soil,” loathing of the mechanical character and measured pace of work at an industrial plant.<sup>150</sup>

In 1906, the tramway line from the railway station to the Brianskyi plant was launched. Nevertheless, the idea of “a city’s center,” with its theatres, clubs, and biggest churches was explicitly counterposed to the working-class estates. The majority of working-class settlements were separated from the city’s center by

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vived more or less unchanged) and shows an obvious contempt for rapid industrial changes as something akin to “the loss of culture” and “the loss of a national authenticity.” Compare Volodymyr Kulikov, “Industrialization and Transformation of the Landscape in the Donbas from the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Migration and Landscape Transformation. Changes in East Central Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. Martin Zückert and Heidi Hein-Kircher (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 57–81.

148 Rubach, ed., *Istoriia Ekaterinoslavskoi sotsial-demokraticheskoi organizatsii, 1889–1903*, 29.

149 G. Petrovskii, “S 1898 goda po 1905 god (Vospominaniia),” in *Istoriia Ekaterinoslavskoi sotsial-demokraticheskoi organizatsii, 1889–1903*, 49.

150 A. I. Fenin, *Vospominaniia inzhenera. K istorii obshchestvennogo i khoziaistvennogo razvitiia Rossii (1883–1906 gg.)* (Prague: Russkii institut v Prage, 1938), 46–47, 53, 149–150. Compare the English translation of this book: Aleksandr I. Fenin, *Coal and Politics in Late Imperial Russia: Memoirs of a Russian Mining Engineer*, trans. Alexandr Fediaevsky, ed. Susan P. McCaffray (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990).

the bridge across the Dnipro. Whenever there were signs of a protest brewing amongst workers, the police strived to block the bridge.<sup>151</sup>

Management and engineers at most enterprises were Westerners, often without any knowledge of Russian. Meanwhile, the greatest irritant for the workers was the guard control at the plant. The guards had been recruited among Circassians—an indigenous ethnic group of the North Caucasus. According to memoirs written in London in 1902 by Bolshevik Ivan Babushkin, who worked in Katerynoslav:

The workers especially loathed the Circassians who worked as guards at several plants. Circassians are benighted and boorish people; armed with cutting weapons, and sometimes firearms, and enthusiastically prepared to defend any foreman, any boss, not to mention the director and his deputy; on every occasion they would take their weapons, ever ready to make a lunge at the workers.<sup>152</sup>

The Circassians' ethnic and linguistic otherness was used by the plant owners as an instrument for the purpose of preventing them from finding a common language with the workers. In response to criticism and protests, early in the twentieth century Circassians were replaced with retired soldiers.

## A Revolution for Workers: Russian Social Democrats

Katerynoslav was considered a center of People's Will followers as well as social democratic, anarchist, and Zionist movements. Even Social Democrats acknowledged that local workers had "a special liking" for anarchism, whose ideas gained a foothold in Katerynoslav on a large scale, primarily thanks to the leader of Białystok anarchists Fishel Shteinberg.<sup>153</sup>

By the 1890s, the Social Democrats had replaced People's Will as the most radical revolutionary movement. In December 1897, the League of the Struggle

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151 *Rabochee dvizhenie v Ekaterinoslave* (Geneva: n. p., 1900), 8.

152 I. V. Babushkin, *Vospominaniia. 1893–1900 gg.* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1955), 104.

153 G. I. Petrovskii, "Iz vospominanii. Shtrikhi. 1924 g.," in G. I. Petrovskii, *Izbrannnye proizvedeniia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), 133; Anatolii and Anna Duboviki, *Deiatel'nost' "Gruppy ekaterinoslavskikh rabochikh anarkhistov-kommunistov" (1905–1906 gg.)*, accessed May 17, 2021. <http://socialist.memo.ru/books/html/duboviki.html>; M. Ravich-Cherkasskii, "Moi vospominaniia o 1905 gode," *Letopis' revoliutsii* 5–6 (1925): 319. Compare V. V. Kriven'kii, *Anarkhistkoe dvizhenie v Rossii v pervoi chetverti XX veka. Teoriia, organizatsiia, praktika* (Moscow: Politicheskaiia entsyklopediia, 2018).

for the Emancipation of Labor—fashioned after a similar organization in St. Petersburg—was established in Katerynoslav. At the founding congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1898 in Minsk, the Katerynoslav organization was one of the five regional political formations present.<sup>154</sup>

“Katerynoslav’s first social democrat” was, arguably, V. Teitelbaum, who brought revolutionary books from Geneva into the city. He died in 1900 in Pavlohrad.<sup>155</sup> Persons who played a key role in Katerynoslav’s “revolutionary awakening” were two Social Democrats sent into exile from Moscow to Katerynoslav—Aleksandr Vinokurov and Grigory Mandelshtam. In 1895, Isaak Lalaïants moved to the city and in the spring of 1900 published, together with former People’s Will member Aleksandr Martynov-Piker, the first issue of *Iuzhnyi Rabochii* (*The Worker of the South*) newspaper. Moreover, in 1903 Lalaïants was already running a printing shop of the Bolshevik newspaper *Iskra* (*Spark*) in Geneva. According to the memoir Lalaïants wrote already in the Soviet times:

Ekaterinoslav astonished us with its ebullient, unusually rapid-paced way of living. The city was not a big cultural, intellectual provincial center in the then customary sense of the phrase, like Kiev, for instance; it was seething with a different sort of vital energies—the energies of big factories: tons of gold were flowing here into the capitalists’ hands; dozens of thousands of workers who were creating this gold were “free like birds.” As you become acquainted with the city’s life, Kiev, or Kharkov, or other similar centers lose their appeal for you.<sup>156</sup>

It may seem unbelievable that the imperial officials chose a large industrial center as a place to exile St. Petersburg’s revolutionaries, but that’s how it was. In the wake of the textile workers’ strikes in St. Petersburg in 1896 and 1897, the Bolshevik Ivan Babushkin, already mentioned here, was sent in exile to Katerynoslav, where he found “a wide boundless steppe, beckoning a nonworking person” and a grateful student—Petrovsky.<sup>157</sup> Babushkin was arrested in

154 Katerynoslav was represented at the congress by a lawyer Kazimir Petrusevich (1872–1949) who was expelled to Katerynoslav from Kyiv in 1897. After his return from Minsk Petrusevich was immediately arrested and expelled, this time to the Vologda region in Russia. In 1919 Petrusevich moved to Poland where he lived until his death.

155 Rubach, ed., *Istoriia Ekaterinoslavskoi sotsial-demokraticheskoi organizatsii, 1889–1903*, 6.

156 Isaak Lalaïants, *U istokov bol'shevizma. Zarozhdenie RSDRP*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1934), 33.

157 Babushkin, *Vospominaniia*, 72, 77.

Katerynoslav. Nevertheless, in 1902 he fled from prison and moved to London, and later returned to Russia to participate actively in the revolution of 1905 in Siberia where in 1906 he was arrested and executed.

The Brianskyi plant worker Petrovsky, “who was fully under Babushkin’s influence,” played an important role, if not in the city’s history, then in the history of its name. The future prominent Bolshevik was born in a village near Kharkiv called Pechenihiy, studied at a school run by the Kharkiv seminary, took a job at a locksmith’s workshop at the age of fourteen, and started working at the Brianskyi plant at fifteen. While working as a turner at the Providence plant in Mariupol, in 1912 he was elected in the Fourth State Duma from the workers’ curia of the Katerynoslav Governorate.<sup>158</sup>

### A Revolution for Workers: Jewish Social Democrats

Jews, as has been noted, constituted the majority among craftsmen. According to a Katerynoslav Jewish socialist Vladimir Dalman:

We, Jewish proletarians, were fortuitous guests at the plants: the area where we could act was by virtue of circumstances limited to the city’s streets where workshops, commercial warehouses and stores were located. Do I need to explain how much inferior the conditions, resources and instruments of our struggle were to the conditions of the factory workers’ struggle?<sup>159</sup>

Many of the active members of the revolutionary organizations were people of Jewish origin. The motivation ground on which the Jewish participation in the revolutionary struggle resided was continuous discrimination against them in the Russian Empire, accompanied by good education that many young Jews received. Most of them joined non-Jewish parties. As a historian put it, Jews joined the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party in order to never again be labeled Jews.<sup>160</sup> Leo Trotsky used to say that his nationality is “social democrat” precisely in this sense.<sup>161</sup> However, many (first of all

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158 *Ves' Ekaterinoslav* 1911, 75.

159 V. Dal'man, “Oktiabr'skie dni v Ekaterinoslave: Mysli i vospominaniia,” *Serp* 1 (1907): 211.

160 Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Lenin's Jewish Question* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xiii.

161 Compare Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

monarchists) perceived the revolutionary parties and revolutionary movement as “Jewish”.

The social democratic parties were nationwide and ethnic. In Katerynoslav, Jewish parties enjoyed an especially strong representation among ethnic social democratic organizations. The General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia (generally called simply The Bund, the Yiddish name for “union”)—the single representative of Jewish working class—was formed in September 1897, a couple of months earlier than the formation of the RSDRP.<sup>162</sup> Operating in great secrecy, the Bund was a well-managed party with close ties to RSDRP (in 1903 the Bund left RSDRP, to join it again in 1906 as an autonomous unit). Lenin saw the Bund as nationalist, ghettoizing, and leading to splits in the workers’ movement, and yet the Bund was half-heartedly accepted by the Bolsheviks.<sup>163</sup> In 1905, the Bund adopted a program for establishing national and cultural autonomy. It championed a transfer of all cultural functions from the state to each nation’s “special institutions” elected by popular vote.<sup>164</sup>

1905 saw the establishment in Kyiv of Poale Zion [Workers of Zion], a Jewish social democratic labor party. The first organization of the future party was created in winter 1900–1901, in Katerynoslav.<sup>165</sup> The leader of the Zionist workers was Ber Borochov who joined RSDLP in 1900 in Katerynoslav but who was excluded from it a year later due to a difference of opinion on the Jewish question. Borochov wanted to provide a theoretical ground for the combination of nationalist and social principles. In his opinion, a concentration of Jews on one piece of land, namely, in Palestine, should “normalize” the class struggles of Jewish proletarians, who were subject to double oppression: ethnic and class-based.<sup>166</sup> In his brochure “The National Question and the Class Struggle” (1905),

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162 More on Bund see in Gertrud Pickhan, “Gegen den Strom.” *Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund “Bund” in Polen 1918–1939* (Leipzig: Simon-Dubnow-Institut, 2001) and Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Poles, Jews, and the Politics of Nationality: The Bund and the Polish* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

163 Petrovsky-Shtern, *Lenin’s Jewish Question*, 79–84.

164 Tsentral’nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads’kykh ob’iednan’ Ukraïny [TsDAHOU, Central State Archive of Civil Organizations of Ukraine], fond 41, opys 1, sprava 1, arkush 13.

165 TsDAHOU, fond 41, opys 1, sprava 1, arkush 33.

166 Avraham Yassour, “Philosophy—Religion—Politics: Borochov, Bogdanov, and Lunacharsky,” *Studies in Soviet Thought* 31 (1986): 200–201. See also Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics. Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 329–363.



Borochov called himself “an anarcho-socialist” and declared that his mission was to introduce class struggle into Zionism.<sup>167</sup>

Borochov’s “proletarian Zionism” can be typologically compared with Ukrainian social democratic movements. Interestingly, the idea of a fully independent Ukraine was first brought up by a Marxist—an Austrian citizen called Yulian Bachynsky, a social commentator from Lviv. In “Ukraina Irredenta,” the brochure he published in 1895, Bachynsky argued that Ukraine’s political independence was a suitable objective for the Ukrainian bourgeoisie as well as a necessary prolog to class struggle, “international unity of the human race,” and an international language.<sup>168</sup> Not surprisingly, Borochov maintained contacts with Ukrainian Social Democrats and even delivered speeches at the meetings of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers Party (USDRP).<sup>169</sup>

A little later, in April 1906, a splinter group of Poale Zion movement formed the Jewish Socialist Workers Party (SERP), which de facto became a Jewish section of Russia’s Socialist-Revolutionary Party. SERP advocated the establishment of a Jewish state (in a distant future), viewed as the solution for the Jewish question, while national-political autonomy was its immediate goal.<sup>170</sup>

According to a German-language report published five years after the 1905 anti-Jewish pogrom in Katerynoslav, the city then was home to about 600–700 active members of Poale Zion (although the party itself claimed its local membership totaled 2,000), sixty active Zionist socialists, and forty Jewish Social Democrats (Bund members).<sup>171</sup>

## The Revolution of 1905

By 1905 Russia, to use an evocative phrase of the Jewish socialist from Katerynoslav Vladimir Dalman, “was turning right before our very eyes from a country of whispers into a country of storms.”<sup>172</sup> This transformation was in

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167 See Ber Borochov, *Selected Works* (New York: EatDogEat Publications, 2011).

168 Iulian Bachyns'kyi, *Ukraina irredenta*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Vydavnytstvo ukrains'koï molodi, 1924).

169 Yassour, “Philosophy—Religion—Politics,” 205, 221.

170 TsDAHOU, fond 41, opys 1, sprava 1, arkush 49.

171 M. Fischer, “Jekaterinoslaw,” in *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, ed. A. Linden, vol. 2 (Köln: Jüdischer Verlag, 1910), 177–178.

172 Dal'man, “Oktiabr'skie dni v Ekaterinoslave,” 203.

a large measure catalyzed through the shock caused by the defeat in the Russo-Japanese war. The hostilities began in the winter of 1904, and in May 1905, the Russian fleet was destroyed in the Battle of Tsushima. However, already in the winter of 1905, the economic impact of the war lost began to be felt in Russia. In St. Petersburg, January saw the start of a strike that grew into what came to be known as Bloody Sunday. A workers' procession walked to the Winter Palace carrying their petitions, only to be shot at by the army. The news of this incident reached the empire's remotest provinces where the revolutionary movement took forms of peasant unrest, workers' and students' strikes as well as some attempts of the local intelligentsia to raise the national question by introducing cultural and sometimes political projects aimed at national mobilization of various population groups.<sup>173</sup>

On January 20, 1905, students of Katerynoslav Mining Institute quit their classes and joined the students' strike at St. Petersburg Polytechnic Institute.<sup>174</sup> In the winter of 1905, more than 20,000 workers in Katerynoslav were on strike. At that time the locally stationed troops were "fairly small in numbers"—no more than 1,000.<sup>175</sup>

The urban riot, supported, among other actors, by outlawed political parties (from anarchists to Zionists), was proceeding at a fast pace.<sup>176</sup> On October 11, 1905, all plants in the city suspended their operations, stores as well as pharmacies were closed, and residents staged three massive demonstrations, at the end of which the building of barricades began. In the evening electricity in the city was turned off, to be restored only on October 16. During clashes with the troops and police, fifty-one people were killed and eighty-one injured—

173 See more in Jan Kusber, *Krieg und Revolution in Russland 1904–1906. Das Militär im Verhältnis zu Wirtschaft, Autokratie und Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997); Martin Aust and Ludwig Steindorff, eds., *Russland 1905. Perspektiven auf die erste Russische Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007). See also Soviet publications about 1905 in Ukraine: F. Ie. Los', ed., *Revoliutsiia 1905–1907 rokiv na Ukraïni*, (Kyïv: Vydavnytstvo AN URSSR, 1955); idem, ed., *Revoliutsiia 1905–1907 gg. na Ukraine. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov v 2-kh tt.*, (Kyïv: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury USSR, 1955).

174 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukraïny v Kyievi [TsDIAUK, Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Kyïv], fond 1597, opys 1, sprava 85, arkush 50.

175 DADO, fond 11, opys 1, sprava 462, arkush 35.

176 See more in: B. Ia. Brikker, ed., *Ekaterinoslavshchina v revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg.: Dokumenty i materialy* (Dnipropetrov's'k: Promin', 1975); S. I. Svitlenko, "Katerynoslav u demokratich-nii revoliutsii 1905–1907 rokiv," *Prydniprov'ia: istoriko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 3 (2006): 19–36; *ibid.*, 4 (2007): 26–46; *ibid.*, 6 (2008): 38–51.



FIGURE 12. The burial of the victims of Revolution 1905 events.  
Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

in October, Katerynoslav had more casualties of the conflict than any other city in the empire.<sup>177</sup>

October 13th saw a huge funeral procession honoring the victims. According to eyewitnesses' accounts, "all Ekaterinoslav" took part in the procession, with a sole exception of "big bourgeoisie, army officers, and public servants."<sup>178</sup> No policemen were present on the streets, coffins accompanied by Christian Orthodox priests were followed by coffins of killed Jews and a chorus from a synagogue. A worker in high boots walked behind all the coffins, carrying a large swath of blood-soaked gauze.<sup>179</sup> According to a secret police report, the procession numbered "several thousand persons," and they carried "ten red coffins covered with white gauze drenched in blood."<sup>180</sup> The bodies were buried with honors in common graves in Christian Orthodox and Jewish cemeteries.

177 Gerald Surh, "Ekaterinoslav City in 1905: Workers, Jews, and Violence," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 64 (2003): 148.

178 Dal'man, "Oktiabr'skie dni v Ekaterinoslave," 215.

179 Ibid.

180 DADO, fond 11, opys 1, sprava 465, arkush 36.

On October 17, responding to the revolutionary unrest in many parts of the empire, Nicholas II issued his Manifesto granting the population “the essential foundations of civil freedom, based on the principles of genuine inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association,” including the right to elect deputies in the Duma from those classes of the population that had been previously excluded from the process, and established “as an unbreakable rule that no law shall take effect without confirmation by the State Duma.”<sup>181</sup>

The news of the manifesto reached Katerynoslav on October 18, and two days later, the city experienced an anti-Jewish pogrom that would go down in the city’s history as the worst incident of its kind.

### The Anti-Jewish Pogrom and Its Consequences

The first pogrom in Katerynoslav took place in 1883. This event was important, inter alia, because local members of the underground socialist organization People’s Will supported the thugs, claiming that the outbreak of violence was useful for the development of revolutionary processes, especially since its victims supposedly were “not Jews but kikes who exploited people.”<sup>182</sup>

On July 20, 1905, twenty years after the 1883 pogrom, Katerynoslav had a one-day outbreak of anti-Jewish violence, organized by “benighted individuals from the urban working masses.”<sup>183</sup> The prospect of further escalation was stopped thanks to the quick and resolute response of the acting governor Lopukhin.<sup>184</sup> This case illustrates the importance of immediate decisions of power holders to maintain the state monopoly on violence. The authorities’ reaction to a much more violent pogrom in October was different.

In the politically turbulent situation, the anti-Jewish pogrom as such was not something that came completely out of the blue. Rather, the opposite was the case: local Jewish parties were getting ready to respond to a possible outbreak of violence. One of the instruments of response was self-defense units—mobile groups equipped with firearms and coordinated by telephone. According to Ber Borochoy, the very first self-defense unit was organized in Katerynoslav

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181 *Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburskogo gradonachal'stva*, (October 18, 1905): 1.

182 Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 113.

183 Surh, “Ekaterinoslav City in 1905,” 145.

184 Fischer, “Jekaterinoslaw,” 180.

in 1901.<sup>185</sup> In 1905, forty-two cities in the Russian empire had such units.<sup>186</sup> The Katerynoslav self-defense unit numbered 600 persons (and 250 revolvers). They were divided into fifteen large groups, ten of which consisting exclusively of Po'alei Zion members.<sup>187</sup>

The pogrom began on October 21, during the anniversary of Nicholas II's inauguration, with a "patriotic" manifestation in support of monarchy, which took place in the center of the city immediately after a Christian Orthodox church service. According to some accounts, the thugs were provoked by a shot fired at the marchers by someone from the Jewish self-defense units.<sup>188</sup> One of the members of the units recalled that the chain of events was set in motion when a Jewish self-defense patrol killed a bully who attacked an old Jew.<sup>189</sup> In any case, the first attempts to vandalize stores run by Jews were not met with any response from the authorities, which gave the attackers a sense of impunity and immediately scaled up the ferocity of the pogrom. The chief of the Katerynoslav state security agency, in his classified report to the police, wrote that, in the course of events on October 21, "the police was nowhere to be seen" and "the city was in a state of total anarchy."<sup>190</sup>

The city's Jews had only one force to protect them—their self-defense units, whose functioning became much more difficult on the second day of the pogrom, when the telephone line was knocked out of service. And yet, the availability of revolvers gave the units a serious advantage over the much larger crowd of thugs. In the clashes between the thugs and the self-defense units, at least twenty-five thugs were killed and forty-eight seriously wounded.<sup>191</sup> The majority of Jews attacked were killed by cutting weapons. Five self-defense fighters were killed, including two Christians.<sup>192</sup> The sources give different overall numbers of killings during the Katerynoslav pogrom. An eye-witness and an active member of the self-defense force writes about 126 killed Jews and forty-seven killed

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185 Ber Borochoy, "Reminiscences," in Borochoy, *Selected Works*, 56.

186 Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "Self-Defense," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 18, 262.

187 Fischer, "Jekaterinoslaw," 189–190.

188 Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*, 215.

189 Dal'man, "Oktiabr'skie dni v Ekaterinoslave," 224–225.

190 DADO, fond 11, opys 1, sprava 465, arkush 36.

191 Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*, 216–217.

192 Fischer, "Jekaterinoslaw," 191.

Christians,<sup>193</sup> while a German publication about the pogroms, printed in 1910, mentions sixty-seven killed Jews and more than thirty Christians.<sup>194</sup> A report of the police chief to the governor, dated October 25, 1905, states:

During the recent riots in Ekaterinoslav 122 small stores, 64 shops, 135 trunks, 40 flats were pillaged, and 5 homes burnt. Jews killed with bladed weapons: 34 males, 9 females, 1 girl; [Jews] killed with firearms: 20 males. Russians k[illed]: 6 males, 1 female, with firearms. Turks [killed]: 1 male, with firearms. Persons wounded with bladed weapons and firearms: 48 Jews, 46 Russians.<sup>195</sup>

Historians debated the question of workers' participation in the pogrom. Some researchers believed that Jews were scapegoated by workers disappointed in the revolutionary movement.<sup>196</sup> According to other historians, the argument about the thugs being mostly workers is dubious. One of the main arguments contains the assertion that viewing "workers" as a homogenous group would be a great simplification.<sup>197</sup> Some workers took part in the pogrom while others were trying to defend Jews against the thugs. Most victims of the pogrom were Jews, although the persons beaten up also included students, and, in Kamianske, Poles.

Only on the third day could the army stop the pogrom and block the workers' housing estates. It appears very likely that the authorities deliberately chose to respond to the events with delay.<sup>198</sup>

How to interpret the outburst of urban violence? Was the pogrom a manifestation of immanent antisemitism or an evidence of inadequacy of the political regime that tolerated or even encouraged the movements resulting in the pogroms and hoped that they would dampen the heat of anti-government demonstrations?<sup>199</sup> Thinking about rank-and-file thugs, one can suppose that

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193 Dal'man, "Oktiabr'skie dni v Ekaterinoslave," 241.

194 Fischer, "Jekaterinoslaw," 185.

195 Quoted in Bystriakov, *Ocherki istorii sionistskogo dvizheniia*, 50–51.

196 Wynn, *Workers, Strikes, and Pogroms*, 226.

197 Surh, "Ekaterinoslav City in 1905," 152, 160–161.

198 Compare Gerald Suhr, "The Jews of Ekaterinoslav in 1905 as Seen from Town Hall: Ethnic Relations on an Imperial Frontier," *Ab Imperio* 4 (2003): 217–238.

199 Il'ia Gerasimov, "My ubivaem tol'ko svoikh': prestupnost' kak marker mezhnatsionnykh granits v Odesse nachala XX veka (1907–1917 gg.)," *Ab Imperio* 1 (2003): 251. See also Ilya Gerasimov, *Plebeian Modernity. Social Practices, Illegality, and the Urban Poor in Russia, 1906–1916* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018).

they used to vent their long-standing frustration through violence towards the most discriminated group of population.<sup>200</sup> The logic of the thugs' actions, meanwhile, was to a large degree conditioned by the (in)action of the authorities, from local police to the emperor Nicholas II who claimed that "the kikes themselves were to blame."<sup>201</sup> The outbursts of violence, which the authorities, if not always provoked, often deliberately neglected to stop, targeted the most easily marked "Other."<sup>202</sup>

Overall, from October 1905 to January 1906 657 anti-Jewish pogroms were recorded across the entire Russian Empire, forty-one of them in the Katerynoslav Governorate.<sup>203</sup> Of equal interest are cases, when, as in 1905, pogroms were prevented. This is what happened in "Polish Manchester," Łódź, where 25% of the population was Jewish.<sup>204</sup> The Revolution of 1905 in industrial Łódź played out as a small-scale civil war (*walki bratobójcze*) between socialists and nationalists.<sup>205</sup> In the summer of 1905, with persistent rumors about the forthcoming pogrom of Jews and intellectuals, at least 20,000 Jews left the city. Polish socialists campaigned against the possible pogrom, but the factor that turned the tide was a resolute stance against pogroms adopted by a local garrison.<sup>206</sup>

The 1905 pogrom in Katerynoslav left a deep trauma on the city's Jewish population. The local Jewish community was only revitalized in 1907, when Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson moved to Katerynoslav from Mykolaiv. By

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200 Ibid. Compare Jonathan Dekel-Chen et al., eds., *Anti-Jewish Violence. The Pogrom in East European History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

201 Il'ia Halant, "Zhytomyrs'kyi pohrom 1905 roku," *Ukraina* 4 (1925): 90–91. Compare Viktoriya Khiterer, "The October 1905 Pogrom in Kiev," *East European Jewish Affairs* 22, no. 2 (1992): 21–37.

202 The Odesa case in this context is analyzed in Ilya Gerasimov, "How to Sow the Wind: The Escalation of Violence Through Crude Mass Politics in 1905 in Odessa, and elsewhere" (manuscript). Quoted with the permission of the Author. Compare Robert Weineberg, *Blood on the Steps: The Revolution of 1905 in Odessa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) and Evrydiki Sifneos, *Imperial Odessa. Peoples, Spaces, Identities* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

203 See more in Stefani Hoffman and Ezra Mendelsohn, eds., *The Revolution of 1905 and Russia's Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

204 On Jewish Łódź see Wiesław Puś, *Żydzi w Łodzi w latach zaborów, 1793–1914* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2003); Paweł Spodenkiewicz, *The Missing District. People and Places of Jewish Łódź* (Łódź: Hobo, 2007).

205 Marta Sikorska-Kowalska, ed., "Wolność czy zbrodnia?" *Rewolucja 1905–1907 roku w Łodzi na łamach gazety "Rozwój"* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2012), 109, 125.

206 Ibid., 308–310.



1914, the city had three Talmud Torah schools with 500 students overall. 885 people studied at cheders and yeshivas. The city also had a Jewish hospital and a Jewish nursing home for the elderly. The community provided financial assistance for 500 families.<sup>207</sup>

Despite the magnitude of urban violence in 1905–1906, the monarchy was not about to drop the habit of pandering to antisemitic sentiments. In 1911, in Kyiv, a thirty-seven-year-old Menahem Mendel Beilis, superintendent at a brick factory, stood trial because of an accusation in the ritual murder of a twelve-year-old Christian student at the Kyiv Sophia Divinity School. The Beilis affair resonated across Russia. On October 28, 1913 the jury, composing mostly of local peasants, acquitted Beilis.

One of Beilis's lawyers was a native of Katerynoslav, Oscar Gruzenberg. He was a talented lawyer who refused to convert to Christianity in order to get a university job and became a prominent defense attorney.<sup>208</sup> At the Beilis hearing, Gruzenberg began his speech thus: "It is up to you to decide whether you believe me or not, but if, at least for a minute, I would not only know but also think that Judaism allows and encourages the use of human blood, I would not have stayed in this religion."<sup>209</sup> In his memoirs published in 1938 in Paris, Gruzenberg wrote that with the Beilis affair "the tsarist regime committed a moral suicide."<sup>210</sup>

## The Results of the Revolution and Political Movements After 1905

The revolutionary struggle in Katerynoslav continued until the end of 1905. On December 16, the martial law was introduced in the city. The army regained

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207 Yehuda Slutsky and Shmuel Spector, "Dnepropetrovsk," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 5, 724.

208 More on *advokatura* in the Russian Empire and the place of Jewish lawyers see William Pomeranz, "'Profession or Estate'? The Case of the Russian Pre-Revolutionary *Advokatura*," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 77, no. 2 (1999): 240–268; William Pomeranz, "The Practice of Law and the Promise of Rule of Law. The *Advokatura* and the Civil Process in Tsarist Russia," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 2 (2015): 235–262.

209 More about the Beilis trial in Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, 40–55, and Mendel Beilis, *The Story of My Sufferings* (New York: Mendel Beilis Pub. Co., 1926).

210 O. O. Gruzenberg, *Yesterday: Memoirs of a Russian-Jewish Lawyer* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 104, 105.

control over Amur and Nyzhniodniprovsk, the workers' housing estates on the left bank, only on December 22nd. The urban riot in 1905 demonstrated not only the absence of a homogenous working class, but also a high degree of young people's involvement in the large-scale unrest. In particular, Dalman wrote about "big crowds of children and teenagers nervously repeating the familiar revolutionary slogans."<sup>211</sup> Equally important was the apathy of a majority of the city's residents, which was mentioned in the police reports. A German-language account of the anti-Jewish pogrom echoed this observation: "The majority of Russians living in Ekaterinoslav was indifferent to politics of any kind. The majority put private life before all."<sup>212</sup>

As a result of the 1905 revolution, Russia experienced a boom of legal political activities. The period saw the emergence of the political parties of the modern type. The largest among them were the Cadets (the Constitutional Democratic Party, otherwise known as the Party of People's Freedom), the Octobrists (officially, the Union of October 17, named after the day when Nicholas signed the manifesto providing basic civil rights and establishing a parliament), Trudoviks (Toilers, named so after their principal newspaper), and so forth.

The Cadets championed constitutional monarchy; equality of citizens before the law, irrespective of gender, religion, or ethnicity; freedom of cultural self-identification of ethnic groups; universal suffrage; universal free of charge and compulsory elementary education.<sup>213</sup> This was the biggest faction (179 deputies out of 478) in the First Duma, which held together for two and a half months. The Katerynoslav chapter of the Cadets was headed by a legal scholar Pavel Novgorodtsev, who later was appointed the rector of the Moscow Institute of Commerce and the dean of the Russian Law Faculty of Charles University in Prague.

On the right flank of Russian liberalism, the Octobrists, too, favored the idea of constitutional monarchy and championed granting the peasantry equal rights with the other estates, although they were against federalism and cultural autonomy (making a sole exception for Finland).<sup>214</sup> The Octobrist faction was the largest in the Third Duma, and the Fourth Duma was chaired by Mikhail

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211 Dal'man, "Oktiabr'skie dni v Ekaterinoslave," 203.

212 Fischer, "Jekaterinoslav," 175.

213 On Cadets see Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia, 1880–1918* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

214 A. Steblev and I. Sakharov, eds., *Programy glavneishikh partii* (Moscow: Biblioteka svobodnogo naroda, 1917), 49.

Rodzianko, an Octobrist from Katerynoslav and a leader of the *zemstvo*, who considered himself “a Little Russian” (*maloross*).<sup>215</sup>

1905 also saw the shaping-up of the radical right movements known as the Black Hundred [Chernaia Sotnia]. Their party—Union of the Russian People—was in good graces with Nicholas II and the Christian Orthodox clergy. In August 1906, the party adopted a charter stating that the Union’s goal was “development of Russian national consciousness and creation of a lasting union of Russian people of all estates and any financial standing.”<sup>216</sup> The Black Hundred’s policy papers emphasized that the Union “does not distinguish between Great Russians, White Russians, and Little Russians” and condemned “the modern bureaucratic order, which has been hiding the Russian tsar’s pure soul from the people.”<sup>217</sup> About half of the Union’s members lived in Ukrainian governorates and, most interestingly, even referred to the necessity to restore Cossack regiments, and used Taras Shevchenko’s poems during public events they organized.<sup>218</sup>

Antisemitism was central to Black Hundred’s ideology, which stated that the solution to the “Jewish question” would be “the formation of a Jewish state” where all Jews should be relocated. Russia, meanwhile, would have to “instantly” grant its Jews a foreigner’s status and begin a campaign of ruthless discrimination against them, including a ban on teaching and editing periodicals, as well as restoring the Pale of Settlement.<sup>219</sup>

The Union of the Russian People established so-called self-defense units, which were responsible, among other things, for political assassinations (in particular, the murders of cadet deputies of the Jewish origin to the Duma Mikhail

215 See also his memoirs: M. V. Rodzianko, *Krushenie imperii i Gosudarstvennaia Duma i fevral'skaia 1917 goda revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Ikar, 2002).

216 More on the Union of the Russian People, also in the context of its descriptions as “a Russian version of national socialism” and “Europe’s first fascist organisation” see Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics*, 212–232. Historians pay attention to the anti-liberal stance of the URP as well as its eagerness to employ physical violence and methods of mass politics.

217 Compare Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus'. Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); and Johannes Remy, *Brothers or Enemies: The Ukrainian National Movement and Russia from the 1840s to the 1870s* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016).

218 See more in Klymentii K. Fedevych and Klymentii I. Fedevych, *Za viru, tsaria i kobzaria. Malorosiis'ki monarkhisty i ukraïns'kyi natsional'nyi rukh (1905–1917 roky)* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2017).

219 “Programma Soiuzu russkogo naroda,” *Pochaevskii listok*, no. 38 (September 1906).

Herzenstein and Grigory Iollos). The Union actively employed social populism, which attracted many workers. The Bolshevik Petrovsky in his memoirs mentioned “the fact that [workers] subscribed to a huge number of the Black Hundred’s newspapers, which they were allowed to receive through their plant’s office.”<sup>220</sup> The Katerynoslav chapter of Black Hundred was headed by Vasily Obraztsov, a priest’s son who taught at Katerynoslav seminary and divinity college.

The Trudoviks’ party came into its own in 1906, as a party of peasants’ deputies to the Duma. One of the most well-known Trudoviks was Alexander Karavaev, a peasant’s son and a doctor in a *zemstvo*, who lived in Katerynoslav since 1899 and was elected to the Duma from the peasant curia in 1907. As the deputy, Karavaev distinguished himself with his speeches on the land question as well as thanks to his stance against the pogroms and discrimination against Jews. As early as in 1900, in Katerynoslav, he came up with the idea of setting up a People’s House [Narodnyi Dom] (in a ruthless twist of historical irony, ten years later this idea was realized by his staunch political enemies from the Black Hundred).<sup>221</sup> Karavaev received numerous threats “as an advocate of granting land to peasants and of equal rights to Jews.” On March 4, 1908, he was fatally wounded in Katerynoslav. The killer approached him pretending to be asking for help for his sick brother. Before drawing his last breath Karavaev said: “This is Black Hundred, for my lectures in Amur.”<sup>222</sup>

The murder of Karavaev, as well as the active agitation among the workers, showed that the Black Hundred members were eager to use mass propaganda and physical violence in order to compete with different leftist revolutionary groups in their own field. As a result, in Katerynoslav, like anywhere else in the empire, individual acts of political terror were committed by different political organizations. The anarchists, mentioned above, killed the director of an engineering plant with a bomb in October 1905. The next year, they detonated an

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220 Petrovskii, “S 1898 goda po 1905 god,” 50. Compare the acknowledgment of the influence of the Black Hundred in Ekaterinoslav workers’ circles in M. Khanin, *Repressii na Ukraïni za tsaratu. Katerynoslavshchyna* (Kharkiv: Shliakhy revolutsiï, 1929), 46–51.

221 On Karavaev see Aleksandr L’vovich Karavaev. *Materialy po biografii pokoïnogo*, vol. 1 (Katerynoslav: Iuzhnaia zaria, 1908); *Drug naroda. Aleksandr L’vovich Karavaev* (St. Petersburg: n. p., 1910); Varfolomeï Savchuk, *Gore ot dobra, ili zhizn’ i smert’ doktora Karavaeva*, accessed May 17, 2020, [http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article\\_ru.php?article=1334](http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article_ru.php?article=1334). See also a brochure about the opening of People’s House published by the Black Hundred: Vasilii Obraztsov, *Torzhество russkago ob’edineniia. Osviashchenie “Narodnogo doma” Ekaterinoslavskogo otdela Soiuzza russkago naroda 5-ogo oktiabria 1910 g.* (Kharkiv: n.p., 1912).

222 *Drug naroda. Aleksandr L’vovich Karavaev*, 84.

explosive near soldiers' barracks at the Amur district and threw a bomb into a first-class train.<sup>223</sup> The Socialist-Revolutionary Party's militia shot from revolvers the newly appointed governor Zheltonovsky near the railway station in April 1906,<sup>224</sup> and in May 1906 assassinated the chief of a local penal facility near a circus.

The partial legalization of political competition only reduced, but not eliminated political tensions. None of the four Dumas lasted a full term. The electoral laws were changed at every turn as the monarchy hoped to obtain a convenient parliament that would not demand a constitution. Universal suffrage never materialized in imperial Russia. Deputies were elected by four curias: landowners, urban dwellers, peasants, and workers. At the election to the Second Duma, for instance, the vote of one landowner was equal to the votes of 260 peasants and 543 workers.<sup>225</sup>

FIGURE 13.  
Bryanska  
Church  
nowadays.  
Photo by  
Andrii  
Portnov.



Despite all the above mentioned, the vast empire was getting used to the novel realities of public policy and the Duma became a place where diverse

223 O. P. Tkachenko-Plakhii, "Proiavy ta osoblyvosti revoliutsiinoho teroru na Katerynoslavshchyni v 1905–1907 rr.," *Prydniprov'ia: istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 11 (2012–2013): 159–160.

224 More on criminal case of the Zheltonovskii murder see in Sergeĭ Anisimov, *Kak éto bylo. Zapiski politicheskogo zashchitnika o sudakh Stolypina* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Vsesoiuznogo obshchestva politkatorzhan i ssyl'noposelentsev, 1931).

225 Aleksandr Mindlin, *Gosudarstvennaia Duma Rossiiskoi imperii i evreiskii vopros* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2015), 185.

issues were discussed. In particular, it was at the Duma that a Bolshevik from Katerynoslav Petrovsky, as a “representative of the proletariat of one of the largest oppressed ethnic groups,” spoke in favor of “a sustained and unfettered development of ethnic groups on the basis of full national self-identification” and asked for authorization to set up schools where classes would be taught in the Ukrainian language.<sup>226</sup> Soon after, all five Bolshevik deputies to the Duma (including Petrovsky) were arrested for their anti-war activities and in 1915 sent to Siberia “for life.”<sup>227</sup> As it turned out later, their “lifetime exile” was to last for less than two years.

### The Ukrainian Movement Before and After 1905

The Ukrainian project, like other national projects of “stateless” ethnic groups in the nineteenth century, rested on recognition of local cultural originality. Closer to the end of the century, it cautiously formulated the principle of cultural autonomy and was rather wary of the thesis of absolute political independence (of a nation state).<sup>228</sup> The Ukrainian project was pivoted with an ethnographic logic by focusing on the recognition of the unity (*sobornist*) of the territories with prevalence of Ukrainian (officially called “Little Russian” or “Ruthenian”) peasant

226 M. L. Lur'e, ed., *Bol'shevistskaia fraktsiia IV Gosudarstvennoi dумы. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1938), 350–356; “Dvi promovy H. I. Petrovs'koho v IV Derzhavniĭ Dumi,” *Litopys revoliutsii* 1 (1928): XXXVIII–XLVIII. In his private correspondence in 1950 Petrovskii recalled that it was Lenin who encouraged him to pay attention to the Ukrainian question, and “proposed to get acquainted with Ukrainian activists, to know Ukrainian language properly”: TsDAHOU, fond 237, opys 1, sprava 107, arkush 1. Lenin himself prepared several addresses on Ukrainian national issue to be delivered in the Duma by Petrovsky. For details see John S. Reshetar, “Lenin on the Ukraine,” *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* IX, no. 1–2 (1961): 6–7.

227 A. E. Badaev, *Bol'sheviki v Gosudarstvennoi Dume. Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1930). See also S. I. Gopner, “Bol'sheviki Ekaterinoslava 1905 g. Iz vospominanii,” *Voprosy istorii* 3 (1955): 24–31; H. I. Petrovs'kyĭ, “Katerynoslav u pershii rosiĭs'kii revoliutsii (spohady),” *Komunist Ukraïny* 12 (1955): 32–38.

228 For details see Serhy Yekelchuk, *Ukraïnofily: Svit ukraïns'kykh patriotiv druhoi polovyny XIX st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2010); Aleksei Miller, “Ukrainskii vopros” v politike vlastei i russkom obshchestvennom mnenii (vtoraia polovina XIX v.) (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2000); Serhy Bilenky, *Romantic Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian Political Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Michael Moser, *Ukraïns'kyĭ P'iemont? Deshcho pro znachennia Halychyny dlia formuvannia, rozbudovy i zberezhennia ukraïns'koï movy* (L'viv: Smoloskyp, 2011).



population, although these territories belonged to different empires: Russian and Austro-Hungarian.

As for the empires, they were sometimes supportive of the Ukrainian movement as an instrument of their anti-Polish policies but at other times were afraid of it as “the Poles’ conspiracy.”<sup>229</sup> In particular, two decrees issued in the Russian Empire became symbols of its “oppressive anti-Ukrainian policies” and signaled the recognition of the political potential of the Ukrainian movement. On July 18, 1863 Pyotr Valuev, the minister of the interior, issued an order to stop the printing of religious and educational literature in “Little Russian vernacular” (the so-called Valuev Circular). In addition, on May 18, 1876, in the German town Bad-Ems, Emperor Alexander II signed the so-called Ems decree, which forbade the import of Ukrainian-language books (this applied first of all to publications produced in Austria) as well as the translation of fiction, the staging of Ukrainian plays (the ban on performances was lifted in 1881), and the use of the special Ukrainian characters (that is, the use of characters that the Russian script did not have).<sup>230</sup>

The empire appeared to be giving an unequivocal warning about “separatist plans” disguised as spread of knowledge and interest in local history. Nevertheless, even after these two prohibitions, the antiquarians’ curiosity about the past (in particular, the past of Cossacks in the southern steppes) did not always have political overtones. Until 1917, it was possible to balance Ukrainophilia and loyalty to the empire, although after the start of the twentieth century this combination of loyalties was becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain.<sup>231</sup> The behavior of Hryhory Zaliubovsky was arguably an example of such stance

229 See more in Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992); David Saunders, “Russia’s Nationality Policy: The Case of Ukraine (1847–1914),” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 29, no. 1–2 (2004): 399–419.

230 Davis Saunders, “Russia and Ukraine under Alexander II: the Valuev Edict of 1863,” *The International History Review* 17, no. 1 (1995): 23–50; Ricarda Vulpius, *Nationalisierung der Religion. Russifizierungspolitik und ukrainische Nationsbildung 1860–1920* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2005); Johannes Remy, “The Valuev Circular and Censorship of Ukrainian Publications in the Russian Empire (1863–1876): Intention and Practice,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 49, no. 1–2 (2007): 87–110.

231 Ostop Sereda, “Shaping Ukrainian and All-Russian Discourses: Public Encounters of the Ukrainian Activists from the Russian Empire and Austrian Galicia (1860–70-s),” in *Russian and Eastern Europe: Applied “Imperiology,”* ed. Andrzej Nowak (Cracow: Arcana, 2006): 381–399; Olga Andriewsky, “The Russian-Ukrainian Discourse and the Failure of the ‘Little Russian Solution,’” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*, ed. Andreas Kappeler et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2003), 182–214.



balancing imperial and Ukrainian loyalties. He is generally considered to be Katerynoslav's first amateur ethnographer. Zaliubovsky, the chairman of the Katerynoslav court, devoted nearly all his free time to collecting proverbs and sayings and studying the everyday life of Ukrainian peasants.<sup>232</sup>

Local specifics could mean just local colors of "Russia's general history," but it could also be an instrument of disseminating views which, from the empire's standpoint, were tantamount to separatism. The case of Ukraine in this context was especially important and delicate because the definition of "Russianness" itself was subject to different interpretations in the course of the nineteenth century. The key problem can be stated as follows: are Great Russians, Little Russians and White Russians (Belarusians) parts of a "triune Russian nation" or are they separate nations? Where is the demarcation line between a dialect and a language, between "triunity" and distinctness?<sup>233</sup>

For leaders of the Ukrainian movement this question was equally important. The positive answer to the issue concerning "nations" did not automatically mean advocacy of political independence. The most vital problems of the Ukrainian movement included drawing demarcation lines between Ukrainian language and culture, on the one hand, and Polish and "Great Russian" cultures and languages, on the other; the "national awakening" among peasants; and the challenge of "un-Ukrainian" cities.<sup>234</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century,

232 More on Zaliubovskiy see in Z. P. Marina, "Hryhorii Antonovych Zaliubovskiy: Hromads'kyi diiach ta naukovec' Katerynoslavshchyny (1836–1898)," in H. A. Zaliubovskiy, *Tvory z istorii ta etnografii Malorosii* (Kyiv: Oleh Filiuk, 2015), 9–58. See also V. Danilov, "Pamiaty G. A. Zaliubovskogo," *Letopis' Ekaterinoslavskoi uchenoï arkhivnoi komissii* 5 (1909): 108–111; Volodymyr Bilyi, "Mynule etnografii na kol. Katerynoslavshchyny ta ii suchasni zavdannia," *Zbirnyk Dnipropetrovs'koho kraievoho istorychno-archeolohichnoho muzeiu* 1 (1929): 235–260; S. I. Svitlenko, *Suspil'nyi rukh na Katerynoslavshchyni u 50–80-kh rokakh XIX st.* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Vydavnytstvo Dnipropetrovs'koho universytetu, 2006).

233 More on the correlation between the choice of national name and political and ethnogeographical concepts in the Russian Empire see E. Iu. Borisënok, ed., *Imia naroda. Ukraina i eï naselenie v ofitsial'nykh i nauchnykh terminakh, publitsistike i literature* (Moscow: Nestor-Istoriia, 2016); M. V. Leskinen, *Velikoross/velikorus. Iz istorii konstruirovaniia etnichnosti. Vek XIX* (Moscow: Indrik, 2016). Compare Andreas Kappeler, "Mazepintsy, Malorossy, Khohly: Ukrainians in the Ethnic Hierarchy of the Russian Empire," in Kappeler, *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945)*, 162–181.

234 Different examples of intellectual debates on this issue are analyzed in Tetiana Portnova, *Liubyty i navchaty. Selianstvo v uivlenniakh ukrains'koi intelihentsii druhoi polovyny XIX st.* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Lira, 2016).

Ukrainians (or, rather, people who claimed the “Little Russian” language as their mother tongue) in the Russian Empire accounted for nearly 16% of urban residents<sup>235</sup> (slightly more than 22% in Kyiv, nearly 26% in Kharkiv, and 5,66% in Odesa). According to a historian, “urbanization occurred in Ukraine, but without substantial participation by Ukrainians.”<sup>236</sup> Another researcher came up with an even bolder formulation of the problem, arguing that cities became “the laboratory for the Russification of the Ukrainian people.”<sup>237</sup>

In other words, the Ukrainian project turned out to be lacking many of the social factors that strengthened other national movements, especially in the case of “nation states.” Whereas in France peasants “were becoming French” as urban customs and institutions (from schools and newspapers to railroads and industrial plants) were gaining hold in rural areas,<sup>238</sup> in the case of Ukraine modernization often strengthened the rural areas’ estrangement from the cities by reinforcing “the peasant dominant” of the Ukrainian project.

Analyzing the Ukrainian movement in the Russian Empire, it is important to remember that the empire’s policies were not monolithic and consistent. The case of Katerynoslav, too, had its own specifics in this context.

A brochure published in 1887 on Katerynoslav’s anniversary included a poem in Ukrainian written in the Russian alphabet, which proudly claimed that “*I skoro tam, de Polovytsia, / Velyka slava zahula . . .*” [And soon, out of the place where Polovytsia stands, / The great glory raised].<sup>239</sup>

Dmytro Doroshenko, who came to Katerynoslav in 1909 to teach history at the College of Commerce, wrote in his memoir that on the whole the “political atmosphere” in the city “was not hostile to Ukrainess, unlike in Kyiv” and even the “local Black Hundred’s press did not touch Ukrainians,” while Doroshenko’s neighbor—a secretary of the Union of the Russian People and a teacher at

235 Steven L. Guthrie, “Ukrainian Cities during the Revolution and the Interwar Era,” in *Rethinking Ukrainian History*, ed. Ivan L. Rudnytsky (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1981), 157.

236 Patricia Herlihy, “Ukrainian Cities in the Nineteenth Century,” in Rudnytsky, *Rethinking Ukrainian History*, 135.

237 Bohdan Kravchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 5.

238 Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

239 M. Krivotorov, “Davno i teper,” *ELuL*, no. 12, May 3, 1887, 103.

a seminary—often invited his wife to give a reading of Ukrainian poetry at the Union’s concerts!<sup>240</sup>

Organizers of anniversary celebrations of the Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko usually rented the best facilities in Katerynoslav, at the English Club or the Traders Assembly. In 1914, when celebrations of Shevchenko’s anniversary were prohibited in many cities of the Russian Empire, Katerynoslav, thanks to its governor’s special authorization, hosted a large-scale celebration accompanied by a fair of local producers, choral concerts, and theatrical performances. The Ukrainian activist Petro Yefremov pointed out an important feature of the Shevchenko anniversary celebration in Katerynoslav. It was a festival not only for “committed Ukrainians,” but also for “Little Russians,” who “openly demonstrated that they were not guests here and that Shevchenko was their ‘own poet,’ their ‘national poet,’ that they ‘needed him indeed.’”<sup>241</sup>

One of the most beautiful houses on the Katerynynskyi Avenue—the four-story commercial apartment building, erected by a millionaire engineer Volodymyr/Vladimir Khriennikov and finished in the autumn of 1913—was designed in “Ukrainian style.”<sup>242</sup> Two most prominent figures in the Ukrainian movement of Katerynoslav, Syniavsky and Adrian Kashchenko, were generals according to the Table of Ranks. All this does not mean that local Ukrainian movement always found a common language with the empire’s administration. However, being an apparent minority in the city and purposefully cultivating a friendly relationship with the authorities, it developed in a far more favorable environment than its cousins in the already mentioned Kyiv or Kharkiv.

## Academic and Cultural Institutions and Ukrainophilia

The myth of the Cossacks occupies a special place in the Ukrainian cultural canon and in Shevchenko’s poetry in particular. Geographically, the territory of the Katerynoslav governorate is precisely where Zaporozhian Cossacks used to live. Therefore, in Katerynoslav studying local history and folklore meant studying

240 Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moï spomyny pro davnie mynule (1901–1914 roky)* (Winnipeg: Tryzub, 1949), 143.

241 V. Iunosh [P. Efremov], “Syla stykhii (Z vrazhen’ podorozhn’oho),” in Chaban, *U staromu Katerynoslavi*, 105.

242 Valentin Starostin, *Dom Khrennikova na Prospekte*, accessed May 17, 2020, [http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article\\_ru.php?article=1249](http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article_ru.php?article=1249); Valentyn Starostin, *Dnipro: symbol mista. Budy-nok Khrinnykova* (Dnipropetrovsk: Herda, 2017).

the history of the Cossacks. This research area could be incorporated into the imperial narrative (as we could see in the case of the celebration of the city's centennial anniversary in 1887), but it was also capable of challenging this narrative.

The devotees of local history often wished to immerse themselves into the lost "golden age," to become melted into it. That was the case of Ivan Manzhura,<sup>243</sup> a Katerynoslav poet, ethnographer, traveling scholar, and the author of historical fairy tales in Ukrainian. As his biographer aptly wrote: "If we were living now in the times of Zaporozhian Cossacks, he would have joined them and become a jolly good Cossack skilled in fighting and drinking."<sup>244</sup>

Adrian Kashchenko, who was not a traveling mercenary but a state counselor holding the office of chief inspector at the Katerynoslav railroad, wrote his historical texts only in Ukrainian.<sup>245</sup> Kashchenko penned the first Ukrainian-language book published in Katerynoslav—it came out in 1883. Notwithstanding, professional historians did not easily accept the fact that his essays targeted a wide audience and criticized his work by citing "a big number of historically inaccurate points" and "lack of familiarity with sources."<sup>246</sup>

Typologically similar is the life story of Yakiv Novytsky, teacher, ethnographer, and student of folklore, who traveled from one village to another while writing down legends and collecting historical artifacts. A staunch supporter of People's Will's ideas, Novytsky married a former serf and spent every summer in Khortytsia, the legendary site of the first Zaporozhian Sich.<sup>247</sup>

243 On Manzhura see M. Mochul'skiĭ, "Ivan Manzhura, ukrains'kyi poet i etnograf. V 75-ti rokovyni ioho narodyn (Krytychno-biografichnyi narys)," *Ukraina* 5 (1926): 23–59; I. Aizenshtok, "Poetychna tvorchist' Iv. Manzhury," in Ivan Manzhura, *Poezii* (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukraïny, 1930), VII–XXXVI; I. P. Berezovs'kyi, *Ivan Manzhura: Narys zhyttia i diial'nosti* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo AN USRR, 1962); M. D. Bernshtein, *Ivan Manzhura: Zhyttia i tvorchist'* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1977).

244 N. Bykov, "Iv. Manzhura, ukrainskii etnograf i poet," *Letopis' Ekaterinoslavskoï uchënoï arkhivnoï komissii* 6 (1910): 20.

245 On Kashchenko see H. R. Koryts'ka, *Tvorchist' A. Kashchenka: problematyka i poetyka* (PhD diss., Dnipropetrovs'kyi natsionalnyi universytet, 2006); Vasyl' Bidnov, "Spomyny pro Adriiana Kashchenka," *Literaturno-naukovyï vistyky* 24, no. 1 (1923): 229–237.

246 M. Hrushevs'kyi, "Rets. na: Kashchenko A., Opovidannia pro slavno viis'ko Zaporozhs'ke Nyzove; Velykyi Luh Zaporozhs'kyi," *Ukraina* 4 (1924): 163–165.

247 On Novyts'kyi see Volodymyr Bilyi, "Ia. P. Novyts'kyi (1847–1925). Z portretom," *Zapysky Istorychno-Filolohichnogo viddilu Ukraïns'koï Akademii Nauk* 7–8 (1926): 358–366; D. Cherniavs'kyi, "Iakiv Pavlovych Novyts'kyi," *Ukraina* 1 (1926): 186–191; L. Ivannikova,

The collection put together by Novytsky became a valuable addition to the holdings of the Museum of Katerynoslav, which, at its initial stage, was several times at risk of closing down. In 1849 the governor Fabr, together with Iakov Grakhov, the director of the educational establishments of the governorate, founded a public museum in the Potemkin palace. After the founders' death, nobody wanted to take care of the museum, and its exhibits were transferred to a boys' school. In 1887, Pol' founded a museum in four rooms of his own house on the Soborna Square, leaving it open for the public. Pol' divided the antiquities that he exhibited into four groups (assigning a room to each): prehistorical, Scythian, Zaporozhian, and Catherinian. Dmytro Yavornytsky, who came to



FIGURE 14.  
Antin Syniavsky. Photo from  
the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

Katerynoslav at the very beginning of the twentieth century, was impressed by Pol's collection: "Diversity and value of Pol's collection of antiquities astonished me. Neither before nor later did I see anything like this in private possession."<sup>248</sup>

In 1902, Yavornytsky, a graduate of the Kharkiv University and by then the author of the already published first volume of *A History of Zaporozhian Cossacks*,<sup>249</sup> became the director of Pol's museum, which was initially housed in the College of Commerce and then in the Potemkin Palace. In his published works as well as in his capacity as the museum's director, he promoted the cult of Zaporozhian Cossacks, and was even gradually fashioning himself to look like one.

"Iakiv Novyts'kyi i vyvchennia fol'kloru Katerynoslavshchyny," *Narodna tvorchist' ta etnohrafii* 5–6 (1994): 35–41.

248 D. Evarnitskii, "Muzei A. N. Polia," *Istoricheski vestnik* XLII (1890): 798.

249 On Iavornyts'kyi see I. M. Hapusenko, *D. I. Iavornyts'kyi, Biobibliohrafiia vchenykh Ukraïns'koï RSR* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1969); M. M. Shubravs'ka, *D. I. Iavornyts'kyi: Zhyttia, fol'klorstychno-etnohrafichna diial'nist'* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972); S. V. Abrosymova, *Dmytro Iavornyts'kyi (Zaporizhzhia: Tandem-U, 1996)*; S. I. Svitlenko, *Dmytro Iavornyts'kyi: vchenyi ta pedahoh v ukraïns'komu intelektual'nomu spivtovarystvi* (Dnipro: Lira, 2017).



A contemporary historian analyzes Yavornytsky's personality as an example of a researcher delving into the subject of his research so deeply that it becomes the core of his private life.<sup>250</sup> In Yavornytsky's case, the method of associating himself with the subject of his research made him look, in the eyes of his colleagues and the visitors to the museum, like "a Cossack chieftain," a live illustration of the museum's exposition.

A friend of Yavornytsky and the director of the Katerynoslav College of Commerce, Antin Syniavsky, already mentioned in this chapter, was a talented organizer. In 1903, he initiated the establishment of Katerynoslav Academic Commission for Archives, which was officially headed by Prince Nikolai Urusov, local marshal of the nobility (the head of the statutory local assembly of the hereditary nobility).<sup>251</sup> In 1904, the Commission started publishing its "Chronicle." In 1905, Katerynoslav hosted the 13th Congress of Archaeologists.



FIGURE 15. The local history (Pol') museum. Early twentieth-century postcard. Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

250 Vasyl' Ul'ianovs'kyi, "Relihiia i tserkva v zhytti i tvorchosti D. I. Iavornyts'koho," in *Mappa Mundi: Zbirnyk naukovykh prats' na poshanu Iaroslava Dashkevycha z nahody ioho 70-richchia*, ed. Ihor Hyrych et al. (Lviv: Vydavnytstvo M. P. Kots', 1996), 757.

251 More on Urusov see in: V. I. Lazebnik, V. D. Myronchuk, and S. I. Svitlenko, "Mykola Urusov," in *Diiachi derzhavnoi vlady i samovriaduvannia Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti: Istorychni narysy*, ed. S. I. Svitlenko, vol. 1 (Dnipropetrovs'k: Art-Pres, 2009), 328–334.

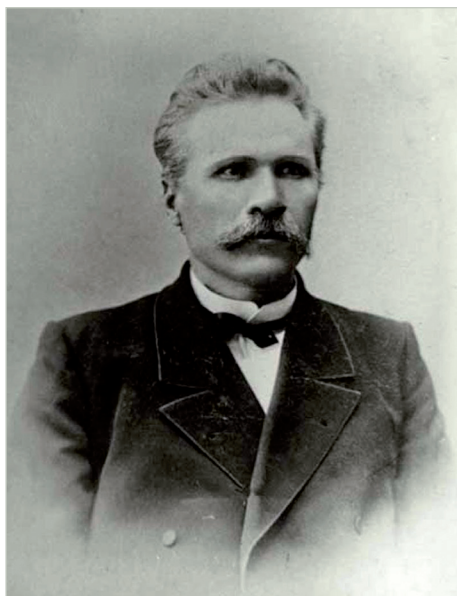


FIGURE 16.  
Dmytro Yavornytsky. Photo from  
the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

Thanks to the efforts by the Katerynoslav Scientific Society, chaired by the professor of chemistry at the Mining College Venedikt Kurilov, and the support by the governor Fiodor Keller, prince Urusov, and the head of a governorate *zemstvo* Mikhail Rodzianko, funds were allocated for the construction (completed in 1905) of a building for the Pol' museum. The holdings of the museum were quickly absorbing private collections of the local residents interested in history. At the opening ceremony of the museum's building, Kurilov characterized it as "a cultural and educational establishment with a mission to study the area where it is located," both its history and modern industrial development.<sup>252</sup>

### Prosvita in Katerynoslav

Prosvita, an *intelligentsia* project that championed the creation of Ukrainian cultural societies (the word means "education" or "enlightening"), came to the Russian Empire from Austria-Hungary. The first Prosvita society was opened in Lviv in 1868. By the end of the nineteenth century, Prosvita became an influential educational-cultural organization in Eastern Galicia, reaching into the region's towns and villages. After the 1905 Revolution, in Russia it became possible to lawfully open Ukrainian cultural associations. The Katerynoslav Prosvita, created on October 8, 1905, became the first organization of its kind in the Russian Empire.

252 "Ekaterinoslavskii oblastnoi muzei imeni A. N. Polia. Istoriia sozdaniia i zadachi uchrezhdeniia," in *Rechi, proiznesennye v den' osvishcheniia zdaniia 14-go avgusta 1905 g. M. V. Rodzianko i V. V. Kurilovym* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia gubernskogo zemstva, 1905), 17.



In the Russian Empire, Prosvitas had to operate only on territories indicated in their individual chapters (usually these territories coincided with those of governorates). These limitations prevented local Prosvitas from uniting into a single structure, as it happened in Eastern Galicia in Austria. A local Prosvita's chapter in Russia had to be approved by the administration of the relevant governorate. Accordingly, the organizations' activities depended very much on the relations between local Ukrainian activists and the imperial administration. Another distinctive feature of Prosvitas in Russia was their narrowly cultural specifics, whereas in the Austrian Empire these organizations were also doing business (cooperatives, mutual aid funds) and carrying out educational projects in rural areas.

The Katerynoslav Prosvita had four sections: theatrical, literary, singing/musical, and librarian. Prosvita was most successful as a producer of theatrical performances, concerts, and literary readings. Did these events have political overtones and, if so, how strong were they? Yevhen Chykalenko, a Ukrainian patron of arts, mentioned in his memoirs that historian Yavornytsky, an Octobrist on friendly terms with the marshal of the governorate's nobility Urusov, secured authorizations for opening Prosvita offices in nearby villages. This could be regarded as a sign that Ukrainian sentiment not only was not turning peasants into separatists but, with the help of "innocent" theatrical performances and readings, was protecting them against "agrarian devastation and all sorts of disruptive behavior."<sup>253</sup>

At the same time, being a visitor to Katerynoslav, the Ukrainian journalist Matushevsky claimed that he heard a lot of complaints about Prosvita from "the most committed" Ukrainians—they reportedly said that local Ukrainians with barely or semi-developed sense of commitment to Ukrainianness caused a lot of damage to Prosvita. According to such stories, these people "of little culture" have united into an arts' club that did nothing except produce theatricals, play the lousiest dramas and comedies, earn a lot of money, and spend this money as it pleased.<sup>254</sup>

By 1906, the Katerynoslav Prosvita had 190 members, increasing its membership to 250 by the year 1915.<sup>255</sup> Since 1908, it was regularly on Wednesdays organizing lectures on Ukrainian history and culture. In 1911, the Prosvita

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253 Ievhen Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk (1907–1917)*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Tempora, 2004), 257.

254 Quoted in Chaban, *U staromu Katerynoslavi*, 46.

255 M. P. Chaban, *Diiachi Sichslav's'koï "Prosvity" (1905–1921)*. *Biobibliohrafichnyi slovnyk* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Ima-Pres, 2002), 19, 30.



FIGURE 17. The cover of “Dniprovi khvyli” Ukrainian journal, 1911.  
From Andrii Portnov’s collection.

opened a library. From 1910, it was publishing a magazine in the Ukrainian language, *The Dniro Waves* [Dniprovi hvyli], whose de-facto editor in chief was Dmytro Doroshenko. From 1910–1913, the magazine had several hundred

subscribers and published seventy-two issues. Most of its contributors were local writers, historians, and ethnographers.<sup>256</sup> In 1913, Doroshenko himself published a popular book about the history of the region.<sup>257</sup>

Perhaps the most successful among the Katerynoslav Prosvita's initiatives was its activities in nearby villages. It opened thirteen affiliates in rural areas. The biggest among them was set up in 1907 in Manuilovka, a big village on the Dniipro's right bank, where many natives worked in railway workshops in Nyzhniodniprovsk.<sup>258</sup> This successful initiative did not pass unnoticed among the Black Hundreds, who did not always believe in the "innocence" of Ukrainian cultural initiatives. A member of the Black Hundred in Kyiv, Sergei Shchiogolev, anxiously wrote that "among all the Prosvitas functioning today the Ekaterinoslav chapter is the trend-setter," while the Prosvita in Manuilovka "with its energetic activities has outdone not only its founder but all other Prosvitas in Russia."<sup>259</sup>

In 1911, in Katerynoslav, Prosvita organized a concert of *kobzars* (Ukrainian folk singers) and in 1913 celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of the literary career of the Lviv-based Ukrainian writer Ivan Franko. Among its published books, the most successful release was Yavornytsky's popular essay *How the Glorious Zaporozhian Rank-and-File Cossacks Lived*, whose 4,250 copies were published in 1912 and 1913.<sup>260</sup>

The Katerynoslav Prosvita was closed during the First World War, in 1916, later than all other Prosvitas. It is important to emphasize that it owed its

256 S. Abrosymova, T. Koval'ska, "Katerynoslavs'kyi chasopys 'Dniprovi khvyli,'" *Borysfen* 1 (1994): 10–11; V. I. Lazebnik, "Kuz'ma Kotov i ioho 'Dniprovi khvili,'" *Khronika-2000* 73 (2007): 499–505.

257 Dmytro Doroshenko, *Z mynuloho Katerynoslavshchyny. Korotka istoriia kraiu ta ioho zaselenia* (Katerynoslav: Prosvita, 1913).

258 On Ekaterinoslav Prosvita see E. Vyrov, "Deiatel'nost' Ekaterinoslavskoï 'Prosvity' i eë filii v svyazi s voïnoi," *Ukrainskaia zhyzn'* 3–4 (1915); M. Novyts'kyi, "Desiat' lit zhyttia Katerynoslavs'koï 'Prosvity,'" *Osnova* 3 (1915): 62–71; S. Abrosymova and O. Zhurba, "Diial'nist' katerynoslavs'koï 'Prosvity' (1905–1916) ta zavdannia vyvchennia ii istorii," *Problemy istorii natsional'no-vyzvol'noho rukhu na Ukraïni v period feodalizmu ta kapitalizmu* 1 (1991): 3–4; S. Abrosymova and O. Zhurba, "Istorii suspil'noho zhyttia Katerynoslava na pochatku XX st.," *Doslidzhennia z istorii Prydniprov'ia* 1 (1991): 63–67; O. I. Zhurba, "Storinkamy istorii katerynoslavs'koï 'Prosvity,'" *Naddniprians'ka Ukraïna: istorychni protsesy, podii, postati* 1 (2001): 133–153.

259 S. N. Shchëgolev, *Ukrainskoe dvizhenie kak sovremennyi etap iuzhnorusskogo separatizma* (Kyiv: I. N. Kushnerëv i Ko., 1912), 273–274.

260 O. I. Zhurba, *Diial'nist' D. Iavornyts'koho u Katerynoslavs'kii "Prosviti,"* accessed May, 17, 2021, <http://museum.dp.ua/article0423.html>.

exceptional tenacity to the good relations between the local Ukrainian movement activists and the local imperial administration. In any case, in the very near future, the Ukrainian movement and the Russian Empire were to enter into open confrontation. And one of its arenas was industrial Katerynoslav.

## The City of Opportunities and Contrasts

It is difficult to foretell the future precisely because predictions are usually based on situations familiar to the observer, without accounting for unforeseen cardinal changes caused by technical innovations or changes in international trends. In *Materials for Russia's Geography and Statistics*, collected by officers working at the Russian army's headquarters and printed in 1862, it was directly stated that "Ekaterinoslav, considering its position, is unlikely to gain prominence with time," primarily due to the Dnipro's unsuitability for navigation because of its rapids.<sup>261</sup> In contrast, in 1898 the authors of the popular publication *Picturesque Russia* boldly predicted "a dazzling future" for the new center of the industrial region in less than forty years.<sup>262</sup> Just seven years after the release of the *Picturesque Russia*, Katerynoslav experienced a bloody anti-Jewish pogrom, and less than twenty years later it became plunged into the quagmire of revolutionary violence and in conflicts between different political projects in the south of the former empire.

The symbolical coincidence of the Brianskyi plant's launch with the city's centennial anniversary reinforced the idea that industry was Katerynoslav's "sole reason to exist."<sup>263</sup> The region's fast-paced development brought tens of thousands of labor migrants into the city and, at the same time, made Katerynoslav one of the centers of the revolutionary movement. In 1897, with a population of 113,000, the city was the seventeenth in the empire, in 1914 it moved to the twelfth position (its population by then 211,000). Industry represented the focus of the educational environment, which was defined in Katerynoslav by the Mining Institute and private institutions such as the Emperor Nicholas II

261 V. Pavlovich, ed., *Materialy dlia geografii i statistiki Rossii, sobrannnye ofitserami General'nogo shtaba. Ekaterinoslavskaiia guberniia* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia departamenta General'nogo shtaba, 1862), 305.

262 *Malorossiiia i Novorossiiia*, vol. 5 of P. P. Semënov, ed., *Zhivopisnaia Rossiia. Otechestvo nashe v ego zemel'nom, istoricheskom, plemennom, ekonomicheskom i bytovom znachenii*, part 2 (St. Petersburg: Tovarischchestvo M. O. Vol'f, 1898), 169.

263 Luigi Villari, *Russia under the Great Shadow* (London: T. Fisher, 1905), 103.

College of Commerce. The city was getting used to living from one factory's whistle to another, while driving the steppe further and further away from its boundaries. Because of Katerynoslav's rapid pace of industrial development, it was compared with America or industrial centers of Western Europe. "The new city," "the city without a past" was for some an embodiment of potential for growth and for others, a belated realization of Potemkin's plans in circumstances nobody could have foreseen.

Katerynoslav, as it was at the end of the nineteenth century, can be metaphorically described as an example of *imperial multiculturalism*. The city of migrants became a meeting place of Great Russian, Little Russian (Ukrainian), Jewish, Polish, and German traditions and cultures. At approximately the same time in the Polish-German-Jewish-Russian Łódź, which was developing at an equally fast pace, a new type of person was formed—known as *Lodzermensch*, a product of "transnational industrial culture,"<sup>264</sup> with a personality without any roots, a materialist indifferent to the matters of national affiliation who lives and earns his bread in a "vile city" dominated by estrangement and greed.<sup>265</sup>

The writers of that period did not really focus on a special Katerynoslav type of person—a product of industrialization. Perhaps it was partly because the example of Łódź, turned into a single-industry city in the process of industrialization, was much more extreme than Katerynoslav's. This city in the Kingdom of Poland, which grew in an impressing speedy pace, had neither a fully functioning sewage nor a university. Meanwhile, Katerynoslav in 1912 had five theatres, a fully functioning system of water pipes (in use since 1908), two electric trams lines, eleven gardens and squares as well as thirty-six hospitals.<sup>266</sup>

The mythology of Łódź turned out to be much more compelling and tenacious. It was communicated to the outside world, among other things, in Władysław Stanisław Reymont's prose. But in the south Ukrainian outskirts of the empire, the role of "industrial Moloch" in the works of fiction was usually assigned to Iuzovka (present-day Donetsk), which was a part of the Katerynoslav Governorate, and not the administrative center of the governorate itself.<sup>267</sup>

264 Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, "Łódź. Na przekór," in *Polsko-niemieckie miejsca pamięci*, ed. Robert Traba and Hans Henning Hahn, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Scholar, 2015), 103.

265 Bömelburg, "Łódź. Na przekór," 89–90. Compare Wojciech Górecki, *Łódź przeżyła katarsis* (Łódź: Biblioteka "Tygla Kultury," 1998).

266 *Ves' Ekaterinoslav* 1911, 114.

267 See such literary texts as "Pod zemlëi" [Underground] (1895) by Aleksandr Serafimovich and "Iuzovskii zavod" [The Yuzovka Plant] (1896) by Aleksandr Kuprin.

# The Symphony of Revolutions

How all these revolutions are the same!

Ivan Bunin,  
*Cursed Days*

The man is now a beast. Maybe that's the way  
he was before, only we didn't know it.

Alexey Tolstoy,  
*The Road to Calvary*

The First World War very soon turned from an adventure marked by romantic daring into a cruel demolition of the old rules. Flirtations with nationalism contributed to a fall of the empires, while the weakening of legitimate institutions of the state opened the floodgates for the spread of violence and crime. “The Road Back”—a phrase not accidentally used by Erich Maria Remarque in the title of his novel—to a peaceful life, walked by millions of recent soldiers with a deeply traumatic war experience, became a challenge for the entire continent. As a historian accurately noted, “the failure of the state to provide sufficient security to its citizens and the social pathologies that emerged over the course of 1915 and 1916 are critical for an understanding of the Russian Revolution.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Joshua A. Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 175. For more information on the influence of the First World War on the Russian Empire see: Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002); Eric Lohr, Vera Tolz et al., *The Empire and Nationalism at War* (Bloomington: Slavica, 2014); Aleksei Miller and Dmitrii Chëryni, eds., *Goroda imperii v gody Velikoï voïny i revoliutsii* (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2017); Włodzimierz Borodziej and Maciej Górny, *Nasza wojna. Narody. 1917–1923* (Warsaw: Foksal, 2018). Compare Andrzej Chwalba, *Samobój-*



## “The Great War” and Katerynoslav

The Ukrainian writer and a member of Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers Party (USDRP) Volodymyr Vynnychenko described in his diary a loyalist demonstration in Katerynoslav, one of the many that followed the outbreak of the “Great War”—later to be named the First World War.<sup>2</sup> He emphasized the role of Jewish participants:

In this public prayer and manifestation there was one element that made a sad, depressing spectacle—Jews coming with the flags and the tsar’s portrait . . . It was shameful, difficult and painful to watch the nervous, jittery assiduity with which these poor people were showing off their patriotism. They were so afraid of the prospect of the patriots with flags coming to their shops and apartments and taking their lives . . . they hated so much leaving the procession, going home and letting go of the flags dear to them; they had screamed themselves hoarse; their shouts “hurrah” were like the shouts of a man who, while being strangled, is meanwhile shouting “Murder!” They had been near every church and in every street, they had shown to the entire city how patriotic they were.<sup>3</sup>

The state questioned the loyalties not only of Jews but, even more drastically, of the German Mennonite colonists, who had been living in small groups in the southern parts of the empire since the end of the eighteenth century. The Russian Empire demonstratively discriminated against the Germans, first of all, on a symbolic level. As part of the anti-German trends, the capital city St. Petersburg was renamed into Petrograd. More keenly felt was the ban on the public

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*stwo Europy. Wielka wojna 1914–1918* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014); and Jochen Böhrer, Włodzimierz Borodziej, and Joachim von Puttkamer, eds., *Legacies of Violence: Eastern Europe’s First World War* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2014). The Ukrainian aspect is described in Mark von Hagen, *War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007) and Mark von Hagen, “War and the Transformation of Loyalties and Identities in the Russian Empire, 1914–18,” in *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914–1945*, ed. Silvio Pons and Andrea Romano (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000), 1–35. See also George O. Liber, *Total Wars and the Making of Modern Ukraine, 1914–1954* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

- 2 In 1915 Stepan Tomashivsky, a Ukrainian historian from Lviv, said he doubted that the term “world war,” invented by some commentators, would gain a foothold in historical scholarship: Stepan Tomashivskyi, “Viina i Ukraïna,” *Vistnyk Soiuzu vyzvolennia Ukraïny* 29–30 (1915): 2–3. Later the Second World War legitimized the “international” status of the First World War for good.
- 3 Volodymyr Vynnychenko, “Zi ‘Shchodennyka’ 1914,” in Mykola Chaban, ed., *U staromu Katerynoslavi (1905–1920 rr.). Khrestomatiia. Misto na Dnipri ochyma ukrains'kykh pys'mennykiv, publitsystiv i hromads'kykh diiachiv* (Dnipropetrovsk: IMA-pres, 2001), 127.



use of the German language and the forceful closures of all German-language newspapers. This discriminative attitude was also visible in the socio-economical realm. Russia adopted a law to deport all individuals of German ancestry from its border regions, and property of German owners was forcibly sold out across the Empire.<sup>4</sup> The Orthodox Church joined the state-run campaign, buttressing the argument about “the Germans’ economic stranglehold” with references to sectarianism. In particular, the journalist team of the newspaper *Ekaterinoslavskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* [The Ekaterinoslav Eparchy Bulletin] wrote on September 1, 1914:

Our foe is the German, who has done all right for himself using our territory and our corn, having occupied the boundless stretches of the most fertile land in the south of Russia; the very same German who has tried to undercut the roots, the foundations of our faith planting and spreading sectarianism.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the anti-German propaganda, the Mennonite community invented a Dutch ancestry for the colonists, in contradistinction to the German pedigree.<sup>6</sup> The Mennonites also made attempts to prove their loyalty. Many colonists joined the Russian army’s medical units.<sup>7</sup>

A southern city, Katerynoslav was regarded by the government as a convenient place where strategically important industrial facilities could be relocated from war-torn territories. In the summer of 1915, 400 wagons carried the K. Rudzki i Spółka factory from Warsaw to Katerynoslav.<sup>8</sup> The Stella factory,

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4 See more in O. V. Beznosova, “Antigermanskaia kampaniia v Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii. 1914–1917 gg.,” in *Pytannia nimets'koi istorii. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'*, ed. S. I. Bobyl'eva (Dnipropetrovsk: Vydavnytstvo DNU, 2011), 110–122. On the “nationalization” of the Russian Empire see Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

5 *Ekaterinoslavskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti* 25, 1914, 700.

6 For more information on this “invention of tradition” see: Abraham Friesen, *Defense of Privilege: Russian Mennonites and the State before and during World War I* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 2005).

7 See more in: E. E. Khodchenko, “Vlast' i mennonity v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny: Rossiia—SSHA—Kanada,” in Bobyl'eva, *Pytannia nimets'koi istorii. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'*, 92–114. Compare N. V. Ostasheva, *Na perelome epoch. Mennonitskoe soobshchestvo Ukrainy v 1914–1931 gg.* (Moscow: Gotika, 1998).

8 F. H. Turchenko, “Sotsial'no-ekonomichni protsesy v pivdennoukraïns'komu rehioni,” in *Velyka viïna 1914–1918 rr. i Ukraïna. Istorychni narysy*, ed. O. Reient, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Klio, 2014), 423.

a joint stock society brought from Riga to Katerynoslav, started producing special machines for manufacturing gun-butts.<sup>9</sup>

As the war turned into a prolonged bloody slaughter, it gradually raised the awareness that a strong labor force was needed in order to sustain the war-driven economies. Initially, only railroad workers were exempted from military service, but by the end of 1914 workers at military industrial facilities became eligible for deferment. There was a deficit of manpower in industry; however, the number of workers in the Katerynoslav Governorate was constantly growing. From 39,000 in 1913 it slightly decreased to 36,000 in 1914, but soon transformed into 43,000 in 1915 and reached 59,000 in 1916.<sup>10</sup> In the spring of 1915, the managers of ore mines were even allowed to hire prisoners.

The war and the large-scale mobilization of men, who in the early twentieth century were the sole breadwinners in most families, generated immense social obligations for the city. In the early 1916, the Council of the *zemstvo* stated: "The city expends enormous amounts of money to provide assistance to the draft-ees' families and makes everything possible to prevent impoverishment of the population."<sup>11</sup>

Katerynoslav was not a battlefield, even though it was not located far from the frontline. Accordingly, it experienced an influx of internally displaced persons. In the spring of 1916, about 3,360,000 people in the Russian Empire moved to another localities, and in early 1917 this number grew to more than 6,000,000 people.<sup>12</sup>

A large part of these refugees came to Katerynoslav, starting in early 1915. By January 1916, Katerynoslav received 244,687 people, 50,000 of whom stayed in the administrative center of the governorate. The share of refugees in the population was 7.44% in the governorate, and 22.94%—in the city.<sup>13</sup> Most refugees came from the southern districts of Volhynia. One of them was the future

9 V. Ia. Belich, Z. G. Sumina, *Dnepropetrovsk: Putevoditel'-spravochnik* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1985), 58–59.

10 Turchenko, "Sotsial'no-ekonomichni protsesy," 424.

11 *Ekaterinoslavskaia zemskaiia gazeta*, 22, 1916, 4.

12 Pons and Romano, *Russia in the Age of Wars, 1914–1945*, 18, 38. See more in Peter Gattell, *A Whole Empire Walking. Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). On the situation in Ukraine, see: L. M. Zhvanko, *Bizhentsi Pershoi svitovoi viiny: ukrains'kyi vymir (1914–1918 rr.)* (Kharkiv: Kharkivs'ka natsional'na akademiia mis'koho hospodarstva, 2012).

13 *Ekaterinoslavskaia zemskaiia gazeta*, 11, 1916, 3.

Ukrainian neorealist poet Valerian Polishchuk, who found an office job at the Brianskyi plant. It was there that he first had a close look at the life of a factory and came to love it.<sup>14</sup> Jews constituted a significant amount of the refugees. One of memoirists described their arrival this way: “Actually, despite all the sorrow, it was a blessing for our town because it was infused with a new Jewish blood. During these years, 1915–1916, Yekaterinoslav has been enriched by genuine Jewish power of the Jews of Lithuania and Poland.”<sup>15</sup>

Emperor Nicholas II came to Katerynoslav on January 31, 1915. He visited an army hospital, where he “kindly posed for a group photo” with patients and the staff, and he also visited the Pol’ Museum, the Red Cross’s office, and the Brianskyi plant.<sup>16</sup> As for the visit to the latter, the emperor made this entry in his journal:

The train approached the Brianskii Alexandrovskii Southern Russian Plant, of which I made an unhurried and careful tour; I saw the operations of a blast furnace and the production of rails, sheets of steel, armor plating, and wire. There are 9,500 workers—everything is made from our materials and produces a nice impression overall . . . The order in the city and at the facilities was exemplary.<sup>17</sup>

In the course of his visit, Nicholas II “kindly accepted a jar full of the first Russian iodine,” produced from Black Sea algae by local chemists, namely the Mining Institute’s professor Lev Pisarzhevsky and his assistant, Nikolai Averkiev.<sup>18</sup> This invention had a great significance, as Russia used to buy its iodine in Germany before the war. Now, as Pisarzhevsky wrote to the city’s authorities,

14 Valer’ian Polishchuk, “Dorohy moïkh dniv,” in Raïsa Movchan, ed. *Sami pro sebe. Avtobiohrafii ukrains’kykh myttsiv 1920-kh rokiv* (Kyiv: Klio, 2015), 337. More on Polishchuk see in Galina Babak, “Valerian Polishchuk i ukrainskii “Avangard” 1920-kh godov,” *Rhema*, 4 (2020): 191–213.

15 Hadassa Rachel Birman, “My memories,” in *Yekaterinoslav-Dnepropetrovsk Memorial Book*, ed. Zvi Harkavi and Yaakov Goldbur (Jerusalem: Yizkor Books in Print Project, 1973), 54.

16 L. I. Satanovskii, ed., *Ves’ Ekaterinoslav*, 17th ed. (Katerynoslav: L. I. Satanovskii, 1915), 131.

17 S. V. Mironenko, ed., *Dnevniky imperatora Nikolaia II*, vol. 2. (1905–1918) (Moscow: Rosspen, 2013), 204.

18 Satanovskii, *Ves’ Ekaterinoslav*, XIV. See also V. S. Savchuk, “Farmatsiia Rossiïskoï imperii v Pervoï mirovoi voïne: Ekaterinoslavskii iod,” in Bobylëva, *Pytannia nimets’koï istorii. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats’*, 64–77.



FIGURE 18. Emperor Nicholas II visits local history museum.  
Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

new solutions were necessary that would “eliminate . . . the dependence on Germans.”<sup>19</sup>

The military hospital Nicholas II visited had been housing the Nicholas II College of Commerce not long ago. The College, meanwhile, had its classrooms, library, and special study rooms placed in a section of an edifice on the Katerynynskyi Avenue, recently built in the style of Ukrainian baroque for the merchant Volodymyr/Vladimir Khrennikov. A person with Ukrainophile leanings, Khrennikov, free of charge, let two rooms in that building to an office of Prosvita and its affiliate organization—the Galician Committee for Refugee Assistance.

To the Ukrainian national movement, the Great War became a serious ordeal. The masses to whom the Ukrainian leaders used to address their messages found themselves on different sides of the conflict. In Eastern Galicia, legal Ukrainian parties declared their loyalty to Austria. Soldiers and officers of the Russian army, taken prisoners by Austrians and Germans, experienced separa-

19 Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti [DADO, State Archive of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast], fond 1, opys 1, sprava 632, arkush 108.

tion along ethnic lines, with Ukrainians kept in special camps, where they were exposed to anti-Russian propaganda. Most leaders of the Ukrainian national movement in Russia, however, were trying to assure the authorities of Ukrainians' loyalty to the tsar. For instance, Symon Petliura published an article in the Moscow journal called "*Ukrainskaia zhizn'*" [Ukrainian Life] arguing that fears of "pro-Austrian leanings" among the Ukrainian subjects of the Russian Empire were "groundless." According to Petliura, the Ukrainian activists had "always envisioned that the part of Ukrainian people that was incorporated into Russia would develop as a nation within Russia's borders" and that Ukrainians would "fulfill the obligations of Russian citizens in this difficult time through and through."<sup>20</sup> The Russian government did not believe Petliura. Perhaps they had a hunch—several years later he became the leader of one of Ukraine's socialist cabinets, which signed an agreement with Poland, whereby Ukraine abandoned its claims to Eastern Galicia for the sake of joint military action against the Bolsheviks.

In Petrograd, it was assumed that the Ukrainian national movement had an obvious separatist potential in the course of the war. In late November 1915, while the liquidation of the anti-war Katerynoslav chapter of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labor Party was proceeding, the police searched the local office of Prosvita. On January 26, 1916, the Katerynoslav chapter of Prosvita, which had existed much longer than its counterparts in other cities, was closed "on account of neglecting in its activities its immediate objectives as set out in its charter."<sup>21</sup>

During the First World War, Katerynoslav experienced the same difficulties as almost all other European cities at that time: governments played on xenophobic sentiments; there was mass mobilization of males and an influx of refugees; apartment rents grew; industrial facilities were relocated; and ethnic discrimination flourished. All these tendencies brought into motion a society accustomed to mass politics. The result was a series of revolutionary events, which, while seemingly designed to end the war as soon as possible, effectively prolonged it.

20 S. V. Petliura, "Voïna i ukrainsky," *Ukrainskaia zhizn'* 7 (1914): 3–7. At later times, too, the Ukrainian activists in Russia used to emphasize that Ukrainians on either side of the border "fulfilled their civic duty," although for them "the war proved to be quite literally fratricidal." See, for example, *Ukrainskii vopros. Sostavleno sotrudnikami zhurnala "Ukrainskaia zhizn',"* 3rd ed. (Moscow: Zadruga, 1917), 168–169.

21 Valentin Starostin, *Dom Khrennikova na Prospekte*, accessed May 17, 2020, [http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article\\_ru.php?article=1249](http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article_ru.php?article=1249).

## The Revolution in the City

Russia was gradually drifting into a revolutionary era. Its harbingers were individual terror attacks that started with the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. This development was propelled by a period full of wars, first with the Russian fiasco in the war against Japan in 1904–1905 and then with the losses in the First World War.

Crown Rabbi of Katerynoslav Levin retrospectively viewed the pogrom in Chisinau in 1903 as “the final collapse of the Russian imperial government,” which exposed “the ghastly rottenness which had eaten into the system of the government.”<sup>22</sup> The liberal commentator Peter Struve claimed already in November 1917 that the imperial government not only “prepared the revolution,” but also “made it inevitable,” especially regarding the wartime challenges and the fact that the society was not prepared for an “active and responsible participation in the life of the state.”<sup>23</sup>

The Russian Revolution of 1905 played out as a minor civil war in some places. This war consisted of street fights and peasant unrest alongside with anti-Jewish pogroms. The monarchy’s inability to keep things in check only reinforced revolutionary expectations. Anti-government movements became even more radicalized during the First World War, which introduced millions of yesterday’s peasants to the experience of violence. Overthrowing the monarchy for the alleged purpose of a democratically driven new order, according to a witness of the revolutionary events in Katerynoslav, “looked like a simple answer to all questions, but produced a million of new problems.”<sup>24</sup>

A Bolshevik named Serafima Gopner, who came to Katerynoslav from France in 1916, recalled that the February Revolution came into the city “by telegraph.”<sup>25</sup> A journalist Zinovy Arbatov, whose description of what was going on in Katerynoslav in 1917–1922 was written in the summer of 1922 in Berlin,

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22 Shmarya Levin, *Forward from Exile. The Autobiography* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967), 377.

23 P. B. Struve, *Izbrannye sochineniia* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 1999), 257, 281. Compare the point made by contemporary historian that “Russian liberals turned out to be the first, but not the last, to assume mistakenly that a deep-rooted social crisis could be solved by offering ‘the people’ constitutional liberties.” Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent. Europe’s Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 9.

24 Victor Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom. The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official* (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1949), 20.

25 *Bor’ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine. Sbornik vospominanii i statei* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Ist-part, 1927), 5, 77.



straight after the events, mentioned that the revolution in the city “was made by people who came on a morning train from Kharkiv”—they brought newspapers announcing Nicholas II’s abdication.<sup>26</sup>

In any case, the provincial city of Katerynoslav was presented with a *fait accompli* of what had happened in the capital. The significance and the content of the recent events were interpreted in all possible ways by different parties. Self-organizing units of local authorities attempted not so much to keep the revolutionary deluge in check, as to improve, or at least to maintain, inasmuch as it was possible, the *status quo*. This logic can be clearly seen in the position of the Orthodox Church. In March 1917, two days earlier than the Provisional Government, the Holy Synod declared it was impossible to restore a monarchical rule in Russia. Every periodical printed by Orthodox parishes ran statements to the effect that the autocracy was “a dilapidated building” which “crumbled on its own.”<sup>27</sup> On March 6, 1917, Bishop of Katerynoslav and Mariupol Ahapyt/Agapit (Vyshnevsky), sent to the “Good Citizen of Ekaterinoslav,” as the head of the Provisional Committee of the State Duma, Mikhail Rodzianko, was called, a cable in which he affirmed his willingness “to work with renewed vigor for the benefit of the Church and our dear Motherland under the full control of the new Government.”<sup>28</sup> In March 1917, in Katerynoslav, the eparchial council organized a meeting of churchmen and laymen, who said categorically that “there can be absolutely no return to the old regime since it was ruinous for the faith and the church.” The meeting resolved *inter alia*:

Considering the inappropriateness of further fund raising for the construction of the monument in honor of the Romanov family . . . to ask the Eparchial Council to use the funds collected for this project to build a monument dedicated to the liberation of the Russian Christian Orthodox Church from the grip of the state.<sup>29</sup>

26 Z. Iu. Arbatov, “Ekaterinoslav 1917–1922 gg.,” in *Arkhiv ruskoï revoliutsii*, ed. I. Gessen, vol. 12 (Berlin: I. Gessen, 1923), 83.

27 S. V. Savchenko, “‘Medovyï mesiats’ revoliutsii: Ekaterinoslavskaiia eparkhiia v marte 1917 g.,” *Istoriia torhivli, podatki ta myta* 1–2 (2016): 181–202.

28 M. A. Babkin, ed., *Rossiiskoe dukhovenstvo i sverzhenie monarkhii v 1917 godu. Materialy i arkhivnye dokumenty po istorii Russkoï Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi* (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 224–225.

29 *Deianiia Ekaterinoslavskogo eparkhial'nogo sobraniia predstavitelei klira i mirian Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi 21 i 22 marta 1917 g.* (Katerynoslav: Tipografiia I. E. Kogan, 1917), 13, 16. The eparchial council in its resolutions stressed that it was important to ensure that in the new Russia “all activities of all authorities are based on the foundation of Orthodox Christianity,” and the head of the state “is an Orthodox Christian.” Ibid., 13, 15.



Even though the Christian Orthodox Church had occupied a dominant position in the Russian Empire, it had also suffered from the Russian autocracy: for example, Peter I stripped the Church of the right to elect its patriarch. In the first days of the revolution, it “preferred the image of a victim of the monarchy to the one of its never wavering pillar of support.”<sup>30</sup>

According to a Bolshevik Miron Trubnyi, the events of the February Revolution “were so awesome that they dumbfounded even the best prepared comrades.”<sup>31</sup> The early spring of 1917 saw regular demonstrations in public gardens and squares, mainly among soldiers. The police were gradually disappearing.<sup>32</sup>

Less than two years before, the residents of Katerynoslav had cheered the emperor’s arrival. But in 1917, nobody stood up to defend the monarchy. In early March, the bronze statue of Catherine II was thrown off its pedestal.<sup>33</sup> It had been lying near the Mining Institute’s wall for some time, before it was moved to the inner courtyard of the Pol’ Museum. And in November, the municipal council resolved to rename the Cathedral Square into the Square of the Constituent Assembly.

Nevertheless, a socio-political consensus about the new regime had never been reached. On the one hand, a Committee of Civic Organizations’ Deputies of Katerynoslav was established under the idea to unite local elites with democratic views who saw their goal as one of a peaceful transformation and a way to maintain order until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.<sup>34</sup> Simultaneously, other structures emerged such as a Soviet committee initially dominated

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30 Savchenko, “Medovyĭ mesiats’ revoliutsii,” 202.

31 I. Zhukovskii [Miron Trubnyi], “Podgotovka Oktiabria v Ekaterinoslave,” *Letopis’ revoliutsii* 1 (1926): 9.

32 Remarkably, in 1922, one of the local Bolsheviks already admitted in his memoir that the Bolsheviks were unpopular at those assemblies, mentioning the slogans such as “Lenin out,” loud calls about “German spies,” and insinuations from the crowd about Jewish lineage of the Bolsheviks on the podium: M. Ravich-Cherkasskii, “Fevral’–dekabr’ 1917 goda v Ekaterinoslave,” *Letopis’ revoliutsii* 4 (1922): 76, 78–79.

33 *Biulleten’ gubernskogo Ispolnitel’nogo komiteta obshchestvennykh organizatsii Ekaterinoslava* (August 10, 1917). Princess Urusov recalled that the bronze statue was dismantled in the very first day of the revolution: Allen A. Sinel, “Ekaterinoslav in Revolution: Excerpts from the Diary of Princess Urusov,” *Russian Review* 29, no. 2 (1970): 192–208.

34 The description of the assembly where Ekaterinoslav’s last governor Cherniavskii burst into tears when he was told that “he was trusted as a person, but not as the governor,” see in Zhukovskii [Miron Trubnyi], “Podgotovka Oktiabria v Ekaterinoslave,” 14.

by the Mensheviks with their slogan “unity of revolutionary democracy.”<sup>35</sup> In addition, factory committees were established at every large industrial plant. The governing weakness and conflicts of interests among the authorities instantly resulted in a surge in crime, with criminals readily using revolutionary slogans and flags as cover. Such turbulences in the socio-political landscape were followed by the growth of unemployment, alcoholism, and all sorts of social deviations. According to the memoirist, “little towns in governorates immediately dropped out of sight.”<sup>36</sup> According to another participant of the events, “that was the kind of moment when everything depended on the power of the gun.”<sup>37</sup>

As in 1905, the city saw the emergence of militias linked to political parties: the Bolsheviks’ Red Guard, anarchists, leftwing Socialist-Revolutionaries, a “flying squad of old soldiers,” four Jewish militia units as well as *haidamak*—armed Ukrainian units.<sup>38</sup> The circle of armed people was ever growing wider.

## In the Ukrainian People’s Republic

At that time, big cities in Ukraine were predominantly non-Ukrainian-speaking and non-Ukrainian ethnically. According to activists of the Ukrainian national movement, they were the “Achilles’s heel” in the plans to develop the new country.<sup>39</sup> In particular, the Ukrainian social democrat—Isaak Mazepa—who was in

35 Ravich-Cherkasskii, “Fevral’–dekabr’ 1917 goda v Ekaterinoslave,” 75; E. Kviring, “Ekaterinoslavskii Sovet i oktiabr’skaia revoliutsiia,” *Letopis’ revoliutsii* 4 (1922): 64.

36 Arbatov, “Ekaterinoslav 1917–1922 gg.,” 84.

37 Nestor Makhno, *Vospominaniia*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Ukraïna, 1991), 104.

38 A word of Turkish origin, *haidamaka* (an outlaw, a robber) is first recorded in early eighteenth-century sources. It was applied to the revolts of Cossacks and peasants in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The major event in this succession of rebellions, Koliivshchyna in 1768, was accompanied with brutal pogroms of Jews and Poles, and featured in Taras Shevchenko’s poem of the same name. Describing the period of 1917–1921, both the *haidamak* and their political opponents neutrally used this word referring to the Ukrainian military. But from the late 1920s, in Soviet publications, the word *haidamak* began to be replaced with *petliurovtsy* (“Petliura followers”). This “modernization” of the term was most likely inspired by the newest political developments such as Petliura’s assassination in 1926 in Paris and the widespread practice of using his name with reference to “Ukrainian nationalism.” As an example, see V. Averin, “Oktiabr’skaia revoliutsiia v Ekaterinoslave,” *Letopis’ revoliutsii* 5–6 (1927): 100–129.

39 See more in Tetiana Portnova, “Misto i revoliutsiia: Katerynoslav 1917–1919 rr. v ukrains’kykh memuarakh,” *Moloda natsiia* 3 (2004): 52–62. On the role and images of peasants in Ukrainian national movement see Tetiana Portnova, *Liubyty i navchaty. Selianstvo v uiavlenniakh ukrains’koi intelihtsiï druhoi polovyny XIX stolittia* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Lira, 2016).

Katerynoslav from 1917 until January 1919, left this description of the region's mood:

The countryside was the main stronghold of Ukrainianness in the Katerynoslav region. Cities were alien, un-Ukrainian. During the two years of revolutionary life in Katerynoslav, with its more than 200,000 residents, I cannot recall even as little as five or six “recently converted” *Little Russians* joining our community of Ukrainian intelligentsia. The handful of people—about twenty—that was in place at the start of the revolution remained a small group by the time I left Katerynoslav, two years after the revolution. This fact should tell so much to a future historian about the Ukrainian nationalist forces during the great Ukrainian revolution!<sup>40</sup>

Although the Ukrainian national activists all agreed that Katerynoslav was “un-Ukrainian,” they disagreed over the strength of the Cossack tradition there. The Commander of Ukrainian units in Katerynoslav Mykhailo Omelianovych-Pavlenko argued that “Zaporozhian traditions are still alive: on Kaidak you could see characters who would be perfect models for Repin’s painting.”<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, S. Levchenko, the Commander in the Hetman’s Eighth Katerynoslavskyi Corps, who came to the city in 1918, wrote that Katerynoslav appeared to him “very foreign, Russified” and even the old Dnipro pilots [*lotsmany*] “did not know anything about a ‘Sich.’”<sup>42</sup>

Vasily Zenkovsky, a Russian religious philosopher, who grew up in Ukraine, was well familiar with the Ukrainian national movement and advocated the all-Russian national project. He saw the main problem of the Ukrainian national

40 Isaak Mazepa, *Ukraina v ohni i buri revoliutsii* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2003), 34–35. Elaborating on this observation, Mazepa pointed to an increase in pro-Bolshevik sentiments among the townsfolk: “as the Ukrainian socialists were making progress winning over the Ukrainian village from Russian influences, the alien, non-Ukrainian town was gradually becoming the Russian Bolsheviks’ main base.” Ibid., 46. Compare this assertion with the description of Ukrainian activities in Ekaterinoslav made by Mazepa’s associate Panas Fedenko, who wrote that “Ukrainian element in Katerynoslav proper was quite small and not of a high caliber.” See Panas Fedenko, *Isaak Mazepa—borets’ za voliu Ukraïny* (London: Nashe slovo, 1954), 20–23.

41 Mykhailo Omelianovych-Pavlenko, “Na Ukraïni, 1917–1918 rr.,” in Mykhailo Omelianovych-Pavlenko, *Spohady ukraïns’koho komandarma* (Kyiv: Planeta liudei, 2002), 42. Omelianovych-Pavlenko refers here to the famous painting by Ilya Repin, “Cossacks Write a Letter to the Turkish Sultan” (finished in 1891), for which Repin’s friends—historian Dmytro Yavornytsky, general Mikhail Dragomirov, and others—posed as Cossacks. The painting is kept at the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg.

42 S. Levchenko, “8. Katerynoslavs’kyi Korpus,” *Za derzhavnist’* 9 (1938): 63.

movement in the fact that “Ukraine chose the revolutionary path when it had no authority figures, no strong and experienced leaders capable of holding power.”<sup>43</sup>

By the moment the Russian Empire ultimately fell apart, the Ukrainian national movement—led by intellectuals such as the historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko, the literary scholar Serhy Yefremov, and the journalist Symon Petliura—had a predominantly socialist political program and envisioned Ukraine as an autonomous entity within a new Russia. In an effort to organize local self-government and in anticipating a general election in the Constituent Assembly (Russia’s supreme legislative organ), the Ukrainian activists in Kyiv established the Central Rada (*rada* is the Ukrainian for “council”). Until the end of 1917, documents issued by the Central Rada repeatedly emphasized that, at this time as before, political representatives had not changed their vision of “not separating Ukraine from Russia” and were supporting the facilitation of the process turning “the entire Russian Republic [into] a Federation of equal and free nations.”<sup>44</sup>

The Central Rada’s position, foregrounding “Ukraine’s autonomy in the Russian federative democratic republic” and advocating for the self-determination of Ukrainians, was backed up by the All-Ukrainian Congress in Katerynoslav on May 21–22, 1917, attended by 451 delegates.<sup>45</sup> In the meantime, local Ukrainian activists recognized the absence “of a solid foundation for realizing our ideals in the presence of the hostile attitudes at the top of Russian society in Ukraine”<sup>46</sup> and the lack of appreciation of the idea of national emancipation

43 O. K. Ivantsova, ed., *Getman P. P. Skoropadskii, Ukraina na perelome. 1918 god* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 2014), 231.

44 V. F. Verstiuk, ed., *Ukraïns'ka Tsentral'na Rada. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Naukovy dumka, 1996), 398, 400. Among the publications by the direct participants of events the following is of special value: Pavlo Khrystiuk, *Zamitky i materiialy do istorii ukraïns'koï revoliutsii. 1917–1920 rr.*, vol. 1–4 (Vienna: Ukraïns'kyi Sociolohichnyi Instytut, 1921–1922). Publications on the 1917 revolution in Ukraine include John S. Reshetar, *The Ukrainian Revolution, 1917–1920: A Study in Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952); Taras Hunczak, ed., *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1977); Stephen Velychenko, *State Building in Revolutionary Ukraine. A Comparative Study of Governments and Bureaucrats, 1917–1922* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011). See also Wolfram Dornik, ed., *Die Ukraine zwischen Selbstbestimmung und Fremdherrschaft 1917–22* (Graz: Leykam, 2011) and Chris Ford, “Reconsidering the Ukrainian Revolution 1917–1922: The Dialectics of National Liberation and Social Emancipation,” *Debatte* 15, no. 3 (December 2007): 279–305.

45 N. L. Iuzbasheva, ed., *Ukraïns'ka revoliutsiia 1917–1921 rr. na Prydniprov'i: zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Dnipro: Lira, 2016), 43.

46 Ibid., 55.

among the masses. In addition, the very idea of the Katerynoslav Governorate being part of a future autonomous Ukraine was a subject of heated political debate on local levels. Delegates of the Second Congress of the Katerynoslav Governorate's Peasants, which was held on August 13–15, 1917, "after much deliberation resolved, by a majority vote, that the Katerynoslav Governorate should be part of Ukraine."<sup>47</sup> However, in October 1917, the members of the municipal council could not agree on a mutual stance over the issue. The idea of Ukrainian autonomy and Ukrainian socialists' references to "the historical rights" as well as "centuries-old oppression of Ukrainians" were supported by Jewish socialists and Zionists, whereas representatives of Russian parties, including the Bolshevik one, insisted that the governorate's status should be decided by a plebiscite.<sup>48</sup>

Even the fall of the Provisional Government in Petrograd as a result of the Bolsheviks' *coup*, did not change the Rada's federative rhetoric. Two weeks after Lenin's ascent to power, on November 7, 1917, it announced the birth of the Ukrainian People's Republic (*Ukraïns'ka Narodna Respublika*, UNR) as an autonomous entity within a future democratic Russia. This document known as the Third Universal declared the UNR's jurisdiction over the lands "primarily inhabited by Ukrainians"—in other words, the nine governorates: Kyiv, Podillia, Volhynia, Chernihiv, Poltava, Kharkiv, Katerynoslav, Kherson, and Taurida (without the Crimean peninsula).<sup>49</sup> The document also outlined the most important new democratic and social reforms: all lands were made the property of the "working people"; workday was limited to eight hours; capital punishment was abolished; and all democratic freedoms and "national-personal autonomy" were guaranteed for Russians, Poles, Jews, and other ethnic minorities of Ukraine.<sup>50</sup>

A couple of days after the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd, the municipal council (*mis'ka/gorodskaia дума*) of Katerynoslav condemned this political change. Allegedly, it ruined the unity of the revolutionary forces and would ultimately lead "to the civil war" by destroying plans for the Constituent Assembly.<sup>51</sup> This logic could be regarded a sign of revolutionary democratic legality. Follow-

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47 Ibid., 62.

48 Ibid., 79–85.

49 Verstiuk, ed., *Ukraïns'ka Tsentral'na Rada. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 1, 400.

50 Ibid., 400.

51 V. Ia. Iatsenko, "Diial'nist' Katerynoslavs'koi mis'koï dumy v konteksti podii zhovtnia 1917 r.," *Problemy politychnoi istorii Ukrainy* 10 (2015): 99–107.

ing such line of thinking, on November 16, 1917, the same municipal council voted for the Third Universal by the Central Rada, noting that the Rada “had every right to protect Ukraine against anarchy,” while also adding that a decision about demarcation of the future borders would have to be made by a democratically elected Constituent Assembly.<sup>52</sup>

According to Emanuil Kviring, one of the leaders of the Katerynoslav Bolsheviks, after the October *coup* and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, in Katerynoslav “it became perfectly clear who would be vying for power: us, the Bolsheviks, and the Ukrainians from the Rada.”<sup>53</sup>

The Central Rada did not recognize the Bolsheviks and remained loyal to the ideals of a democratic revolution. The Bolshevik government in Petrograd declared the Rada “bourgeois” and, after a failed attempt to seize power in Kyiv in December 1917, began to plan an armed attack to overthrow it. The Bolsheviks used the request for military assistance issued by the Soviet Ukrainian People’s Republic to legitimize their assault. This action was telling of the way the Bolsheviks made use of the nomenclature created during the Ukrainian revolution. The Soviet Republic’s birth was announced on December 11–12, 1917 in Kharkiv, which at that time was a big city located practically on the border between Ukrainian and Russian governorates.

Vladimir Antonov, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Infantry College who took part in the takeover of the Winter Palace, was appointed commander-in-chief of the Soviet troops in southern parts of Russia in 1918, and in 1919 he became the commander of the Ukrainian Soviet Army.<sup>54</sup> On Lenin’s advice, Antonov even “Ukrainized” his surname, adding “Ovseenko.” He admitted that the Bolsheviks planned to use Kharkiv as a foothold for a *coup d’état* to gain control over all of Ukraine.<sup>55</sup>

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52 DADO, fond 469, opys 1, sprava 1, arkushi 362–362 zvorot.

53 Kviring, “Ekaterinoslavskii Sovet i oktiabr’skaia revoliutsiia,” 66.

54 In the 1920s Antonov worked at diplomatic missions in Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, and Poland. Later he served as the chief prosecutor of the RSFSR (in 1934–1936). It is known that he encouraged the judges to issue stricter sentences considering “the proletarian necessity.” From 1936 to 1937 Antonov was the Soviet consul general in Barcelona, but in 1937 he was ordered to return to the USSR, where he was arrested as a “Trotskyite.” He was executed in February 1938. His son, Anton Antonov-Ovseenko, became a publicist and the devoted critic of the crimes of the Stalin regime.

55 V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Vyschiï voennyi redaktsionnyi sovet, 1924), 70.

Big factories were the Bolsheviks' strongholds. The Katerynoslav Bolsheviks asked for armed assistance. In mid-December 1917, Katerynoslav received a wagon full of 10,000 rifles, ten million cartridges, several hundred Nagant revolvers, and ten machine guns from Moscow as well as a special train brought from Petrograd with 300 workers.<sup>56</sup> This event was likened by a memoirist to the setting of a match to a barrel of kerosene.<sup>57</sup>

Already in December 1917, Katerynoslav became a scene of the first street fights, which, at the hearings at the City's Duma, were called "the events of civil war."<sup>58</sup> After a failed attempt to confiscate the wagon with weapons, the Ukrainian troops fired shots at the Brianskyi plant. One cannon hit a barrack with Austrian prisoners of war, another, the chimney of a blast furnace. On January 3, 1918, the bodies of the people killed were buried with special ceremony in a common grave on the Cathedral Square, while the bodies of three Bolsheviks from Russia were sent to Moscow.<sup>59</sup>

Significantly, during the armed conflict most regular army units remained neutral. In December 1917, Princess Vera Urusova, who was the wife of the marshal of Katerynoslav's nobility Nikolai Urusov, wrote: "It is so strange to see armed workmen in the streets, whereas uniformed soldiers idle around. They are neutral and will not join in the struggle."<sup>60</sup>

The Bolsheviks' Kyiv offensive forced the Central Rada to declare the independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic on January 9, 1918. In the same document, namely, the Fourth Universal, the Rada called for peace talks with Germany and Austria-Hungary as well as promised, after the completion of the talks, "to completely disband the army" and replace it with a militia protecting

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56 According to Emanuel Kviring's memoir, a deputy sent to Moscow was instructed to say he was sent by the Soviets, "and under the condition that some of the weapons would be distributed among the militia units of Jewish socialists and Ukrainian social democrats": Kviring, "Ekaterinoslavskii Sovet i oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia," 69. Another Bolshevik, S. Koshelev, offered a slightly different version of the events in his memoir. He claimed that the decision to ask the Soviet government in Petrograd to supply weapons was made by the Bolshevik organization of the Brians'kyi plant. "An old Bolshevik comrade Roizenman" was responsible for bringing the wagon with the weapons from Moscow, and the Ukrainian troops learned about the shipment "from their sympathizers among railway employees": [n. ed.], *Bor'ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 169–170.

57 Arbatov, "Ekaterinoslav 1917–1922 gg.," 84–85.

58 DADO, fond 469, opys 1, sprava 1, arkush 457.

59 *Bor'ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 135.

60 Sinel, "Ekaterinoslav in Revolution: Excerpts from the Diary of Princess Urusov," 194.





FIGURE 19.

Princess Vera Urusova. Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

the rights of the “working people.”<sup>61</sup> In the winter of 1918, the army, not yet officially disbanded, was *de facto* not defending the UNR, and, on January 26th, the Bolsheviks’ troops under the command of Mikhail Muraviev entered Kyiv.<sup>62</sup>

On the following day, the Central Rada’s representatives signed a separate peace treaty with Germany and its allies, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire, in Brest-Litovsk. In response to the Ukrainian government’s request for military support against the Bolsheviks, the German army entered Kyiv already on the first day of March. Two days later, the Bolshevik government of Russia also signed a peace treaty with Germany and its allies, whereby Russia dropped its claims to Finland, Ukraine, the Baltic States, and Transcaucasia.<sup>63</sup> It

was not easy for the Bolsheviks to explain the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk to their supporters, including the ones in Katerynoslav. Serafima Gopner recalled how, on Lenin’s advice, she told the workers at the Brianskyi plant that a revolution in Germany was inevitable, and that it “would nullify the peace treaty completely,”

61 V. F. Verstiuk, ed., *Ukrains’ka Tsentral’na Rada. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 2 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1996), 102–103.

62 Muraviev, notorious for his brutality in Kyiv and other cities he occupied, was one of those adventurers who threw in his lot with the revolution. An officer in the imperial Russian Army and a sympathizer of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, Muraviev joined the Bolsheviks and was in charge of a succession of important military operations, but in July 1918 he himself raised an anti-Soviet uprising and took his life while the Bolsheviks suppressed the unrest. The suicide happened in Lenin’s hometown Simbirsk.

63 More on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty see in: I. V. Mikhutina, *Ukrainskii Brestskii mir. Put’ vykhoda Rossii iz Pervoï mirovoi voïny i anatomiia konflikta mezhdu Sovnarkomom RSFSR i pravitel’svom Ukrainskoï Tsentral’noi Rady* (Moscow: Evropa, 2007).

although the workers were “shaming her and lashing out at her” for her speech.<sup>64</sup> Another Bolshevik, I. Amosov, speaking at the plant, pointed out it was necessary to have all ammunition and non-ferrous metals taken from the facilities, and after these words the workers kicked up a row saying that the Bolsheviks were moving plants to Moscow.<sup>65</sup>

## In Hetman Skoropadsky's Ukrainian State

The UNR's socialist government, which returned to Kyiv thanks to the German military support, turned out to be incapable of controlling the situation in the country and of ensuring food supplies to Germany and Austria in compliance with the treaty. Less than two months later, the German army helped to stage a *coup d'état* in Kyiv, bringing to power Pavlo/Pavel Skoropadsky, who was a former general of the imperial Russian army, of Cossack hetman heritage.<sup>66</sup> On April 29, 1918, Skoropadsky was proclaimed a hetman and became the head of the new polity called the “Ukrainian State.” Skoropadsky's government made efforts to return to a semblance of the “old order.” Among other changes, it cancelled the land reforms and restored the prerevolutionary property rights. By many, it was perceived as an islet of order and peace. Purportedly, it was also a stronghold against Bolshevism and a provisional form of statehood to last until “the revival of the rule-of-law Russia,” as “building a Ukrainian state, [they]

64 *Bor'ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 207. Tellingly, Gopner in the 1957 edition of her memoir advanced a different version of the workers' vision of Lenin's position: “The masses were especially influenced by an exact quotation of Lenin's statement, the mere fact that these thoughts, these words were Lenin's. The wide masses by then had already appreciated the greatness of Lenin's foresight”: S. Gopner, “Vid bereznia 1917 do bereznia 1918 roku,” in *Bortsi za Zhovten' rozpovidaiut' (Spohady uchasnykiv borot'by za vladu Rad na Katerynoslavshchyni)*, ed. G. A. Istomin and P. M. Rashev (Dnipropetrovsk: Oblasne vydavnytstvo, 1957), 63.

65 *Bor'ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 198.

66 Publications on Skoropadsky's Ukrainian State include: Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Niemiecka interwencja militarna na Ukrainie w 1918 roku* (Warszawa: DiG, 2000); V. F. Sol-datenko, *Ukrains'ka revoliutsiia. Istorychnyi narys* (Kyiv: Lybid', 1999); H. V. Papakin, *Skoropads'kyi: patriot, derzhavotvorets', liudyna. Istoryko-arkhivni narysy* (Kyiv: Derzhavnyi komitet arkhiviv Ukraïny, 2003); O. P. Reient, *Pavlo Skoropads'kyi* (Kyiv: Al'ternatyvy, 2003); R. Ia. Pyrih, *Ukrains'ka het'mans'ka derzhava 1918 roku. Istorychni narysy* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NANU, 2011). See also Frank Grelka, *Die ukrainische Nationalbewegung unter deutscher Besatzungsherrschaft 1918 und 1941/41* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

build Russia.”<sup>67</sup> At the same time, many Ukrainian leaders, especially the ones not very actively involved in the UNR, believed that the Skoropadsky regime was a cornerstone in the establishment of the Ukrainian statehood.<sup>68</sup> Apparently, the hetman himself did not have a definite opinion about the issue, although he stated repeatedly: “Filled with love for Russia, my Ukrainianness was not destroying a future Russia—it was creating it.”<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, both the “pro-Russian” and “Ukrainian” parties among the hetman’s associates understood the fragility of the very structure of his state, which owed its existence to the power of the German and Austrian troops. To the man in the street, however, the *status quo* seemed amazingly solid, compared to the previous revolutionary months.

In line with the agreement on the separation of the zones of influence, Katerynoslav hosted Austrian troops, although they were often called “Germans” by the locals. Ukrainian troops, belonging to the still existing UNR, entered the city on April 4, 1918. The Bolshevik Amosov described this event in his memoir:

The bourgeoisie and the clergy were all pomp and ceremony. There were bells ringing all over the city. All organizations shut down by the Bolsheviks resumed their activities on that day. The Ukrainian socialists celebrated their victory at a function on April 4 in the Kolizei theatre. It was a large gathering, although workers were nowhere to be seen. The chairman of the meeting Bednov greeted the assembly on the historical occasion of integration of the Ekaterinoslav region into Ukraine.<sup>70</sup>

In May 1917, the news of the hetman’s *coup* reached the city. Very soon, the law and order returned to Katerynoslav and the food supply chains were restored. The lawyer G. Igrenyev, who worked in the city, wrote in his memoir that Katerynoslav was famous for “fantastically cheap foodstuffs, which were available aplenty in markets” and the city “was regarded as Ukraine’s most

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67 These are the words of Vasily Zenkovsky. See Ivantsova, *Getman P. P. Skoropadskii. Ukraina na perelome*, 337.

68 See, for instance: Dmytro Doroshenko, *Moï spomyny pro nedavnie mynule* (Munich: Ukraïns’ke vydavnytstvo, 1969). Between May and November 1918, the historian Dmytro Doroshenko served as a minister of foreign affairs in Hetman Skoropadsky’s government.

69 Ivantsova, *Getman P. P. Skoropadskii, Ukraina na perelome*, 574–575. See also Pavlo Skoropads’kyi, *Spohady. Kinets’ 1917–hruden’ 1918* (Kyïv: Shkhidnoievropeïskyi doslidnyi instytut im. V. Lypyns’koho, 1995).

70 Ivantsova, *Getman P. P. Skoropadskii, Ukraina na perelome*, 230.

delightful place foodwise.”<sup>71</sup> Igreniev came to Katerynoslav to teach law at a private Russian-language university, authorized by the Hetman. The department of Russian history at the university was headed by Matvei Lubavsky, a scholar invited from Moscow. As for local scholars, Lubavsky hired Vasyl Bidnov, a researcher of church history, who accepted the offer on the condition that he would be allowed to give his lectures in Ukrainian language.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, Bidnov preferred another school that invited him—the entirely Ukrainian-language Kamianets-Podilsky State University. Lubavsky soon returned to Moscow, and the Katerynoslav University never began to fully function.

Evgenia Turmanina, who came to Katerynoslav with her fellow teachers of natural sciences “from a starved Moscow,” described the city, in retrospect, as a food paradise: “Everyone was stunned by prices in Ekaterinoslav: a bag of flour cost 5 roubles, lard and sugar, everything was cheap, a bunny cost 5 kopecks. After Moscow it was simply a paradise.”<sup>73</sup>

However, life under Hetman Skoropadsky did not seem “paradise” to everyone. In the reports of the provincial headman, Major General Ivan Chernikov for the summer-autumn of 1918, it was noted that “due to the inactivity of the factories and unemployment, the mood of the working masses was depressed.”<sup>74</sup> At the same time, the mood of the peasants was “restless,” the majority’s attitude towards the return of land to the landlords was clearly negative, and only the most prosperous part of the peasants seemed to be “satisfied with the emerging system.”<sup>75</sup> Chernikov noted the prevalence of rumors about the return of the Bolsheviks and the fact that the Austrian troops “show energy only during punitive expeditions” and requisition of bread.<sup>76</sup>

The attitude towards the cultural policies of the Hetman was also ambiguous. It was not a secret that a large part of his administration was pro-Russian.

71 G. Igreniev, “Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia (avgust 1918 g.–iiun’ 1919 g.),” in *Arkhiv russkoï istorii*, ed. I. V. Gessen, vol. 3–4 (Berlin: I. Gessen, 1921), 234.

72 Vasyl’ Bidnov, “Pershi dva roky Kam’ianets’koho universytetu,” *Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk* 11 (1928): 233–234.

73 [n. a.], “Svidetel’stvo o Ekaterinoslave vremen grazhdanskoï voïny,” accessed May 17, 2020, [http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article\\_ru.php?article=99](http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article_ru.php?article=99).

74 Valentyn Kavunnyk, ed., *Arkhiv Ukraïns’koï Narodnoï Respubliky. Ministerstvo vnutrishnikh sprav. Spravozdannia huberniial’nykh starost i komisariiv (1918–1920)* (Kyïv: Instytut ukraïns’koï arkhieohrafiï ta dzhereloznavstva im. M. S. Hrushevs’koho NANU, 2017), 52, 69.

75 Ibid., 59, 62.

76 Ibid., 71, 61, 86.

The above-cited General Chernikov *de facto* supported the semi-legal Katerynoslav center of the Volunteer Army operating in the city since July 1918, which recruited and sent volunteers to the troops of General Anton Denikin who rejected political and cultural independence of Ukraine and strived to restore the imperial Russia. On the night of December 10, 1918, a detachment of almost 1,000 men, under the command of General Ignaty Vasilchenko, left Katerynoslav for Crimea, where twenty days later they were included in the Denikin's army.<sup>77</sup>

For Ukrainian socialist Panas Fedenko, who lived in Katerynoslav in 1918, it was clear that the Skoropadsky's regime actually supported the Russian cultural dominance in "Ukrainian State," and refused to Ukrainize Katerynoslav's educational institutions.<sup>78</sup>

### A Kaleidoscope of Powers against the Background of War

The stability of the Hetman's grip on power directly depended on the Austrian and German troops, and the state of the latter—on the situation in Germany. All the Hetman's attempts to create his own army, independent of the German-Austrian allies, ended in failure. The so-called "federative charter," signed by Skoropadsky on November 14, 1918, which proclaimed the autonomy of Ukraine as part of the future, non-Bolshevik Russia, did not help either. While the pro-imperial forces pinned their hopes on Denikin, the Ukrainian socialists sought to overthrow the Skoropadsky regime and return to the interrupted developments set in motion by the February 1917 democratic revolution. After the revolutionary events in Germany in November 1918 and the hetmanate's "federative charter" with Russia, the Ukrainian socialist directorate under Symon Petliura's leadership was formed. It declared itself a successor to the Central Rada and initiated a military campaign against the falling Skoropadsky regime.

On December 17, 1917, the municipal council of Katerynoslav unanimously voted for "welcoming the Ukrainian republican troops who overthrew the hetmanate" and reminded, perhaps out of the desperate wish to turn back the

77 For details see A. V. Ganin, "Russkii proekt' getmana P. P. Skoropadskogo: opyt Ekaterinoslava (noiabr'–dekabr' 1918 goda)," *Slavianovedenie* 1 (2018): 56–61. See also memoirs about the "Katerynoslav campaign" towards Crimea in S. V. Volkov, ed., *Rossiiia zabytaia i neizvestnaia. Beloe dvizhenie*, vol. 5, 1918 god na Ukraine (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2001), 145–167.

78 Fedenko, *Isaak Mazepa—borets' za voliu Ukrainy*, 43–45.

clock, about the necessity to convene a Constituent Assembly.<sup>79</sup> However, the directorate failed to create a viable state. The directorate's troops were in control of Katerynoslav, at least formally, only on January 1–26, 1919.<sup>80</sup>

Already two days after the revolutionary events in Germany, on November 11, 1918, the Bolshevik government in Petrograd resolved to start an offensive “in support of Ukrainian workers and peasants” within ten days.<sup>81</sup> The Red Army entered Katerynoslav, without meeting almost any resistance, on January 26, 1919.<sup>82</sup>

Soon the city was visited by Leo Trotsky. An eyewitness of his arrival wrote about Trotsky's “four-hour-long speech”: “The same big crowds which ecstatically greeted Emperor Nicholas II in 1915 now poured out on the streets and met the red dictator in silence.”<sup>83</sup>

From the moment the Bolsheviks took control of the city, they paid much attention to propaganda and even issued a decree mobilizing all local artists.<sup>84</sup> Adolf Strakhov, a native of Katerynoslav, who later built a reputation for himself as a Soviet poster artist, designed an obelisk dedicated to “the heroes of the Revolution,” which was mounted, on May 1, 1919, on Soborna Square at the grave of people killed when the first gunfights erupted in the city. The twenty-five-meter-high obelisk was made of wood, decorated with gypsum bas-reliefs and sprinkled over with liquid cement.<sup>85</sup>

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79 Iuzbasheva, *Ukrains'ka revoliutsiia 1917–1921 rr. na Prydniprov'i*, 201.

80 See more in R. Ia. Vaskovs'kyi, “Pivroku z zhyttia Katerynoslava (osin' 1918–vesna 1919 rr.),” *Hrani* 2 (2001): 19–24; Iu. S. Mytrofanenko and T. M. Tsymliakova, “Viis'kovo-politychna sytuatsiia v Katerynoslavi v sichni 1919 roku,” *Prydniprov'ia: istoryko-kraieznachchi doslidzhennia* 8 (2010): 271–280.

81 V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1932), 11.

82 M. A. Shtein, ed., *Grazhdanskaia voïna na Ekaterinoslavshchine (fevral' 1918–1920 gg.). Dokumenty i materialy* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1968), 78–79.

83 Arbatov, “Ekaterinoslav 1917–1922 gg.,” 89.

84 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv-muzei literatury i mystetstva Ukraïny [TsDAMLUMU, Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Arts of Ukraine], fond 176, opys 1, sprava 7, arkush 4; A. I. Strakhov, “*Za poklykom revoliutsii*” (manuscript) [Memoirs about his work in Katerynoslav during the Civil War]. I am grateful to Kateryna Iakovenko for sharing this source with me.

85 Strakhov made a detailed description of the obelisk and First of May Demonstration in his memoir notes compiled in late 1960s: TsDAMLUMU, fond 176, opys 1, sprava 7, arkushi 9–12.



Just three days after the First of May demonstration, Katerynoslav was taken over by the Volunteer Army of General Denikin, supported by the *Entente* countries (Russia's allies in the anti-German coalition in the First World War). The Denikin troops started with the destruction of the Bolshevik memorial creativity and remained in control of Katerynoslav for six and a half months, until December 1919. Denikin championed the idea of "Russia, united and indivisible." Arbatov, who sympathized towards Denikin and his men, described the first days of "the White Guard's power" in Katerynoslav:

As soon as the next morning the exultation gave way to vexatious puzzlement . . . The city's richest commercial section, all the best stores were looted, fragments of broken shop window scattered all over the sidewalks . . . People who came out on the streets in the morning hurried back to their homes, and dark people were roaming the city all day long, guiding bands of [White] Cossacks and pointing out to them the richest stores. Plundering was in full swing.<sup>86</sup>

Many expected that the White Army would bring back the law-and-order society that existed under the Hetman's rule, and stop requisitioning, which was a practice associated with the Reds. However, General Andrei Shkuro, who was showered with flowers on the *Prospekt* on the first day, was in no hurry to keep the drunken Cossacks in check. A dinner party with Denikin was organized in the cityhall. After a representative of a Ukrainian organization made a speech in Ukrainian language, Denikin uttered curtly: "Your ace, independent Ukraine, is trumped . . . Long live Russia, One and Indivisible."<sup>87</sup>

In the first days of July 1919, Shkuro's Cossacks perpetrated an anti-Jewish pogrom. According to Paulina Taslitskaia's testimony, recorded on August 7, 1920 in Moscow, the White Cossacks walked into the houses and took everything they wanted. There were also cases of murder and rape. The railroad became an unsafe place for Jews. According to memoirists' accounts, a rabbi from a shtetl near Katerynoslav asked Jews not to use the railway because "the cemetery had no longer plots for graves."<sup>88</sup> Denikin's soldiers were known to collect

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86 Arbatov, "Ekaterinoslav 1917–1922 gg.," 91.

87 Ibid., 94. For more details see Anna Procyk, *Russian Nationalism and Ukraine: The Nationality Policy of the Volunteer Army During the Civil War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1995).

88 L. B. Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov. Pogromy na Ukraine, v Belorussii i evropeiskoi chasti Rossii v period Grazhdanskoï voïny 1918–1922 gg. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 2007), 199.



contributions “on account of the Jews’ pro-Soviet sympathies.”<sup>89</sup> The pogrom perpetrated by General Shkuro’s troops was only stopped several weeks later.

### The Peasant Revolution in the City: Makhno and Makhnovism

The revolution spread in the cities and the reaction came from the country. Nestor Makhno was probably the most famous among the leaders of the peasant revolution, and not only in the Katerynoslav Governorate. Born into a peasant family, in 1906 he was arrested as a member of a group of anarchist expropriators and in 1910, sentenced to death by hanging, but, on account of his young age, capital punishment was commuted to penal servitude for life. The 1917 revolution set Makhno free. In his native village, Huliaipole, “comrade father Makhno” organized a movement that many of his contemporaries compared with the Zaporozhian Cossacks. What angered Makhno and his followers the most seemed to be the requisitions carried out by the Austrian and German troops in 1918 in the Ukrainian villages.



FIGURE 20. Nestor Makhno (on the left) and Nikolai Dybenko.  
Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

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Compare Peter Kenez, “Pogroms and the White Ideology in the Russian Civil War,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 293–313.

89 Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*, 214.

Makhno's political platform was pivoted around the idea of "a Soviet rule on the basis of people's self-government" and the "free Soviets" elected by all working people. His leaflet, *What do Makhnovists Fight for*, claimed that their goals included "un-powered federations of economic organizations, free alliances of workers', peasants' and intellectuals' unions" as well as a social order where "all of national wealth" was controlled by "industrial professional unions."<sup>90</sup> Trying to formulate their vision of socialism, the Makhnovists were inclined to form occasional military coalitions with the Bolsheviks (this happened three times: in late 1918, in February 1919, and in October 1920). Moreover, they were implacable enemies of the hetman and the Whites (that is, the regimes trying to restore the land rights such as they were in the—by then—defunct Russian Empire). The Makhnovists seemed to be, at the same time, more-or-less indifferent to the Ukrainian national project.

"Un-Ukrainian but not anti-Ukrainian,"<sup>91</sup> and distinctly "anti-bourgeois,"<sup>92</sup> their movement does not easily lend itself to the standard formulas of political anarchism. This circumstance, along with their local color and impressive military achievements, inevitably drew researchers' attention to Makhno's movement and its mythology.<sup>93</sup> Valerian Pidmohylny, a Ukrainian prosaic and a native

90 V. Danilov, V. Kondrashin, and T. Shanin, eds., *Nestor Makhno, Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine. 1918–1921: Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Rossipen, 2006), 290–291.

91 Frank Sysyn, "Nestor Makhno and the Ukrainian Revolution," in Hunczak, *The Ukraine, 1917–1921: A Study in Revolution*, 271–304. In 1926, already an *émigré*, Makhno, who used to issue all orders in Russian, admitted that the anarchists would have done well had they "taken into consideration the vernacular of Ukrainian village." However, he believed that the key factor in such strategy was to destroy the apparatus of the state, to replace it with "the organs of social and economic self-government by workers and peasants." See Aleksandr Skidra, ed., *N. I. Makhno. Na chuzhbinie 1923–1934 gg. Zapiski i stat'i* (Paris: Gromada, 2004), 72.

92 Compare Makhno's own comments in Nestor Makhno, *Vospominaniia*, vol. 2 (Kyiv: Ukraina, 1991), 175.

93 Publications on Makhno and his movement include Victor Peters, *Nestor Makhno: The Life of an Anarchist* (Winnipeg: Echo Books, 1970); Romuald Wojna, "Nestor Machno: Anarchyzm czynu," *Z pola walki* 50, no. 2 (1970): 45–76; Felix Schnell, *Räume des Schreckens. Gewalt und Gruppenmilitanz in der Ukraine, 1905–1933* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2012); V. F. Verstiuk, *Makhnovshchyna: Selians'kyi povstans'kyi rukh na Ukraïni (1918–1921)* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1992); V. M. Volkovyns'kyi, *Nestor Makhno: lehendy ta real'nist'* (Kyiv: Perlit Production, 1994); A. B. Shubin, *Makhno i ego vremia. O Velikoï revoliutsii i Grazhdanskoï voïne 1917–1922 gg. v Rossii i na Ukraine* (Moscow: Librokom, 2013); D. V. Arkhireis'kyi, *Makhnov's'ka veremiia. Ternystyi shliakh Revoliutsiïnoï povstans'koï armii Ukraïny (makhnovstiv) 1918–1921 rr.* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2015); Sean Patterson, *Makhno and Memory. Anarchist and Mennonite Narratives of Ukraine's Civil War, 1917–1921* (Winnipeg: University of

of the Katerynoslav region, described the Makhno movement in his short story “The Third Revolution” (1925) as “the village’s march on the city” imbued with hatred for anything that appeared to the village as “seigniorial.” As for Makhno himself, Pidmohyl’nyy portrays him as “in the doldrums and heartbreakingly lonely,” “someone who rose from the dark depths of the soil in order to flash by as a forgotten fire of days long gone” (this is perhaps an allusion to the peasants’ and Cossacks’ revolts in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries), “with a heart that has gotten drunk on other people’s blood, which he had to draw in order to exist.”<sup>94</sup>

Debates about the nature and content of the Makhno movement still continue. But there is no doubt about the massive scale of the movement. In the autumn of 1919, the Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine numbered 30,000–35,000 people.<sup>95</sup> It was an army on wheels. Makhnovists are credited with inventing the *tachanka*—a horse-drawn platform with a backward-looking machine gun installed on it.<sup>96</sup>

In December 1918, the Makhnovists took over Katerynoslav for the first time. The avantgarde of the Makhno army came to the city on a worker’s train,

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Manitoba Press, 2020). See also a comparative study: Dittmar Dahlmann, *Land und Freiheit. Machnovščina und Zapatismo als Beispiele agrarrevolutionärer Bewegungen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1986) and A. V. Posadskii, ed., *‘Atamanshchina’ i ‘partizanshchina’ v Grazhdanskoï voïne: ideologiia, voennoe uchastie, kadry. Sbornik statei i materialov*, (Moscow: AIRO-XXI, 2015), 367–464. Compare Soviet publications of the 1920s: M. E. Ravich-Cherkasskii, *Makhno i makhnovshchina* (Katerynoslav: Vseukrainskoe izdatel’stvo, 1920); D. Z. Lebed’, *Itogi i uroki tekh let anarkho-makhnovshchiny* (Kharkiv: Vseukrainskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1921).

94 Valer’ian Pidmohyl’nyi, *Tretia revoliutsiia. Opovidannia. Povisti. Roman* (Kyiv: Ukraïns’kyi pys’mennyk, 2012), 249–252. This image of the Makhno movement as essentially “peasant” and “anti-urban” could be also found in the memoirs of another Ukrainian writer and participant of the revolutionary events: Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, *Na shliakhakh i rozdorizhzhakh. Spohady. Nevidomi tvory* (Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 1999). See also a memoir by Yakov Kalnytsky, who experienced the Makhno rule in Katerynoslav himself and later on became a popular Soviet writer: Ya. Kal’nyts’kyi, *Pid Katerynoslavom (P’iat’ epizodiv borot’by)* (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukraïny, 1927). In the second volume of Alexey Tolstoy’s “The Road to Calvary” (completed in 1941), where the action is set in Katerynoslav (with a description that betrays a thorough knowledge of the topographic minutiae), Makhno is shown as a sly, vicious, and cruel thug with horrific eyes and “teeth yellow as an old dog’s”: Alekseï Tolstoï, *Khozhenie po mukam*, vol. 2 (Cheliabinsk: Iuzhno-ural’skoe knizhnoe izdatel’stvo, 1982), 241–242.

95 S. S. Khromov, ed., *Grazhdanskaia voïna i voennaia interventsiiia v SSSR: Èntsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia èntsiklopediia, 1983), 344.

96 Danilov, Kondrashin and Shanin, eds., *Nestor Makhno, Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine*, 17.

which used to bring the people from settlements on the left bank of the Dnipro to work, and quickly took over the station as well as the adjacent zone. However, on January 1st, Makhno's army gave way to the Ukrainian troops of Petliura's directorate, having lost several hundreds of people while crossing the Dnipro on the ice.<sup>97</sup>

In late January 1919, the Makhno units, now an ally of the Bolsheviks, seized Katerynoslav once again (there would also be a third time, in July 1919). The novel aspect of the event was emphatic anti-urban character of the occupying forces. The Makhnovists considered cities "unnecessary" and started abolishing prisons by literally shooting criminal convicts on the spot. They also destroyed bridges and railroad tracks.<sup>98</sup>

Igrenev in his memoir described their actions in the following manner: "Makhno allows everybody to take one pair of anything they need to wear on themselves. And he shoots anybody who takes more than that." The memoirist emphasizes that he met different types of the Makhnovists: some laughed at the murdered "bourgeois"; others would say after each piece of food they ate, "Thanks to the master and mistress of the house," adding this bit of information about themselves: "We take out only the Jews and the Germans—they are the main bourgeois."<sup>99</sup>

On December 7, 1919, the Makhnovist chief of defense of "free un-powered" Katerynoslav introduced martial law in the city, which included the suspension of theatrical performances and the introduction of a curfew.<sup>100</sup> Article 6 of the new order stated as a "last warning" that people should not "ride on horses through gardens—there are roads for this."<sup>101</sup> In addition, Makhno did not see the governorate's main city as a potential capital. This function was reserved for Makhno's native village, Huliaipole, which had three secondary schools, kindergartens, and ten army hospitals.

97 D. V. Arkhirei's'kyi, "Makhnovtsi v Katerynoslavi: khronolohiia viis'kovoï prysutnosti," *Prydniprov'ia: Istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 13 (2015): 38.

98 G. A. Borisov, D. Iu. Meshkov, and M. A. Skok, eds., *N. Makhno i makhnovskoe dvizhenie. Iz istorii povstancheskogo dvizheniia v Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, (Dnipropetrovs'k: DAES, 1993), 18.

99 Igrenev, "Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia," 238.

100 Borisov, Meshkov, and Skok, *N. Makhno i makhnovskoe dvizhenie*, 135.

101 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady Ukraïny [TsDAVOU, Central State Archive of the Higher Authorities of Ukraine], fond 1824, opys 1, sprava 23, arkush 6.



FIGURE 21. The remnants of the city's prison wall destroyed by Makhnovists.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

Most of the legends about Makhno ascribe to him the features of a Cossack *kharakternyk*—a warrior with magic abilities and knowledge. The Red Army Commander Antonov-Ovseenko claimed that the Makhnovists used to refer to their leader as a “father hobnobs either with devil or with God” and that they regarded him “not an ordinary person anyway,” and explained the strength of the Makhnovist movement by Makno’s “profound ‘earthenness’” (*pochvennost’*).<sup>102</sup> This “earthenness” discloses both the strength and the weakness of the Makhnovist movement. Its followers championed the peasants’ notion of “their” power—a power that is close to you, palpable, non-urban, and violently strong.<sup>103</sup> However, shaping an “earthen” army into a regular one was no easy task. A Bolshevik Hryhorii/Grigorii Konevets wrote in his memoir that Makhno’s forces formed only “a short-term army, incapable of sustaining a long period of inactivity.”<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, Antonov recognized its potential:

The Ukrainian Soviet army commanders were aware of the internally contradictory nature of Makhnovism, aware of the inevitability of a conflict with anarchist trends among wealthy peasants of the Ekaterinoslav region. But at that historical period . . . they thought of Makhnovism as their ally. This movement should have been brought under control and

102 V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voine*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1933), 95–96.

103 Serhii Savchenko, *Tserkovnaia provintsiiia v revoliutsii 1917 goda: Ekaterinoslavskaia eparkhiia kak zerkalo sobytii* (manuscript), 67. Quoted with the permission of the author.

104 G. Konevets, “1919 god v Ekaterinoslave i Aleksandrovske,” *Letopis' revoliutsii* 4 (1925): 85.

directed into an appropriate channel, and the groundwork for its class-based stratification and division should have been laid. And the movement was a serious one, very antagonistic both to the Petliura style and the Denikin style, and heroic—in its indefatigable struggle against German occupiers and the White Guard.<sup>105</sup>

According to a modern researcher, the cult of Makhno was promoted, firstly, through physical violence. It was precisely using this method that “the father” communicated with the world around him and cultivated his legitimacy.<sup>106</sup> Makhno personally took part in assassinations—in particular, in the elimination of his rival, the paramilitary leader Nikiifor Grigoriev.

Like Makhno, Grigoriev was pitchforked into a position of prominence by the revolutionary wave. Formerly a staff captain in the Russian army, Grigoriev put himself at the head of an insurgent army whose slogan was “Away with the domination of foreigners, Communists, and kikes.” Grigoriev’s army numbered up to 20,000 soldiers, six armored trains, more than fifty cannons, and 700 machine guns. In 1919 his soldiers took over cities and towns such as Mykolaiv, Kherson, Kremenchuk, Katerynoslav, Uman, and Cherkasy. Alongside with this regional importance, Grigoriev played also a significant role on an international level, whether purposefully or not. In April 1919, temporarily allied with the Bolsheviks, his army forced the French troops to retreat from southern Ukraine. A month later, Grigoriev’s assault stopped the Red Army on its way to Hungary, where it was to help the Communist uprising. In this way, the project of a “worldwide revolution” was suspended.<sup>107</sup>

Makhno himself justified the killing of Grigoriev by the fact that the latter was “a perpetrator of pogroms.”<sup>108</sup> The Makhnovists’ anti-Jewish pogroms and the attitudes to Jews held by “the father” himself are subjects of debate. The Bolsheviks concluded in March 1919:

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105 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 4, 98. Compare it with Antonov’s opinion about Makhno: “A confirmed anarchist, personally honest, but with all sorts of nasty things being done behind his back—he could have been used by us nicely, if we had had the apparatus we were lacking.” Ibid., 335.

106 Schnell, *Räume des Schreckens*, 287–366.

107 R. Iu. Vaskovs’kyi, “Try epokhy za olyn rik (Katerynoslav za doby Het’manatu Skoropads’koho, UNR i radians’koï vlady),” *Prydniprovia: istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 3 (2006): 49–50.

108 Skidra, *N. I. Makhno. Na chuzhbine 1923–1934 gg.*, 90.



“The Father Makhno”’s troops are suffused with the spirit and trends of the devil-may-care, free Zaporizhzhia . . . The brigade has a strong presence of wealthy peasants and lumpens, antisemitism is widespread. “Father” himself sees in every Jew, even a Red Army soldier, a spy, removing all restraint from the masses.<sup>109</sup>

Quoting this passage, Antonov-Ovseenko adds: “Makhno did all he could to prevent pogroms.”<sup>110</sup> At the same, the Mennonite colonists were victims of repeated cruel attacks by large Makhnovist groups. For Makhno, the Mennonites were guilty of supporting Hetman Skoropadsky’s food requisitions and holding pro-monarchy views.<sup>111</sup> Even years later, when his army was disbanded and he was living as an émigré, Makhno was arrested in Gdańsk, accused of killing Mennonites. Nevertheless, he managed once again to avoid a long prison term. He died in Paris in 1934.

## The Pogroms and the Revolution

In 1918–1920, about 40% of the anti-Jewish pogroms in the war-torn Ukraine, were perpetrated by units under the formal command of the UNR’s directorate headed by Petliura, although acts of violence against Jews were not the work of only one (or two) political group(s). In fact, the perpetrators included the Whites, the Reds, the Polish army as well as Grigoriev’s and Makhno’s troops.<sup>112</sup>

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109 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 3, 203.

110 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 4, 105.

111 Harvey L. Dyck, John R. Staples, and John B. Toews, eds., *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre: A Civil War Tragedy in a Ukrainian Mennonite Village* (Toronto: Pandora Press, 2001). Compare N. V. Venger, “Ievreïs’ki ta menonits’ki pohromy na pıvdni Ukraïny: do pytannia pro typolohiiu ta semantyku podii 1919 roku,” *Humanitarnyi zhurnal* 3–4 (2011): 138–146.

112 These figures could be found in: Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government. Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1999), 113, 115. Abramson notes that although Petliura himself was not an antisemite and even issued proclamations against pogroms, this did not prevent the troops, formally under the directorate’s command, from committing atrocities against Jews. Compare important (for the most parts comparative) observations in memoirs, written in 1921, of an eyewitness of the events and an active member of both Jewish and Ukrainian national movements: Arnol’d Margolin, *Ukraina i politika Antanty. Zapiski evreia i grazhdanina* (Berlin: S. Efron, 1922). See also the publication compiled, right after the events, by the Far East Jewish Civic Committee for Assistance to Orphaned Victims of the Pogroms: S. I. Gusev-Orenburgskii, *Bagrovaia kniga. Pogromy 1919–20 gg. na Ukraine* (Kharbin: DEKOPO, 1922). Compare Oleg Budnitskii, *Russian Jews between the Reds and the Whites 1917–1920*



According to rough estimates, more than 30,000 Jews were killed in pogroms country-wide.<sup>113</sup>

Igrenev wrote in his memoir:

“Kill kikes and commissars” was the most popular slogan among the region’s residents, and leaders of most diverse movements readily stooped to using it. “Maknovists,” “Grigorievists,” “Denikinists”—they all without exception looked at the Jewish pogrom as the panacea for the yoke of Bolshevism. The hypnosis of this belief was so great that it brought under its sway even highly educated public figures with liberal sensitivities.<sup>114</sup>

In Katerynoslav, anticipations of a pogrom had been in the air since the the February Revolution—many were afraid that the events of 1905 would repeat themselves. Belyavsky, the director of the Gantke factory, put in charge of law and order in the city, hastily recruited students to put together an anti-pogrom force.<sup>115</sup> The Jewish self-defense units were back in action in the city as well. Princess Vera Urusova put down in her diary in 1918: “What good fortune that we were living in a Jewish quarter and that the Bund was so well organized.”<sup>116</sup>

One of the bloodiest anti-Jewish pogroms in Katerynoslav was perpetrated by White Cossacks units of the General Shkuro’s Volunteer Army. An archive contains a letter written by a “Russian woman and a mother of volunteer soldiers” and addressed to Volunteer Army’s Commander General Denikin. It represents a descriptive account of the pogroms in Katerynoslav with references to cases of murder and rape in the parents’ presence. The writer of the letter urged Denikin “to imagine all this infinite horror” and stop it.<sup>117</sup> Denikin inscribed his resolution in the following manner: “[c]ourt martial and capital punishment for

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(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) and Christopher Gilley, “Beyond Petliura: the Ukrainian National Movement and the 1919 Pogroms,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 47, no. 1 (2017): 45–61.

113 Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 120.

114 Igrenev, “Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia,” 243.

115 A. V. Mikhailiuk, “Ekaterinoslav v 1917 godu (istoricheskie zarisovki),” *Hrani* 1 (2001): 10.

116 Nicholas Tyrras, ed., *Letters of Life in an Aristocratic Russian Household before and after the Revolution. Amy Coles and Princess Vera Urusov* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 206. Regretably, this publication of Urusova’s diary is very poorly commented and the editor seems to be completely unaware of Katerynoslav’s personalities and contexts.

117 Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*, 237.

this rabble without any hesitation,” and issued an order “to put out such officers and put to death such soldiers” in Katerynoslav.<sup>118</sup>

And yet, Denikin’s attitude to the pogroms and antisemitism was ambiguous. On August 8, 1919, the general received a delegation of representatives of Jewish communities from Katerynoslav, Kharkiv, Rostov, and Taganrog. Talking with them, Denikin tried to legitimize the prevalence of anti-Jewish sentiment among his soldiers by the fact that they had to struggle against “Jewish Communist legions” and, when told the horrific story of the Katerynoslav pogrom, claimed that “not only Jews” were suffering, as “a lot of riffraff” joined the army through the mobilization campaign. Nevertheless, he abstained from issuing an order against the pogroms out of fears that it “would not be properly understood.”<sup>119</sup> Hence, Denikin *de facto* acknowledged the extent of antisemitism among the Whites.

The cruelest and bloodiest anti-Jewish pogroms were the ones organized by the Grigoriev’s army. It accounted for 4% of all pogroms that took place in Ukraine; however, the death toll of the cruelties by Grigorev’s men amounted to 3,471, or 11.22% of the overall number of pogrom victims.<sup>120</sup> In May 1919, the Grigorievists perpetrated a pogrom in Katerynoslav and its suburbs. According to eyewitnesses’ accounts, “locals were not taking part, some reacting with indifference, others maliciously showing Jewish homes to the perpetrators, and but a handful of people expressing sympathy and hiding many Jews.”<sup>121</sup>

Among the anti-Bolsheviks, the main ideological explanation of the pogroms was “kike-Bolshevism” (*zhidobolshevism*). As Henry Abramson explains,

The most common charge against Jews was that they were allied with the Bolsheviks . . . [Although] a small minority of Bolsheviks were Jews and even smaller minority of Jews were Bolsheviks. History, however, is better understood as the unfolding of events based on perceptions rather than as the linear progression of facts. Jews were perceived as the driving force behind the Bolshevik movement, and it was not difficult to identify significant examples.<sup>122</sup>

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118 Ibid., 238.

119 Ibid., 781–784.

120 Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 116.

121 Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*, 406.

122 Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government*, 112.

Mindful of this, many Jews were wary of getting jobs in the Soviet system, “lest their families and relatives get butchered if the regime changes or a gang makes a raid.”<sup>123</sup> Archives, meanwhile, hold complaints about the Soviet authorities’ antisemitism (in particular, one such message came in August 1920 from Kamianske).<sup>124</sup> Anyway, a rationale for the pogroms focused on the identification of Jews with Bolshevism appears to be an insufficient explanation of the magnitude of violence directed against a particular social-ethnic group. Besides, this idea, whenever it was introduced, was usually supplied *post factum*, as a self-justification of the committed acts. For sociologists, the power of antisemitic stereotypes is not a solid enough basis for understanding the outbreak of mass violence.<sup>125</sup> An important thing to consider is the fact that anti-Jewish pogroms in 1918–1919 were not simply outbursts of chaotic violence. Most often, they were perpetrated by an armed group claiming the legitimate authority. Moreover, pogroms occurred when such group was either retreating, or trying to take over an inhabited locality—in other words, attempting either to hold on to, or to establish its legitimacy through violence against the most vulnerable population group, assigned to the role of a collective “scapegoat” for atrocities committed by previous group(s) in power. In this case, grassroots antisemitism was an important factor to be considered in the choice of the victim.

### Everyday Routines of the Civil War

The history of every revolution could probably be put down on paper as “a chronicle of daily villainies.”<sup>126</sup> A society that immerses itself in a revolution

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123 Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov*, 406.

124 Ibid.

125 Compare important theoretical observations in Trutz von Trotha, “Zur Soziologie der Gewalt,” *Soziologie der Gewalt. Sonderhefte: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 37 (1997): 9–58; Mark Mazower, “Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century,” *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 1158–1178; Randal Collins, *Violence. A Micro-Sociological Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Jörg Baberowski, “Gewalt verstehen,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 5 (2008): 5–17; Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jan C. Behrends, “Gewalt und Staatlichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert. Einige Tendenzen zeithistorischer Forschung,” *Neue Politische Literatur* 58 (2013): 39–58.

126 Isaak Babel’, “Konarmia,” in Isaak Babel’, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1966), 60. Compare Igor’ Narskiĭ, *Zhizn’ v katastrofe. Budni naseleniia Urala v 1917–1922 godakh* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 2001); Tanja Penter, *Odessa 1917. Die Revolution aus der Perspektive der Peripherie* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000); Liudmila Novikova, Sarah Badcock, and Aaron

of any kind gradually becomes accustomed to instability. At the same time, it tries to figure out the points of reference in the new system of relations, and to maintain the minutiae of everyday life that can be preserved when the pace of social processes accelerates and many inhibitors, including the state's legitimate monopoly on violence, disappear.

Katerynoslav's immersion in the revolution is described in the diary of Princess Vera Urusova, who, left alone when her husband moved to the Caucasus region where he was eventually killed by the Bolsheviks, lived through all regime changes in the city. Almost every new set of rulers installed their headquarters

precisely in the Urusovs' house. Urusova tried not only to record her feelings about the socio-political changes but also to make sense of them.

Already in the end of 1916, the princess had to take a ride on the steps of a train filled with army deserters and was faced with a novel, defiant, and sometimes insulting attitude from servants. In 1917, the revolutionary turbulences led to the discontinuation of telegraph and postal services. In addition, tram and railway traffic was stopped. A great increase of thieving and violence made people constantly fear for their lives as well as the ones of friends and relatives. As the princess commented on the revolutionary events, "it all seemed to me like a tiresome comedy with marionettes." Still, the new situation could not change her entire established beliefs and sway her conviction that "some day we may be able to live a normal life."

Nonetheless, in the spring of 1918 a shocking event happened that reached a point of no return. Peasants looted the family estate Kotovka; the garden and the



FIGURE 22.

The memorial cross in honor of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic soldiers erected in January 2017.

Photo by Andrii Portnov.

family library counting 27,000 books were destroyed, and the favorite couple of swans were sold at the price of three rubles per each.<sup>127</sup> Vera Urusova shared her sadness and the personal shock: “it makes me feel as if we are buried alive,” “as if we had survived our own execution.” She kept asking herself “are we just relics?” She compared her destiny with that of hunted animals, and reminisced how, in her childhood, she and other kids were playing the game of the French Revolution: “[n]ow those make-believe games have become a dreadful reality.”<sup>128</sup>

The princess sought explanations “for this destructive madness” in Sergei Platonov’s lectures on Russian history, in the books of Anatole France, Dante, Pushkin, and Leo Tolstoy. At last, she made the following entry: “I understand how Bolshevism developed in Russia because Russians by nature are inclined to destroy things and then have foreigners rebuild them.”<sup>129</sup> Yet, in Urusova’s mind, the feeling of shame for Russia was inextricably linked to patriotism: “If I did not love my country so much, I would not feel such shame now.”<sup>130</sup> Unlike other memoirists, in April 1918 she harshly criticized the widespread admiration for “the German order”:

It is shameful to accept peace and have order restored to us by an army, which can also crush us. How disheartening to think that all the efforts and sacrifices that we bore in the war have ended like this . . . Socialist governments of different shades have deprived us of everything that was dear to us and they have ruined us completely. But I would have given up all my possessions voluntarily had the socialists been able to save Russia. But besides destruction, the socialists have also exposed the vile elements of the people before the whole world. I am not thinking of just the working class, but of Russians from all walks of life.<sup>131</sup>

Constantly comparing the comportment of people she knew before and during the revolution, Urusova arrived at the conclusion that “[w]ar and revolution, I think, reveal the true essence of things and people, like an x-ray.” However,

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127 Tyrras, *Letters of Life*, 280, 281, 273, 301.

128 Ibid., 371, 385, 307, 332, 345.

129 Ibid., 363.

130 Ibid., 320.

131 Ibid., 357. Princess Urusova was allowed to leave the Soviet Union and immigrate to Italy in October 1924. In emigration, she was known to make her living by teaching foreign languages. Urusova’s last letter, which she sent to her English teacher’s family in Great Britain, is dated April 1942.

in another passage she wondered at the fact that “the recent horrors have not changed people at all” and tried to find comfort in memories: “I have contempt and certain pity for them because they live in darkness. Besides, they cannot deprive us of our past . . . I am grateful to the Lord for that past.”<sup>132</sup>

Katerynoslav in January 1918 is also described in the memoirs of Pavlo Vasyliuk, a young chief of the army of the governorate and a native of Eastern Galicia:

The city looked somewhat weird. In daytime, as if nothing was happening, trade was going on as usual, and there was not much crime around because thieves were punished on the spot, by vigilante justice. Initially the soldiers would leave the service at will and take rides to their homes with bags full of state property, their guns sawed-off, just in case. Evenings in the city were marked by “the deepening of the revolution”: there was a lot of shooting from rifles and revolvers everywhere, and now here, now there, a grenade would go off. Who was shooting and why? Some were learning to shoot, others were simply utilizing bullets lest they burden their pockets, and still others were shooting to pluck up their courage. Shots were fired at the sky, at electric lamps, so they would shine less, at windows close at hand, and quite often—at passers-by [who were] presumed dangerous. Restaurants, bars, gambling houses were chockfull of visitors.<sup>133</sup>

The popularity of entertainment venues reflected not so much an eagerness to bring a situation full of dangers and instability back to normal, as a desire to enjoy “the boons” that could disappear at any moment. During the revolutionary years, the main thing in short supply was the sense of stability, whereas unhealthy uncertainty became the norm.

Valerian Pidmohyl'nyi's short story “Third Revolution” (1925) describes Katerynoslav living through the fifteenth regime change. As its character prayed, “May this regime hold for a long-long time . . . At least two months!”<sup>134</sup>

Compiling a timeline of Katerynoslav's revolutionary years is a difficult task not only on account of frequent regime changes, which amounted up to

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132 Tyrras, *Letters of Life*, 384, 374, 340–341.

133 Pavlo Vasyliuk, “Katerynoslavs'ki podii 1917–1919 r.r.,” in *Nashe slovo. Zbirnyk 3. Isaakovi Mazepi na vichnu pam'iat'* (Munich: Nashe slovo, 1973), 80. Vasyliuk wrote his memoirs in emigration in Prague where he worked as chemist. In 1945, he was arrested by the Soviet secret service and brought to the Soviet prison.

134 Pidmohyl'nyi, *Tretia revoliutsiia*, 234.



twenty-five in the narrow timeframe 1917–1920,<sup>135</sup> but also due to the periods when different rulers coincided. For instance, for a week in November 1917, and a week in January 1919, the Hetmanate uptown coexisted with Petliura's directorate downtown.<sup>136</sup> In December 1918, according to the Bolshevik Amosov:

Kaidaky and Chechelevka were under the Soviets. The Petliurovists ruled over the stretch of land between Chechelevka and Sadovaya. The territory from Sadovaya to the Cityhall was the Germans' preserve. So-bornaya Hill all the way to the summer houses was controlled by the Eighth corps (established on the hetman's order and oriented at the one and indivisible [Russia—A. P.]).<sup>137</sup>

The revolution did not simply crush and delegitimize the old system. It also created an array of new opportunities, namely, career growth, enrichment, and self-realization. Its destructive component initially even helped to unite groups with different political agendas, who were wary of a total chaos. For instance, in the autumn of 1917, parties of different stripes (including anarchists!) defended wine and vodka warehouses from the mob attacks.<sup>138</sup>

For the criminal world, too, the revolution offered new opportunities and created a space where thugs, for a while, could assume the guise of “builders of the new world.” In particular, criminal gangs very soon began posing as requisition commissions of different groups in power—first of all, the Soviet authorities. Therefore, the Bolsheviks of Katerynoslav had to manufacture 1,200 special badges for their functionaries and told the residents that these badges distinguished Red Guard soldiers from bandits.<sup>139</sup>

The magnitude of thuggery directly depended on the strength of the powers that be. Whenever they weakened, thuggery flared up. This is what happened, in particular, before the Bolsheviks' first retreat in the winter of 1918. According to the memoirs of Vasily Averin:

in the last days we spent there thuggery spread around like a fire. All these gangs had very impressive names—for instance, a squadron of maximalists, anarchists, etc. After their takeover of the best hotels, they used them

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135 Khromov, ed., *Grazhdanskaia voïna i voennaia interventsia v SSSR: Entsiklopediia*, 207.

136 Igrenov, “Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia,” 235.

137 *Bor'ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 250.

138 Omelianovych-Pavlenko, “Na Ukraïni, 1917–1918 rr.,” 34–35.

139 *Bor'ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 179.



to store all their loot. Bringing these groups to heel was no easy matter because our troops were unwilling to engage in military action against them. To liquidate these gangs, we had to use the Serpovskaya detachment and the detachment of Jewish soldiers.<sup>140</sup>

Historians note that the key to understanding the attitudes of peasants, who made up 87.4% of the population in the Katerynoslav Governorate, during the revolution were their unwillingness and unpreparedness to sacrifice anything, especially land ownership, for the sake of the “highest ideals.” Local interests were paramount.<sup>141</sup> Elements of local self-awareness could be traced in workers’ attitudes as well. In particular, workers from the Brianskyi plant were opposed to the Bolsheviks’ plans to evacuate the equipment when they would retreat from the city. Such event would cause the shutdown of the plants and cost the workers their jobs. At the initial stage of the revolution, the railway office workers were trying to keep any armed group from entering the city. They hoped to maintain a relative calm until a legitimate government would be set in place in the country.

Such manifestations of local attitudes, triggered by the elementary desire to maximize chances of survival, are not always easy to discern behind the ideologically colored stories depicting the events. The authors of such histories, trying out the roles of “awakeners,” could complain, not without reason, that “everything was getting smashed against the benightedness of the masses.”<sup>142</sup> Notwithstanding, from a historian’s point of view, it is important to understand this logic of non-involvement. It corresponds also to the philosophy of communal interest and victimhood as reflected in the idea of a common grave, which was

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140 Ibid., 271.

141 See a special research made on documents from the Kharkiv region: Mark R. Baker, *Peasants, Power, and Place. Revolution in the Villages of Kharkiv province, 1914–1921* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2016). Compare O. V. Mykhailiuk, *Selianstvo Ukraïny v pershi desiatylittia XX st.: Sotsiokul’turni protsesy* (Dnipropetrovsk: Innovatsiia, 2007); Iu. H. Pakhomenkov, “Vid ‘Vserosiiskoho selians’koho soiuzu’ do ‘Selians’koi spilky’: Borot’ba za vplyvy na selianstvo Katerynoslavshchyny v 1917 rotsi,” *Humanitarnyi zhurnal* 1 (2012): 140–147.

142 Omelianovych-Pavlenko, “Na Ukraïni, 1917–1918 rr.,” 42. It would be worthwhile to compare the above statement of the chief of the Ukrainian troops with the Bolshevik Vasily Averin’s confession: “When the risk of occupation became real—especially in the last days of March—quite naturally, one could see a feeling of uncertainty creep over the workers who stayed, and they started to adopt democratic norms.” *Bor’ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine*, 271.

created for the victims of the first street fights in Katerynoslav on December 27–29, 1917. All twenty-three victims—the local Bolsheviks, the UNR soldiers, and the six Austrian prisoners of war who came under fire—were honorably buried in one grave.<sup>143</sup>

The further development of the war situation and the fatality counts, growing concurrently with the aggravation of the ideological conflict, soon made such common graves inappropriate and impossible. Violence and death were becoming a routine occurrence. Therefore, only acts of extreme cruelty were bound to draw attention and become recorded. For instance, describing Katerynoslav under the Whites' rule, Evgenia Turmanina noted that "because of the lack of textiles, in our city people often disinter corpses recently buried, sometimes several bodies at a time, and leave them out in the open in indecent poses. Window shutters in homes are closed—after the pogrom Jews are afraid of everything."<sup>144</sup> Turmanina also recorded a story (as heard from a female friend) of a rape by the Makhnovists: "The wife of one of the officers told us with horror how four Makhnovists made a tour of their house, took her to a far-off room and raped her—all four of them. And she was afraid of calling her father—they could have killed him."<sup>145</sup>

And yet, even during the most violent moments, the abuse went hand in hand with the daily routine. According to the memoirs of Victor Kravchenko, a Katerynoslav resident coming from a worker's family,

The amazing fact, in retrospect, is that under the turbulence of civil war, disorder, and dangers, the processes of ordinary living somehow went on. We worked, studied, ate, slept, read and laughed. We made new friendships and even planned for the future. The turbulence became a familiar and natural thing. . . Life, the will to survive and the habit of survival, were stronger than all the violences.<sup>146</sup>

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143 Mikhailiuk, *Ekaterinoslav v 1917 godu*, 17.

144 [n. a.], "Svidetel'stvo o Ekaterinoslave vremen grazhdanskoï voïny," accessed May 17, 2020, [http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article\\_ru.php?article=99](http://gorod.dp.ua/history/article_ru.php?article=99).

145 Ibid.

146 Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom. The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official*, 23. Victor Kravchenko grew in the family of a worker who was an active participant of the 1905 revolution in Katerynoslav. Kravchenko had worked as an engineer in different locations across the USSR before getting an appointment at the trade mission in the US. In April 1944 he asked for political asylum in Washington. His memoir *I Chose Freedom* became an international bestseller and caused a political scandal. In 1946, he sued the French Communist newspaper *Les Lettres Françaises*, which claimed that the book was authored not by Kravchenko but by

Princess Urusova expressed the same opinion in her diary: “From a distance you may imagine the terror to be truly great, but in fact the dull routine of life lightens the seriousness of the situation.”<sup>147</sup>

The routine of survival is also captured in the writings of Anatoly Starodubov, an adolescent offspring of a noble family who started keeping a diary in 1918, aged nine, under the impression of Nicholas II’s journal he had read. Starodubov always started his daily entries, which are most of the time laconic and unemotional, with references to the weather, and frequently mentioned books he had read, without much passion. Starodubov records that people living in the city’s center began arranging kitchen gardens and had grown accustomed to lunching without butter and searching for firewood to heat their homes by taking apart palisades and then digging up tree stumps in the Potemkin Garden.<sup>148</sup>

An (un)surprising manifestation of humaneness in a situation of wartime dehumanization is described in “Kol’ka” (1924), a poem by Mikhail Svetlov, a native of Katerynoslav and a member of Katerynoslav chapter of Komsomol, who went on to become one of the foremost Soviet poets.<sup>149</sup> The speaker in the poem has been ordered to execute by shooting a prisoner—a soldier of Makhno. When the prisoner, called Kol’ka, extends his hand to the speaker, he cannot carry out the order. It is curious, how the poem’s last lines give a sense of the speaker’s identity and that of his recent enemy-turned-friend:

Kol’ka, Kol’ka . . .  
Where is my anger?  
I didn’t make the shot,  
And we walked back:

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émigrés, hired by the American state security service, and that the information provided in the book about the Soviet repressions was false. After proceedings that attracted a lot of attention, the court ruled in Kravchenko’s favor while refusing to compensate his damages. See more in: Gary Kern, *The Kravchenko Case: One Man’s War on Stalin* (New York: Enigma Books, 2007); Nina Berberova, *Delo Kravchenko. Istoriia protsesa* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo imeni Sabashnikovskh, 2000).

147 Tyrras, *Letters of Life*, 287.

148 A. F. Starodubov, *Zapiski ochevidtza. Dnevnik v 2-kh knigakh*, vol. 1 (Dnipropetrovs’k: Gaudeamus, 2001), 62, 63, 73, 97.

149 See Svetlov’s reminiscences of his childhood in Katerynoslav in his short memoirs: Mikhail Svetlov, “Zametki o moei zhizni,” in Mikhail Svetlov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975), 7. In 1922, already in Kharkiv, Svetlov wrote a short poem “Ekaterinoslav,” in which he identified his native town with its heart of Bolshevism—the Brians’kyi plant: Mikhail Svetlov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974), 56.

This young lad must have  
 Pulled out an ace at birth.  
 We walked back and, light-handed,  
 In an unfamiliar tavern  
 Near the Brianskyi plant  
 Set about seeing off a long stretch of leisure.  
 And at the dawn we were  
 Congratulating one another with a new friendship,  
 Him, forgetful of his association with Makhno,  
 Me, forgetful of my Jewishness.<sup>150</sup>

### Soviet Rule: Provisional and Permanent

As the religious philosopher and Minister of religions in the Skoropadsky government Vasily Zenkovsky observed: “only Bolsheviks had in their ranks individuals skilled at holding power.”<sup>151</sup> Also important were Lenin’s keen political instincts, his aptitude for tactical withdrawal and subsequent return to pursuing his political goals, with new slogans, suited for a particular moment, and with unrelenting cruelty. One of such vital tactical steps was representing the Bolsheviks’ offensive in Ukraine as a local initiative, not something plotted from the outside. In particular, on April 3, 1918, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Soviet Russia Georgy Chicherin had this to say in response to the Rada’s peace proposal:

As for the fratricidal war allegedly fought between two antagonistic nations, the people’s commissariat resolutely rejects such an explanation of the bloody battle in Ukraine. The Soviet government is not at war with the Ukrainian People’s Republic. This is a battle between two parts of Ukrainian people, and what we have here is only heartfelt compassion which Russia’s working masses offer to Ukraine’s workers and peasants in these days, which are truly tragic for Ukrainian—and not only Ukrainian—people.<sup>152</sup>

150 Svetlov, *Sobranie sochineniï*, vol. 1, 98. In 1919, together with another famous Soviet writer, Perets Markish, Svetlov was a member of the Jewish self-defense unit in Katerynoslav. See Aleksandr Bystriakov, *Ocherki istorii sionistskogo dvizheniia v Ekaterinoslave* (Dnipropetrovsk: Sokhnut-Ukraina, 2008), 149.

151 Ivantsova, *Getman P. P. Skoropadskii. Ukraina na perelome*, 215.

152 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 2, 251.

Shortly before that—coincidentally, in Katerynoslav—at the Second All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets (March 17–19, 1918), Ukraine was proclaimed an independent Soviet republic. Two days later, hastily leaving the city, the Bolsheviks who announced the Soviet Ukraine, were already in Taganrog.

In their confrontation with Ukrainian governments, the Bolsheviks professed their localness. Seeking support for their struggle against the German and Austrian troops, they tried to secure “Mother Russia’s help.” In his memoir, Zinoviy Arbatov mentioned the shock felt by residents of Katerynoslav when the generals formerly in service of the tsar issued such pro-Bolshevik statement. Arbatov also wrote about the impact of the cruel acts committed by the Bolsheviks’ secret police *Cheka*: “Neither pandemics nor hunger depressed the people so much as the awareness of the total lack of any rights, and the sense of absolute vulnerability made us unhealthily fearful and extremely submissive to the tiniest tokens of the Red power.”<sup>153</sup>

On December 24, 1918, after receiving the news of the monarchy’s fall in Germany, Soviet Russia withdrew from the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and immediately began an offensive on Ukraine. Responding to the UNR’s naïve question about the reasons for the Soviet troops’ advance, Chicherin claimed that “it is not the Soviet army [advancing], it’s Ukrainian troops . . ., in Ukraine, a revolt caused by the directorate’s counterrevolutionary measures is gaining momentum.”<sup>154</sup> On February 5, 1919, the Bolsheviks were in Kyiv. Shortly before that, on January 27, Katerynoslav was taken over by the Red troops under the command of Pavel Dybenko. In the March of 1919, a special commission of the Highest Military Inspectorate depicted the state of the possessed territories:

The overall state of the Ekaterinoslav governorate is that of distress. A grave food crisis. Unemployment. Factories are idle. Workers, who expected that the Soviet authorities would relaunch the factories, are highly dissatisfied; antisemitic propaganda. The anarchist-antisemitic propaganda is corrupting the troops. Due to the discontent among the soldiers, the overall situation in *uezds* is unstable. Even the morals of the Eightieth regiment of the Ninth division, which arrived from Russia, have gone out of the window. Communist organizations in *uezds* are very weak.<sup>155</sup>

153 Arbatov, “Ekaterinoslav 1917–1922 gg.,” 108. Compare Igrenyev, “Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia,” 240–241.

154 Antonov-Ovseenko, *Zapiski o grazhdanskoï voïne*, vol. 3, 146.

155 Ibid., 203.

The Soviets installed themselves in the city on December 30, 1919, at a seventh try, 2 years after their first attempt on December 29, 1917.

### At the Crossroads of Wars and Revolutions

The First World War, to use George Kennan's phrase, became the "great seminal catastrophe" ("seminal" here means both "primary" and "fertile").<sup>156</sup> People looked forward to it as both the deliverance and the beginning of a new world. It started off a chain of wars and revolutions, which left a very painful mark on the ethnic outskirts of the Russian Empire. Katerynoslav experienced both the Russian and the Ukrainian revolutions as well as a series of local movements and initiatives. Between 1917 and 1919, the city experienced more than twenty regime changes, including the creation of various Ukrainian states and the advances of Denikin's White army. It was taken over three times by Nestor Makhno, and Soviet rule was finally established on the seventh attempt. The fragile consensus over the inviability of monarchy, reached in February 1917, was soon replaced with social and ethnic conflicts, which intensified along different lines of separation, reinforcing and overlapping each other. According to a modern historian, the self-organization of society in the Russian Empire only exacerbated these divisions, while the success of various political projects became more and more predicated on the willingness and ability to use violence.<sup>157</sup>

The Ukrainian writer Viktor Petrov (Domontovych) described this kaleidoscope of powers with great sensitivity:

The rulers in this city in the steppe, open to every wind as it was, were changing with kaleidoscopic brightness. They were changing in nearly the same organic pattern as the tide at an ocean rises and falls. In the brief periods decreed by fate for every set of rulers, the wielders of power were acting hastily and relentlessly. They acted with a cruel hopelessness of conquistadors, conquerors of a recently discovered and yet unexplored continent.<sup>158</sup>

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156 Quoted in Gerd Koenen, *Mezhdu strakhom i voskhishcheniem. 'Rossiiskii kompleks' v soznanii nemtsev, 1900–1945* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2010), 18.

157 See Il'ia Gerasimov, ed., *Novaia imperskaia istoriia Severnoi Evrazii*, vol. 2 (Kazan': Ab Imperio, 2017), 609–612.

158 V. Domontovych [Viktor Petrov], *Doktor Serafikus. Bez hruntu* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 1999), 331. Compare the description of the power changes in nearby Elysavethrad (now Kropyvnyts'kyi) in Ilya Ehrenburg's insightful novel published in 1921: Il'ia Ehrenburg, "Neobychainye pok-

Quite tellingly, when a new set of rulers took over the city, they tried to conceal (or, at least, to play down) the fact that they were strangers to the place. Perhaps only Makhno did not have this problem to deal with, but his localness included aversion to cities as such, since the Makhnovist movement was a peasant movement by nature.<sup>159</sup> Nevertheless, the ethno-national affiliation of the Makhnovists and other local guerilla groups evades straightforward categorization:<sup>160</sup> while they used symbols associated with Zaporozhian Cossacks, these movements could have been entertaining pan-Ukrainian, Bolshevik, or simply local aspirations all along.<sup>161</sup>

In the intervals between the political shifts, Katerynoslav and most of its residents found themselves, to use the apt phrase of the Bolshevik Serafima Gopner, “in an atmosphere of passive expectation,”<sup>162</sup> trying to figure out intuitively what ideological line to hold in order to increase their chances for survival. This was not easy, considering that Katerynoslav enjoyed relative stability only from March 1917 until November 1918. From the end of 1918 to 1920, the city was in the grip of chaos and terror, which, *inter alia*, diminished the range of options of passive non-participation in the revolutionary events and of changing political camps.

Changing political camps, often for reasons that had little to do with ideology, was one of the main features of the civil war. This practice is described in Valerian Pidmohyl'nyi's story “Haidamaka” (1918), where two men join the Ukrainian army—one because he had “heard they have lots of weapons and wanted to get himself a pistol,” and another, because he “became completely disillusioned with life” and “resolved to go some place where people get killed.”<sup>163</sup>

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hozheniia Khulio Khurenito,” in Il'ia Ehrenburg, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990), 424–425.

159 See also: Iurii Mytrofanenko, *Ukrains'ka otamanshchyna 1918–1919 rokiv* (Kropyvnyi's'kyi: Imeks-LTD, 2016); Volodymyr Lobodaiev, ed., *Viina z derzhavoiu chy za derzhavu? Selians'kyi povstans'kyi rukh v Ukraïni 1917–1921 rokiv* (Kharkiv: Klub simeinoho dozvillia, 2017).

160 Compare Serhy Yekelchuk, “Bands or Nation Builders? Insurgency and Ideology in the Ukrainian Civil War,” in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War*, ed. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 52–71.

161 Christopher Gilley, “Fighters for Ukrainian independence? Imposture and identity among Ukrainian warlords, 1917–22,” *Historical Research* 90, no. 247 (2017): 172–190.

162 Gopner, “Vid bereznia 1917 do bereznia 1918 roku,” 25.

163 Pidmohyl'nyi, *Tretia revoliutsiia*, 19. Born in 1901 in a village called Chapli near Katerynoslav, Pidmohyl'nyi graduated in 1918 from Katerynoslav *Realschule* and enrolled at the mathematics department of a university, which he had to leave on account of financial difficulties.



A person who lived through more than one regime change in Katerynoslav reminisced: “At every regime change, lines were crossed and recrossed.”<sup>164</sup> The Bolsheviks acknowledged that the Red Army was joined “not by the best of people but by youngsters and thrill seekers.”<sup>165</sup> The Red Army soldiers who swore neutrality before the Grigoriev army’s arrival openly stated, “whoever comes, we’ll obey”<sup>166</sup>!

Urban elites were often keen to preserve their standing under any regime. For instance, the Archbishop of Katerynoslav and Mariupol (since 1911) Ahapyt, who had been a prominent member of the regional Black Hundred until 1917, at first rejoiced at the end of monarchy and, in 1919, became the head of the “Synod of Ukrainian Christian Orthodox Autocephalous Church.” Nevertheless, when the Denikin army took control of the city, he repented and again assumed the office of the archbishop. In November 1922, he was arrested by the Bolsheviks and died in prison.<sup>167</sup> No matter who was in control, attempts to adapt to a current regime could not guarantee survival, and yet, the post-revolutionary period saw quite a few examples of people switching over to the former enemy’s side. A good example is the story of Lev Zadov (Zinkovskiy), a native of a Jewish agricultural colony near Katerynoslav, who worked as a counterintelligence chief with Makhno and later escaped to Romania, returning to the Soviet Union, and in 1924 becoming an OGPU (secret police) operative.

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The writer published his first short stories and translations in Katerynoslav, but already in 1921, he moved to Kyiv. Kyiv is the setting for his 1928 modernist novel *The City (Misto)*. In December 1934 the writer was arrested, and in 1937, executed by shooting in a concentration camp in Karelia. More on Pidmohylny see in V. O. Mel’nyk, *Suvoryi analityk doby: Valer’ian Pidmohyl’nyi v ideino-estetychnomu konteksti ukrains’koï prozy pershoï polovyny XX st.* (Kyiv: Vipol, 1994); Maxym Tarnawsky, *Between Reason and Irrationality. The Prose of Valerijan Pidmohyl’nyj* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Mykola Chaban, ed., *Nashchadok Stepu. Spohady pro Valer’iana Pidmohyl’noho* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Lira, 2001); Olena Haleta, ed., *Dosvid kokhannia i krytyka chystoho rozumu. Valer’ian Pidmohyl’nyi: tekst i konflikt interpretatsii* (Kyiv: Fakt, 2003), etc.

164 Igrenyev, “Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia,” 236.

165 Mikhailiuk, “Ekaterinoslav v 1917 godu,” 16.

166 Igrenyev, “Ekaterinoslavskie vospominaniia,” 242.

167 The personality of Ahapyt remains scandalously underresearched. See O. V. Boiko and Ie. O. Snida, “Postat’ arkhiepyskopa Katerynoslavs’koho Ahapita na tli tserkovno-politychnykh protsesiv pisliarevolutsiinoï doby (1917–1924 rr.),” *Prydniprov’ia istoriko-kraieznachy doslidzhennia* 8 (2010): 225–233. Compare Klymentii K. Fedeych and Klymentii I. Fedevych, *Za viru, tsaria i Kobzaria. Malorosiis’ki monarkhisty i ukrains’kyi natsional’nyi rukh (1905–1917 roky)* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2017), 266–267.



FIGURE 23. Hryhorii Petrovsky visits the Petrovsky plant in 1922.

Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

He continued working for the organization until he was arrested in 1937 and later executed as a “Romanian spy.”<sup>168</sup> A White Army general, Yakov Slashchov, who drove Makhno out from Katerynoslav, returned from emigration in 1921. He took up a teaching job at a school for the Red Army officers in Moscow. In January 1929, Slashchov was shot in his Moscow apartment. The killer claimed that his murder was motivated by revenge for the Jewish pogroms carried out by the Slashchov troops in Mykolaiv.<sup>169</sup>

In the whirlwind of war and revolution, it was easier to seize power than to hold onto it. As it turned out, the Bolsheviks were the most adept at the former and the most talented at organizing a regular disciplined army. Their masterful tactics in combination with the cruelest policy of terror enabled them

168 Volodymyr Mel'nyk, “Dva zhyttia L. Zinkovs'koho-Zadova,” in *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB 1* (2003): 154–170. A historian Kostiantyn/Konstantin Shteppa, who happened to share a prison cell with Zadov, described him in memoirs: K. F. Shteppa, *XX vek. Istoriia odnoi sem'i*, ed. A. V. Popov (Moscow: Rusaki, 2003), 108–118.

169 More detailed information is provided in: A. V. Kavtaradze, *Voennye spetsialisty na sluzhbe Respubliki Sovetov, 1917–1920 gg.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988).

to maximally adapt to realities of the day. Lenin's flexibility in the national question, in combination with carefully thought-out economic compromises (NEP) and the protection of a strong machinery of the state, enabled the Bolsheviks to gain control over most territories of the former empire. At the same time, both Russian and Ukrainian democratic projects not only proved to be weaker than the Bolsheviks' ones, but also contributed to each other's failure.<sup>170</sup>

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170 Compare an important observation that exactly "the Ukrainian national movement in 1917 was the largest challenge to Russian democracy" and the last failed to respond to it. So "the Ukrainian vision of a confederation of genuinely equal nation states with their own socialist parties" proved to be rather unrealistic: Mark von Hagen, *The 1917 Revolution and the Imperial Turn* (manuscript). Quoted with the permission of the author.

# The Soviet Dnipropetrovsk

Katerynoslav has always seemed to me as what might be called an unfinished city. As if someone wanted to take a shot at it but didn't. The wide sweep, like that of a real steppe—but it wasn't carried through, it was stopped at the very start.

Serhy Yefremov,  
*Diaries*, 1928

Soviet cities were to become a polar opposite to the “bourgeois cities.” This vision related especially to Dnipropetrovsk, which was an industrial hub in a strategically important region. In 1933, the head of the Dnipropetrovsk design and reconstruction board argued that Dnipropetrovsk “concentrated all the worst aspects of the capitalist city, as it became clearly divided into proletarian and bourgeois neighborhoods, reflecting in its geographic division its face of a class society.”<sup>1</sup>

After the series of revolutions and wars, the city had to be not only restored but *reconsidered* as well. The Soviet project of taming nature (the most compelling part of which was the construction of a waterpower plant in the lower reaches of the Dnipro—the facilities that flooded the rapids and cardinally changed the entire ecosystem) went hand in hand with the Soviet utopian project of “the garden city.” The latter was understood literally, as “a city submerged in verdure,” but never as a jointly governed community.<sup>2</sup>

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1 R. B. Restling, “Dnepropetrovsk na putiakh sotsialisticheskoi rekonstruktsii,” *Arkhitektura SSSR* 6 (1935): 70–71. I am grateful to Valentyn Starostin who brought my attention on this publication.

2 Mark Meerovich, *Gradostroitel'naia politika SSSR 1917–1929. Ot goroda-sada k vedomstvennomu rabochemu poselku* (Moscow: NLO, 2017), 10.

Rhetorically promoting emancipation (of workers from “capitalist exploitation,” women from “kitchen-sink slavery,” ethnic groups from “the prison of nations”), the Soviet authorities, meanwhile, were extremely preoccupied with monitoring and accounting. Already by the mid-1920s, the Soviet government had definitely decided that apartment blocks with communal flats represented ideal residential arrangements for the formation of collectives of workers living side by side, whereas a roof over one’s head was the ideal leash to keep people tethered to their workplaces.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the state monopolized distribution of housing, making it a key social incentive, so that the Soviet city became a space of control and, at the same time, of attempts to evade it.

### The Soviet Rule in Katerynoslav

In December 1920, at an assembly of the Katerynoslav city council, Kliment Voroshilov, the member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry Army, stated that “perhaps in entire Ukraine you cannot find a city more damaged than Ekaterinoslav. We have to put it back into its proper shape . . . We can and must overcome ruin and starvation.”<sup>4</sup> A little earlier in October 1920, the governorate’s Extraordinary Commission (*Cheka*) outlined in its report that workers in Katerynoslav were feeling “unsure” and overwhelmed by “apathy” because their hopes for a better life were defeated, their factories were standing idle and pro-Petliura sentiments were pretty strong, while peasants were as “anti-Soviet as before.”<sup>5</sup>

To understand the methods used by the Bolsheviks to “put things back into a proper shape,” one should remember that the First World War strengthened the tendency towards absolutism of state power and control all through

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3 Ibid., 11, 133, 284.

4 G. V. Nikonenko and G. I. Shevchenko, eds., *Dnepropetrovsk: Vekhi istorii* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1976), 42. Voroshilov in his memoir mentions how, when out of job, he wandered around Katerynoslav: “the beautiful and big town along the bank of the majestic Dnieper.” While describing a risky rock-climbing adventure, he suddenly uses the Ukrainian name of the river: “Dnipro took pity of me, and even though out of job, I’m nonetheless alive.” K. E. Voroshilov, *Rasskazy o zhizni (Vospominaniia)*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1968), 103–104.

5 Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovskoi oblasti [DADO, State Archive of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast'], fond P–1, opys 1 dodatkovyi, sprava 6, arkush 9.

Europe.<sup>6</sup> Regulation and centralization of distribution of goods; forced labor; social engineering; the ideas that common welfare requires the displacement or elimination of “undesirable elements”; the classification of people according to their ethnic origin often purposefully ascribed to them—all these political-economic features became typical for the postwar social architecture. According to Peter Holquist, in this context, “Russia’s civil war might be seen as only the most developed instance of a more extended ‘European civil war’ stretching through and beyond the Great War.”<sup>7</sup>

In the case of the Soviet republics, state violence and militarization of their economy, in particular, the suppression of peasants’ revolts and confiscation of grain for cities and industry, were a part of the realization of Lenin’s principles guiding towards the survival of the country surrounded by enemies. Starting in 1921 and lasting through 1922, a period of famine with aggravating consequences, especially in the territories near the Volga and Ural rivers as well as in Soviet Ukraine, was caused by the Bolshevik “war communism,” accompanied by a horrible crop failure resulting from a dry season and a very cold winter. The famine was officially recognized by the Soviet government as such and the authorities asked for international help.

Already in 1918–1919, trying to form an alliance of convenience with the peasantry against their enemies, the Bolsheviks masterfully exploited popular phobias, aspirations, and illusions by summarizing them in simplest terms and thus imitating an expression of “people’s hopes”—first and foremost, those expressed in the slogan “land to peasants.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, already in the first stable years of Soviet rule, it became obvious that “peasants did not ever obtain what they called ‘soviet power’—that is, control over their daily lives and work, ‘free trade,’ and the right to dispose of the fruits of their labor as they saw fit. And they certainly did not receive freedom from outside interference.”<sup>9</sup>

6 See more in Andrea Graziosi, *Voïna i revoliutsiia v Evrope, 1905–1956* (Moscow: Rossipen, 2005), 33–52.

7 Peter Holquist, “To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia,” in *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald G. Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127.

8 Serhii Savchenko, *Tserkovnaia provintsiiia v revoliutsii 1917 goda: Ekaterinoslavskaia eparkhiia kak zerkalo sobytii* (manuscript), 63–64. Quoted with the permission of the author.

9 Mark R. Baker, *Peasants, Power, and Place. Revolution in the Villages of Kharkiv province, 1914–1921* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2016), 199.

Instead of the right to dispose of their land “as they saw fit,” peasants were slapped with a system of requisitions and faced the famine. In the Katerynoslav Governorate, in the winter of 1921, 64% of crops were destroyed and the territory was officially categorized as starving.<sup>10</sup> In August 1921, a representative of the All-Ukrainian Revolutionary Society wrote in his report devoted to the Katerynoslav Governorate that the city was “really starving,” hospitals, kindergartens, and schools were closed, and “now thousands of starved people, including many orphans, are literally dying of starvation.”<sup>11</sup>

Vera Urusova described her impressions of the international mission of assistance to the starving:

... we, who had descended to level of ragged savages, were astonished to see normal, well dressed people among us. We must have seemed like a nation of Robinson Crusoes who have been rescued from some desert island. When I first met the President of the American Relief Agency, Mr. Bergold, I bombarded him with questions about everything that had happened in the world in the last few years . . .<sup>12</sup>

In the spring of 1921, concerned about the famine and insufficient efficiency of the exclusively punitive measures, the Bolsheviks adopted, on Lenin’s insistence, the New Economic Policy (NEP). A manifestation of “the alliance of the city and the village,” it was tactical retreat designed to improve the country’s economic situation by weakening the economic burden on rural areas and authorizing a market economy together with different forms of private ownership, including foreign investment.<sup>13</sup> An involuntary and brilliant improvisation by the Soviet authorities, NEP was seen by many as a rejection of Marxist principles and the revolutionary ideals. For Lenin, however, it was more of

10 See more in O. M. Movchan, A. P. Ohins’ka, and L. V. Iakovleva, eds., *Holod 1921–1923 rokiv v Ukraïni: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 1993); Oksana I. Hanzha, *Ukraïns’ke selianstvo v period stanovlennia totalitarnoho rezhymu (1917–1927)* (Kyïv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NANU, 2000).

11 L. B. Miliakova, ed., *Kniga pogromov. Pogromy na Ukraine, v Belorussii i evropeïskoï chasti Rossii v period Grazhdanskoï voïny 1918–1922 gg. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 2007), 501.

12 Nicholas Tyrras, ed., *Letters of Life in an Aristocratic Russian Household before and after the Revolution. Amy Coles and Princess Vera Urusov* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 409.

13 See more in S. V. Kul’chyts’kyi, ed., *Suspil’stvo i vlada v radians’kii Ukraïni rokiv nepu (1921–1928)*, vol. 1 (Kyïv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NANU, 2015).



a tactical retreat before yet another vigorous offensive, which, though, he did not live to see.

Difficulties with food supplies in urban areas were typical for the early 1920s. In Katerynoslav they caused workers' riots, the largest among which was the strike in railway workshops lasting from May 1921. Workers attacked the railway administration, beat the head of its security, and decided to move with a demonstration towards the city center, which they were not allowed to enter. Troops were brought in Katerynoslav, with the prominent party and military leaders of Soviet Ukraine personally participating in the suppression of riots in the city.<sup>14</sup> The authorities exerted every effort in order "to show that the strike was caused by political rather than economic reasons and was a result of secret activities of a counterrevolutionary organization."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the *Cheka's* report of the same year mentions the Katerynoslav workers' "indifference" to Soviet power, the one that "drove them to hunger."<sup>16</sup>

After the end of the war, the Soviet government systematically targeted political pluralism, and minimized legal opportunities for a political mobilization outside the government's control. The government's full control over the public sphere was almost always reached by offensive tactics: surveillance was followed by supporting internal split in any non-Bolshevik political party, which soon led to show trials over the rival party's prominent members, their expulsion from Ukraine, and voluntary dissolution of their organization. Overall, such strategy can be traced in liquidation of all non-Bolshevik parties, which was completed by the Soviets by the middle of the 1920s.

All political opponents had to be discredited for the sake of establishing a single-party system. Show trials were of special importance here. They were staged (usually, literally on a theater stage) with maximum theatrical effects and initially ended up with relatively mild sentences. Already in April 1921, the case of the former city's administration under Denikin was heard in Kharkiv Opera House (ten of the twenty-four accused were university

14 For details see V. G. Grinchenko, "Malen'kii Kronshtadt': Sobytiia 1921 g. v Ekaterinoslave," *Politicheskie partii i dvizheniia Ukrainy XIX–XX vv.* (Dnipropetrovsk: Vydavnytstvo DNU, 1993), 109–119.

15 Ie. I. Borodin, ed., *Reabilitovani istoriiei. Dnipropetrovs'ka oblast'*, vol. 1 (Dnipropetrovsk: Monolit, 2009), 116.

16 Viktor Chentsov, Dmytro Arkhireis'kyi, "Represyivna polityka bil'shovyts'koho rezhymu na Katerynoslavshchyni v 1920-kh rr.," *Z arkhiviv VUCHK–GPU–NKVD–KGB 1* (2014): 56.

professors).<sup>17</sup> In May 1921, the show trial against the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionary Party's Central Committee took place.<sup>18</sup> Already in 1920, the All-Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party announced its voluntary dissolution, whereas in 1926 and 1928 former members of the party were arrested in Katerynoslav.<sup>19</sup>

The Mensheviks (the sister party of ruling Bolsheviks) were dissolved likewise. After the October Bolshevik takeover, the Mensheviks advocated the retention of civil liberties and denounced the Red Terror. In the beginning of 1920s, 113 out of 175 Mensheviks in Katerynoslav were arrested. In summer 1923 the Mensheviks were "strictly forbidden" to give lectures at the party's schools. In February 1924 the All-Ukrainian Congress of the Mensheviks in Kharkiv announced the party's voluntary dissolution.<sup>20</sup>

In regard to other parties, Soviet government was even more vigorous. In 1921, the Katerynoslav *Cheka* was demanded "not to permit the legalization of the anarchists"; in 1922, it was requested to put Zionist youth organizations out of commission "without wide coverage"; in September 1924, the Chekists reported the deportation of "the active element" of the Zionist movement outside Soviet Ukraine.<sup>21</sup>

The legitimization of the victory in the civil war meant, for Lenin and his party, the establishment of total control over public life. In May 1922, a special circular order of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine prohibited any public lectures and disputes without the prior approval of the government. Notably, special emphasis was placed on anti-religious disputes, which were advised to be conducted "only by well-prepared speakers and audience."<sup>22</sup> In October 1922 print censorship was introduced, which, at least at

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17 Viktor Husiev and Ihor Verba, "‘Iahidky vzrily potim’ (Z choho pochalo ‘perekovuvaty’ kharkivs’ku intelihentsiiu radians’ke pravosuddia),” *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1–2 (1995): 157–165.

18 Volodymyr Prystaiko, Iurii Shapoval, "Shliakh na Solovky,” *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1–2 (1995): 57–58.

19 Dmytro Arkhirei’s’kyi, Viktor Chentsov, "Bil’shovyky proty sotsialistychnykh partiï: represyynni aspekty politychnoi borot’by 1920-x rr.,” *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1 (2003): 31–32, 35–36.

20 Ibid., 22–24, 27.

21 Borodin, *Reabilitovani istoriieiu*, vol. 1, 118, 127–128, 138.

22 Ibid., 125.

first, was not implied for the publications by the Comintern, Communist Party, and Academy of Sciences.<sup>23</sup>

### Sovietization, Katerynoslav Style

In the early 1920s, Katerynoslav was visited by a British woman who knew neither Russian (and certainly not the Ukrainian) language nor the region's history. Nonetheless, her description of the destroyed city confirms the official Soviet information:

If one wished to write an exciting book of adventure, one would write the modern history of "Catherine's town," explaining the reason of its ruins. All is in ruin in Ekaterinoslav, except just the main street, and even that ends in a garden of weeds. The house in which the great Catherine used to visit her lover, the governor of the city, is looted of every mortal thing except its crystal chandeliers, the glitter of which can still be seen through the broken windows.<sup>24</sup>

Soviet reports about the city characterized the general condition of its public utilities as "poor" and "in need of lasting, long-term efforts aimed at rebuilding the city and putting it back into its pre-war shape."<sup>25</sup>

The author of a guidebook published in 1928 in Moscow applied the term "fairly well kept" only to Katerynoslav's central section, noting that only about half of the city's streets were paved, and, although certain steps to revamp distant working-class neighborhoods had been taken since 1923–1924, only 42% of estates were equipped with water pipes, and barely 10% disposed of a sewage.<sup>26</sup>

A local population census in 1920 showed that 41.9% of men and 23.8% of women in the Katerynoslav Governorate were literate. Literacy rates among the city's residents were higher, with the male literacy rate at 64.9%, and female rate

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23 Ibid., 128.

24 Clare Sheridan, *Across Europe with Satanella* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1925), 111–112. I am grateful to Stanislav Menzelevsky who brought my attention to this publication.

25 *Vsia Ekaterinoslavshchina. Spravochnaia kniga na 1925 god* (Katerynoslav: Zvezda, 1925), 141.

26 E. S. Batenin, ed., *Donbass. Iuzhnyi gorno-promyshlennyi raion*, (Moscow: Transpechat' NKPS, 1928), 338. Compare A. Radò, comp., *Führer durch die Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1928), 681–686.

at 49.7%.<sup>27</sup> The positive correlation between literacy and residence in the city is obvious, when one looks deeper into the breakdown along particular ethnic groups: 62% of Poles, 61.1% of Germans, 57.3% of Jews, 48.2% of Russians, and only 26% of Ukrainians knew how to read and write.<sup>28</sup> The ethnic groups who were historically most urbanized proved to be more literate than Ukrainians, who were predominantly village-dwellers. This correlation between the social (village) and ethnic (Ukrainian) origin posed one of the main challenges for Soviet nationalities policy during the 1920s.

A census taken in Katerynoslav in 1923 showed that Katerynoslav and its neighboring working-class townships, namely Amur-Nyzhniodniprovsk and Shliakhivka, had a population of 73,325 men and 82,333 women: 34.02% of them were blue-collar workers, 27.14%—white-collar workers, 13.04% belonged to the bourgeoisie, the jobs of 11.4% persons could not be assigned to any particular occupation category, 2.77% were domestic servants, 2.24%—soldiers and sailors, 1.13% were engaged in liberal professions, and 8.2% were unemployed.<sup>29</sup> The city's ethnic composition was the following: 42.5% Russians, 32.2% Jews and 32.2% Ukrainians.<sup>30</sup>

As of January 1, 1926, Katerynoslav had a population of 142,000 (40% of whom were Russians, 39% Jews, and 16% Ukrainians), and Amur-Nyzhniodniprovsk—27,000 (52% of whom were Russians, 34% Ukrainians, 6% Jews, and 4% Poles).<sup>31</sup>

Industry remained the backbone of the city's economy. In the 1920s, Katerynoslav had twenty-eight iron and steel plants as well as engineering works. A manufacturer of blast furnaces incorporated within the Petrovsky Yugostal Company, formerly the Brianskyi plant, was one of the biggest plants in the USSR in terms of its labor force (14.5 thousand) as well as the volume of its output—cast iron, steel, finished steel items, and rolled wire.<sup>32</sup>

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27 *Vsia Ekaterinoslavshchina. Spravochnaia kniga na 1925 god*, 24.

28 *Narodnoe khoziaistvo Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii. Otchet Ekaterinoslavskogo gubernomsoveshchaniia Soveta truda i oborony za period 1 apreliia–1 oktiabria 1922 g.* (Katerynoslav: Tipolitografiia Ekaterininskoi zheleznoi dorogi, 1922), 5.

29 *Vsia Ekaterinoslavshchina. Spravochnaia kniga na 1925 god*, 127.

30 *Ibid.*

31 Batenin, *Donbass. Iuzhnyi gorno-promyshlennyi raion*, 338; Radò, *Führer durch die Sowjetunion*, 681.

32 *Ibid.*, 339.

This big industrial center was not rich in cultural landmarks. After the demolition of the monumental bronze statue of Catherine II, the cityscape did not have much left—only small busts of Alexander Pushkin mounted in 1901 and Mykola/Nikolai Gogol erected in 1909. On January 22, 1924, a Lenin monument was added to this architectural landscape, across the road from the city's public garden on the *Prospekt*. The witness of the monument's opening described it as follows: "The monument is a granite bust of Lenin placed on a four-cornered wooden column which is painted in a granite color."<sup>33</sup> This first



FIGURE 24.

Hryhorii Petrovsky.  
Photo from the collection  
of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum  
of Dnipro.

monument of Lenin in the city had not stood long. Already in 1933, the party committee decided to demolish it because "neither the dimensions, nor the location, nor the general view of the square correspond to the goals of perpetuating Lenin."<sup>34</sup>

In August 1926, the city also saw "the beginning of the construction of a beautiful monument to the era, its great sacrifices and unmatched achievements—the grandiose edifice of the Metalworkers House of Culture, under whose vaults, made of steel, concrete, and glass, all trade unions and all the most important organizations of proletarian culture will work side by side."<sup>35</sup> Built in the proximity to the Brianskyi plant, the palace was designed by the local architect Oleksandr Krasnoselsky<sup>36</sup>.

For the Bolshevik politics in the beginning of the 1920s, it was crucial to reenact the ideologically significant events of the recent past. The diary of Anatoly Starodubov contains descriptions of such "commemorations." On November

33 A. F. Starodubov, *Zapiski ochevidtsa. Dnevnik v 2-kh knigakh* (Dnipropetrovsk: Gaudeamus, 2001), vol. 2, 75.

34 Valentin Starostin, *Ulitsy Dnepra* (Kharkiv: Folio, 2018), 189.

35 Batenin, *Donbass. Iuzhnyi gorno-promyshlennyi raion*, 347.

36 See more in O. N. Ihnatov, *Arkhitektori O. L. Krasnosel's'kyi* (Kyiv: Budivelnik, 1966).

7, 1922, leaflets were hung all around the city for the anniversary of the October Revolution. A big arch was erected in front of the GPU [*Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie*, the State Political Administration, a new name adopted for the Cheka in February 1922—A. P.] building with a slogan on it: “The step-back is over. Now proletariat goes forward!” The city center was illuminated. In the window of Khrennikov’s house, an electrical hammer was striking sparks from a mountain. The windows of the shops were colored red with electrical lamps switched on inside.<sup>37</sup>

In January 1924, in front of the railway station, the “staging” of workers’ execution in Petrograd took place,<sup>38</sup> and in August of the same year on Soborna square (in 1922 it was named after the October Revolution) “a jackstraw of war was burnt” to commemorate a ten-year anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.<sup>39</sup> In 1925, the anniversary of the October Revolution was celebrated with a manifestation, trailed by “trucks with dancers, white officers, popes, and capitalists guarded by workers and peasants. . . . On the balcony of the hotel ‘France’ the characters of the past were grimacing and shouting: an officer, a haidamak, a pope, a Menshevik.”<sup>40</sup> The carnivalization of the new regime’s most important holiday was supposed to ultimately delegitimize alternative political projects, which were still real in the memory of the city dwellers.

It is difficult to estimate how the people involved in the Soviet celebrations perceived the event itself and its messages. However, there is an interesting record of an external witness, Nikolai Moshkov, a radiotherapist from Katerynoslav. On November 7, 1930 he wrote in his diary:

While waiting for the train we observed the gatherings of demonstrators on the railway station square. One fact astonished me. A dull indifference to everything happening around was written all over the participants’ faces. After saying a couple of welcoming words, the speaker went away, and a typical vagabond climbed on the stage accompanied by a boy who was seven or eight years old. Orchestras were playing in the receding columns. The vagabond was clowning on the stage, and the boy next

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37 A. F. Starodubov, *Zapiski ochevidtsa. Dnevnik v 2-kh knigakh* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Gaudeamus, 2001), vol. 1, 171–172.

38 Ibid., 22.

39 Ibid., 46.

40 Starodubov, *Zapiski ochevidtsa. Dnevnik v 2-kh knigakh*, vol. 2, 117.



to him was whistling. The demonstrators in the still standing columns were staring at them silently, not showing any outrage.<sup>41</sup>

The Sovietization of the city included the renaming of its streets. In particular, Katerynynskiy Avenue became Karl Marx Avenue, Bishops Street—Soviet Street, Palace Street—Trotsky Street, Potemkin Street—Voroshilov Street, Stolypin Street—Chernyshevsky Street, Ascension Street—Bukharin Street, Bryanskaya Street—Petrovsky Street.<sup>42</sup> The renaming project replaced the imperial semantics with the Soviet one. It also used Ukrainian references. For example, Police Street became Taras Shevchenko Street.

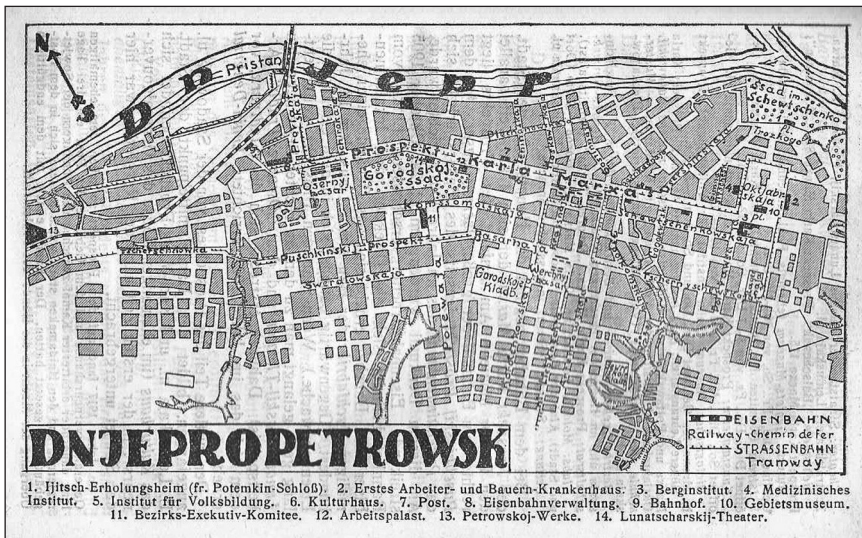


FIGURE 25. Map of the city center in German-language guidebook “Fuhrer durch die Sowjetunion” (Berlin, 1928).

From Andrii Portnov collection.

The Soviet cult of Taras Shevchenko was complicated in nature. Shevchenko was the biggest cultural figure in the Ukrainian canon. And he was integrated in the Soviet pantheon because of the powerful anti-tsarist and social rhetoric of his poetry. From the very beginning of the Soviet rule, Shevchenko festivities were organized in Katerynoslav. In March 1920, the poet’s portraits were

41 G. I. Guliaev, N. D. Busygina, eds., *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev: 1929–1942* (Dnipropetrovsk: Svidler A. L., 2012), 16–17.

42 *Vsia Ekaterinoslavshchina. Spravochnaia kniga na 1925 god*, 150–151.



hung along the main avenue, arches were built on Soborna square, and a procession went through the city center with “Ukrainian and Red flags,” as noted by Starodubov. After the demonstrations and the speeches were over, “everyone went to the cathedral.”<sup>43</sup> A Soviet festivity where Ukrainian flags and churchgoing were permitted is a testimony to the tactical flexibility of the Soviet power, which, in the beginning of the 1920s, still had to deal with political pluralism of the revolutionary and the civil war years.

### The Bolsheviks and the National Question

In the early twentieth century, as the belief in “the right of people to self-determination” was getting stronger, explaining political, social, and economic conflicts in nationalistic terms grew in influence. Empires were replaced with “nation states,” where ethno-religious homogeneity was an important precondition for political stability.

The Bolshevik government, on the one hand, advocated the ideals of internationalism. On the other hand, it founded the Soviet formal federal structure following the principle of territorial ethnicity. All the country’s residents were classified according to their “nationality,” *de facto* equalized with the category of ethnic origin, which played an important role in Soviet social politics.

To a great degree, the Bolsheviks owed their victory in the turmoil of wars and revolutions to their ideological flexibility and their readiness to adapt to the changing circumstances. While the Russian democrats and the monarchists ignored the national question, Lenin used it artfully in his bid for power. Putting into practice many ideas championed by national movements, such as promoting education in local languages, Lenin did this in order to strengthen the Soviet rule and weaken its local antagonists. One of the steps in this direction was the consistent use of the term *Ukrainians* (instead of “Little Russians” or *Malorossy*). In the Bolsheviks’ logic, this term promoted the narrative of the oppressed people who had to fight for their name and their national status.<sup>44</sup> Already in 1914, Lenin made a distinction between “a Great Russia, the country of the Great Russians, and ‘Russia,’ whose many peoples, including Ukrainians, were under Great-Russian rule.” He recognized that “Great Russians and Ukrainians were

43 Starodubov, *Zapiski ochevidtsa. Dnevnik v 2-kh knigakh*, vol. 1, 59–60.

44 E. Iu. Borisēnok, “Poniatia ‘Ukraina’ i ‘ukraintsy’ v bol’shevistskoī identifikatsionnoī strategii,” in *Imia naroda. Ukraina i eē naselenie v ofitsial’nykh i nauchnykh terminakh, publitsistike i literature*, ed. E. Iu. Borisēnok (Moscow: Nestor-Istoriia, 2016), 230.

two different nations.”<sup>45</sup> In Lenin’s logic, the Bolsheviks’ “unqualified” recognition of the right to self-determination (even including territorial secession) opened an avenue for “advocating a free union of the Ukrainians and the Great Russians, a voluntary association of the two peoples within one state.”<sup>46</sup>



FIGURE 26. The Khrinnykov house in 1930s.  
Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

Zeki Velidi Togan, a leader of the Bashkir national movement, cited in his memoir an interesting conversation about national policies between Lenin and Hryhory Petrovsky, a Ukrainian Bolshevik and a native of Katerynoslav. According to Togan, Petrovsky said:

Lenin looks at everything tactically . . . He places morality in the service of the proletariat’s class struggle. Many of the Bolsheviks’ allies are but temporary fellow travelers . . . Lenin is protecting the Great Russians’ interests even more vigorously than Peter the Great did. Having freed the nation of Great Russians from the bonds of capitalism . . . he hopes to make out of it an example for other nations to follow. . . . We, Ukrainians,

45 Roman Szporluk, “Lenin, ‘Great Russia,’ and Ukraine,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 28, 1–4 (2006): 611–626. See also John S. Reshetar, “Lenin on the Ukraine,” *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.* 9, 1–2 (1961): 3–11.

46 See more in Borisënok, “Poniatiiia ‘Ukraina’ i ‘ukraintsy,’” 232.

disagree with our nationalists over the problems of Ukraine, and still, even we have to argue with Lenin all the time . . . If capitalism and capitalist imperialism are going to remain our common enemy forever, these ambiguous, insincere relations between Communist Great Russians and Communists from small nations will hold. This is something inevitable that we should come to terms with.<sup>47</sup>

In the early days of the Soviet regime, the Bolsheviks attempted to take the sting out of nationalism by realizing, to a large degree, its key ideas. Their other solution to the national question was cultivating ethnic minorities at the expense of the majority, which is now called “affirmative action,”<sup>48</sup> or, by those who criticize this term, “state-sponsored evolutionism.” The short-term goal of this policy was to make the Soviet regime conspicuously different from imperialist powers, while the strategic aim was “to usher the entire population through the Marxist timeline of historical development: to transform feudal-era clans and tribes into nationalities, and nationalities into socialist nations.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, the Bolsheviks were not at all interested in creating nations for their own sake. For them, different ethnic groups were the raw material for the creation of the future unified Soviet society.<sup>50</sup> The establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a formally federated entity in December 1922 was, for the Bolsheviks, the first step towards a global Soviet republic of labor and “a socialist union of denationalized peoples.”<sup>51</sup> This goal should not be confused with the idea of turning the entire population into “an ethnically homogenous nation state.”<sup>52</sup>

47 Zaki Validi Togan, *Vospominaniia*, vol. 1 (Ufa: Kitap, 1994), 365–367. I am grateful to Mykhailo Haukhan who brought my attention to this publication.

48 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

49 Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 8. Compare this with the argument of a contemporary Ukrainian historian that the strategic goal of Soviet national policy was “completely uniting workers and peasants of all nationalities of the world into a single global Soviet republic,” and the Soviet Union was viewed “as a form of government in transition to the complete unity of workers of different nationalities”: Valerii Vasyliiev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR: dynamika vidnosyn tsentr-subsentr vlady (1917–1938)* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NANU, 2014), 85, 88–89.

50 Francine Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities,” *The Russian Review* 59 (2000): 209.

51 Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 9; idem, “Toward an Empire of Nations,” 225.

52 Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 825.

The Soviet state introduced a new practice: mandatory classification of all its citizens according to their “nationality”—in other words, ethnic origin. Quite often, ethnographic knowledge was used “to forcibly impose nationhood on people who either ‘hid’ or did not know their ‘true’ nationality.”<sup>53</sup> The tendency “to make the nation a primordial entity based on common descent and to ascribe the same characteristics to every single member of the group” was quite obvious.<sup>54</sup>

Lev Kopelev, who grew up in Kyiv, described in his memoir the principles of Soviet “national” self-identification. When asked about his “nationality,” he would say “Soviet.” In the official questionnaires, Kopelev identified himself as Jewish, even though, as he confessed: “I had never found in my consciousness anything that would relate me to national ideals and religious legends of Jewish people.”<sup>55</sup> As a journalist at a factory’s newspaper in Kharkiv, he wrote only in Ukrainian. Kopelev highlighted that he “firmly believed in the need for Ukrainization—the socialist culture should be ‘national in form.’” However, he recognized that, despite his love for Ukraine and Ukrainian language, “there was not a single day or hour when I would feel or call myself a Ukrainian.”<sup>56</sup>

### “Ukrainization” in the City

Lenin’s attention to the national question posed a challenge for the Bolsheviks in Ukraine’s southern regions. In her memoirs written in the 1920s, Serafima Gopner acknowledged that the Katerynoslav Bolsheviks made a mistake by “totally ignoring the national question”: “We, Ekaterinoslavians, especially in the first weeks of the revolution, did not even once recall that we worked in the south of Ukraine. Ekaterinoslav was for us the largest cities in the South of Russia—and nothing more than that.”<sup>57</sup> Another Katerynoslav Bolshevik, Dmitry

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53 Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations,” 210–211.

54 Eric D. Weitz, “Racial Politics without the Concept of Race: Reevaluating Soviet Ethnic and National Purges,” *Slavic Review* 61, 1 (2002): 17.

55 Lev Kopelev, *I sotvoril sebe kumira* (Kharkiv: Prava liudyny, 2000), 130.

56 *Ibid.*, 123, 127.

57 *Bor’ba za Sovety na Ekaterinoslavshchine. Sbornik vospominanii i statei* (Dnipropetrovsk: Ist-part, 1927), 84. In the 1957 version of her memoir, Gopner describes the Ekaterinoslav Bolsheviks’ attitude to the nationalities question as lacking any trace of self-scrutiny. Instead, they lashed out at the “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists” who “in their struggle against Soviet rule twisted Lenin’s slogans” and “interpreted ‘up to secession’ not as the *right* to secession

Lebed, a former workman and the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, even presented a theoretical argument about the risks of the Ukrainian petit bourgeois and peasant culture overwhelming the proletarian and urban, primarily Russian, culture in Ukraine.<sup>58</sup>

To understand the position of Gopner, Lebed, and others, it is important to remember the specifics of the Bolshevik movement in the region. In August 1917, out of 21,719 Bolsheviks of Ukraine, more than 16,000, making up 67% of the population, lived in the region of Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih coal basin. De facto, their organization represented a regional chapter of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).<sup>59</sup> These people initiated the proclamation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Soviet Republic at the Fourth Regional Congress of workers' deputies in Kharkiv, on January 27–30 (February 9–12), 1918. The republic covered the territories of Katerynoslav and Kharkiv Governorates and the industrial areas of the Province of the Don Cossack Host. A core objective behind creating the republic was to protect the Soviet state in Donbas, while the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was in the making and the Rada was at work. In future, the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic was expected to join the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. In March 1918, the republic announced to the advancing German troops that it was not part of Ukraine and, therefore, was not subject to occupation under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Understandably, such claims were just ignored.

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but as the *necessity* to separate Ukraine from Russia." See S. Gopner, "Vid bereznia 1917 do bereznia 1918 roku," in *Bortsi za Zhovten' rozpovidaiut' (Spohady uchasnykiv borot'by za vladu Rad na Katerynoslavshchyni)* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Oblasne vydavnytstvo, 1957), 57. Compare Ralph Carter Elwood, *Russian Social Democracy in the Underground: A Study of the RSDRP in the Ukraine, 1907–1914* (Assen: Van Gorcum and Co., 1974); Ralph Carter Elwood, "The R.S.D.R.P. in Ekaterinoslav: Profile of an Underground Organisation, 1907–14," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 7 (1965): 203–222.

- 58 In fact, Lebed' repeated Rosa Luxemburg's points about the dangers of the national separation for the cause of the socialist revolution. Interestingly, during the 'Ukrainization' politics Lebed published in Ukrainian. See, for instance, memoirs of his work with Petrovsky: D. Lebed', "Pro mynule (Spomyny pro robotu z Hryhoriem Ivanovychem Petrovs'kym)," *Litopys revoliutsii* 2 (1928): 186–203.
- 59 Vasyl'iev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR*, 54; George O. Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy, Urban Growth, and Identity Change in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923–1934* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 31. The complete lack of the "Ukrainian question" was also typical for the fleetlets and decrees of the Katerynoslav RSDRP organization in 1917: S. M. Korolivskii, ed., *Podgotovka Velikoï Oktiabr'skoï Sotsialisticheskoi Revoliutsii na Ukraine (Sbornik dokumentov i materialov)* (Kyïv: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury USSR, 1955).

When the Soviet rule was irrevocably established, Lenin clearly envisioned that the national-territorial principle was more appropriate in state-building than the purely economic considerations. As he argued, the separation of important industrial hubs from Ukraine would objectively weaken the support base of the proletarian dictatorship in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and had no potential in terms of contributing to the resolution of the national and the peasant questions.<sup>60</sup> At the Second All-Ukrainian Congress of the Soviets, in March 17–19, 1918, Ukraine was proclaimed an independent Soviet Republic, which would continue to maintain its contacts with Soviet Russia as before. At the same time, under the pressure from Petrograd, the leaders of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Soviet Republic announced its forthcoming integration into the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, with the hopes that soon all Soviet Republics would “unite into a single worldwide socialist federation.”<sup>61</sup>



FIGURE 27. Lenin's monument in late 1920s-early 1930s.

Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

60 S. S. Khromov, ed., *Grazhdanskaia voïna i voennaia interventsia v SSSR: Èntsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia èntsiklopediia, 1983), 196.

61 Vasyl'iev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR*, 61.



In the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks in Ukraine were faced with the same challenges as the various Ukrainian states of 1917–1919. One of the problems they faced was the territorial and linguistic imbalance: the Russian language dominated in cities and among workers, while in rural areas there was a high concentration of Ukrainian language and “the Ukrainian element.” In addition, there was an obvious hierarchical relationship between the two languages and cultures, and the Ukrainian side was not the one at the top. The Ukrainian communist Ivan Maistrenko described the patterns of ethnic distribution in the capital of Soviet Ukraine, Kharkiv: “Generally speaking, the public and political life in the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was ethnically Russian. Ukrainianness was an island, which, however, was growing rapidly.”<sup>62</sup> Victor Kravchenko, a native of the Katerynoslav region, reminisced that, although he was speaking Ukrainian language at home as a child, he also believed that “our dialect is poorly suited for the terminology of electrical engineering or aerodynamics.”<sup>63</sup>

On June 22, 1923, a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine adopted a resolution on “Ukrainization.” The proposed measures included increased print runs of Marxist literature in Ukrainian; publication of educational books in Ukrainian language for rural areas; creation of Ukrainian language training courses for the Communist Party functionaries; more Ukrainian-language newspapers; and switching teaching at secondary schools and universities into Ukrainian.

The author of a popular booklet on “Ukrainization,” published by a local Komsomol committee in Katerynoslav, started off by recognizing the *status quo*: the proletariat in Ukraine was “primarily Russified or ethnically Russian.” The booklet went on to say that “[we] want the proletariat to influence the development of Ukrainian culture by all means possible,” for only then “there will be a full guarantee that the army of Ukrainian cultural workers would educate millions of people in the proletarian spirit and proletarian ideology.”<sup>64</sup> What is more, such an influence was considered to be impossible without the

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62 Ivan Maistrenko, *Istoriia moho pokolinnia. Spohady uchasnyka revoliutsiinykh podii v Ukraini* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985), 205.

63 Victor Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom. The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official* (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1949), 63.

64 *Za tsilkovytu ukrainizatsiiu! (Chomu treba vyvchaty ukrains'ku ta iak ii treba vyvchaty)* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Dnipropetrovs'ke OK LKSMU, n. y.), 5.



knowledge of the Ukrainian language, history, and culture.<sup>65</sup> This argument was also used by a prominent Ukrainian party official from Kharkiv, who pointed out that in Ukraine “the national question is one of the dimensions of our agricultural policy,” and “Ukrainization” (given a Russified working class) should be considered vitally important if the proletariat was to “take care of the peasants’ cultural development.”<sup>66</sup>

Within the framework of the countrywide *korenizatsiia* (indigenization policy), the Soviet government supported the accelerated development of national languages and cultures, and not only those that were “titular” in the Soviet republics. In areas primarily inhabited by national minorities, their languages were given a specific set of rights. In particular, ethnic (“national”) districts were established in the area around Katerynoslav (three German; two Jewish; one Russian, and one Bulgarian).<sup>67</sup> Among secondary schools of the Katerynoslav region, “in addition to exclusively national schools (three Ukrainian schools, five Jewish, one German, and seven Russian), mixed schools (twenty-three) have special groups where the language of instruction is the one that is native for the school’s most numerous ethnic group.”<sup>68</sup>

Soviet state institutions adapted to Ukrainian language much more slowly. In 1925, a local commission for the “Ukrainization” of Soviet governmental agencies stated that on the average only 30% of them were “Ukrainized.”<sup>69</sup>

Overall, in Soviet Ukraine in 1922–1927 the number of secondary schools with instruction in Ukrainian doubled, going from 6,150 to 15,148, while the share of the members of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine identifying themselves as Ukrainians in their passports grew from 30% in 1923 to 51.8% in 1927.<sup>70</sup> By 1926 77.8 % (11,839 out of 15,209) of Ukraine’s schools adopted Ukrainian as the language of instruction, while 10.4% chose Russian. However,

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65 Ibid.

66 A. Khvyliia, *Natsional'nyi vopros na Ukraine* (Kharkiv: Gosizdat Ukrainy, 1926), 36. Compare the same point in Mykola Skrypnyk’s text: “[We are called upon] to equate the city with the language of the Ukrainian village in order to bring the Ukrainian peasant to equalization with the proletarian city”. See Mykola Skrypnyk, *Statti i promovy z national'noho pytannia*, ed. Ivan Koshelivets’ (Munich: Suchasnist’, 1974), 12.

67 O. Iu. Shmidt, ed., *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 22 (Moscow: OGIZ RSFSR, 1935), 757.

68 Batenin, ed., *Donbass. Iuzhnyi gorno-promyshlennyi raion*, 339.

69 *Vsia Ekaterinoslavshchina. Spravochnaia kniga na 1925 god*, 242.

70 Vasyl'iev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR*, 145.

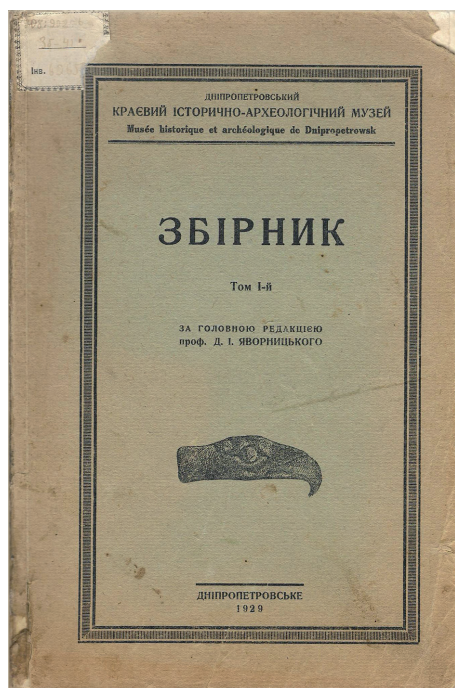


FIGURE 28.  
Cover of the first (and last)  
Dnipropetrovsk historical  
and archeological museum  
volume (1929) edited  
by prof. Yavornytsky.  
From Andrii  
Portnov's collection.

in institutions of higher learning, this process did not develop at the expected pace. In 1925, 42% of classes were taught in Ukrainian. In sciences and medicine “Ukrainization” was proceeding even more slowly: an analysis of 40 academic establishments shows that only 10% of their employees in Katerynoslav, 13.3% in Odesa, and 36.8% in Kharkiv had a command of the Ukrainian language.<sup>71</sup>

The strategy of “Ukrainization,” which promoted robust development of education in Ukrainian and gave a boost to Ukrainian-language publishing, might seem a paradoxical choice for the Bolsheviks: “The party had to legitimize its rule among the non-Russians, especially the Ukrainians, in order to mobilize for *socialism*, but in doing so, it precipitated unintended *national* consequences.”<sup>72</sup> The Bolsheviks’ plan included creating the image of Soviet Ukraine as a “Piedmont

of the Ukrainian movement”—an ideal society for millions of Ukrainians in the USSR’s neighbor countries.<sup>73</sup> Here, it is important to note that after the First

71 Khvyliia, *Natsional'nyi vopros na Ukraine*, 37, 39, 46.

72 Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy*, 139.

73 The image of Soviet Ukraine as a “Piedmont of Ukrainian working people” was often used by Mykola Skrypnyk, People’s Commissar of Education. See Skrypnyk, *Statti i promovy z natsional'noho pytannia*, 178–184. See also Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” 842, 860. Compare H. H. Iefimenko, “Komunizm vs ukrains'ke natsiietvorennia v Radians'kii Ukraïni (1917–1938 rr.): spriannia, poboriuvannia chy vymushene zamyrennia?,” *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 12 (2012): 114–132. See also Elena Borisënok, *Fenomen sovetskoï ukrainizatsii. 1920–1930-e roky* (Moscow: Evropa, 2006). According to Borisënok,

World War Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania were home to up to seven million Ukrainians.<sup>74</sup>

The context of “Ukrainization” created an opportunity to combine Communist and nationalistic sentiments, to speak openly about the Russian colonialism and criticize it.<sup>75</sup> However, in April 1925, Stalin admitted that the victory of Socialism could be limited to “one particular country.” Only one year later, he voiced his fears that “nativization” may turn into a struggle against Russian culture and its greatest achievement, namely Leninism.<sup>76</sup> Gradually, the USSR abandoned its support of ethnic cultures, especially given that the international political climate also became unfavorable for the Soviets. In France, Henri Poincaré’s anti-Soviet cabinet rose to power in 1926; further events included Józef Piłsudski’s *coup d’état* in May 1926 in Poland; the severance of UK–USSR diplomatic relations in May 1927; the violent suppression of Communist organizations in China, also in 1927; and the assassination of a Soviet ambassador in Warsaw in June 1927.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the Soviet authorities decided to reject “nativization” in favor of strengthening the Russian language and culture. An important thing to remember is that, “[o]n the one hand, Stalin reintroduced policies which maintained a dominant role for the Russians. On the other hand, he allowed the structures and institutions which could promote non-Russian national consciousness to remain in place.”<sup>78</sup>

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*korenizatsiia* (indigenization) was regarded as an expediency measure to stabilize the situation in the republics, whereas the gathering of territories on the old imperial unitarian basis would have been doomed to failure.

- 74 The Ukrainian party bureaucrats themselves reported inflated figures, asserting that there were about 11,589,000 Ukrainians outside the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, even without counting Ukrainians in Soviet Russia, and exaggeratedly estimated the Ukrainian population in Poland at 8,323,000. See Khvyliia, *Natsional'nyi vopros na Ukraine*, 61.
- 75 James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1939* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983). Compare Stephen Velychenko, *Painting Imperialism and Nationalism Red: The Ukrainian Communist Critique of the Russian Communist Rule in Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); idem, “Ukrainian Anticolonial Thought in Comparative Perspective. A Preliminary Overview,” *Ab Imperio* 4 (2012): 339–371.
- 76 Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy*, 150.
- 77 More on the Polish context could be found in Jan Jacek Bruski, *Between Prometheus and Realpolitik. Poland and Soviet Ukraine, 1921–1926* (Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2017).
- 78 Liber, *Soviet Nationality Policy*, 181.

## How Katerynoslav Became Dnipropetrovsk

During the revolutions and wars of 1917–1921, Katerynoslav, the imperial appellation, was already often considered a misnomer. The Ukrainian activists came up with a new name, Sicheslav, to honor the settlements of Zaporozhian Cossacks—*sichs* most of which were located in the region. In 1918, Teachers' Society headed by Yevhen Vyrovny started to use the name “Sicheslav” in its publications, although it never received official approval.<sup>79</sup> In January 1924, participants of the 8th Congress of Governorates' Soviets resolved to rename the city as Krasnodneprovsk (Red-Dneprovsk),<sup>80</sup> but this appellation also did not receive the central governmental approval and never became official.

Finally, on July 20, 1926, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR changed the city's name from Katerynoslav to Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>81</sup> The new appellation combined the name of the Dnipro River with the family name of Hryhory Petrovsky, a prominent Bolshevik and a former worker of the Brianskyi plant. At the time of the renaming, Petrovsky chaired Ukraine's Central Executive Committee. In the period between the Bolshevik revolution and his appointment to this office in 1919, Petrovsky was the first commissar (that is, minister) of the interior of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). He signed, on behalf of the Soviet Russia, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and, on behalf of Ukraine, the decree for the creation of the Soviet Union.

By the mid-1920s, renaming towns and cities in honor of prominent Bolsheviks was not yet a regular occurrence, but it was not an extraordinary event either. As early as 1923, Gatchina became Trotsk, and a real wave of renaming was ushered in by Lenin's death, heralded by the renaming of Petrograd to Leningrad. In 1924, Yelizavetgrad became Zinovievsk and Yuzovka—Stalino. In 1925, Tsaritsyn became Stalingrad. Places that changed names after Dnipropetrovsk included Yenakievo (Rykovo after 1928), Tver (Kalinin after 1931), Viatka (Kirov after 1934). Usually, when a big city was renamed in honor of a party leader during his lifetime, it was a Bolshevik from Moscow. Considering that Petrovsky was a republican-level Bolshevik leader from Ukraine, renaming Dnipropetrovsk in his honor falls out of the pattern. Another curious aspect of the story is that although the word Dnipropetrovsk is fairly hard to pronounce, this name proved to be the longest-lived new Soviet toponym of the 1920s.

79 D. Cherniavs'kyi, “Vid Polovytsi do Dnipropetrovs'ka” (Do evoliutsii nazvy mista), *Zoria* 21 (1926): 22.

80 Starostin, *Ulitsy Dnepra*, 15.

81 *Izvestiia TsIK Soiuzu SSR i VTsIK*, no. 178, August 5, 1926, 2.

It survived the German occupation and the breakup of the USSR, and held on for nearly ninety years—until 2016.

Petrovsky's career of a party official was fairly singular. On the one hand, already in the mid-1930s, he fell out of favor with Stalin, but on the other, unlike most "old Bolsheviks" and practically all high-ranking Ukrainian communists of the 1930s, he survived the purges. In 1938, when Petrovsky—then a candidate member of Politburo (Executive Committee of the Communist Party—its highest authority)—asked Stalin why he was not invited to the Politburo's meetings, he was given a chance to meet with Stanislaw Kosior, the former first secretary of Ukraine's Communist Party (then under arrest) in Stalin's office. Allegedly, Kosior, already broken by torture at the time, advised Petrovsky to "disarm himself in front of the Party."<sup>82</sup> This advice, as well as a full confession of the guilt attributed to him, did not save Kosior from execution—in February 1939, he was shot. Meeting with a former close associate in Stalin's office made such a strong impression on Petrovsky that "since then every night going to bed he would put by his bedside a gun he kept since the civil war, so that he could take his life when the secret police would come knocking on his door."<sup>83</sup>

Petrovsky was never arrested. Members of his family, however, were not spared from the purges. Petrovsky's elder son, Pyotr, editor-in-chief of the *Leningradskaia pravda* newspaper, was arrested in 1932 and then again in 1937. He died in prison in the autumn of 1941. His younger son, the General-lieutenant Leonid Petrovsky, was killed in battle the same year. In 1938, Leonid was stripped of all distinctions and dismissed from the army, but subsequently reinstated after the end of the Second World War.<sup>84</sup> And Petrovsky the senior from 1939 worked in Moscow as a deputy director for facilities management at the Museum of the Revolution. There he reported directly to a fellow member of the pre-revolutionary Duma, Fyodor Samoilov. Petrovsky died in 1957, shortly after a visit to Dnipropetrovsk. In the city named after the old Bolshevik, a museum in his former house and his large statue on the railway station square were unveiled in 1976.

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82 P. Prudovich, "O sem'e G. I. Petrovskogo," *Minuvshee. Istoricheskiĭ al'manakh* 2 (1990): 361.

83 Ibid.

84 Additional details can be found in Petrovsky's letters to his son Pyotr outlining the efforts dedicated to Pyotr's rehabilitation: Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob'iednan' Ukraïny [TsDAHOU, Central State Archive of Civil Organizations of Ukraine], fond 237, opys 1, sprava 113, arkush 9.

### “The Great Turn” at a Local Level

Lenin died on January 21, 1924, and the NEP he initiated was essentially discontinued by the late 1920s. 1928 in the USSR saw the launch of the first “five-year plan of the economic development.” In 1929, Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (TsK VKP(b)), celebrated his fiftieth birthday. As Stalin consolidated his grip on power, the concept of “building socialism in one country” took hold, the Soviet authorities announced that the country was speedily heading along the path towards industrialization and collectivization, and the policy of “indigenization” (*korenizatsiia*) was scaled down.

The new trends in Ukraine’s national policy were illustrated by the show trial of members of the invented “Union for the Liberation of Ukraine” (Soiuz vyzvolennia Ukraïny, SVU) in March–April 1930 at the Kharkiv Opera House. 474 people were involved in the proceedings, most of them Ukrainian intellectuals and former members of Ukrainian political parties.<sup>85</sup> Serhy Yefremov, a literary scholar and a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, was named leader of the organization. The wave of arrests swept through all of Ukraine.

In 1929, in Dnipropetrovsk, two professors of the local Institute of People’s Education were arrested in connection with the SVU trial: at first, historian Volodymyr Parkhomenko, then, Petro Yefremov, a literary scholar and brother of Serhy Yefremov. Also arrested were Liubov Zhyhmailo-Bidnova, wife of Vasyl Bidnov, a historian who emigrated from Ukraine. Of these people, only Parkhomenko, who was sentenced to ten years of labor camps, managed to survive, leave the camp, and even continued his academic career, but outside Ukraine.<sup>86</sup>

With the scaling-down of the “indigenization,” the Soviets also stopped supporting literature and education in Yiddish, which flourished in Katerynoslav in the early 1920s.<sup>87</sup> Neither the “Piedmont principle,” nor sympathies of “the most

85 Volodymyr Prystaiko and Iuriï Shapoval, “Fars z trahichnym finalom (Do 65-richchia protsesu u spravi “Spilky vyzvolennia Ukraïny”),” *Z arkhiviv VUCHK–GPU–NKVD–KGB 1–2* (1995): 190–198.

86 More details in: Andriï Portnov, *Volodymyr Parkhomenko—doslidnyk rann’oi istorii Rusi* (L’viv: Instytut ukraïnoznanstva im. Ivana Kryp’iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 2003); Andriï Portnov, “Volodymyr Parkhomenko—istoryk ta ioho istoriohrafichni obrazy,” in A. Portnov, *Istoriï istorykiv. Oblychchia i obrazy ukraïns’koi istoriohrafii XX stolittia* (Kyïv: Krytyka, 2011), 39–98.

87 More on the topic in: Gennady Estraiikh, “The Stalinist “Great Break” in Yiddishland,” in *Mapping the Jewish World*, ed. Hasia R. Diner and Gennady Estraiikh (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 36–52.



pro-Soviet literature in the world” were no longer vitally needed in the country of the “victorious socialism.”<sup>88</sup>

In the sphere of religion, as in politics, the Soviet authorities initially continued with the pluralism that flourished immediately after the revolution. Later, this pluralism had to be pared down to a controllable standard in the state that was not just secular but atheist. In May 1922, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced an internal split, vigorously fueled by the Soviet authorities. The two antagonistic factions were the followers of Patriarch Tikhon [Vasily Bellavin], who was elected in 1917 and arrested in 1922, and the members of the Renovatist Church, or the Living Church, who considered themselves a movement “for the revolution in religion” and advocated, in particular, the closing of monasteries and the permission to ordain married priests as bishops. Additionally, in Ukraine there was something else the Bolsheviks had to reckon with, namely, the movement for the Ukrainization of the church and church services.<sup>89</sup> It had two factions: “radicals,” who were willing to sacrifice the canons in order to establish an autocephaly, an independent church as soon as possible, and “moderates,” who preferred a Ukrainization with deference to the canons, first of all in respect of ordaining priests and bishops.<sup>90</sup> The first approach was supported by the self-styled Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), established in 1921. The second path was taken by the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Synodic Church. It was established in 1925, in line with the canonical continuity of hierarchy (its bishops were ordained by the Renovatists).<sup>91</sup>

88 Gennady Estraiikh, *In Harness. Yiddish Writer's Romance with Communism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 65.

89 For more information about the period 1917–1921, see: V. I. Ul'ianovs'kyi, *Tserkva v Ukraïns'kii Derzhavi. 1917–1920 (doba Ukraïns'koï Tsentral'noi Rady)* (Kyiv: Lybid', 1997); V. I. Ul'ianovs'kyi, *Tserkva v Ukraïns'kii Derzhavi. 1917–1920 (doba Het'manatu Pavla Skoropads'koho)* (Kyiv: Lybid', 1997); Vasyl' Ul'ianovs'kyi, “Vseukraïns'kyi Pravoslavnyi Tserkovnyi Sobor 1918 r.: dva tserkovno-politychni konteksty,” *Studii z arkhivnoi spravy ta dokumentoznavstva* 5 (1999): 168–176. The literature on Ekaterinoslav is very scarce: Oleh Ihnatusha, “Pravoslavna Tserkva na Katerynoslavshchyni u 1918 r.,” *Studii z arkhivnoi spravy ta dokumentoznavstva* 5 (1999): 181–187; I. M. Shuhal'ova, “Rozvytok pravoslavnoi tserkvy na Katerynoslavshchyni u pershii chverti XX st.,” *Prydniprov'ia: istoriko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 6 (2008): 157–165. I express my gratitude to Serhii Savchenko for his bibliography recommendations and critical remarks.

90 Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, “Ukrainization Movements within the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3–4 (1979–80): 94–95.

91 A very detailed description of the process can be found in: Oleksandr Tryhub, *Rozkol Rosiis'koï Pravoslavnoi Tserkvy v Ukraini (1922–39 rr.): mizh derzhavnym politychnym*



The Soviet policies towards the pluralism in the church were explained in a document issued by the Katerynoslav *Cheka* on August 10, 1921: “We are not creating anything like a Soviet clergy, but we use conflicts between different sections of the clergy to make sure the priests self-destroy, although we are thus making a temporary concession to the masses along the way.”<sup>92</sup> The main target of the state’s anti-religion policies was the church headed by Patriarch Tikhon. This church also had the largest group of followers. In particular, in 1926, the Dnipropetrovsk region had 124 “Tikhonovite” communities (117,914 people); seventeen UAOC communities (9,156 people); five communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Synodic Church (492 people); in 1927–171 “Tikhonovite” communities (171,213 people); fifteen UAOC communities (7,597 people), and eighteen communities of the Synodic Church (15,582 people).<sup>93</sup>

The Soviet policy *vis-à-vis* religion took a sharp turn at about the same time when the Ukrainization projects wound down. In January 1930, the Soviet authorities forced the UAOC to self-disband. By the late 1930s, the Renovationists were left without bishops. As a result, when the Second World War broke out, the only surviving religious community was that of the Russian Orthodox Church, which had experienced much oppression and became appreciably more loyal to the Soviets.

The statistics on the closing of churches can be used as an indicator of the scope of Soviet oppression. As early as in 1924, eleven Christian Orthodox churches were closed in Katerynoslav.<sup>94</sup>

The policy of closing sacred sites applied not only to facilities used by the Russian Orthodox Church. By 1936, Dnipropetrovsk had only two functioning synagogues: at 7 Kotsiubynskyi Street and 32 Novoselska Street.<sup>95</sup> The choral synagogue was closed in March 1929, alongside with the Brianska church

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*upravlinniam ta reformatsiiei* (Mykolaïv: Vydavnytstvo Chornomors'koho derzhavnoho universytetu im. Petra Mohyly, 2009).

92 Ibid., 171.

93 Ibid., 293, 295.

94 O. V. Boiko, “Represii proty pravoslavnoho dukhovenstva i viruiuchykh na Dnipropetrovshchyni u 1920–1930-ti roky,” in *Reabilitovani istoriiei*, 746.

95 Viktor Chentsov, “Shtrykhy do portreta odnogo v’iaznia,” *Z arkhiv VUCHK–GPU–NKVD–KGB 1–2* (1997): 228.



FIGURE 29. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson. Photo from his interrogation case (1939) from the collection of Museum “Memory of Jewish people and the Holocaust in Ukraine” in Dnipro.

and the Roman Catholic church of St. Joseph.<sup>96</sup> The city’s mosque was closed in 1926 and converted into a militia’s club a year later. 1930 saw the closing of the Transfiguration Cathedral, and next year an “anti-religious museum” was opened in the building.<sup>97</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran church of St. Catherine was closed in 1933.

As of September 1, 1933, Dnipropetrovsk had less than half of the churches it had before the revolution. Only ten Russian Orthodox churches and one monastery (the city had thirty-six churches of different denominations in 1920, and eleven in 1933) remained.<sup>98</sup> As of April 1, 1936, in the entire Ukrainian

96 V. Rybalka, “Razom z usima. Ievreï Dnipropetrovshchyny—zhertvy radians’kykh politychnykh represii 1920–1930-kh rr.,” in *Mista i sela Dnipropetrovshchyny y vyri politychnykh represii*, ed. Ie. I. Borodin, vol. 5 (Dnipro: Monolit, 2017), 143, 145; O. V. Boiko, “Sviato-Mykolaïvs’ka (Brians’ka) tserkva: do istorii zakryttia v 1920-ti roky,” *Naddnyprians’ka Ukraïna: istorychni protsesy, podii, postati* 11 (2013): 209–220; Ie. Vradii, “Pershyi pokaranyï narod: poliaky Prydniprov’ia pid prytylom stalins’kykh represii,” in *Mista i sela Dnipropetrovshchyny u vyri politychnykh represii*, vol. 5, 95.

97 V. V. Ivanenko, M. E. Kavun, “Osoblyvosti rozvytku urbanizatsiïnoho protsesu v Dnipropetrovs’ku v dobu “sotsialistychnoi modernizatsii,” *Prydniprov’ia: istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 8 (2010): 176, 180.

98 Ibid., 176.

Soviet Socialist Republic, only 9% (1,116 out of 12,380) of the Russian Orthodox churches who had been functioning in 1917 were active.<sup>99</sup>

Even more telling is the information about arrests and executions of the clergy. The priests shot during the Great Terror of 1937–1938 include Makary, Bishop of Katerynoslav and Novomoskovsk (secular name Grigory Karmazin); the bishops who were provisionally appointed after the arrest of Bishop Makary in December 1925—Damian (secular name Dmitry Voskresensky) and Constantin (secular name Constantin Diakov), as well as Archbishop Georgy (secular name Spiridon Deliev) who was ordained Bishop of Katerynoslav in 1928.<sup>100</sup>

Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the chief rabbi of Dnipropetrovsk, was arrested on March 28, 1939. He was accused of illegally collecting funds for anti-Soviet activities and “regularly keeping in touch with his son, the chief rabbi of Warsaw, who is a prominent Polish intelligence agent.”<sup>101</sup> On July 23, 1939, the NKVD’s Special Council sentenced Schneerson to five years of exile in Kazakhstan, from which he never returned (he died in Almaty on August 9, 1944).<sup>102</sup>

### The Great Famine 1932–33

The famine of 1932–1933, which killed several million peasants in many regions of the USSR (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kuban, and the Volga region in Russia), was arguably not only an example of social engineering by the Bolsheviks but also the crucial battle in the Soviets’ war on peasantry, the goal of which was to cow the peasants into submission and force them towards collectivization.<sup>103</sup> The

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99 Tryhub, *Rozkol Rosiis'koi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvy v Ukraini (1922–39 rr.)*, 119.

100 The mentioned priests (except for Archbishop Georgii who confessed to being a “Polish agent” under investigation) were ranked by the Russian Orthodox Church as saints in 2000. See Iurii Skubak, “Sviatye dnepropetrovskoi zemli,” accessed May 17, 2020, <http://archiv.orthodox.org.ua/page-2058.html>; “Sobor novomuchenikov i ispovednikov ekaterinoslavskikh,” accessed May 17, 2020, <https://drevo-info.ru/articles/13674572.html>.

101 Rybalka, “Razom z usima. Ievrei Dnipropetrovshchyny,” 146–148; M. Karshenbaum, “Ravvin g. Ekaterinoslava-Dnepropetrovska Levi-Itskhak Shneerson (1878–1944),” in *Materialy k istorii khasidizma*, ed. R. I. Goldstein (Dnipropetrovsk: Dnipro, 1994), 63–74; Khana Shneerson, “Vospominaniia rebetsn,” accessed May 17, 2020, <http://www.lechaim.ru/arhiv/236/shneerson.html>.

102 Chentsov, “Shtrykhy do portreta odnogo v'iaznia,” 237.

103 Andrea Graziosi, *Velikaia krest'ianskaia voina v SSSR. Bol'sheviki i krest'iane. 1917–1933* (Moscow: Rosspén, 2001). The most important publications about the Great Famine include Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); James E. Mace, “The Man-Made Famine of 1933

practice of forcefully collecting grain from the peasants in order to accelerate industrialization can be also interpreted as punishment by starvation. In January 1932, an anonymous correspondent from a village near Dnipropetrovsk sent a letter to the Politburo, which encompassed the following description of the situation: “the people have swollen brains and they begin to strongly detest the Soviet rule since nobody has any guarantee against being thrown out of a collective farm and having his last meager possessions or the last crumb of bread on the table taken away from him.”<sup>104</sup>

In February 1932, Hryhory Petrovsky, the head of the executive committee of Soviet Ukraine, wrote to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, urging the authorities to ask the All-Union Central Committee of the party to stop collecting grain in Ukraine.<sup>105</sup> Besides, in his letter on June 10th addressed to Stalin and Molotov in Moscow, Petrovsky argued that Ukraine’s Central Committee had made a mistake when it agreed unconditionally to meet the unreasonably high grain procurement targets set by the All-Union Central Committee. Petrovsky also acknowledged that “a substantial portion of the countryside has fallen prey to famine,” and requested the authorities to urgently “help Ukraine’s villages by delivering two or, at the very least, one and a half million *poods* of grain.”<sup>106</sup> Stalin detested this letter, as it only strengthened his distrust of the Ukrainian leadership. He issued the following resolution: “Ukraine has been given more than its fair share. There is no

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in the Soviet Ukraine: What Happened and Why?” in *Toward the Understanding and Preventing of Genocide*, ed. Israel W. Charny (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 67–83; Robert W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger. Soviet Agriculture, 1931–1933* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Michael Ellman, “The Role of Leadership Perceptions and of Intent in the Soviet Famine of 1931–1934,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, 6 (2005): 823–841; Taras Hunczak and Roman Serbyn, eds., *Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933: Genocide by Other Means* (New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 2007); Viktor Kondrashin, *Golod 1932–1933 godov: tragediia Rossiiskoi derevni* (Moscow: Rossipen, 2008); Stanislav Kul’chyts’kyi, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. iak henotsyd. Trudnoshchi usvidomlennia* (Kyiv: Nash chas, 2008); Norman N. Naimark, *Stalin’s Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). For historiographical overview see Olga Andriewsky, “Towards a Decentred History: The Study of the Holodomor and Ukrainian Historiography,” *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 2, 1 (2015): 18–32.

104 DADO, fond P.-19, opys 1, sprava 90, arkush 42.

105 Ruslan Pyrih, ed., *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraïni: Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv: Kyievo-Mohylians’ka akademiia, 2007), 70.

106 Ibid., 197–199.

place to take extra grain and no reason either.”<sup>107</sup> In August 1932, Stalin wrote to the Politbiuro member Lazar Kaganovich:

The situation in Ukraine is as bad as it gets. The situation in the party [hereinafter underlined in the original–A.P.], that is. They say that in two regions of Ukraine (in and around Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk, if I’m not mistaken) about 50 local committees [of the Party] have spoken up against the grain procurement targets, saying they are unrealistic . . . What does it look like? This is not a party but a parliament, a caricature of parliament. . . If we do not set about straightening things out in Ukraine right now, we can lose Ukraine.<sup>108</sup>

Soon Kaganovich was appointed the head of the extraordinary commission for “accelerating grain procurement” in Ukraine. One of the measures employed to achieve the “acceleration” were the “black boards,” which listed the names of collective farms that failed to meet their quotas. The punishment for the underachieving collective farms (according to the Ukrainian Politburo’s directive of November 18, 1932) included taking all goods from their stores, stopping trade with them, and arresting and deporting all “socially alien elements”—in other words, applying the principle of collective responsibility, already tested by Bolsheviks during the civil war.<sup>109</sup> In December 1932, 228 collective farms of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* (oblasts were the administrative units in the Soviet Union established in 1932 instead of governorates) were listed on the “black boards.”<sup>110</sup> Another important measure was restricting peasants’ freedom of movement: they were forbidden from leaving places where they were permanently living and police crews patrolling railway stations were beefed up with additional manpower.

All this added bitterness to the relationship between the city and the village, which was one of the main elements of the recent revolutionary events.<sup>111</sup>

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107 Ibid., 206.

108 A. Berelovich and V. Danilov, eds., *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD. 1918–1939. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 3, book 2, 1932–1934 gg. (Moscow: Rossipen, 2005), 19–20.

109 Ibid., 21. For details see Heorhii Papakin, “Chorna doshka:” *antyselians’ki represii* (1932–1933) (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy NANU, 2013).

110 N. V. Kystrus’ka, ed., *Rozkurkulennia, kolektyvizatsiia, Holodomor na Dnipropetrovshchyni (1929–1933 roky). Zbirnyk dokumentiv* (Dnipropetrovsk: Herda, 2008), 11.

111 Compare Barbara Falk, *Sowjetische Städte in der Hungersnot 1932/33. Staatliche Ernährungspolitik und städtisches Alltagsleben* (Köln: Böhlau, 2005); Andrea Graziosi,

The authorities attributed the food shortages in urban centers to peasants' sabotage. A memo of March 21, 1933, sent by the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* Party Committee to the Central Committee of the Communist party in Ukraine mentioned "regular failures to provide workers and white-collar employees with the sufficient quantities of food" and failures of centralized supply of food to the city.<sup>112</sup> City dwellers were recruited into special teams dispatched to villages to confiscate the grain hidden by the peasants. In "The Education of a True Believer" (1975), Lev Kopelev recalled how in December 1932 he was sent from Kharkiv to a nearby village as an agitator whose task was to convince peasants not to hide the grain. He saw the requisitions and convinced—himself, this time—to have no pity for those who sabotage the politics of collectivization. Kopelev reflects on his feeling of shame, his inability to publicize the story of the famine earlier, and his incapacity to get rid of a sin. He asks himself: "How all that could have happened? Who is guilty for starving millions of people to death? How could I participate in it?"<sup>113</sup>

Meanwhile, starving and dying peasants on city streets became a regular occurrence in the first half of 1933. Nikolay Moshkov, a doctor from Dnipropetrovsk, wrote in his diary after a visit to Kharkiv in the summer of 1933: "When I was in Kharkiv, people dying of hunger on the sidewalk could be seen anywhere; empathy is dulled—passers-by just walk by without paying attention, as if this is something ordinary!"<sup>114</sup> This passage can be interpreted as evidence that in Dnipropetrovsk, Moshkov did not see such scenes every day, although the famine in Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* was severe.

In March 1933, Mendel Khataievych, the First Secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* Party Committee, sent an "absolutely confidential" letter to secretaries of the district committees demanding to immediately take steps to ensure that: "in our *oblast* not a single responsible collective farmer swells from hunger or dies by starvation anymore."<sup>115</sup> Before this letter was written and sent, on

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"The Great Famine of 1932–1933: Consequences and Implications," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25, 3–4 (2001): 157–165.

112 R. Ia. Pyrih, ed., *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni: ochyma istoriykiv, movoiu dokumentiv* (Kyïv: Polityvdav Ukraïny, 1990), 464–467.

113 Kopelev, *I sotvoril sebe kumira*, 272.

114 G. I. Guliaev and N. D. Busygina, eds., *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev: 1929–1942* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Sviddler A. L., 2012), 24–25.

115 Kystrus'ka, *Rozkurkulennia, kolektyvizatsiia, Holodomor na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 244.



March 5, 1933, the head of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* State Political Directorate (GPU—secret police) sent a report to the head of Ukraine’s GPU, informing him that the district divisions of the GPU had carried out medical examinations “under the pretense of identifying cases of epidemic diseases” and had checked for “instances of swelling and death by starvation,” and these inspections confirmed the occurrence of deaths by starvation, cannibalism, and the consumption of meat of cats, dogs, and dead horses.<sup>116</sup> And in April 1933, in his yet another “strictly confidential” letter Khataievych mentioned the preparations for deporting “*kulaks*, Petliurists, and criminals” (17,000 families and 5,000 single individuals) from the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*.<sup>117</sup>

It is difficult to provide an exact number of the victims of the famine in the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*, Soviet Ukraine, or the entire USSR, given that the authorities deliberately tried to deny even the existence of the famine. Otto Schiller, a German agricultural attaché in Moscow wrote in the spring of 1933: “A distinctive feature of this famine is that the authorities have not acknowledged, and do not now acknowledge, that the famine exists.”<sup>118</sup> Yet, a careful study of the available sources and a statistical analysis of indirect data (birth rates, etc.) suggest that the overall number of victims of the famine and concomitant diseases in the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* was between 659,000 and 833,000.<sup>119</sup> According to recent calculations, direct losses from hunger in 1932–1934 in the Dnipropetrovsk region amounted to 368,400 people (of which 333,000 were villagers).<sup>120</sup>

Another evidence of the famine is the official letter sent in 1933 by the chiefs of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* to the Party’s Central Committee, in which they asked to allow 20,000 peasants from Russia to move to the deserted collective farms.<sup>121</sup> A special communication of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*’s GPU,

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116 Berelovich and Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD*, 305–307.

117 Kystrus’ka, *Rozkurkulennia, kolektyvizatsiia, Holodomor na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 244.

118 Quoted in Marco Carynnyk, “Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, the United States and the Ukrainian Famine of 1933,” in *Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933*, ed. Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 109.

119 S. I. Svitlenko, ed., *Natsional’na knyha pam’iati Holodomoru 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraïni. Dnipropetrovs’ka oblast’* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Art-Pres, 2008), 25.

120 For detailed calculation see Oleh Wolowyna, Serhii Plokhyy, Nataliia Levchuk, Omelian Rudnytskyi, Alla Kovbasiuk, and Pavlo Shevchuk, “Regional Variations of 1932–34 Famine Losses in Ukraine,” *Canadian Studies in Population* 43, 3–4 (2016): 175–202.

121 Kystrus’ka, *Rozkurkulennia, kolektyvizatsiia, Holodomor na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 14.



dated March 27, 1934, shows the results of the farmers' relocation to Ukraine: 43,100 families of peasants had arrived (24,300 from Russia and Belarus and 17,000 from Ukraine's other areas), 219,110 people overall. The largest group—3,265 families—came to the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*.<sup>122</sup> According to the report, the attitudes to the new arrivals were “mostly healthy,” although there were “also instances of unfriendliness” and *kulaks* were “instigating ethnic hostility.”<sup>123</sup> However, in September 1934, the Relocation Committee of the Soviet government reported that, out of 45,500 peasant households relocated to Ukraine, 23.5% (10,282) returned, including 3,198 or 24% from the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*.<sup>124</sup> The Soviet authorities put the blame for the high numbers of the returnees on “*kulaks* and asocial elements, who had actively agitated for ‘moving back,’ intimidating the new arrivals with the prospect of starvation and terrorizing them.”<sup>125</sup>

Nowadays, researchers of the Great Famine are convinced that “place of residence, defined in terms of ecological zones and border versus central location, influenced chances of survival, ethnicity did not.”<sup>126</sup> Still, discussions about the genocidal nature of the Great Famine and its national dimensions are going on.<sup>127</sup>

## The Regional Museum at the Time of Repressions

In Dnipropetrovsk, it was precisely at the peak of the famine in 1933 when the authorities introduced cardinal changes in the historical museum. One can say that the museum's long-standing director Dmytro Yavornytsky himself was its key attraction. An enthusiastic student of Cossacks' history with a controversial academic reputation (his texts were more than once criticized for lack

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122 Berelovich and Danilov, *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK–OGPU–NKVD*, 545.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid., 639.

125 Ibid. Compare also Hennadii Yefimenko, “Pereselennia ta deportatsii v post holodomorni roky (1933–1936): poraionnyi kriz,” *Problemy istorii Ukraïny: fakty, sudzhennia, poshuky* 22 (2013): 136–165.

126 Serhii Plokhyy, “Mapping the Great Famine,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1–4 (2015–2016): 406. Compare Gerhard Simon, “Chy buv Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. “instrumentom ‘likvidatsii’ ukraïns'koho natsionalizmu,” *Ukraïns'k'yi istorychyi zhurnal* 7 (2005): 128.

127 For details see Andrii Portnov, “Der Holodomor als Genozid. Historiographische und juristische Diskussionen,” *Osteuropa* no. 1–2 (2020): 31–49.



FIGURE 30. The demonstration on November 7.  
Photo by Mikhail Perepelitsyn from Andrii Portnov's family archive.

of academic rigor) Yavornytsky was a true master of survival in Katerynoslav. In 1915, he welcomed Tsar Nicholas II during his visit to the city; under Hetman Skoropadsky, in May 1918, at a regional congress of the clergy, he spoke on Ukrainization of the church;<sup>128</sup> under Denikin, he hid a pro-Bolshevik artist, Strakhov, in his basement<sup>129</sup> and wrote letters in defense of his arrested colleague Antin Syniavsky, claiming that the latter “has never been a separatist but always championed the unification of Little Russia with Great Russia.”<sup>130</sup> All this allowed him, *inter alia*, to keep the museum's collection intact.

It was Yavornytsky who buried the statue of Catherine II in the museum's courtyard when it was toppled immediately after the February Revolution, and, in 1925, dug it out and placed it among stone statues of Polovets origin. In 1923, Yavornytsky wrote that the museum he headed “was rightfully considered one of Ukraine's first museums.” It had 9 sections: pre-historical, Scythian, Greek,

128 Oleh Ihnatusha, “Pravoslavna Tserkva na Katerynoslavshchyni u 1918 r.,” *Studii z arkhivnoi spravy ta dokumentoznavstva* 5 (1999): 182.

129 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv-muzei literatury i mystetstva Ukraïny [TsDAML M Ukraïny, Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of Ukraine], fond 176, opys 1, sprava 7, arkush 13.

130 Serhii Bilokin', “Antin Syniavs'kyi i ioho doba,” in A. S. Syniavs'kyi, *Vybrani pratsi* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993), 26.

Turkic, Zaporozhian, religious, ethnographic, environmental, and archival.<sup>131</sup> In 1929, Yavornytsky was elected a full member of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. His membership, likewise, was an element of the political game and what can be called a concession to the Soviet government. Yet, the authorities mistrusted Yavornytsky. In the GPU documents of the 1920s, he was called “the supporter of the Black Hundreds” and, in the 1930s, official dispatches referred to Yavornytsky as “a staunch Ukrainian nationalist and fascist hostile to the Soviet government.”<sup>132</sup>

On August 5, 1933, the party committee of the city of Dnipropetrovsk passed a resolution “On the Situation in the Regional Museum,” claiming that under the guidance of the “Ukrainian nationalist” Yavornytsky the museum had become “one of the hotbeds of nationalist counter-revolutionary activities in Ukraine.”<sup>133</sup> Yavornytsky was dismissed from the post of director but not arrested. He managed to survive the Great Terror, which was not the case for a number of his colleagues.

## The Great Terror 1937–38

Two years after the Great Famine, in 1935, two construction projects were completed in Dnipropetrovsk—a five-story building of the NKVD of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* and the militia investigation department at the crossroad of Korolenko and Bazarna Streets. Soon, the wave of Great Terror swept through the entire Soviet Union. In 1937–1938, more than 1 million people were arrested on political charges and more than 500,000 were executed.<sup>134</sup>

131 D. I. Iavornyts'kyi, “Narodniĭ muzeĭ v Katerynoslavi,” *Chervonyi shliakh* 3 (1923): 154. A detailed description of the museum is provided in: Pavlo Matviiev's'kyi, “25-richchia Dnipropetrovs'koho kraievoho istorychno-archeolohichnoho muzeiu,” *Zbirnyk Dnipropetrovs'koho kraievoho istorychno-archeolohichnoho muzeiu* 1 (1929): 5–43.

132 V. Savchuk, “Intelihentsiia Dnipropetrovshchyny v ‘obiiimakh vlady’: 20–30-ti roky XX stolittia,” in Borodin, *Reabilitovani istoriiei*, vol. 1, 790; V. Chentsov, “Ideoloh ukraïns'koho natsionalizmu,” in Borodin, *Reabilitovani istoriiei*, vol. 1, 352.

133 Ruslana Man'kov's'ka, “Represii sered muzeinykh pratsivnykiv v kintsii 20–30-kh rr.,” *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1–2 (1997): 265.

134 Among the multiple studies focusing on the Great Terror, see: Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag. From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Jörg Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde. Stalins Herrschaft der Gewalt* (Munich: Beck, 2012).

Overall, in 1937, in the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*, 17,124 people, or every fifteenth resident of the area, were arrested and/or executed.<sup>135</sup> The victims of the Great Terror in the *oblast* included both high-ranking officials (for instance, relatives and friends of Mendel Khataievych, former first secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* Party Committee and second secretary of Ukraine's Central Committee who was arrested in July and executed in October 1937 in Kyiv) and ordinary Soviet people who were persecuted to meet the "national" arrest quotas.

In July 1937, the head of the NKVD Nikolai Yezhov ordered the arrest of all German citizens within five days.<sup>136</sup> In August 1937, the authorities issued an order to combat "the fascist-insurrectional . . . activities of the Polish intelligence services in the USSR."<sup>137</sup> This "combat" included the elimination of ethnically defined administrative units (*raions*) and ethnic vocational and secondary schools. Individuals were singled out for persecution based on their "nationality," or ethnicity, which was an obligatory identifier in the USSR. The 2 ethnic-based persecution campaigns in the late 1930s resulted in "the almost complete destruction of the Polish and German components in the ethno-cultural composition of the [Dnipropetrovsk] *oblast*."<sup>138</sup>

In 1958 in Munich, a native of Dnipropetrovsk who took the pseudonym A. Dneprovets published a memoir about the Great Terror in his native city. The writer claimed that political prisoners sentenced to death were executed by shooting in the NKVD's garage (first at 9 Dzerzhinsky Street, then in the NKVD's new building on Korolenko Street) and the dead bodies were secretly buried at cemeteries around the city.<sup>139</sup> Historians were able to identify one of

135 Viktor Chentsov and Dmytro Arkhirei's'kyi, "Osoblyvosti 'velykoho teroru' 1937–1938 na Dnipropetrovshchyni," *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1 (2007): 106–107.

136 Very detailed accounts about the process include: N. Romanets', "'Vynni u tomu, shcho nimtsi.' Represii proty nimets'koï menshyny Dnipropetrovshchyny (1920–1940-i rr.)," in Ie. I. Borodin, ed., *Mista i sela Dnipropetrovshchyny u vyri politychnykh represii. Zbirnyk statei*, vol. 5 (Dnipro: Monolit, 2017), 29–84. I am grateful to Denys Shatalov who brought my attention to this publication.

137 More details in: Ie. Vradii, "'Pershyi pokaranyi narod': poliaky Prydniprov'ia pid prytsilom stalins'kykh represii," in Borodin, *Mista i sela Dnipropetrovshchyny u vyri politychnykh represii*, 85–118. Compare with: Oleksandr Rubliov and Volodymyr Repryntsev, "Represii proty poliakiiv v Ukraïni u 30-ti roky," *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1–2 (1995): 116–155.

138 Chentsov, Arkhirei's'kyi, *Osoblyvosti 'velykoho teroru'*, 108.

139 A. Dneprovets, *Ezhovshchina. Zabyt' nel'zia . . .* (Munich: Izdanie Tsentral'nogo ob'edineniia politicheskikh emigrantov iz SSSR, 1958).

the executioners: Naum Turbovsky, the chief of the Dnipropetrovsk NKVD prison. His employee appraisal reads:

He knows his job well. He expertly organized inmates' security arrangements and isolation in the penal facilities of the State Security Board of the Ukrainian NKVD, as well as delivery of prisoners for interrogations from the Dnipropetrovsk penal facilities . . . He personally carried out the sentences in respect to more than 2,100 inmates. He is fully fit for the position. He merits the promotion to the next special rank ahead of schedule.<sup>140</sup>

### The Soviet Exterior of the “Southern Manchester”

The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, published in 1935, stated that Dnipropetrovsk “is one of Ukraine’s most modernized urban centers—it has tram and bus transportation, public water supply, sewage, electric lighting.”<sup>141</sup> In 1933, the city had a population of 379,200: 36% were registered as Ukrainians, 31.5% as Russians, 26.6% as Jews.<sup>142</sup> There were eleven institutions of higher learning, including the Institute of Railroad Engineers, Institute of Civil Engineering, Metallurgical Institute, and Chemical Engineering Institute (with a total of about 11,000 students), which were opened in 1930; five theatres; four big libraries; five museums as well as forty-three newspapers and four magazines.<sup>143</sup> The Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* was on the third place on urbanization (26.6 % of population) in Ukraine, after the Donetsk (48.3%) and Odesa (42%) ones.<sup>144</sup> By the early 1930s, illiteracy was mostly eliminated and universal elementary schooling was introduced.<sup>145</sup>

140 Oblasnyĭ derzhavnyi arkhiv Sluzhby bezpeky Ukraïny v Dnipropetrovs'kii oblasti [State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast], fond 64, sprava 4227, arkush 77; Dmitrii Volchek, *Lichno rasstrelial 1200 chelovek. Istoriia palacha i ego zhertvy*, accessed May 17, 2020, [https://www.svoboda.org/a/29591642.html?fbclid=IwAR1H\\_G8SJX6D5PzCzMPhjVyW7LqDnK84wyhOuOeJVzwhkt\\_QEDLFl6-bK34](https://www.svoboda.org/a/29591642.html?fbclid=IwAR1H_G8SJX6D5PzCzMPhjVyW7LqDnK84wyhOuOeJVzwhkt_QEDLFl6-bK34).

141 Ia. Artiukhov, “Dnepropetrovsk,” in *Bol'shaia sovetskaiia entsiklopediia*, vol. 22, ed. O. Iu. Schmidt (Moscow: OGIZ RSFSR, 1935), 747.

142 Ibid., 746.

143 Ibid., 747.

144 Ibid., 760.

145 Artiukhov, “Dnepropetrovsk,” 766.

In 1938, suburban communities Diivka-1 and Diivka-2 were incorporated into the city. According to the census of 1939, the population of Dnipropetrovsk exceeded 500,000. In terms of population size, Dnipropetrovsk was the Soviet Union's eleventh urban center and Ukraine's fourth after Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa.<sup>146</sup>

The Petrovsky and Lenin plants, employing a total of 35,000 workers, were the USSR's biggest; the Liebknecht plant and the steel foundry employed 7,000 people each.<sup>147</sup> In 1930, a bridge-making shop was converted into a metalwork plant, called Molotov *Stal'-Most*, and a cooking shop was expanded into the Kalinin Coking Plant.<sup>148</sup> Four years later, the narrow street railway tracks, along which Tram 1 circulated, were replaced with wider ones, and a street railway connected the center and the left-bank Amur district. In 1936, the first street lights were installed on Marx and Pushkin Avenues. In 1932, the reinforced concrete Merefo-Khersonskiy bridge was put in place. 1934 saw the launch of an eighty-kilometer-long paved road connecting Dnipropetrovsk to Zaporizhzhia.<sup>149</sup>

Of great importance for the city and the entire Ukraine was the launch of the Dnipro Hydroelectric Station (DniproHES). For the first time in the river's history, the rapids were flooded and regular navigation between Kyiv and Kherson was made possible. The construction of DniproHES became a symbol of "the Soviet people's victory over nature." The costs of such "victory" included the change of the natural current of Dnipro and the covering of large territories with water.<sup>150</sup> And still, it took a while before the possible impact on the environment became clear. This is how the professor of archaeology Iryna Kovaliova, who grew up in Dnipropetrovsk, described the river: "Ah, the Dnieper of my childhood! Going out to the islands for a picnic people did not take water with them—to get some water, you just had to bend over the side of the boat, and the fish broth made with it was the best I've ever tasted."<sup>151</sup>

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146 Chauncy D. Harris, "The Cities of the Soviet Union," *Geographical Review* 35, 1 (1945): 119.

147 Ivanenko and Kavun, *Osoblyvosti rozvytku urbanizatsiinoho protsesu v Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 167.

148 Ibid., 164.

149 Ibid., 168–169.

150 More details in: Roman A. Cybriwsky, *Along Ukraine's River. A Social and Environmental History of the Dnipro* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018), 69–90.

151 Iryna Kovalëva, *Zhizn' provedënnia v mogile: Ispoved' arkeologa* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Art-Press, 2008), 23.

Almost immediately after the launch of DniproHES the construction of a river port was started in Dnepropetrovsk, and the decision to build an embankment along the river was made.

The policy of eliminating the city's old cemeteries was arguably an element of the same "gentrification" project. In 1936, the authorities of Dnepropetrovsk decided to eliminate the city's oldest burial ground with at least 100,000 graves, which now stood in the city center. The sites included the Voskresenska (Resurrection) church built in 1837 on the cemetery, a massive chapel over the grave of the Duma deputy Karavaev as well as the common grave of victims of the revolutionary fights in 1905.<sup>152</sup> It was decided to build on the site of the old cemetery a sports stadium called Steel. This decision should be viewed within a broader context—from the mid-1930s, it became a mainstream practice in the USSR to build parks on the sites of old cemeteries. And in the new Soviet city there seemed to be no need for cemeteries at all (for instance, the development plans for Magnitogorsk did not provide for a cemetery). The old-style cemeteries appeared out of step with the times, and efforts were made to popularize cremation instead.<sup>153</sup>

## The Urban Development Plans

Life (not only economy) in the USSR had to be pre-planned, especially the life of a large industrial city. In May 1926, a five-year plan of reconstruction of Katerynoslav-Dnipropetrovsk was sent to the republican government in Kharkiv. It envisaged a city divided into several areas: industrial; residential; administrative and commercial (central); academic and educational (on the hill); and a port area (on the right bank). Planned sites included an airdrome, a racetrack, an amateur sports club and "a square of mass action."<sup>154</sup>

1933 saw the presentation of a new plan, which proposed the fashioning of Dnipropetrovsk into a "model socialist city." It prognosed a rapid population growth (reaching the mark of 775,000 in 1948), residential areas divided into seven sections, with the average house having no more than four

152 Maksim Kavun, *Istoriia znamenitykh kladbishch goroda*, accessed May 17, 2020, <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/124913>.

153 Anna Sokolova, "Novyi mir i staraia smert', sud'ba kladbishch v sovetskikh gorodakh 1920–1930-kh godov," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 1 (2018): 74–94.

154 V. Starostin, *Proekt razvitiia goroda 1925–1927 gg.*, accessed May 17, 2018, <http://encdp.com/city/architecture/gradostroitelstvo/619>.



or five stores (or six to eight in the center), and lots of green spaces.<sup>155</sup> The *Zvezda* newspaper published the following emotional appeal: “Let’s turn our city—the city of cast iron and steel—into a model prosperous socialist center!”<sup>156</sup> Other headlines and slogans published in the same issue highlight the main problems of the urban living: “Let us get the maximum of the capital investment!”; “For a normally functioning street railroad”; “For uninterrupted water supply”; “For installation of gas and energy distribution networks”; “For nice-looking and well-appointed streets and squares”; “Let’s begird the city with a circle of greenery”; “Residential accommodations to working people”; and finally, “turn the face of our splendid Dnieper to proletariat.”<sup>157</sup>

The majority of these plans remained in the domain of dreams. In December 1938, the city’s chief architect Oleksandr Krasnoselsky described Dnipropetrovsk of the future in this way:

The city with its factories, suburbs, the Dnieper’s riverside is flooded with greenery. The air is pure, fragrant, tender, as if after a spring rain . . . Dnepropetrovsk is changed beyond recognition. Now it is famous not only for its gigantic factories and plants but also for its wonderful streets, boulevards lined with chestnut and lime trees, its children’s Central Park stretching from Schmidt Street to Sadovaia Street, its electric railway for kids,<sup>158</sup> a fleet of kids’ boats shuttling to and fro along the mirror-like surface of the lake, a fleet of kids’ flying boats, sometimes taking wing, sometimes gliding along the water, the wonderful parks. By the way, a couple of words about the parks. All of them—Kaidatsky Park, the Palace of Culture’s Park, the Kids’ Park, the Eighth of March Park, the Shevchenko Park, etc.—are interconnected with an uninterrupted tape of boulevards crossing the city in all directions.<sup>159</sup>

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155 Idem, *General’nyi plan Dnepropetrovska 1933 goda*, accessed May 17, 2018, <http://encdp.com/city/architecture/gradostroitelstvo/599>; R. B. Tresling, ed., *Nasha rabota. Arkhitekturnyi sbornik Dnepropetrovshchiny* (Dnipropetrovsk: Oblizdat, 1936).

156 *Zvezda*, no. 1, December 26, 1933, 3. I express my gratitude to Klymentii Fedevych who shared this source with me.

157 Ibid.

158 The Small Stalin Railway was launched in Khataievych Park in the summer of 1936: G. I. Guliaev, V. I. Bol’shakov, and N. D. Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk: 1928–1947* (Dnipropetrovsk: Pgasa, 2009), 29.

159 A. L. Krasnosel’skii, “Gorod-sad,” in *Ridne misto moie*, ed. V. V. Sloboda (Dnipropetrovsk: Lira, 2008), 179–181.

Krasnoselsky had a vision of a million-plus city with a transformed Shevchenko Park, from where a steel bridge would lead to the Komsomolsky Island, with new buildings on Karl Marx Avenue, and “a grandiose memorial of the Great Socialist Revolution” and “a marvelous, enormous Lenin statue” on the former Soborna square.<sup>160</sup>

Krasnoselsky, who built dozens of buildings in Katerynoslav-Dnipropetrovsk, correctly foresaw only the construction of a bridge in the Shevchenko Park and the four bridges across the Dnipro. Further construction was halted when the Second World War began, less than a year after the publication of his article.

### “Without Foundation”: An Attempt to Create a Literary Myth of Dnipropetrovsk

It was during the Second World War, in a magazine produced on an occupied territory by a German propaganda department, that the seminal “Dnipropetrovsk text” was first published—a novel about the city as it was in the 1920s, written by its native, Viktor Petrov.

Viktor Petrov is perhaps the most mysterious and multi-faceted personality in the intellectual history of twentieth-century Ukraine. An ethnographer, historian, linguist, and archaeologist, Petrov also managed to wear some other hats. He was a provocative writer, a collaborator of Soviet secret services, an original philosopher, and an editor of a Ukrainian magazine published by the German occupation authorities. He also managed to remain an enigma for his biographers.<sup>161</sup>

A priest’s son, Viktor Petrov was born in Katerynoslav in 1894. In 1918, he graduated from the history and philology department of Kyiv University and

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160 Ibid.

161 On Petrov’s biography and literary as well as scholarly work see V’acheslav Briukhovets’kyi, *Viktor Petrov: verkhý doli—vérkhy i doli* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2013); Vitalii Andrieiev, *Viktor Petrov. Narysy intelektual’noi biohrafii*. (Dnipropetrovs’k: Herda, 2012); Solomiia Pavlychko, *Dyskurs modernizmu v ukrains’kii literaturi* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1999); Myroslav Shkandrij, “Avant-gardist versus Neoclassicist: Viktor Domontovych’s Early Novels,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 42, 3 (2000): 315–329; Vira Aheieva, *Poetyka paradoksa. Intelektual’na proza Viktora Petrova-Domontovycha* (Kyiv: Fakt, 2006); Iurii Barabash, “Kto vy, Viktor Petrov? Povest’ V. Domontovicha (Petrova) na fone épokhi i sud’by,” in Iu. Barabash, *Ukrainskoe literaturnoe zarubezh’e. Litsa. Sud’by. Teksty* (Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2016), 148–184. See also: Viktor Petrov, *Lysty do Sofii Zerovoi*, comp., Viktoriia Serhienko (Kyiv: Dukh i litera, 2021); Katarzyna Glinianowicz, Paweł Krupa, and Joanna Majewska, eds, *Viktor Petrov: Mapuvannia tvorchosty pys’mennika* (Kraków: Universitas, 2020).



FIGURE 31.

Viktor Petrov's child photo from Katerynoslav.  
Photo from the Archive of the Institute  
of Archeology of National Academy  
of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv.

from 1924 worked at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. In 1928, he debuted as a novelist, publishing several pieces of intellectual prose, mostly focused on unusual love affairs with multiple literary and philosophical allusions. Arrested in June 1938, Petrov was released two weeks later—this incident was probably a turning point in his relationship with the Soviet intelligence. In January 1941, Petrov was appointed director of the Institute of Ukrainian Folklore. In this capacity he was evacuated—along with most of his fellow researchers from the Academy of Sciences—to Ufa. However, in autumn of 1942, all of a sudden, Petrov turned up in the German-occupied Kharkiv. There, he officially

worked at the military propaganda agency and unofficially performed still unknown (due to inaccessibility of archives) assignments for Soviet intelligence. In the Ukrainian magazine he produced for German authorities, under the pen name V. Domontovych, Petrov started publishing his novel *Without Foundation* (*Bez gruntu*).

The last days of the Second World War Petrov spent in Berlin where he worked at the Ukrainian Scientific Institute, and after the approach of the Red Army, he moved to Munich where he taught and actively published in magazines for Ukrainian *émigrés*. His areas of interest were unusual for publications of this type. They included European existentialism, modern art, the development of physics, biographical sketches of Van Gogh and François Villon, Montesquieu and Goethe, Marko Vovchok and Lesia Ukraïнка.

On April 18, 1949, Petrov walked out of his Munich apartment and disappeared.<sup>162</sup> He was not heard of until the summer of 1950, when he turned up in Moscow, as a researcher at the Institute of History of Material Culture of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In 1957, Petrov returned to Kyiv and married Sofia Zerova, the widow of poet Mykola Zerov, whom Petrov befriended in Kyiv in the 1920s–1930s. Petrov and Zerova registered their marriage thirty-five years after their first meeting. In 1966, Petrov defended his second thesis (he did not succeed in reinstating the academic degree he was granted in 1930) called “Language. Ethnicity. Folklore.” Petrov died on June 8, 1969.

After his return to the USSR Petrov no longer published literary works—most of his publications were devoted to archaeology. Thus, V. Domontovych’s literary career spanned no more than twelve years (from the late 1920s to the early 1940s) of Petrov’s seventy-five years of life.<sup>163</sup>

Petrov’s novel *Without Foundation*, set in Dnipropetrovsk in the early 1930s, is written as a multi-layered narration by Rostyslav Mykhailovych, an art scholar and consultant working for the Committee for Protection of Historical Landmarks, a “respectable and self-confident” person, “a collector of impressions,” sensitive to political winds of the day and valuing “intellectual vagabondage.”<sup>164</sup> The main character, a native of Katerynoslav, is sent to his home city on an assignment, to take part in an official meeting the purpose of which is making a decision about what to do with the so-called Varangian Church built by Stepan Lynnyk in 1908. Both the church and its creators are fictitious, but Dnipropetrovsk in Petrov’s text is rich in authentic detail: topographic, personal, nostalgic.

Rostyslav Mykhailovych is an erudite, an influential and very circumspect person. His circumspection is not just egoism, but also a manifestation of the ability to look at any problem from different angles. He parades before the readers a number of prominent cultural figures of Dnipropetrovsk (in most cases, their prototypes could be identified), and shows that all of them have somehow lost the ground, limited themselves to certain clear-cut convictions, and are doomed—some to die, others to lose their jobs.

162 More details in: Serhii Bilokin’, “Dovkola taiemnytsi,” in Viktor Petrov, *Diiachi ukrains’koi kul’tury—zhertvy bil’shovyts’koho teroru* (Kyiv: Voskresinnia, 1992), 3–23; V’iacheslav Briukhovets’kyi, “Den’, shcho mozhe vmistyty vichnist’,” in *Obrii osobystosti. Knyha na poshanu Ivana Dziuby*, ed. Olia Hnatiuk and Leonid Finberg (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2011), 185–205.

163 Shevel’ov, “Shostyĭ u hroni,” 508.

164 Here and hereinafter *Without Foundation* is quoted following V. Domontovych, *Proza*, vol. 2, ed. Iurii Shevel’ov (New York: Suchasnist’, 1989).

Likewise, the impress of futility, groundlessness sits on the brow of architect Lynnyk, Rostyslav Mykhailovych's teacher and a member of St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts. The author undoubtedly likes this unsociable and tough person, describing him as a carrier of a grand project—a quest for absolute, supra-individual, anti-sensual art: “He attempted to replace subjective art with universal art; relativist art—with definitive art; intellectual art—with people’s art.” Lynnyk is interested in things in process of formation (like, for instance, old Rus’ before Volodymyr the Great). As described by Rostyslav Mykhailovych, Lynnyk rebelled, engaged in a quest, and mysteriously drowned in the Gulf of Finland, convincingly demonstrating “the egoistic naivety of a lone and pessimistic artist separated from the ground.”

The ideal location where to watch the groundlessness of various intellectual explorations turns out to be the characters’ (and the author’s) native city. In *Without Foundation*, Dnipropetrovsk is assigned the most important role. Everything begins with the passage in which the main character (un)recognizes his native region as he looks on through the window of a train:

The same boundless infinity of the space and the sky as before, only now it’s not a virgin soil of the steppe but rails, slag, railroad switches, freight wagons and flat wagons, red and green wagons, open platforms, tank wagons. There is no trace left of the erstwhile steppe, the entire colossal expanse of land is crisscrossed with countless rows of railways . . . Iron, cast iron, coal, coke, cement, brickwork turned the steppe into a black tomb. Gone are the unploughed greenish-grey fields, and the train races through stretches of land filled with railways, wagons, brick buildings of factories and plants. I was approaching a city I didn’t know yet.

Rostyslav Mykhailovych compares these sights with his childhood memories: “the provincial town of one-story houses,” “the idyll of cherry gardens,”<sup>165</sup> southern tea drinking in the evenings, with buns and watermelons, and with the pre-revolutionary Potemkin Garden above the Dnipro, which was dominated by nature and not by the regularity of Soviet parks.

The novel can be interpreted as apologetics of intellectual doubt and literary mimicry, as a reminiscence to Leo Shestov’s “The Apotheosis of Groundlessness,”<sup>166</sup> as well as to Anatole France and Henri de Régnier ironic

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165 Ibid., 271–284.

166 The Kyiv-born Russian existential philosopher Leo Shestov published his “*Apofeoz bezpochvennosti*” already in 1905. Its English translation done in 1920 was published under the misleading title “All Things are Possible”.

prose. Petrov sends a message that every take on any problem is only partially correct and nobody can be absolutely right. The novel is written by a person in doubt, by someone sensitive to contradictions and limitations of any idea or any belief. This is a reward for (and, at the same time, a curse of) a critical mind.

The spontaneous love story, which erupts as Rostyslav Mykhailovych walks out of the Varangian Church, also becomes a victim of his intellectual stance and “groundless” attitude. According to him, “We lose the habit of acting, feeling and thinking on our own initiative. We act, think, live in line with the general formulas, which are created for millions.” This conclusion is also applied to love.

Where is Petrov in V. Domontovych’s Dnipropetrovsk story? Is he identical to Rostyslav Mykhailovych? On the one hand, both the writer and his character are natives of Dnipropetrovsk. On the other, the description of the protagonist’s appearance is emphatically different from the way Petrov looked. Notwithstanding, commentators have more than once articulated their suspicions that Petrov was an alter ego of his character. Vasyl Chaplenko, himself a native of Katerynoslav (he is mentioned in the novel under his real name) wrote bluntly, “If egoist Rostyslav Mykhailovych is V. Petrov’s self-description, then it could provide a clue to the mystery.”<sup>167</sup> Later researchers would talk about “a stunning parallelism” and remark, not without reason, that “the intensity and assertiveness with which Petrov postulated an *epochal connection* between the most general ideological pronouncements and the trivial and aesthetic emotions of the people behind them” bring the writer and his characters very close to each other.<sup>168</sup>

Curiously, in *Without Foundation*, the author’s voice, as distinct from Rostyslav Mykhailovych’s, can only be heard once, in a passage fraught with symbolism. First, he shares his thoughts on the Empress Catherine’s imperial project, which is essential for Dnipropetrovsk’s image: “To begin, never to finish. To design but not to build. To apply a lot of effort, to strain one’s muscles, to bring the strain to a catastrophe, to breakdown, but fail to achieve what was planned.”<sup>169</sup> Afterwards, suddenly, an author’s remark comes up. In this remark,

167 Vasyl’ Chaplenko, “Povist’ pro Sicheslav abo spohady mystetstvoznavtsia,” *Novi dni* (1972): 9–12.

168 Barabash, “Kto vy, Viktor Petrov?,” 153; Aleksandr Dmitriev, “Arkheohogiiia epokhi i plastika identichnosti: Petrov—Domontovich—Ber,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 5 (2017): 224.

169 V. Domontovych, *Doktor Serafikus. Bez hruntu* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 1999), 213.

Petrov highlights the course which Rostyslav Mykhailovych's thought is taking. He comments that in Dnipropetrovsk's hilly area, everything fits together to form one whole: an "unfinished" building of the historical museum, an "unrealized" project of the huge cathedral, and a "half-done" mill in Gogol's *Dead Souls*. In this combination of unfinished things, "something is always lacking."<sup>170</sup> It is a perfect—"groundless"—place to be reflected upon.

Petrov's novel needs Dnipropetrovsk—a city that escapes clear definitions and remains unfinished. In this context, "unfinished" means both incomplete and full of possibilities. *This* city fits into *such* novel seamlessly. It is a place where one can sense, as strongly as nowhere else, the loss of confidence and the accidental nature of a place of residence. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Petrov published his text in 1942, in the extreme conditions of the Nazi occupation.

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170 Ibid., 214.



## A City at War

Perhaps the tragic aspect of war and other disasters consists precisely in the fact that their general necessity rules are at odds with a person's conscience . . . Only fortune can save you during war and disasters.

Friedrich Gorenstein,  
*The Place*

Dismissed from the director's position at the Dnipropetrovsk Historical Museum, but not jailed, Dmytro Yavornytsky finished his opus *A History of the City of Katerynoslav* in 1939. Catering to the Soviet government's needs to prove that Soviet Ukraine could be compared to the leading industrial powers, he extolled its achievements using metaphors such as "the American tempo" and "a Ukrainian Manchester," even though these images were associated with the imperial period:

Dnipropetrovsk is growing every day and every minute, running ahead at an American tempo. The lively imagination envisions its future as not just a great one but as grandiose. Very soon, all twenty townships on the right bank of the Dnipro will merge with it . . . And all this mixed together will produce one huge, populous, wealthy, glittering city, what might be called the jolly Ukrainian Manchester.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Yavornytsky died in the summer of 1940. A year later, the German troops invaded the Soviet Union. The Second World War thus reached Dnipropetrovsk, turning it—like the entire Ukraine—into a space where the history's bloodiest experiment was staged.

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1 D. I. Iavornitskiĭ, *Istoriia goroda Ekaterinoslava*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovs'k: Sich, 1996), 145–146.

## The Summer of 1941: From Soviet to Nazi Rule

Numbering 560,000 residents by 1941,<sup>2</sup> Dnipropetrovsk had felt the impact of the Second World War already in 1939 and 1940. In her memoirs, Irina Kovalëva wrote that “shortly before the Winter War [the Soviet-Finish war that started in late November 1939] food products started vanishing from stores. You had to queue to buy sugar, flour, bread.”<sup>3</sup> She also mentioned that the arrests of “unreliable individuals” were taking place more often than before.<sup>4</sup>

June 22, 1941—the day when the Third Reich attacked the Soviet Union—was described in several memoirs of Dnipropetrovsk residents. The acting first secretary of the Party’s *oblast* Committee (*obkom*) Konstantin Grushevoi/Kostiantyn Hrushovy recalled that the day was a sunny one. Having learned about the beginning of the war early in the morning, he was immediately instructed to have the public radio loudspeakers ready by noon as well as, immediately after Molotov’s speech, to make locals assemble in public spaces to declare their loyalty to the Soviet motherland.<sup>5</sup> The local student Vladimir Gelfand wrote in his diary that:

lots of people were bustling around on the streets. Trams were overcrowded and people were hanging on their footboards, so we barely managed to get on a tram and then out of it at the point of our destination. In Olya’s apartment we learned that Germany declared war on us. It was horrible and took us by surprise.<sup>6</sup>

The memoirs of Irina Kovaleva, who was eleven in 1941, mirror the chaos and despair lurking through the streets:

My childhood ended abruptly when Fascist Germany declared the war. It was a lovely Sunday . . . Suddenly, from an open window came a woman’s scream, then another, and yet another . . . It was announced on the radio that German aircrafts shelled out cities, and then Molotov spoke.

2 I. A. Shakhraichuk, “Sotsial’ni nastroi naseleння Dnipropetrovs’ka v period natsysts’koï okupatsii mista (1941–1943 rr.),” *Problemy politychnoi istorii Ukraïny* 13 (2018): 203.

3 Irina Kovalëva, *Zhizn’, provedënnaia v mogile: Ispoved’ arkhеologа* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2008), 24.

4 Ibid.

5 K. S. Hrushovyĭ, *Todi, v sorok pershomu . . .* (Kyïv: Vydavnytstvo politychnoi literatury Ukraïny, 1973), 31.

6 Vladimir Gel’fand, “Dnevnik za 1941 god,” accessed April 5, 2021, <http://www.gelfand.de/1941gvv.html>.

The memories of the Civil War still fresh in their minds, the women, stunned, rushed to stores to buy salt, sugar, candles.<sup>7</sup>

On the same date, martial law was imposed in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. One day later, the authorities began to call up men for military service on a large scale. Previously, the draft requirement applied to men aged from twenty-three to thirty-six; however, since August 10, the age range had been extended, and was now from eighteen to fifty years. On June 29, the Soviet government issued a directive to leave nothing to the enemy during the retreat. On July 5, Moscow sent a directive concerning Dnipropetrovsk: the engine plant whose construction was underway in the town and the automobile plant in Amur-Nyzhnyodniprovsk had to be evacuated.<sup>8</sup> In other words, already in early July 1941, the Soviet government—watching the speed with which the German troops were advancing in the USSR—felt certain that the area along the Dnipro would fall into enemy hands.

Yet a large part of the city's population in June and July 1941 could not even imagine that the Germans were to invade as far as Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>9</sup> Many people fled to the city from areas near the front line.<sup>10</sup> They were soon followed by retreating Soviet troops. The atmosphere of uncertainty and fear gave rise to gossip, the dissemination of which the NKVD's (the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) employees tried to curb. The secret police's foremost task now consisted in identifying and arresting the "anti-Soviet elements [individuals]" by starting with the most active disseminators of panic rumors.<sup>11</sup> Capturing deserters, reinforcing harsh passport controls, and conducting massive spot checks in hotels and parks were indispensable parts of the NKVD's daily routine. For instance, from July 20 to July 25, 1941, the NKVD carried out "247 patrols and arrested 359 people" in Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>12</sup> In the period from June 22

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7 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedēnaia v mogile*, 32.

8 Hrushovyi, *Todi, v sorok pershomu . . .*, 32–50.

9 Ibid., 39; "Dnevnik Vladimira Gel'fanda za 1941 god."

10 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedēnaia v mogile*, 33.

11 See Vladyslav Hrynevych, *Nepryborkane riznolossia. Druha svitova viina i suspil'no-politychni nastroi v Ukraïni, 1939–cherven' 1941 rr.* (Kyïv: Lira, 2012); T. V. Vrons'ka et al., *Kyïv u dni natsysts'koi navalay za dokumentamy radians'kykh spetssluzhb* (Kyïv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NANU, 2003).

12 Oleh Bazhan, "Suspil'ni nastroi v Ukraïns'kii RSR u pershi dni Velykoï Vitchyznianoï viiny (za dokumentamy Haluzevoho derzhavnogo arkhivu Sluzhby bezpeky Ukraïny)," *Z arkhiviv VUCHK–GPU–NKVD* 2 (2011): 17.

to September 25, 1941, the NKVD managed to detain 326 people in the *oblast*, 273 of them allegedly because of anti-Soviet agitation.<sup>13</sup> 1,981 deserters were apprehended from June to September 1941.<sup>14</sup> Another duty assigned to the secret police was controlling the process of evacuation. Employees of the NKVD were therefore seconded to industrial facilities with the task to prevent, *inter alia*, individual attempts to thwart planned explosions of the premises before the retreat. Perilous mailings in order to assess different social groups' attitudes towards the war also belonged to NKVD's track record.<sup>15</sup>

On July 18, 1941, the Party's Central Committee issued a directive concerning the deployment of the underground anti-German resistance network and the creation of guerilla units. August 1st saw the initiation of the defenses' construction in Dnipropetrovsk. Around 100,000 people were employed in the process. On August 5th, the order to evacuate the city was issued and, one day later, the evacuation of the biggest industrial facilities began. On August 19th, the German army started shelling the city.<sup>16</sup> This is how Vladimir Gelfand described the evacuation in his diary:

The group of first evacuees consisted of families of the members of the city's council and of police employees. Automobiles were honking time and again—thousands of locals were leaving the town day and night. Gossip mongering was on the up. Remaining residents resented those who were leaving. Some were even whispering that only Jews were fleeing—they supposedly had caches of gold stored away, that's why they were making off . . . Petrovsky, Lenin, Kaganovich, Molotov, machine building, and many other plants ground to a halt. The industrial sector of the giant city was quickly disappearing. Trains carrying machines and equipment of the abandoned factories were leaving the city regularly. The evacuation efforts were stepped up, buying train tickets became a mission impossible to accomplish.<sup>17</sup>

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13 Ibid., 36.

14 Ibid., 40.

15 Ibid., 7–46.

16 Hrushovyi, *Todi, v sorok pershomu* . . . , 89, 93; Shakhraichuk, "Sotsial'ni nastroi," 205.

17 Gel'fand, "Dnevnik za 1941 god." Gelfand and his family were evacuated to Essentuki, where, in May 1942, he was drafted into the army. Within the Red Army ranks, he reached Berlin. Gelfand kept a diary at the front-line and after the war, when he returned to Dnipropetrovsk.

Radiologist Nikolai Moshkov made the following entry in his diary on August 7, 1941: “What a panic! The big wigs’ wives left at night, the NKVD is leaving, and ashes and smoke from the ‘case files’ they are burning are sweeping along the streets. Hospitals are being evacuated.”<sup>18</sup> Two days later, he added: “The masses are feeling resentful about the big bosses, who are leaving the town in comfort, taking the money with them . . . So, for instance, at the Petrovsky Plant people nearly dismembered a shop foreman or the plant’s director, who, leaving with his family, supposedly was carrying with him 500,000 roubles.”<sup>19</sup> Witnessing the hasty evacuation and attempts to flee the city, the Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov recalled witnessing what looked like columns of refugees from Dnipropetrovsk (“They rode in cars, carts, walked. Tractors and harvesters were moving—an endless number of tractors and harvesters”). He noted the general “nervous mood” and the shock that “the Germans are already here, near the Dnieper.”<sup>20</sup>

On August 15, 1941, the German troops entered Kryvyi Rih, the most important industrial hub of Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*. The Dnipropetrovsk’s railway station was destroyed by shelling on the following day. On August 18,



FIGURE 32.  
Two Nazi-time book  
publications about  
Ukraine: “Land  
of Future” (1939)  
by Axel Schmidt  
and “Land of Black  
Earth” (1942)  
by Franz Obermaier.  
From Andrii  
Portnov’s collection.

- 18 G. I. Guliaev and N. D. Busygina, eds., *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev: 1929–1942* (Dnipropetrovsk: Svidler A. L., 2012), 81.
- 19 Ibid., 83. The information about the events on the Petrovsky plant is confirmed by the militia reports on workers’ dissatisfaction “due to management mistakes,” which led to the beating of the party functionaries by the workers: Bazhan, “Suspil’ni nastroi,” 13.
- 20 Konstantin Simonov, *Raznye dni voïny. Dnevnik pisatel’ia. Tom 1. 1941 god* (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1981): 229–231.

1941, the DniproHES dam was blown up following the Soviet government's order. Three days later, Moshkov described the atmosphere as "a silence extraordinary for our town" and "an absolutely clear horizon" (when the industrial facilities were out of operation, they were no longer polluting the atmosphere).<sup>21</sup>

On August 20–25, 1941, the German troops fought to take over the right bank area of Dnipropetrovsk. The combat units included the Third Army Corps (Wehrmacht) under the command of General Eberhard von Mackensen; Fifth SS Panzer Division "Wiking," which consisted of volunteer fighters from Northern Europe; two divisions of the Italian Expeditionary Corps in Russia (*Corpo di Spedizione Italiano* in Russia, or CSIR) and a unit of Hungarian mine clearance specialists.<sup>22</sup> Dnipropetrovsk was defended by units of the Reserve Army under the command of General Lieutenant Nikandr Chibisov. The very word "reserve" makes it clear that there were no regular troops in the city. The fighting units were hastily cobbled together, with weapons and communication gear being in short supply. After a round of very heavy fighting on the city's outskirts, in the evening of August 24th the Soviet troops received an order to retreat from Dnipropetrovsk and blow bridges across the Dnipro.<sup>23</sup> The commander of the 255th rifle division defending the city Ivan Zamertsev (who was later promoted to General Major) recalled that during the battle for Dnipropetrovsk, the Soviet army leadership "was compelled to hastily thrust into combat units and regiments that were created from scratch, still in the process of formation and cobbling-together and, moreover, poorly equipped with weapons and materiel."<sup>24</sup> The heavy fighting and the efforts to check the advance of the enemy troops, whose strength and equipment were far superior to the ones of the Soviet army, took its toll in the form of battle casualties. In his memoirs printed in 1964,

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21 Guliaev and Busygina, eds., *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev*, 90.

22 I. Ia. Shchupak, ed., *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku* (Dnipro: Tkuma, 2017), 32.

23 More details on the war memorials centered on the fight scenes in Dnipropetrovsk are available in Franz Halder, *Kriegstagebuch. Tägliche Aufzeichnungen des Chefs des Generalstabes des Heeres 1939–1942*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1962); I. T. Zamertsev, *Cherez gody i rasstoianiiia* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965); I. V. Tiulenev, *Cherez tri voïny*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1972); Eberkhard von Makenzen, *Ot Buga do Kavkaza. Tretii Tankovyi korpus v kampanii protiv Sovetskoi Rossii 1941–1942 godov* (Moscow: Tranzitkniga, 2004).

24 I. Zamertsev, "V boiakh za Dnepropetrovsk," accessed April 5, 2021, <http://www.rkka.ru/oper/diff/dnepropetrovsk.htm>.

Zamertsev acknowledged that “the rate of our battle losses at times amounted to 50–60%.”<sup>25</sup>

Stalin took the loss of Dnipropetrovsk very badly—the place that he ordered “not to surrender under any circumstances” and “not to let the enemy cross on to the east bank of the Dnipro” fell surprisingly fast.<sup>26</sup> After the retreat from Dnipropetrovsk, Stalin dismissed the commander of the Southern Front General Ivan Tyulenev from his post. Other soldiers and commanders of units, however, distinguished themselves for their bravery and were decorated with honors. In particular, the title Hero of the Soviet Union was awarded to Yefim Pushkin (the commander of the 8th division of the 4th Mechanized Corps) and posthumously to Major Boris Krotov, the commander of the 28th Cavalry Division for the defense of Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, water and power supplies were cut off in Dnipropetrovsk and the city experienced the emergence of looters, who plundered the abandoned stores with great zeal.<sup>28</sup> A railway employee Sergei Shvedov describes the situation in his diary:

The folks are taking food products from wagons standing on rail tracks. Grain and flour are carted from the elevator storage. The populace is taking as much as it can lift from the ground . . . The city is being wrecked while ordinary folks are picking all they could: foodstuff, buckets, bowls, balalaikas, radios, glass, toys, kerosene, oil, paints, furniture, pot flowers (for instance, palm trees from the Ilich Palace of Culture), coal, firewood, clothes, and the like.<sup>29</sup>

The German troops entered Dnipropetrovsk on August 25, 1941. This is how Nikolai Moshkov described the process: “At ten in the morning, calmly and unhurriedly, the perfectly armed German troops walked into the city from Chechelivka and Krasnopillya. Among their vehicles there was not a single cart,

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25 Ibid.

26 Hrushovyĭ, *Todi, v sorok pershomu* . . . , 168; A. A. Grechko, *Gody voĭny* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), 37–38.

27 A. K. Nemykin and V. M. Kotsur, *Boĭova slava Dnipropetrovshchyny: narysy pro Heroiv Radians'koho Soiuzu* (Dnipropetrovsk: Sich, 2000), 19–22.

28 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedënaia v mogile*, 35.

29 G. I. Guliaev, V. I. Bol'shakov, and N. D. Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk: 1928–1947* (Dnipropetrovsk: Pgasa, 2009), 57, 61.



not a single bicycle! Only motor-bicycles and automobiles.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Irina Kovaleva recalls the Germans’ arrival:

Old women were taking icons from places where they were stored and hanging them on the walls, to show off their Christian Orthodox faith; calendars with Soviet leaders’ images were taken down from the walls, and dangerous books stowed away. I remember how a “real” German first appeared in our house. He was a tall wiry military policeman with strangely whitish eyes and a metal badge on his chest. Loudly stamping his feet in short—un-Russian—high boots, he was flinging open doors of apartments and, pointing his finger at quailing local women, asking “Jude? Jude?”<sup>31</sup>



FIGURE 33. Occupied Dnipropetrovsk in 1941.

Photo by Berkó Pál. Source: [fortepan.hu](http://fortepan.hu)

Initially, the right bank section of Dnipropetrovsk was governed by German military administration. Meanwhile, the Soviet army was continuing the shelling of the city from the left bank of the Dnipro. According to accounts of people who remained in Dnipropetrovsk, these artillery attacks on residential sections

30 Guliaev and Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev*, 94.

31 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedënnaiia v mogile*, 36.

of the town were “the best agitation against the attackers.”<sup>32</sup> Reportedly, Red Army soldiers that were captured by the Germans believed that “the Soviet artillery attacks are so ruthless because the artillerists were told that only Germans were staying in Dnipropetrovsk and all residents were evacuated.”<sup>33</sup>

### The Subsidiary Authorities and the Ukrainian Nationalists’ Attempts to Establish Control over Them

In the evening of September 29, 1941, the Soviets stopped shelling Dnipropetrovsk. The front line moved eastward and the military administration in the conquered city was replaced with a civil administration. On November 15, 1941, Dnipropetrovsk became a part of *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, which by the autumn of 1942 had become the Third Reich’s largest colony in terms of size.<sup>34</sup> The colony incorporated also other regional units such as Zhytomyr, Lutsk, Mykolaiv, and the Crimean Peninsula (the latter was *de facto* governed by a military administration through the entire period of occupation). Dnipropetrovsk had the status of a separate administrative component (headed by a *Stadtkommissar*) and was an administrative center of the *Generalkommissariat*, which governed Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* and most of the Zaporizhzhia *oblast*.<sup>35</sup>

32 Guliaev and Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev*, 96, 105.

33 Guliaev, Bol’shakov, and Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk: 1928–1947*, 62.

34 Overviews of the situation in Ukraine under Nazi rule are provided in Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair. Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press, 2004); O. Ie. Lysenko, ed., *Ukraïna u Druhiï svitovii viïni: pohliad z XXI stolittia. Istorychni narysy* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 2010). Important materials for cross-regional comparisons are delivered in: A. V. Skorobohatov, *Kharkiv u chasy nimets’koï okupatsii (1941–1943)* (Kharkiv: Prapor, 2004); Dmytro Tytarenko, *Kul’turni protsesy v Ukraïni u roky natsysts’koï okupatsii (zona viïskovoï administratsii)* (Lviv: Instytut Ukraïnoznanstva imeni I. Kryp’iakevycha NAN Ukraïny, 2004); Dieter Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht. Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941–1944* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2008); Wendy Lower, “A New Ordering of Space and Race: Nazi Colonial Dreams in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, 1941–1944,” *German Studies Review* 25, no. 2 (2002): 227–254; O. Ie. Lysenko, ed., *Kyïv: viïna, vlada, suspil’stvo. 1939–1945 rr. (Za dokumentamy radians’kykh spetssluzhb ta natsysts’koï okupatsiinoï administratsii)* (Kyïv: Tempora, 2014); Nataliia Makov’s’ka, ed., *Arkhivy okupatsii. 1941–1944* (Kyïv: Kyievo-Mohylians’ka akademiia, 2006), 129–146; Nataliia Kashevarova, *Diial’nist’ Operatyvnoho shtabu Rozenberga z vyvchennia natsystamy ‘skhidnoho prostoru’ (1940–1945)*, vol. 1–2 (Kyïv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NANU, 2014).

35 Among the in-depth academic works focused on an overview of the situation in occupied Dnipropetrovsk are Simone Attilio Belezza, *Il tridente e la svastica. L’occupazione nazista in Ucraina orientale* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2010); Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs’ku*.

It became common to retrospectively define the German rule in Eastern Europe as “occupation.” Still, as Sebastian Conrad pointed out, “the use of the term ‘occupation’ has tended to distract attention from the fact that Nazi policies in eastern Europe were not intended as temporary seizure of power; the Nazis were aiming for permanent control that would allow far-reaching political, economic, and social changes.”<sup>36</sup>

The first steps taken by the new authorities included, on the one hand, punitive actions against the Soviet regime’s *faithfuls* (this category was designed to encompass people who were Communists, Soviet underground fighters, or Jews). On the other hand, there were also visible efforts to revive the infrastructure in terms of communications, bridges, water supply (from September 18, 1941), and tramway transport across the city (after October 12, 1941).<sup>37</sup>

Already on September 2, 1941, the Ukrainian subsidiary municipal administration (*Ukrain'ska dopomizhna uprava*) was set up and was headed by the engineer Petro Sokolovsky. A native of Sevastopol and a graduate of Kharkiv Agricultural Institute who spent eight months in a Soviet prison in 1936, Sokolovsky was the head of the engineering design department at the Board of Hydraulic Engineering when the war started.<sup>38</sup> The municipal administration reported to the German *Stadtkommissar* and consisted of thirteen departments (housing, healthcare, education, trade, retirement pensions, tramway, water supply, and others). Its staff numbered 493 people.<sup>39</sup> The municipal administration’s responsibilities included, *inter alia*, oversight of the process of introducing mandatory healthcare insurance, collecting taxes from dog owners, registering bicycles, as well as organizing brothels for German soldiers.<sup>40</sup> As the Soviet secret services saw it,

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36 Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 166.

37 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 60–61.

38 R. Krutsyk and S. Zhovtiĭ, *Chekists'ke dos'ie okupovanoi Ukraïny*, vol. 1 (Kyïv: Presa Ukraïny, 2014), 462.

39 Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti [DADO, State Archive of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast], fond 2276, opys 1, sprava 25, arkush 67. See also: V. L. Borysov, “Struktura ta hospodars'ka diial'nist' ukraïns'koï dopomizhnoi upravly m. Dnipropetrovs'ka v 1941–1943 rr.,” *Hrani* 4 (2006): 18–20.

40 H. Borysov, “Dnipropetrovs'k, okupatsiia. 25 serpnia 1941–25 zhovtnia 1943 rr.,” *Arkhivy Ukraïny* 3 (2005): 248–249.

The municipal administration through the entire period of German rule in Dnipropetrovsk was the occupiers' obedient minion, who dutifully fulfilled their every demand concerning mobilization of human and material resources for the German army and for shipment to Germany . . . and, finally, played the most active role in looting the possessions of, and executing by shooting, 18,000 Jewish residents of the town. The Ukrainian nationalists were not given a role to play in the municipal administration.<sup>41</sup>

The administration and its leader Sokolovsky were likewise called collaborators in documents of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN, the one which presumably was “not given a role to play”) and memoirs of its activists in occupied Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>42</sup>



FIGURE 34. The cover of the “Dnipropetrovsk Newspaper” published on October, 23 1941. Source: libraria.ua

41 Krutysky and Zhovtiĭ, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 463.

42 Vasyľ Regeĭ, “Vid Sianu do Dnipra. Prychynky do istoriĭ Pivdennoi pokhidnoi hrupy OUN (1941–1942 rr.),” in *Dnipropetrovsk'a OUN u borot'bi z nimets'koiu okupatsiieiu (dokumenty ta materialy)*, ed. Iurii Shchur and Artur Seredin (Dnipropetrovsk: Instytut suspil'nykh doslidzhen', 2010), 28. In particular, Regeĭ claimed that he was “depressed” by the fact that Sokolovsky spoke to him in Russian. It is important to emphasize that in their postwar memoirs, members of the OUN often emphasized their anti-German attitude and did not skimp on examples of colonial policies and improper behavior of the Germans in Dnipropetrovsk.

How did the OUN members happen to be in a southern industrial center? The OUN was created in 1929 in Vienna as an illegal far-right organization with the objective of ruthlessly fighting for an independent Ukraine. The OUN was headed by Colonel Yevhen Konovalets, a participant of the Ukrainian revolution in 1917–1921. The OUN's main enemies were the Soviet Union and Poland, within which the majority of Ukrainian territories were incorporated during the interwar period. One of the key components of the OUN's anti-Polish policies was political terror. And one of its main practitioners was Stepan Bandera, who masterminded a number of the OUN's political assassinations. The murder of a secretary of the Soviet consulate in Lviv in October 1933 and the killing of Poland's minister of internal affairs, Bronisław Pieracki, in June 1934 were among them.

Although the OUN did not expand its terrorist activities outside Poland, the Soviet authorities closely watched the nationalists. In May 1938, on Stalin's personal order, a Soviet agent killed the OUN's chief Konovalets in Rotterdam. Both this murder and the onset of the Second World War intensified the split within the OUN, which became final in 1940. After 1940, the Ukrainian nationalists were divided into two factions, each called after its respective leader: Melnykites (*Melnykivtsi*; after Andrii Melnyk, Konovalets's successor) and Banderites (*Banderivtsi*). The OUN's "Banderite" (OUN-B) wing had the reputation of a more uncompromising and radical player, and enjoyed support, first of all, among the organization's young members.<sup>43</sup>

The onset of the German-Soviet war in the summer of 1941 became a vital challenge for both OUN's factions. On June 30, 1941, when the German troops marched into Lviv, the OUN-B decided to declare the establishment of a Ukrainian state so as to confront the Third Reich with an accomplished fact. Bandera's emissary Yaroslav Stetsko came to Lviv to declare, on behalf of the OUN-B, the Act of Restoration of Ukrainian State. Such developments were not what German policymakers wanted to see in the east of Europe, so both Bandera and Stetsko were jailed and placed in a special barrack at the

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43 For more details see John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism 1939–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1980); Roman Wysocki, *Organizacja Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów w Polsce w latach 1929–1939* (Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2003); Oleksandr Zaitsev, *Ukraïns'kyï intehral'nyi natsionalizm (1920–1930 rr.). Narysy intelektual'noi istorii* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013); Myroslav Shkandrij, *Ukrainian Nationalism. Politics, Ideology, and Literature, 1929–1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).



Sachsenhausen concentration camp outside of Berlin (where they stayed until September 1944).<sup>44</sup> But the arrest of the OUN's leaders was not the end of the organization. The German occupation of entire Ukraine opened a window of opportunity for OUN's propaganda and secret activity on the left bank of the Dnipro.

To this end, the OUN-B created several so-called "expeditionary groups" (*pokhidni hrupy*), which advanced deeper into Ukraine in the Wehrmacht's footsteps. The group dispatched to Dnipropetrovsk was the Southern expeditionary one, headed by Zinoviy Matla (nicknamed Sviatoslav Vovk). It succeeded in establishing contacts with locals who held nationalist views and setting up an administrative body for Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*, which was headed by a professor from the Transportation Institute, Panas Oleinychenko, and his deputy Vasyl Rehei, who was a member of the OUN. According to the NKVD, the *oblast* administration, "failing to secure the occupiers' support," could not spread its influence and "several months after its creation was dissolved by the Germans."<sup>45</sup> Already on September 16, 1941, about twenty members of the OUN, including Rehey, were arrested and sent outside the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, back to Galicia.<sup>46</sup>

The OUN also failed to establish control over the "Ukrainian people's police," which, created by the German administration, recruited locals aged from seventeen to thirty-five, whose foremost responsibility was to search for and confiscate state property looted during the Soviet army's retreat.<sup>47</sup> For a short time, this police force was headed by the "nationalist Solntsev, who was, however, soon arrested and executed by the Germans."<sup>48</sup> A former lieutenant colonel of the Russian imperial army, Vasiliev, was

44 Information in detail is provided in O. Veselova et al., *OUN v 1941 rotsi. Dokumenty*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NANU, 2006).

45 Krutsyk and Zhovtiï, *Chekists'kie dos'ie*, 463.

46 Regeï, "Vid Sianu do Dnipra," 25–33.

47 *Dnipropetrovs'ka hazeta*, October 7, 1941. See also Ivan Dereïko, *Mistsevi formuvannia nimets'koï armii ta militsii u Raïkhskomisariati 'Ukraïna' (1941–1944 roky)* (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NANU, 2012); The situation is also described in V. O. Shaïkan, *Kolaboratsionizm na terytorii raïkhskomisariatu 'Ukraïna' i viis'kovoï zony v roky Druhoï svitovoï viiny* (Kryvyi Rih: Mineral, 2005); Frank Golczewski, "Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine," in *Kooperation und Verbrechen: Formen der Kollaboration im östlichen Europa 1939–1945*, eds. Babette Quinkert et al. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 151–182.

48 Krutsyk and Zhovtiï, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 463.

appointed as the head of the subsidiary police force in charge of the central district.<sup>49</sup>

In general, during the entire period of occupation, the subsidiary local administration was completely dependent on the German administration. The latter was not in the least interested in the OUN as an autonomous political player, seeing it as a hindrance or even a threat. Local residents of Dnipropetrovsk, on their part, often could not understand the role of the members of the OUN who arrived in their city, many of whom were mostly natives of Eastern Galicia. The nationalists' leaders, too, recognized that there were difficulties in communicating their messages to the local public. In his memoirs published in 1952, Zinovii Matla recalled how locals—judging him and his associates by their accent—mistook them for Poles and would not believe that they were speaking in Ukrainian language.<sup>50</sup> Vasyl Rehei, in his memoirs written already in 1994, echoes his party colleague:

Dnipropetrovsk was very russified. When we wanted to establish a minimal contact with people and talked with them, we had a hard time proving that we were Ukrainians. They thought we were speaking Polish, that we were Germans in disguise with a poor mastery of Ukrainian language. We felt hurt and amused when we heard this.<sup>51</sup>

Another passage from Rehei's memoir about this case is most noteworthy: "We had to clarify that we were not against Russians or Russian people but against the Russian empire of Bolsheviks, against the Communists and their rule."<sup>52</sup> It appears reasonable to compare the above statement with the documents circulating inside the OUN, in particular, with the "Socio-Political Review of Dnipropetrovsk" that appeared in June 1942. In this text, Russians are referred to as *moskali* and *katsapy* (both are pejorative forms). The document's central idea revolves around the notion that the Germans prefer to appoint Russians to all key posts rather than Ukrainians and that *moskali* in the city are better off than Ukrainians, whereas local

49 V. L. Borysov, "Intelihentsiia Dnipropetrovs'ka v umovakh nimets'ko-fashysts'koï okupatsiï mista v 1941–1943 rr.," *Intelihentsiia i vlada* 3 (2004): 94.

50 Zynovii Matla, *Pivdenna pokhidna hrupa* (Munich: Nasha knyhozbirnia, 1952), 17.

51 Regei, "Vid Sianu do Dnipra," 26.

52 Ibid., 27.



“intelligentsia is overall demoralized and educated on the Muscovite writer Pushkin . . .”<sup>53</sup>

In the summer of 1942, Dnipropetrovsk was visited by Vasyl Kuk, a member of the OUN, who was moving through the city with German documents. He was “the *providnyk* [chief] of the southern region” until the arrival of the Soviet troops.<sup>54</sup> In a 1994 interview, Kuk—who was to become the last commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army—when asked about the size of the nationalist underground in Dnipropetrovsk, answered: “Don’t know. We should not overestimate. But it was in the order of hundreds.”<sup>55</sup>

The nationalists’ main ideological rival was the Soviet underground. The Party’s underground *oblast* committee was led by Mykola/Nikolai Stashkov. He had worked at the committee as a human resources instructor and was exempt from conscription on account of a serious disease—pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>56</sup> Stashkov chose Pavlohrad, a miners’ town seventy-seven kilometers east from Dnipropetrovsk, as his seat. Pavlohrad was taken over by the German troops on October 11, 1941. By that time, the Soviet authorities had set in place safe-houses and arms caches complete with typewriters, money, and documents.<sup>57</sup>

As for the underground groups hastily cobbled together in Dnipropetrovsk, they were exposed and eliminated in the first months of the occupation. In particular, during the autumn of 1941, nearly all members of the Party’s underground municipal committee of Dnipropetrovsk were arrested. The committee was officially set back in place already in May 1942. The new administrative organ was headed by Yury (Georgy) Savchenko, a political instructor from the Red Army who had escaped from a German camp. Before the war, he worked as an electrician at the Petrovsky plant. The organization under Savchenko’s command numbered several hundreds. It spread anti-German fliers and organized acts of sabotage and subversion (for instance, blowing ammunition depots and

53 O. Pahiria and V. Ivanchenko, eds., *Litopys UPA. Nova seriiia*, vol. 18. *Diial'nist' OUN i UPA na terytorii Tsentral'no-Skhidnoi ta Pivdennoi Ukraïny* (Kyïv: Litopys UPA, 2011), 333–337.

54 Vasyl' Kuk, “Spohady, zapysani Dmytrom Kudeleiu ta Pavlom Khobotom 7 serpnia 1994 roku ta v lypni 1996 roku,” accessed April 5, 2021, <http://avr.org.ua/index.php/viewDoc/11152/>.

55 Ibid.

56 See: Hrushovyi, *Todi, v sorok pershomu . . .*, 269.

57 P. N. Rashev, “Dnepropetrovskie podpol'shchiki,” in *Geroi podpol'ia. O podpol'noi bor'be sovetskikh patriotov v tylu nemetsko-fashistkikh zakhvatchikov v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voïny*, ed. V. E. Bystrov, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970), 194.

foiling efforts to quickly relaunch the industrial facilities).<sup>58</sup> In the summer of 1942, the occupation authorities arrested members of the underground in large numbers (up to eighty people), including Stashkov and Savchenko. The heads of Dnipropetrovsk's underground *oblast* and municipal committees of the Party were executed by shooting on January 9, 1943. According to Soviet sources, Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* had up to 1,228 people working underground and 1,595 active helpers (only a little more than 300 among them were members of the Communist Party or candidates for the membership).<sup>59</sup>

### Shoah in Dnipropetrovsk

In 1939, according to the Soviet census, 89,525 Jews (18% of the city's entire population) were still living in Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>60</sup> It is hard to tell the precise number of Jews staying in occupied Dnipropetrovsk. According to the report of the German *Einsatzkommando* 6, "out of approximately 100,000 Jews originally living in Dnipropetrovsk, about 70,000 escaped before the German troops entered the town."<sup>61</sup>

On September 23, 1941, the city's German governor announced that all Jews aged ten and older had to wear "a white ribbon with the star [of David] sewn to the left sleeve above the elbow."<sup>62</sup> The text of this order also explained the racial concept of national-socialism, according to which "Yid-ism depends on the race, not on the religion" and "if a person's grand- or great-grandparents were Yids then this person is a Yid."<sup>63</sup>

Several weeks later, the Jews of Dnipropetrovsk were ordered to assemble in the morning of October 13, 1941 at the Lux department store in the very

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58 More details in Rashev, "Dnepropetrovskie podpol'shchiki," 179–216. See also Ievhen Berenziak, *Parol' 'Dum Spiro ...' Rozpovid' rozvidnyka*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo politychnoi literatury Ukraïny, 1974).

59 M. A. Slobodianiuk and I. A. Shakhraïchuk, *Rukh Oporu na Dnipropetrovshchyni v roky Velykoi Vitchyznianoï viïny* (Dnipropetrovsk: Oksamyt-Tekst, 2004), 175–195.

60 Shchupak, ed., *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 120.

61 Yitzhak Arad et al., eds, *The Einsatzgruppen Reports. Selection from the Dispatches of the Nazi Death Squads' Campaign Against the Jews: July 1941–January 1943* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1989), 242.

62 *Vil'na Ukraïna*, September 24, 1941.

63 Ibid. It is important to note that the German authorities and their collaborators used the offensive (and forbidden in official use in the USSR) form *zhydy* (kikes) instead of the neutral Russian/Ukrainian designation *evrei* (Jews).

center of the city. The purpose of the gathering was not announced, so many Jews genuinely believed they would be taken to a collective farm for work or transported to Palestine.<sup>64</sup> The Jews had to walk under escort about nine kilometers from the gathering place to the place of execution, a ravine on the site of a state forestry company across the road from the Transportation University (now the Gagarin Park and the campus of Dnipro National University). Old and sick Jews were taken there in automobiles. Not far from the ravine, the Nazis arranged a collection site for valuables. Having left their valuables there, the Jews, in groups of five to twenty people were taken to the ravine, where an SD team (numbering approximately twenty—all volunteers) shot the victims in the backs of their heads. As the dusk set in, the execution stopped and the remaining Jews were left overnight on the spot, out in the cold. Such was the weather in the early winter of 1941 that on the morning of October 14th, many people had died from the intense. Early next morning the execution continued. In two days, at least 11,000 Jews were killed.<sup>65</sup>

Here is an excerpt from the report of *Einsatzkommando 6*:

Of the remaining 30,000 [Jews of Dnipropetrovsk] approximately 10,000 were shot on October 13, 1941, by a detachment of the Higher SS and Police Chief. During the period of the report, a further 1,000 Jews were shot by the *Einsatzkommando 6*. Because of the shortage of skilled workers, it was impossible to avoid sparing, for the time being, the lives of Jewish artisans who were urgently needed for repair work and other such purposes. Steps were taken for the extermination of 1,500 inmates of the regional lunatic asylum.<sup>66</sup>

The last sentence refers to the *oblast's* psychiatric hospital in Ihren. The German officials who visited the hospital demanded that the hospital staff kill the majority of the patients. The responsibility to decide which patients were to be killed was first assigned to the professor of psychiatry David Frank—a Jew and a renowned scholar and the author of a study on cannibalism during the famine of 1921–1922.<sup>67</sup> Frank decided that the first to go would be the older patients

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64 Shchupak, ed., *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 133–134.

65 Aleksandr Kruglov et al., *Kholokost v Ukraine: Reikhskommissariat 'Ukraina'; Gubernatorstvo 'Transnistriia'* (Dnipro: Tkuma, 2016), 152–154.

66 Arad et al., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, 242.

67 D. B. Frank, *Liudoedstvo* (Katerynoslav: n. p., 1926).

and the Jews. The patients were injected with morphine, and when its supplies were exhausted, with ammonium hydroxide, resulting in a painful death.<sup>68</sup> In December 1941, at the Nazis' order, 200 patients were marked for execution and were gathered in Ihren. Stripped of their clothes, they waited for their fate to be decided in a closed space outside the hospital. The execution squad, for some reason, never arrived. By morning, forty people had frozen to death. The remaining patients were poisoned by the doctors.<sup>69</sup> Being himself a Jew, Frank was executed in the following year.<sup>70</sup>

The national-socialist policies of "the final solution of the Jewish question" had an impact on the Jewish agricultural colonies near Dnipropetrovsk as well.<sup>71</sup> In its report of September 12, 1941, *Einsatzkommando 6* mentioned that it discovered Jewish collective farms between Kryvyi Rih and Dnipropetrovsk. The existence of Jews who were not commissars ran counter to the national-socialist stereotypes. Therefore, the writer of the report offered the following explanation: the Jewish collective farmers had "low intelligence" and "the Party's leadership, deeming them unsuitable for appointment into positions of responsibility at the Party or elsewhere, sent them to rural areas."<sup>72</sup>

How did the people of Dnipropetrovsk cope with such extreme circumstances? According to the German perpetrators' reports, very few tried to escape. Most Jews "walked calmly to meet their death. It appeared as if they accepted their fate as a matter of course."<sup>73</sup> The author of the report tried to explain

68 Helinada Hrinchenko and Al'bert Venger, 'Nepotribni liudy': *Znyshchennia patsiiientiv Ihrens'koi psykhiatrychnoi likarni u 1941–43*, accessed April 5, 2021, <http://uamoderna.com/md/grinchenko-venger-useless-people>.

69 DADO, Kopii materialiv Derzhavnoho arkhivu Rosiiskoi Federatsii, fond 7021, opys 57, sprava 13, arkush 2.

70 A. H. Venher, "Vybir bez vyboru: shtrykhy do portreta profesora D. B. Franka," *Suchasni doslidzhennia z nimets'koi istorii* (2018): 121–127.

71 See a special research on the matter: Daniel Rosenberg, *Enquête sur la Shoah par balles. Dans les colonies juives de Dniepropetrovsk*, vol. 1 (Paris: Herman, 2016). Compare with A. H. Venher, "Holokost na terytorii Stalindorfs'koho raionu Dnipropetrovs'koi oblasti v period viiny," in *Velyka Vitchyzniana viina 1941–1945 rr.: Suchasni problemy istorychnoi osvity i nauky. Materialy mizhnarodnoi naukovo-teoretychnoi konferentsii* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Porohy, 2005), 199–204.

72 Arad et al., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, 131; Aleksandr Kruglov, *Bez zhalosti i somnenniia. Dokumenty o prestupleniakh operativnykh grupp i komand politsii bezopasnosti i SD na vremenno okkupirovannoi territorii SSSR 1941–1944 rr.* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Tkuma, 2009), 66.

73 Arad et al., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, 132; Kruglov et al., *Kholokost v Ukraine*, 158–159; Kruglov, *Bez zhalosti i somnenniia*, 214.

such conduct by the impact of the Soviet experience. He believed it was also a result of the passivity of Ukrainian and Russian residents (“It was almost always impossible to incite the populace to energetic acts against Jews”).<sup>74</sup> People of Slavic origin were presumably anxious that the Soviets might return, and the memories of the German troops’ sudden retreat from Ukraine in the autumn of 1918 were still fresh in their minds. The Nazi authorities believed that if they engaged the local subsidiary police force in extermination of the Jews and made the Jews walk across the city before the execution, this would serve to dispel the fears that public manifestations of anti-Semitism might be punished in the future.<sup>75</sup>

There were official rewards for people who would inform the authorities about Jews in hiding. Capital punishment was reserved for those who attempted to help or hide Jews, and this law was enforced across all of Ukraine. Thinking about instances of the rescue of Jews in Dnipropetrovsk, one should take into consideration this important circumstance. Some of these stories were recorded immediately after the war for the *Black Book* prepared by Soviet writers Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman. It includes four stories about Dnipropetrovsk. In three of them, Jews were saved by their spouses of Russian or Ukrainian origin, who procured documents about a non-Jewish origin of their partner, after which the families moved to a different district or left the city altogether, so that people they knew could not inform on them to the police.<sup>76</sup> The records of the interrogations carried out by the Soviets immediately after the liberation of Dnipropetrovsk include cases when—in the course of the 9-kilometer walk to the place of the execution—a person managed to slip out of the crowd unnoticed or flee the site where the executions were carried out.<sup>77</sup> In some of the survivors’ oral testimonies, women at night managed to crawl out of the pit filled with dead bodies and convince the guards that they were non-Jewish and found themselves in the crowd of the Jews by chance.<sup>78</sup> In such instances, the person’s appearance was of

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74 Kruglov, *Bez zhalosti i somnenniia*, 66.

75 Arad et al., *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, 131, 188, 238.

76 Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*, ed. David Patterson (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

77 See the interrogation protocols of Anna Kardashova and Iakov Inger in DADO, Kopii materialiv Derzhavnoho arkhivu Rosiiskoi Federatsii, fond 7021, opys 57, sprava 13, arkushi 28–29, 30–31.

78 See the transcript of Nelli Tsyypina and Raisa Aleksandrova’s oral testimonies in Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 192, 212.

paramount importance. They had to look sufficiently “un-Jewish” in the eyes of the Germans or the local police.

Twenty-four residents of Dnipropetrovsk were awarded the title “Righteous among the Nations.”<sup>79</sup> Looking at this figure, it is important to note that a systematic search of Jews’ rescuers has become possible only since the early 1990s.



FIGURE 35. Destroyed city center in October 1943. Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

Previously, such undertakings were hindered by the complicated Israeli-Soviet relations as well as the unpopularity of the subject of the Holocaust in the Soviet war narrative.<sup>80</sup>

Among the Dnipropetrovsk Righteous, a special place is occupied by the Pole Jan Chodorowski, who in 1942 was twenty-four years old and a student of Lviv Polytechnic School. He recruited manpower for a German construction firm in Dnipropetrovsk and thus rescued twenty-six Galician Jews.<sup>81</sup> There are other known stories about Jews from Eastern Galicia surviving in Dnipropetrovsk. One of these survivors was Abraham Werner, who

described his past at length in a memoir. Werner was the son of the head of a *Judenrat* (Jewish ghetto administration) member in East Galician town of

79 Ibid., 165–180.

80 Frank Golczewski, “Die Revision eines Klischees: Die Rettung von verfolgten Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg durch Ukrainer,” in *Solidarität und Hilfe für Juden während der NS-Zeit. Regionalstudien*, 2nd ed., eds. Wolfgang Benz and Juliane Wetzels, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Metropol, 1998), 9–82.

81 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 168–169.

Sanok. His father was planning for the entire family's escape. He procured forged documents for his son and arranged for him to move from their ghetto to Lviv in the autumn of 1942. As a result, Abraham was the only member of his family who managed to survive. In Lviv, Abraham Werner found a job in *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, where he, as he would later recall, first heard the word Dnipropetrovsk and immediately noticed that he was not the only Jew among the new hires.<sup>82</sup> Seventeen-year-old Werner came to Dnipropetrovsk in the spring of 1943. He wrote in his memoir that back then in the city "there was no sign of Jews or Jewish life anymore."<sup>83</sup>

The survivors' memoirs feature yet another story of the rescue of a Galician Jew in Dnipropetrovsk. A native of Lviv, Jacob Gerstenfeld-Maltiel relocated to Dnipropetrovsk posing as a *Volksdeutsche* (this category of population during the occupation is discussed in some detail below)<sup>84</sup>

According to the official data from the municipal administration, in November 1941 Dnipropetrovsk had 922 resident Jews, in mid-1942, 379, and in May 1943, there were none.<sup>85</sup>

## The Daily Trivia of the Life under Occupation

Practically immediately after the October execution of Jews, the authorities issued new identity documents to Dnipropetrovsk residents, to count the population. Whereas before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union Dnipropetrovsk numbered 560,000 residents,<sup>86</sup> in November 1941, the right-bank area was a place of residence for 183,476 persons, and the right and the left banks together housed 240,000. 70.4% of these people were registered as Ukrainians,

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82 Abraham Werner, *Ordeal and Deliverance* (Raana: Docostory, 2003), 106, 109.

83 Ibid., 123.

84 Jacob Gerstenfeld-Maltiel, *My Private War. One Man's Struggle to Survive the Soviets and the Nazis* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993). It is important to note that these recollections were written down already in 1943. The author refers to the population of Dnipropetrovsk exclusively as "Russian." "Ukrainians" are mentioned only in the context of Lviv and are portrayed as the most dedicated executors of the Nazi policy of extermination of the Jews.

85 Kruglov et al., *Kholokost v Ukraine*, 161–162.

86 O. V. Kasianov and N. V. Kystrus'ka, *Okupatsiyni rezhyim na Dnipropetrovshchyni v khronolohichnykh dovidkakh mistsevykh orhaniv vlady. Zbirnyk dokumentiv* (Dnipropetrovsk: Herda, 2010), 33.



22.3% as Russians, and 0.4% as Jews.<sup>87</sup> In May 1942, the population of the city's right-bank section numbered 178,346 (including 702 Jews) and the population of Amur-Nyzhniodniprovs'k on the left bank 49,772 (including 220 Jews).<sup>88</sup> In May 1943 the census of Dnipropetrovsk arrived at the figure 173,533 with not a single officially registered Jew.<sup>89</sup>

What did Dnipropetrovsk look like after the artillery attacks of the summer of 1941? Nina Hryhorazh, who worked at the local Fine Arts Museum, described the winter of 1941 in Dnipropetrovsk in her notes written down right after the war:

There were gallows in the city. At the corner of Korolenkovskaya and Shevchenkovskaya Street hung a man with the inscription "partisan," the same was at the corner of Ispolkomovskaya and Komsomolskaya. The Soviet bombers flew in and bombed the junction where the troop and fuel trains were standing. But the Germans held firm. Theaters were opened. In the building of railway workers' club they opened a "musical-drama theater" for "civilians" . . . The performances started at 2 p.m., so that the audience had time to go home before curfew. The theater for the [German] military was opened in the premises of Shevchenko theater. Several cinemas were opened . . . The streetcars were running on lines 1 and 2. The cars had their windows stuffed with plywood. The civilian population was forbidden to enter the motor cars.<sup>90</sup>

The abovementioned Abraham Werner compared things he saw in 1943 with the image of the city before the war:

Before the war, Dnipropetrovsk has been a dull, gray town; now, under German rule, it looked even worse. The center of town was half destroyed and filled with rubble due to the heavy bombing it had suffered. Those houses that were left standing were in a sorry state of disrepair, with plaster peeling off the walls and most of the windowpanes missing. Streets were unpaved and telephone and electric cables dangled from crooked poles. The street lamps were broken and at night the streets were dark and deserted.<sup>91</sup>

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87 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 46, 145.

88 Kruglov, *Bez zhalosti i somnenniia*, 215.

89 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 160.

90 D. L. Teslenko, "Spohady N. P. Hryhorazh iak dzherelo z istorii natsysts'koï okupatsii m. Dnipropetrovs'ka," *Voprosy germanskoï istorii* (2009): 191–192.

91 Werner, *Ordeal and Deliverance*, 118.

Researchers agree that for most residents of the occupied territories the main motivation was survival—the eagerness to solve daily problems and adapt to the new reality.<sup>92</sup> Sure enough, the attitudes to the Nazi rule were influenced by a row of important factors such as the presence of relatives in the Soviet Army and, overall, the prewar experience of Soviet life. Once more, the occupation put forward the problem of city and village relations. Dnipropetrovsk had a large shortage of food. And practically immediately after the German takeover of the city, residents of villages around Dnipropetrovsk engaged in lively trade. Irina Kovaleva depicted the situation: “Where did all these enterprising lads and lasses come from? The collectivist fantasies entertained by the Soviet party functionaries proved out to be a soap bubble, which burst at the first puff of the wind of private initiative.”<sup>93</sup> The German authorities, however, fairly soon introduced checks on private trade and refused to eliminate collective farms, contrary to what was initially promised in local newspapers.

Another hope inspired by the German rule—at least a hope that Ukrainian activists entertained—was an expectation for Ukrainization as the most important component of “de-Bolshevization.”<sup>94</sup> And the first steps of the subsidiary administration appeared to be sending positive signals in this respect. September 1941 saw the launch of a Ukrainian-language newspaper *Free Ukraine* in Dnipropetrovsk. It carried the national symbol, namely the trident

92 Shakhraichuk, “Sotsial’ni nastroi”, 217. Compare with: Oleksandr Melnyk, “Political Identity under Invasion: Kherson Oblast in Summer 1941,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 30, no. 1 (2005): 47–74; Tanja Pentter, “Die lokale Gesellschaft im Donbass unter deutscher Okkupation 1941–1943,” in *Kooperation und Verbrechen: Formen der Kollaboration im östlichen Europa 1939–1945*, ed. Babette Quinkert et al. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 183–223; Alexander Dallin, *Odessa, 1941–1944: A Case Study of Soviet Territory under Foreign Rule* (Portland, OR: Center for Romanian Studies, 1957). See also K. M. Aleksandrov, ed., *Pod nemtsami. Vospominaniia, svidetel'stva, dokumenty: Istoriko-dokumental'nyi sbornik* (Saint Petersburg: Skriptorium, 2011); O. V. Budnitskii, ed., ‘Svershilos’. *Prishli nemtsy!* *Ideinyi kollaboratsionizm v SSSR v period Velikoï Otechestvennoï voïny* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 2012); idem, ed., *Odessa. Zhizn' v okkupatsii 1941–1944* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 2013).

93 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedënaia v mogile*, 37.

94 Simone A. Belezza, “The Discourse over the Nationality Question in Nazi-occupied Ukraine: The Generalbezirk Dnjepropetrowsk, 1941–3,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 4 (2008): 573–596. Compare Dieter Pohl, “Russians, Ukrainians, and German Occupation Policy, 1941–43,” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity. The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter 1600–1945*, ed. Andreas Kappeler et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2003), 277–297.

of St. Volodymyr.<sup>95</sup> Already in October 1941, however, the publication changed its name to a neutral one, *Dnipropetrovsk Newspaper* (*Dnipropetrovska hazeta*), and in January 1942, the trident disappeared from its front page. Yet the newspaper continued to be published in Ukrainian, regularly including articles about the history of Ukrainian literature and language. And in June 1942 the subsidiary municipal administration offered compulsory courses with a focus on the Ukrainian language and culture for those civil servants who had insufficient knowledge of Ukrainian.<sup>96</sup>

*Dnipropetrovsk Newspaper* was obliged to comply with the rules that applied to all publications printed in *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. In particular, the German occupation had to be treated as “the return” (in the context of the 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk). The writers had to stress the importance of help and positive attitudes on the part of locals, to refrain from quoting any news from foreign newspapers and to emphasize that “the Ukrainians belong[ed] to the circle of European peoples.”<sup>97</sup> At the same time, as Simone A. Belezza noted, “if some initiatives to promote the ‘re-Ukrainization’ of the population did exist, there were no real discriminatory policies against the Russians,” and, in particular, “The Germans . . . were careful to avoid any equating of Russians with Bolsheviks.”<sup>98</sup> In other words, the German authorities appreciated the advantages of supporting a certain level of interethnic antagonism between different groups of the local population. Nevertheless, they understood that playing up anti-Russian sentiment too strongly could be risky.

The national-socialist authorities made attempts to graft a new ideological skin, engaging locals in this undertaking. In particular, the date of Hitler’s birthday, April 20th, was celebrated as a public holiday in Dnipropetrovsk. In 1942, the celebrations included a rally (with 3,000 participants) and a ceremonial meeting at the Ukrainian Theatre of Music and Drama.<sup>99</sup> June 22th,

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95 The Trident of Volodymyr the Great is a sign depicted on the coins that Prince Volodimer minted in Kyiv in the eleventh century. Since the nineteenth century this sign has been used by various currents of the Ukrainian movement as a national symbol. In 1917 the St. Volodymyr’s Trident became the symbol of the Ukrainian People’s Republic. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists used a modified version of the trident, with a sword in the center.

96 Belezza, “The Discourse over the Nationality Question,” 583.

97 Ibid., 589–590.

98 Ibid., 596.

99 *Dnipropetrovs'ka hazeta*, April 23, 1942.

the start of the Third Reich's war against the Soviet Union, was likewise designated as a holiday. The festivities on that day in 1943 included a Christian Orthodox prayer service, a military parade, a rally with more than 15,000 participants (including orchestras, athletic teams, "girls with flowers," firemen, and school students) as well as amusements and athletic contests in the Chkalov Park.<sup>100</sup> August 25th was "the day of the liberation of the city" from the Soviets. The celebratory events consisted of a rally, music performances, a procession of children "in the traditional costumes," and a solemn speech of the head of the municipal administration, Sokolovsky.<sup>101</sup> The official holidays also included Christmas, both Christian Orthodox and Catholic, and the First of May, as "the Day of Creativity of Nations Liberated from Bolshevism and Capitalism."<sup>102</sup>

The question of the change of toponyms was broached immediately after the Wehrmacht's takeover of the city. Already in November 1941, *Dnipropetrovsk Newspaper* suggested that most streets be renamed and the city's name changed to Dniproslav.<sup>103</sup> It is noteworthy that in other towns of *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* it was municipal administrations that initiated the renamings, usually without objections on the part of the German authorities. In Kryvyi Rih, many streets were renamed in October 1941,<sup>104</sup> and a nearby town, Dniprodzerzhynsk, was given the name it had before the revolution—Kamianske. The idea to change toponyms in Southern Ukraine's biggest location was supported by both the municipal administration and the *Stadtkommissar*, although this was not followed through.<sup>105</sup> The city's main avenue changed its name from Karl Marx to Breitstraße—simply a Broad Street, and Chelyuskin Street became Hitler Street.<sup>106</sup> And that was it. The city itself remained Dnipropetrovsk, with the Bolshevik Petrovsky still alive.

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100 Ibid., June 22, 1943; *ibid.*, June 25, 1943.

101 Belezza, "The Discourse over the Nationality Question," 587–588.

102 *Dnipropetrovsk'ska hazeta*, April 30, 1943. Cf. the information in the OUN's report that the celebration "in spite of widespread advertising" went pretty poorly: Pahiria and Ivanchenko, *Litopys UPA. Nova seriia*, vol. 18, 335.

103 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovsk'ku*, 73.

104 Belezza, "The Discourse over the Nationality Question," 582.

105 DADO, fond 2274, opys 1, sprava 1, arkushi 50–55.

106 Valentin Starosin, *Ulitsy Dnepra* (Kharkiv: Folio, 2018), 117.

## Religious and Educational Policies

*Reichskommissariat Ukraine* viewed religious policy making as an important instrument of anti-Soviet propaganda and a method to train obedient executors of commands issued by representatives of the “supreme German race.”

The Nazi-ruled Ukraine had two active Christian Orthodox churches, which competed with each other but not with the national-socialist policies. August 1941 saw the creation of the Autonomous Ukrainian Church (or Ukrainian Greek-Slavic Church) in the Pochayiv Lavra. It was in canonical communion with the Russian Orthodox Church and often regarded as the latter’s branch on the occupied territories. In February 1942, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church [UAOC] (or “the Holy Orthodox Autocephalous Church on the Liberated Territories of Ukraine”), eliminated by the Soviets, announced its “reestablishment.” Both churches were entitled to open new places of worship. Although the German authorities were determined to see to it, none could become strong enough to gain political clout.<sup>107</sup> The Greek Catholic Church, very influential in Eastern Galicia, was not welcome in *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*.<sup>108</sup>

The records show that—in many regions of Ukraine after the German takeover—some marriages were solemnized in the church, some children were baptized and even some dead bodies were reburied with the performance of the Christian Orthodox rites. Most residents of *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, including Dnipropetrovsk, preferred the autonomous church. This fact is mentioned in the reports about the life during the occupation originating from different sources: the Germans, the OUN, and the Soviets.<sup>109</sup>

In Dnipropetrovsk, the Preobrazhensky (Transfiguration) Cathedral, which was closed by the Soviets, became the seat of the UAOC’s bishop. In June 1942, UAOC’s Bishop Hennady (secular name Hryhory Shyprykevych) came to the city. A month later in July 1942, he was followed by the “autonomous” bishop Dimitry (secular name Evgeny Magan), whose seat was the Troitsky (Trinity)

107 See special publications: Friedrich Heyer, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in der Ukraine von 1917 bis 1945* (Cologne: Rudolf Müller, 1953); M. V. Shkarovskii, *Krest i svastika. Natsistskaia Germaniia i Pravoslavnaia Tserkov'* (Moscow: Veche, 2007); Karel C. Berkhoff, “Was There a Religious Revival in Soviet Ukraine under the Nazi Regime?,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 78, no. 3 (2000): 536–567.

108 Berkhoff, “Was There a Religious Revival,” 547. Compare David Motadel, “Islam and Germany’s War in the Soviet Borderlands, 1941–5,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 4 (2013): 784–820.

109 Berkhoff, “Was There a Religious Revival,” 553; Pahiria and Ivanchenko, *Litopys UPA. Nova seriia*, vol. 18, 338; Krutsyk and Zhovtii, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 465.

Cathedral. According to the Soviet secret services, under the German rule Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* had sixty autonomous and twenty autocephalous places of worship.<sup>110</sup> According to the German church historian and a Secret Military Police (Geheim Feldpolizei, GFP) officer Friedrich Heyer, there were seventy-six autonomous and ten autocephalous churches in Dnipropetrovsk diocese.<sup>111</sup> The same author mentioned that in January 1943 the church service on the Epiphany Day drew a crowd of up to 60,000 people numbering one-third of the entire population.<sup>112</sup> At the same time, the already mentioned NKVD reports about occupied Dnipropetrovsk claimed that the rates of church attendance were overall quite low, with older people being in majority.<sup>113</sup>

Whereas Christian Orthodox churches were not banned by the German administration, Protestant groups were encouraged in all kinds of way. In particular, the occupation administration in Dnipropetrovsk helped set in place an alliance of Evangelicals and Baptists headed by Daniil Shapovalov (later arrested by the Soviets). This organization held two *oblast* congresses, compiled listings of Protestants who suffered persecution during the Soviet period and, according to the Soviet intelligence reports, tried to “turn Dnipropetrovsk into a Ukrainian national center of Evangelical and Baptist sects.”<sup>114</sup> During the occupation, Dnipropetrovsk also disposed of an All-Ukrainian Center of Evangelical Shakers headed by Bishop Gavriil Ponurko. However, this organization was dissolved in April 1944.

Overall, the conclusion that most researchers of the religious life in occupied Ukraine agree upon can be applied to Dnipropetrovsk as well: “There was a religious revival in the territory of the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, but it was modest in scope.”<sup>115</sup>

The situation in the sphere of secondary and higher education was similar. Organizing secondary schools was one of the foremost responsibilities of the

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110 Krutsyk and Zhovtiï, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 465.

111 Heyer, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in der Ukraine*, 189. The author of this book, Friedrich Heyer, was a German Lutheran pastor who spent the Second World War as an officer of the Secret Military Police in Ukraine. In 1947 he was arrested, but quickly released with no charges. Heyer defended this book as a habilitation thesis in 1951, and in 1964 became a professor of denominational studies at the University of Heidelberg.

112 Ibid, 208.

113 Berkhoff, “Was There a Religious Revival,” 562.

114 Krutsyk and Zhovtiï, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 467.

115 Berkhoff, “Was There a Religious Revival,” 566.

subsidiary administrations.<sup>116</sup> In Dnipropetrovsk, the Department of Education in the *oblast* administration was headed by the historian Pavlo Kozar, a former student of Yavornytsky.<sup>117</sup> The culture and education department at the municipal administration was led by Ivan Zelensky, a graduate of Kyiv University's historical department who moved to Dnipropetrovsk in 1937.<sup>118</sup>

Both Zelensky and Kozar championed Ukrainization of school education; however, they also authorized the opening of several schools with education in Russian language.<sup>119</sup> In October 1941, Dnipropetrovsk had forty-one schools up and running; in December, a shortage of fuel for heating at the schools caused a break in classes until February 1942, when they were resumed.<sup>120</sup> The schools had only Soviet textbooks available. History was the only discipline in which efforts were made to have the textbooks replaced. Members of and candidates for a membership in the Communist Party were banned from teaching. Yet, according to a January 1942 report, in eighteen out of twenty-six districts of the *oblast* there were 3,948 teachers, 3,533 of whom were Ukrainians and 274 were ex-members of the Party.<sup>121</sup> Irina Kovaleva had this to say about her school experience in 1941:

My experience of studying at school during the German occupation was limited to two days only. On day one the pupils assembled near the school's building and a representative of the municipal administration

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116 More details in: S. A. Belezza, "Osvita v Ukraïni pid chas natsysts'koï okupatsiï (na materialakh Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti)," *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 3 (2010): 78–91. Compare with: Blanka Ierzhabkova, *Shkil'na sprava ta shkil'na polityka v reïhskomisariati 'Ukraïna' (1941–1944) u svitli nimets'kykh dokumentiv* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 2008).

117 More information about Kozar is available thanks to the works of Mykola Chaban who prepared for publication most important of Kozar's works: P. A. Kozar, *Lotsmany Dniprovskykh porohiv: Istorychnyi narys* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Vydavnytstvo DDU, 1996); Pavlo Kozar, *Na Dniprel'stan cherez porohy. Vybrane*, compiled by Mykola Chaban (Dnipropetrovs'k: IMA-Pres, 2000).

118 Iu. Iu. Fanygin, "Problema periodizatsii deiatel'nosti muzeev regionov, voshedshikh v sostav Reïhskommissariata 'Ukraïna' na primere goroda Dnepropetrovska," *Voprosy germanskoï istorii* (2011): 209, 217.

119 P. Kozar, "Seredni shkoly Dnipropetrovshchyny," *Dnipropetrovs'ka hazeta*, October 23, 1941.

120 I. A. Shakhraïchuk, "Osvita i nauka v umovakh okupatsiï Dnipropetrovshchyny v roky Velykoï Vitchyznianoï viiny (1941–1945 rr.)," *Naddnyprians'ka Ukraïna: istorychni protsesy, podii, postati* 12 (2014): 213.

121 Svitlana Mohyliuk, "Pedahohichni kadry heneral'noho okruhu 'Dnipropetrovs'k': osoblyvosti roboty ta stavlennia do profesiiynykh obov'iazkiv, ikh kvalifikatsiia ta vidbir," *Mandrivets' 4* (2011): 47.



delivered a speech lauding “the new order” and the Führer, after which we were told to go home. Next day subject teachers made us learn by heart poems and songs of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen of the 1920s. Then my parents decided I would rather stop going to school, which I did.<sup>122</sup>

The autumn of 1941 in Dnipropetrovsk also saw the opening of railway and industrial technical colleges, six vocational schools and a school for feldshers as well as midwives. And, on September 22, 1941, the Dnipropetrovsk Ukrainian State University opened its doors. It had six departments and 3,206 students (the medical department, numbering more than 1,000 students, was the largest and the German language study track had 645 students).<sup>123</sup> Professor of biology Ivan Rozgin was appointed rector of the university.<sup>124</sup> The university was granted the right to confer doctoral degrees. They were awarded to the head of the municipal administration, Sokolovsky, and the heads of the educational and cultural departments of the subsidiary administration, Kozar and Zelensky.<sup>125</sup> In the spring of 1942, the university numbered more than 250 teachers, including forty-three full professors.<sup>126</sup> Except for history, lectures in all disciplines were based on Soviet curricula. Teaching history was the purview of Kozar, who held a chair in the history of Ukraine. Zelensky held a chair in world history. In August 1942, Rozgin was dismissed from the rector’s post and, on December 31 in the same year, the university was officially closed.<sup>127</sup>

The Polytechnic Institute (created in the autumn of 1941 based on a merger of the Mining, Metallurgical, Chemical Engineering and Construction Institutes) also terminated its work in the same period. Konstantin Tatomir was ap-

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122 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedēnaia v mogile*, 40.

123 Belezza, “Osvita v Ukraïni,” 85. See also Svitlana Mohyliuk, “Nauka v heneral’nomu okruzi ‘Dnipropetrovs’k’ v period nimets’koï okupatsiï (1941–1943 rr.): vyshchi navchal’ni zaklady na sluzhbi okupantiv (na prykladi diial’nosti Dnipropetrovs’koho ukrains’koho derzhavnoho universytetu ta Dnipropetrovs’koho instytutu inzheneriv transportu),” *Intelihentsiia i vlada* 24 (2012): 135–147; M. V. Poliakov, ed., *Istoriia Dnipropetrovs’koho natsional’noho universytetu* (Dnipropetrovs’k: Vydavnytstvo Dnipropetrovs’koho Universytetu, 2008).

124 Ivan Rozgin obtained a doctoral degree in biology in 1937, and since 1939 worked as deputy director of the Dnipropetrovsk agricultural institute. After the Second World War he lived in West Germany, and since 1950 in the United States. See more in: Mykola Chaban, “Rozgin Ivan Fedorovych,” *Ukrains’ka zhurnalistyka v imenakh* 6 (1999): 288–291.

125 Belezza, “Osvita v Ukraïni,” 86–87.

126 Shakhraichuk, “Osvita i nauka v umovakh okupatsiï,” 214.

127 Belezza, “Osvita v Ukraïni,” 87.

pointed as its rector. The institute employed a staff of 512, including eighteen full and sixty-one associate professors.<sup>128</sup> The Transportation Institute, where the head of the municipal administration Sokolovsky was the rector, shared the destiny of the Mining Institute. In 1941, the school had four departments, fifty-three teachers and 193 students.<sup>129</sup>

The autumn of 1941 saw the reopening of the city's largest museums: the Historical Museum and the Fine Arts Museum. Some of the paintings and other artifacts from both collections caught the fancy of the German administration, which rented them "for temporary use."<sup>130</sup> The director of the Fine Arts Museum, Vyacheslav Korenev submitted several complaints, the content of which included concrete listings of the confiscated items.<sup>131</sup> One of the most famous artists of Katerynoslav Viacheslav Korenev taught drawing at the College of Commerce in the past and was in charge of the Arts Gallery at South Russia Exhibition in 1919. On May 27, 1941, he was appointed the director of the Fine Arts Museum and did not leave the city when it was taken over by the Wehrmacht. He remained the museum's director during the first months of the occupation.<sup>132</sup>

On February 12, 1942, the Dnipropetrovsk's *Stadtkommissar* issued an order whereby the Historical Museum had to vacate its premises, which would be used then as his headquarters.<sup>133</sup> The same period saw the beginning of the merger of the city's two largest museums, which was finished by May 1942. Pavlo Kozar became the director of the new Museum of Fine Arts and History. And in March 1943, the *Reichskommissar* of Ukraine Erich Koch ordered to establish a new museum—the Museum of Ancient and Early Modern History—on the basis of the archaeological collection of Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>134</sup>

128 Iu. M. Chekushyna and Iu. V. Chekushyna, "Dnipropetrovsk'i Politekhnicnyi instytut v period nimets'ko-fashysts'koï okupatsii mista," *Humanitarnyi zhurnal* 1–3 (2012): 15–17.

129 Shakhraichuk, "Osvita i nauka v umovakh okupatsii," 218.

130 Teslenko, "Spohady N. P. Hryhorazh," 190.

131 DADO, fond 2276, opys 1, sprava 1808, arkushi 114–116, 127. Compare with V. M. Beke-tova and D. Ia. Belkin, "Dnepropetrovskii istoricheskii muzei i germanskaia administratsiia v gody Vtoroi mirovoi voïny," *Voprosy germanskoï istorii* (1998): 142–148.

132 Iu. Iu. Fanygin, "Diial'nist' V. V. Korenieva na posadi dyrektora Dnipropetrovskoho khudozhn'oho muzeiu v roky okupatsii," *Rol' muzeiv u kul'turnomu prostori Ukraïny i svitu: stan, problemy, perspektivy rozvytku muzeïnoi haluzi* 11 (2009): 200–210.

133 DADO, fond 2276, opys 1, sprava 110, arkush 264.

134 Fanygin, "Problema periodizatsii," 212–213.

## Dnipropetrovsk: The Nazi Perspective

Even if the questions concerning Eastern Europe's political future were a matter of debate at the highest levels of the Third Reich, the racial supremacy and the need to economically exploit the occupied territories presented central topics for the Nazi regime.

Theatres and casinos with a limited access under the slogan "for Germans only" sprang up in Dnipropetrovsk. There were plans to create a German quarter for about 2,000 German specialists, first of all engineers, migrating to work in the city, in Dnipropetrovsk's upper section, which was less damaged by shelling. In December 1942, the agenda consisted in clearing this area of all its residents (except *Volksdeutsche*); however, the wartime realities prevented such goals from being fully realized.<sup>135</sup> The German specialists were brought to the city mostly for the purpose of restoring its industrial capacity.<sup>136</sup> Still, the output of the relaunched industrial facilities in Dnipropetrovsk amounted to less than half of the prewar level.<sup>137</sup>

In August 1942, the German-language newspaper published in occupied Ukraine ran an article about Dnipropetrovsk, sketching a description of the city's central area. Focusing on the central avenue now called the Broad Street, the writer noted that "a Central European cannot fail to notice holes in the asphalt, but if he has previously seen Russian streets and knows the word *nitschewo* [it goes somehow], he will feel here like in a paradise."<sup>138</sup> The text about the "paradise" by the Dnipro is complete with overtones of a colonizer's superiority and a civilizer's condescension. The sight of the benches with broken planks and of the cement fountain provoked the following comment: "One could laugh at all this if the local poverty looked less depressing."<sup>139</sup> The article was given the title "The City of Catherine the Great."<sup>140</sup>

Hermann Schmand's letter—sent from Dnipropetrovsk in November 1942—also reflects a colonizer's attitude. The engineer takes notice of Ukrainians' love for work. He also asserts that "women generally [are] more docile

135 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 74; Shakhraichuk, "Sotsial'ni nastroi," 209.

136 Further details in: Matthias Riedel, "Bergbau und Eisenhüttenindustrie in der Ukraine unter deutsche Besatzung (1941–1944)," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 3 (1973): 245–284.

137 Pahiria and Ivanchenko, *Litopys UPA. Nova seriia*, vol. 18, 332.

138 "Stadt der Großen Katharina," *Deutsche Ukraine-Zeitung*, August 18, 1942.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

and obedient that the men,” adding that local populace “look[s] surprisingly ‘Arian’ (tall, blue eyes, blonde hair).”<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the younger generation has even “mastered complicated notions of mathematics and geometry.”<sup>142</sup> Overall, residents of Dnipropetrovsk, in the German engineer’s opinion, resemble “sentimental children . . . lacking adult psychological development.”<sup>143</sup> This description mirrors practically all typical elements of the German colonial discourse concerning the east of Europe.

Only the steppe seems to have caused some amazement in this context. Here is how this geographic peculiarity for the newcomers is described in a publication from a popular book series about the war published in 1942: “The Nogai steppe begins behind the Dnieper. So far as the eye can see, not a single tree, not a bush, not a house. The flat earth—all the way to the horizon. The color of grey gleams with mud, and only in the light of the setting sun, which sinks the sky into the sea of bright colors, the dry soil has a purple shine.”<sup>144</sup>

In the steppe area near the Dnipro, local archaeologists—under the supervision of the German scientists and fully supported by the German administration—started excavating Gothic burial sites. Initiated in September 1942, the digging was carried out on forty-three sites of ancient encampments, which were left unexplored by the previous archaeological expedition, active there before the launch of the DniproHES in the period 1927–1932. The local archaeologists were joined by their Hungarian colleagues as well as Mykhailo/Mikhail Miller, a professor of archeology at the Rostov University, who first participated in the excavations in the Katerynoslav area already in 1905 together with Yavornytsky.<sup>145</sup> Miller just defended his habilitation thesis in 1940 in Leningrad, he left Rostov after the battle of Stalingrad and moved to Dnipropetrovsk where he obtained a *Volksdeutsche* status.<sup>146</sup>

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141 Belezza, “The Discourse over the Nationality Question,” 581.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

144 Leutnant Rudolf Brüning, “Gegen Flugzeuge und Kampfwagen,” *Kriegsbücherei der deutschen Jugend* 127 (1942): 28.

145 Lev Bykovs’kyi, “Mykhailo Oleksandrovych Miller 1883–1968 (Bio-bibliografichni materialy),” *Ukrains’kyi istoryk* 1–4 (1968): 105–118.

146 For a critical account of Miller’s archeology research in Nazi-ruled Dnipropetrovsk see D. L. Teslenko and Yu. Yu. Fanygin, “Mykhailo Oleksandrovych Miller—liudyna i uchenyi v epokhu humanitarnykh katastrof,” *Voprosy germanskoï istorii* (2008): 70–101.

In the summer of 1943, the digging continued and was now under the guidance of the German scholar Werner Hülle.<sup>147</sup> During the war, Dr. Hülle—like other German specialists—was an employee of the so-called headquarters of ancient history (*Sonderstab Vorgeschichte*) under the aegis of the *Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce* responsible for the occupied territories (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete*, ERR). Its mission was to identify, describe, and guard (*sicherstellen*) the cultural and scholarly legacy of the occupied countries in Eastern Europe.<sup>148</sup> Other German archaeologists participating in the digging near Dnipropetrovsk included Walter Modrijan and Hans Lorenzen. The Ancient History Taskforce in Dnipropetrovsk was directed by a professor from Dortmund University, Rudolph Stampfuß.<sup>149</sup>

The German specialists also took care of systematizing local archives and libraries. A group tasked with this goal was headed by Georg Winter, a leading German archivist. In Dnipropetrovsk, Winter's team managed to find a Soviet instruction on evacuating the Party's archive as well as a large part of its records that the Soviets, for the lack of time, did not take with them or destroy before the takeover.<sup>150</sup> These materials were recataloged and described by Dr. Erich Lüddeckens. The archival work took almost a year to complete and the catalog numbered 200 pages.<sup>151</sup>

147 Borysov, "Intelihentsiia Dnipropetrovs'ka," 96; Fanygin, "Problema periodizatsii," 214. See also Gabriele Freitag and Andreas Grenzer, "Der deutsche Umgang mit sowjetischem Kulturgut während des Zweiten Weltkrieges: Ein Aspekt nationalsozialistischer Besatzungspolitik," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 45, no. 2 (1997): 237–272.

148 For a comprehensive overview see Nazarii Gutsul, *Der Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg und seine Tätigkeit in der Ukraine (1941–1944)* (PhD diss., Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, 2013); Nataliia Kashevarova, *Diial'nist' Operatyvnoho shtabu Rozenberga z vyvchennia natsy-stamy 'skhidnoho prostoru' (1940–1945)*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukraïny NANU, 2014).

149 Further details in: D. L. Teslenko, Iu. Iu. Fanygin, and O. I. Teslenko, "Diial'nist' zondershtabu pradaivnoi istorii operatyvnoho shtabu, 'Reikhsliiaiter Rozenberh' u heneral'niï orkuizi 'Dnipropetrovs'k' (1942–1943 rr.)," *Voprosy germanskoï istorii* (2007): 382–395.

150 The Soviet authorities managed to evacuate two carloads of documents from the city, primarily records and reference apparatus, as well as about five percent of the archival materials. For details see Dmytro Mieshkov, ed., *Dnipropetrovs'ki arkhivy, muzeï ta biblioteky v roky Druhoï svitovoï viïny. Anotovanyï perelik dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kyiv: Derzhavnyi komitet arkhiviv Ukraïny, 2000), 6, 27.

151 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh orhaniv vlady i upravlinnia Ukraïny [TsDAVOU, Central State Archive of the Higher Authorities of Ukraine], fond 3206, opys 5, sprava 14. See also Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "The Fate of Ukrainian Cultural Treasures during World War II: The Plunder of Archives, Libraries, and Museums under the Third Reich," *Jahrbücher*

In September and October 1942, Dnipropetrovsk was visited by Paul W. Thomson, a full professor and director of the Institute of Geology and Paleontology of the Reich University of Posen (nowadays Poznań in Poland). Thomson examined the local libraries as well as series of paleontological, mineralogical, and geological collections, which the German administration planned to use for the relaunching of the Polytechnic Institute, scheduled for the autumn of 1942.<sup>152</sup>

The academic research of the Rosenberg Taskforce's staff also encompassed a practical aspect: collecting documents about the *Volksdeutsche*. This designation, mentioned above, was applied to people of German descent living on Eastern Europe's Nazi-ruled territories. Overseeing this line of research was at the heart of the Karl Stumpp's sphere of responsibility. Born in 1896 in a German colonist's family near Odesa, Stumpp left Ukraine for Germany in 1918, and in 1922 obtained doctorate in geography and natural science at the University of Tübingen. In 1941–1943, Stumpp headed an eighty-member special-action unit (*Sonderkommando Dr. Stumpp*) designed to carry out a comprehensive demographic, cultural, and racial survey of the occupied Ukraine for the Alfred Rosenberg's Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Territories (RMO).<sup>153</sup> In 1943, in Berlin, Stumpp published a "confidential report" based on archived materials and focused on the German colonies on the island of Khortytsia.<sup>154</sup> After the war, Stumpp produced a monograph on the German colonists in the Russian Empire, largely based on the Dnipropetrovsk archive.<sup>155</sup> During the war, the purpose of

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für *Geschichte Osteuropas* 39, no. 1 (1991): 53–80; Dmytro Mieszkov, "Novi hospodari: Dnipropetrovs'ki arkhivy za nimets'koi okupatsii," *Pam'iatky Ukrainy* 3–6 (1994): 106–112.

152 TsDAVOU, fond 3676, opys 1, sprava 174. See also Gutsul, *Der Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*, 215–216.

153 For details see Eric J. Schmaltz and Samuel D. Sinner, "The Nazi Ethnographic Research of Georg Leibbrandt and Karl Stumpp in Ukraine, and Its North American Legacy," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14, no. 1 (2000): 28–64; Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaft. Personen—Institutionen—Forschungsprogramme—Stiftungen* (München: Saur, 2008). See also Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of "Ostforschung" in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

154 K. Stumpp, *Bericht über das Gebiet Chortitza im Generalbezirk Dnjepropetrowsk* (Berlin: Publikationsstelle Ost, 1943).

155 Idem, *Die Auswanderung aus Deutschland nach Russland in den Jahren 1763 bis 1862* (Tübingen: Selbstverlag Karl Stumpp, n.y.). In postwar West Germany Stumpp worked as a teacher in gymnasium and was a head of the Homeland Association of Germans from Russia (Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland). He assisted Canceledor Konrad Adenauer in the negotiations with the Soviet Union on the release of the German prisoners of war.

Stumpp's research was primarily utilitarian. It embraced the goal of describing the state of Ukraine's German population and the process of shaping the Nazis' policies in relation to the *Volksdeutsche*. Registering the persons of German parentage was the responsibility of a special agency called *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi) under the aegis of *Sonderkommando R*. Although *Volksdeutsche* were not equal in terms of status to the Germans of the *Reich* (*Reichsdeutsche*), they were treated in a more differentiated manner than the Slavic population on the Nazi-ruled territories.<sup>156</sup> The *Volksdeutsche*, who numbered more than 76,000 people in Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*, were entitled to better food, and schools opened only for German children. One of them was a seven-year school directed by Jacob Fauzer, who, prior to the occupation, was the director of the city's most prestigious School no. 28, where German language was taught. The *Volksdeutsche* also enjoyed tax benefits as well as the right to keep radios at home, and, as a general rule, people in this category were given a preferential treatment in contrast to all other candidates for job vacancies.<sup>157</sup>

Whereas in German written sources one can come across expressions of pity for *Volksdeutsche* generated by their social and cultural level, lack of knowledge of German language and of conformity with the Nazi's "racial standards," the anti-Semitic rhetoric went hand in hand with the undisguised feeling of racial superiority in relation to the Slavic population. Such discourses and behavior had, quite naturally, an impact on the locals' overall attitudes towards the Germans. Already in November 1941, doctor Moshkov wrote in his diary: "The Germans are conducting themselves so unceremoniously that they stir ill-feeling across the entire population."<sup>158</sup> The author of the OUN's report about the situation in Dnipropetrovsk in 1942 emphasized: "After the Germans' arrival, the local populace felt good at first. But this did not last long. Today 'the street' is voicing its displeasure with the Germans, irrespective of the speakers'

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In 1966 Stumpp was decorated with the Distinguished Cross of Merit of the German Federal Republic.

156 Renate Dölling-Haufler, *Die weiße Treppe zum Meer. Ein Erlebnisbericht* (Egelsbach: Fouque Literaturverlag, 1998), 157. Upon her arrival in Germany, the author of this memoir was teased at school as "Russian" for her unusual accent and certain non-German words. I am grateful to Korine Amacher who drew my attention to this source.

157 Further details in: M. V. Koval' and P. V. Medvedok, "Fol'ksdoiche v Ukraïni (1941–1944 rr.)," *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 5 (1992): 15–28. Compare Belezza, "Osvita v Ukraïni," 82; idem, "The Discourse over the Nationality Question," 589.

158 Guliaev and Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk glazami ochevidtsev*, 111.



ethnic origin.”<sup>159</sup> The German sources bear out this statement. In October 1941, an intelligence division of the Army Group South reported that 90% to 95% of occupied Ukraine’s population adopted a “wait-and-see” attitude.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, in the summer of 1943, the same intelligence sources arrived at the conclusion that 95% of the population of Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* felt animosity towards the Germans.<sup>161</sup>

One of the reasons why the locals’ attitudes changed for the worse consisted in the ubiquitous practices of shipping able-bodied local residents to Germany, where they were exploited as laborers. In January 1942, about 800 people volunteered to move to the Reich to work,<sup>162</sup> and later roundups on the streets became a trivial occurrence.

It is important to highlight that the occupying troops consisted not only of Germans, but also of Italian, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovakian units, which entered the city on August 28, 1941.<sup>163</sup> The local residents’ diaries and memoirs from this period most often mention the Italians. In contrast to the Germans, they seem far less disciplined, but also not as cruel. Overall, the population of Dnipropetrovsk had a more positive attitude towards the Italian newcomers. The already quoted doctor Moshkov wrote: “Whereas the Germans rob people but rarely, for the Italians robbery is a matter of course.” He also commented on their appearance, impressed by the fact that they “wear the most fantastic clothes, even women’s overcoats.”<sup>164</sup> One of the OUN’s leaders reminisced that “the Germans treated them [the Italians] poorly, fed them worse, and exploited them every step of the way.”<sup>165</sup> Irina Kovaleva accentuated the notion that “most townsfolk sympathized with the Italians—like us, they were second-rate people for the Germans.”<sup>166</sup> This observation is echoed by Italian sources, which often mention frequent conflicts with the German soldiers, even a mass brawl in Dnipropetrovsk when the Italian allies were not admitted to a movie house with

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159 Pahiria and Ivanchenko, *Litopys UPA. Nova seriia*, vol. 18, 336.

160 Shakhraichuk, “Sotsial’ni nastroi,” 216.

161 Ibid., 219.

162 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs’ku*, 71.

163 Ibid., 40.

164 Ibid., 39.

165 Matla, *Pivdenna pokhidna hrupa*, 15.

166 Kovalëva, *Zhizn’, provedënnaia v mogile*, 40.

a limited access for “Germans only.”<sup>167</sup> Meanwhile, German documents cite cases of “improper” conduct of the Italian and Hungarian soldiers—for instance, reselling cigarettes to the Germans.<sup>168</sup>

The Nazi rule of Dnipropetrovsk lasted a little more than two years. On October 25, 1943, Sergei Shvedov marked in his diary: “No more Germans in the city.”<sup>169</sup>



FIGURE 36.

The Holocaust memorial  
on the execution site in former  
Botanical garden near the Dnipro  
National University.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

The same date, October 25th, emerges on the document with a title “Order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the Liberation of the Cities of Dnipropetrovsk and Dniprodzerzhynsk (Kamyanske) from the German Fascist Invaders.”<sup>170</sup> The order states that the 3rd Ukrainian Front under the command of General Rodion Malinovsky “took by storm the regional center of Ukraine, city of Dnipropetrovsk.” Still, no high-intensity hostilities were recorded in the city.

On October 2, 1943, German soldiers killed General Major Vasily Karuna who personally carried out a reconnaissance mission near the destroyed railway bridge during the crossing of the Dnipro. The river was successfully crossed when the bulk of the German troops retreated from the city. The first

thing the Soviet troops did in Dnipropetrovsk was build a pontoon bridge. It was completed in a week (November 6–13). Then it was replaced with a fixed

167 Vantsetti Safronov, *Ital'ianskie voiska na Vostochnom fronte 1941–1943 gg.* (Moscow: Veche, 2012), 69–71.

168 Arad et al., eds, *The Einsatzgruppen Reports*, 242.

169 Guliaev, Bol'shakov, and Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk: 1928–1947*, 104. Compare oral testimonies by Gleb Kritsov (born 1929) about the retreat of the German troops from the city without battling (recorded on January 8, 2012 by the author, transcript in the author's archive).

170 A. F. Stetsenko, ed., *Dnepropetrovskaia oblast' v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza (1941–1945 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Dnipropetrovsk: Knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1962).

bridge, resting on more than 1,200-meter-long wooden piles, which was constructed in thirty-nine days (between November 1 and December 9, 1943).<sup>171</sup>

### First Postwar Years

According to the official Soviet statistics, during the war in Dnipropetrovsk more than 30,000 civilians were executed by shooting and 75,000 deported to Germany as slave laborers; 187 residential multi-story buildings, 1,345 low-rise houses, and 5,763 private homes were wrecked; twenty-nine hospitals, seventeen schools, the opera house, the municipal library and two railway bridges were demolished.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, the retreating German forces took out of the city archaeological artifacts (the items found during the diggings in 1942–1943), the bronze statue of Catherine II (its whereabouts are still unknown), archival collections, including the archives of the Katerynoslav Viceroyalty (they were taken to Potsdam and after the war, “returned” to a historical archive in Leningrad),<sup>173</sup> and the Party’s archive (which was taken to Raciborz in Silesia).<sup>174</sup>

According to different Soviet sources, when the Red Army entered Dnipropetrovsk, the city numbered only 3,000–1,000 residents.<sup>175</sup> There were so few of them because the German administration, before retreating, demanded that the locals be evacuated and forced many to move along with them to the territories still under their control. On October 29, 1943, a rally was held in the city to celebrate the liberation. “Literally all of the town’s residents—up to 2,000 people—took part [in this event].”<sup>176</sup>

The population size of Dnipropetrovsk bounced back to its prewar levels quickly. This happened, inter alia, because many returned from the evacuation. In 1950 the city’s population numbered 520,000—more than in 1939, and in

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171 M. M. Kozlov, ed., *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voïna 1941–1945: Ènsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia ènsiklopediia, 1985), 244.

172 *Okupatsiïyî rezhyr na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 32, 35.

173 Slobodianiuk and Shakhraïchuk, *Rukh Oporu na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 114–115.

174 Kennedy Grimsted, “The Fate of Ukrainian Cultural Treasures,” 68. Total losses of the Dnipropetrovsk archive amounted to more than 750,000 files—first of all, documents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—were destroyed or lost. For more details see Mieszkov, *Dnipropetrovs’ki arkhivy, muzeï ta biblioteki*, 6–7.

175 Krutsyk and Zhovtiï, *Chekists’ke dos’ie*, 460.

176 DADO, Kopii materialiv Derzhavnoho arkhivu Rosiïskoï Federatsiï, fond 7021, opys 57, sprava 13, arkush 14.



FIGURE 37. Plans for reconstruction of Dnipropetrovsk's city center presented in 1948 by the local architects.

Source: Aleksandr Vok Collection, <https://artkostyuk.com/vokok>

1954 it reached the number 600,000.<sup>177</sup> Dnipropetrovsk became the Soviet Union's fourteenth—and Ukraine's third—most populous urban center.

When Soviet rule was reestablished in the city, some of the first symbolically significant steps taken by the Soviet authorities were demolishing the German-Italian war cemetery with its large monument dedicated to the fallen Italian soldiers<sup>178</sup> and setting back in place the children's railroad (opened in 1936) in the Chkalov Park.<sup>179</sup>

Already on June 3, 1944, Grigory Barkhin, a professor at Moscow Institute of Architecture prepared a report about his work trip to Dnipropetrovsk, which was devoted to the reconstruction of the city. On the one hand, the specialist from Moscow liked very much the main avenue with the four rows of trees on the boulevard, referring to it as “one of the best streets . . . ever seen in a city” and

177 Max Biehl, “Bevölkerungsverschiebungen in der Sowjetunion nach der Wahlkreiseinteilung von 1950 und 1954,” *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 72 (1954): 298.

178 See the fotoalbum *Natsysts'kyi 'novyi poriadok' v mistakh Ukraïny. Zbirka fotohrafii ta dokumentiv z fondiv muzeiu 'Pam'iat' ievreis'koho narodu ta Holokost v Ukraïni'* (Dnipropetrovsk: Tkuma, 2015).

179 See Serhy Yekelchuk, “The Leader, the Victory, and the Nation: Public Celebrations in Soviet Ukraine under Stalin (Kiev, 1943–1953),” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 54, no. 1 (2006): 3–19; Kathrin Boeck, *Stalinismus in der Ukraine: Die Rekonstruktion des sowjetischen Systems nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007).

contemplating the “very scenic topography of the place, the gorgeous river with its powerful stream.” On the other hand, according to Barkhin, “at the time when the city was growing and developing its industrial capacity, nothing was done to improve its architectural landscape,” so even in the center it remained “very poor and faceless.” Barkhin also emphasized that “there [were] no old buildings anywhere, except the remains of what once was the Potemkin Palace,” whereas “new buildings of any interest either.”<sup>180</sup>

According to him, “arguably 25% of the city [was] destroyed.”<sup>181</sup> Barkhin deliberately compared the left bank, once home to workers’ neighborhoods, with a “ground zero.” Thinking about the future of Dnipropetrovsk, the architect proposed to follow the established trend “in urban restoration: building low-rises and establishing well-developed settlements near industrial facilities; allocating for small residential houses plots of land as needed; building residential housing closer to nature and providing residents of these country seats with the opportunity to use agricultural labor.”<sup>182</sup>

The restoration of the industrial capacity of the area in and around Dnipropetrovsk advanced at a great speed. Already in 1950, the *oblast* had 608 functioning industrial facilities, 117 of which reported directly to the ministries in Moscow.<sup>183</sup>

The labor force at the industrial reconstruction projects included both prisoners of war and ethnic Germans from Central Europe, for instance, Transylvanian Saxons from Romania. There is a unique memoir of a peasant maiden Helene-Martha Kopony who had been brought to Dnipropetrovsk. Her text has almost no political references and descriptions of the city. It is all the more telling that she calls Dnipropetrovsk’s populace “Russians,” never applying other ethnonyms, and points out that in the postwar city she was now-and-again coming across people with a good knowledge of German language.<sup>184</sup> She also mentions the steppe, the horrible living conditions in her labor camp, as well as the

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180 Iu. L. Kosenkova, *Sovetskii gorod 1940-kh–pervoi poloviny 1950-kh godov. Ot tvorcheskikh poiskov k praktike stroitel'stva*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: URSS, 2009), 324.

181 Ibid.

182 Ibid..

183 Krutsyk and Zhovtii, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 471.

184 Helene-Martha Kopony, *Fünf Jahre Arbeitslager. Meine Erinnerungen an Dnjeprpetrowsk* (Braşov: Aldus, 2013), 49. I am grateful to Katharina Biegger who drew my attention on this publication.



need to wash herself in a factory in the presence of a Soviet male army officer responsible for the Romanian workers.<sup>185</sup>

Living in a country ravaged by war was a difficult daily routine. The reality of postwar Dnipropetrovsk included ruins of buildings populated by the home-



FIGURE 38.  
Vladimir Gelfand. Photo from  
the collection of Museum  
“Memory of Jewish people and  
the Holocaust in Ukraine” in  
Dnipro.

less in the center, gangs of robbers as well as “legless invalids on wheeled wood boards shouting obscenities at passers-by.”<sup>186</sup> Irina Kovaleva reminisced that at her secondary school some of her fellow students stood out. Their “parents served in the occupation forces in Hungary, Slovakia, Germany. It was then that the keenness for foreign-made clothes and the derisive attitude to the products of Soviet industry took hold in citizens’ minds.”<sup>187</sup>

Vladimir Gelfand, back from the front line, wrote in his diary on November 1, 1946:

Nighttime here is dangerous—mug-  
gers are out and on the prowl. Rob-  
beries accompanied with murder are  
a fashion of the day. As soon as the dusk  
falls, in many neighborhoods all activity  
comes to a standstill. The streets are on  
the alert expecting a spilling of blood.  
People became mean.<sup>188</sup>

A November 1946 entry in Sergei Shvedov’s diary reads: “Some people are swollen with hunger. There is more murder, apartment burglary, and street robbery.”<sup>189</sup>

185 Ibid.

186 Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedënnia v mogile*, 47.

187 Ibid., 44.

188 Vladimir Gel'fand, “Dnevnik za 1946 god,” manuscript from the the family archive of Vitaly Gelfand. I am grateful to Vitaly Gelfand for the allowance to quote this source and to Yehor Vradiy and Denys Shatalov who drew my attention to this document.

189 Guliaev, Bol'shakov, and Busygina, *Dnepropetrovsk: 1928–1947*, 123.

Shvedov refers to the famine of 1946–1947, which was the result of unfavorable weather conditions (very little snow in the winter and a very hot summer in 1946) as well as the state's decision to set exorbitantly high grain collection quotas. Like in most regions in southeast and central Ukraine, Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* records for the winter of 1946–1947 display instances of dystrophy, cannibalism, and peasants' attempts to relocate from their villages to towns or to Western Ukraine.<sup>190</sup> It is also worth noting that up to 80% of the collective farmers in the postwar period were females—primary victims of starvation.<sup>191</sup>

### How Did the Soviet Authorities Deal with the Experiences of Occupation?

Was the Soviet power that returned in 1943 identical to the Soviet power that retreated in 1941? The first thing the Soviet administration did was to collect information about the two years when Dnipropetrovsk was under occupation, including information about the murders of Jews.<sup>192</sup> Right away, the authorities arrested seven employees of the Ihren psychiatric hospital, and three of them, including the director Vyacheslav Goncharov, were sentenced to execution by shooting.<sup>193</sup> A twenty-five-year sentence was handed down to Gustav Yakubovsky, a junior faculty at Dnipropetrovsk University's department of biochemistry. A *Volksdeutsche*, under the Nazi rule he became the head of the agency in charge of dealing with the partisan fighters in Novomoskovsk woodlands and directly participated in the arrest of Stashkov, the secretary of the underground *oblast* party committee.<sup>194</sup>

190 Further details in: O. P. Rabenchuk, "Sotsial'ni nastroi ta povedinka naselennia Ukraïny v period holodu 1946–1947 rr.," *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 4 (2006): 87–100; N. M. Sheimina, *Holodni roky (1946–1947) v Ukraïni*, accessed April 5, 2021, <http://www.museum.dp.ua/article0208.html>.

191 Compare with E. Iu. Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspeñ, 1999); Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Postwar Soviet Society: 'The Return to Normalcy,'" in *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union*, ed. Susan J. Linz (New Jersey: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985), 129–156; Nataliia Lebina, *Sovetskaia povsednevnost': normy i anomalii. Ot voennogo kommunizma k bol'shomu stilii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015).

192 DADO, Kopii materialiv Derzhavnoho arkhivu Rosiiskoi Federatsii, fond 7021, opys 57, sprava 13, arkushi 8–9, 15, 22–24.

193 Ibid., arkush 1.

194 Poliakov, ed., *Istoriia Dnipropetrovs'koho natsional'noho universytetu*, 78; Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 108–109.



According to the secret police's report, "in the course of the operation to clear the [Dnipropetrovsk *oblast's*] territory of traitors and accomplices, a large portion of the traitors . . . was arrested, exposed, and sentenced by us. Most of them fled with the Germans to the West and Romania and then they were repatriated."<sup>195</sup> Still, key figures managed to avoid arrest by the Soviets. As a punishment for his "anti-Ukrainian policies" in Dnipropetrovsk, the head of the municipal administration Sokolovsky, some sources suggest, was killed in March 1944 in Lviv by the OUN.<sup>196</sup> Pavlo Kozar died on April 24, 1944, in Polish Radom. The fate of Ivan Zelensky is unknown. Both Dnipropetrovsk priests who served as bishops during the occupation immigrated to the United States. Dmitry died overseas in 1969—Hennady in 1972. The archaeologist Mykhailo Miller worked in Ukrainian émigré scholar institutions in West Germany until his death in 1968. The artist Vyacheslav Korenev—who likewise left Dnipropetrovsk in the autumn of 1943—remained in Ukraine, was not persecuted, and spent the rest of his life in Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky. He died in 1952.

The Soviet authorities conducted special clearance reviews of all communists who remained on the occupied territories (actually, the notion of "spending some time on the occupied territories" became an obligatory personal information to be delivered in almost every questionnaire in postwar Soviet Union). As of January 1, 1948, 120,601 members of the Communist Party of Ukraine had experienced living on the occupied territories. 16,414 of them were killed or died by the moment the town was retaken by the Red Army. The *oblast* party committees immediately carried out a secret audit concerning personal data files of the communists who lived under occupation and expelled more than 90% of them (58,848 out of 65,279) from the party. In 1949, the number of identified communists who lived on the occupied territories grew to 142,134. The *oblast* party committees examined 73,740 personal data files and expelled another portion of 68,032 individuals (92.25%).<sup>197</sup> The Soviet authorities likewise checked the former Soviet prisoners of war, the *Ostarbeiter*, and all residents of the Nazi-ruled territories. Still, direct collaboration with the occupiers would not inevitably entail punishment after the war. In particular, Professors

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195 Krutsyk and Zhovtiĭ, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 456.

196 Lev Shankovs'kyĭ, *Pokhidni hrupy OUN (Prychynky do istoriï pokhidnykh grup OUN na tsentral'nykh i skhidnykh zemliakh Ukraïny v 1941–1943 rr.)* (Munich: Ukraïns'kyĭ samostiinyk, 1958), 151.

197 Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War. The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 122.



FIGURE 39. First of May Demonstration in post-war Dnipropetrovsk.  
Photo from Denys Shatalov's archive.

Iosif Tanatar and Vladimir/Volodymyr Guskov, who worked at the Polytechnic Institute reopened by the German administration, were reappointed to the same positions by the Soviet authorities after a check. The Institute's former rector, Konstantin Tatomir, continued his work in the academia as well.<sup>198</sup>

Another school opened in postwar Dnipropetrovsk was a state university. Graduates of its philological faculty include the most famous Ukrainian Soviet postwar writers who enrolled after returning from the battlefields and the German camps: in 1946 Oles Honchar and in 1951 Pavlo Zahrebelny. Oleg Trubachev, who was to become a renowned Soviet and Russian linguist, too, matriculated at the department in 1947. According to his memoirs, Dnipropetrovsk, where his family moved after leaving Stalingrad destroyed by the war, "came out of the ordeal in a relatively good shape." His attention was captured first of all by a very diverse assortment of books in old bookstores, where one could buy encyclopedias and classic literature in European languages.<sup>199</sup> Trubachev also reminisced about the postwar Dnipro: "In the first postwar years the water level

198 Shakhraichuk, "Osvita i nauka v umovakh okupatsii," 218.

199 O. N. Trubachev, *Ocherki. Materialy. Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 2009), 75–76.

in it was low because of the DniproHES—I remember that a sand spit stretched from Komsomolsky Island nearly to the bridge. Then it all disappeared under the water.”<sup>200</sup>

## Post-war Antisemitism

Antisemitism encouraged by the state became an important element of public life after the war. It was present during the war as well, both on the battlefields and on the home front, and it was based on the stereotype that “Jews [were] not fighting.” In reality, at least 450,000 Jews served in the Red Army and 142,500 were killed in battle.<sup>201</sup> The army officer Gelfand, already quoted, shared his dismay, in April 1943, in his diary: “Why am I Jewish? Why do nations exist in the world at all? Jewishness is always a plague, a never-ending torment with no remedy. Why are Jews disliked? Why do I, like many others, have to conceal my ancestry?”<sup>202</sup>

Jews also had to deal with manifestations of antisemitism during evacuation and back home, when they found that their apartments were occupied by neighbors and their property was stolen.<sup>203</sup> The head of the People’s Commissariat of State Security of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (NKGB USSR), Serhii/Sergei Savchenko, in his secret report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine dated September 13, 1944, wrote about “incidents of severe antisemitic manifestations on the part of the local population in almost all cities.”<sup>204</sup> Savchenko blamed these acts of antisemitism on “remnants of German fascist propaganda and propaganda of Ukrainian nationalists” and cited an

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200 Ibid., 84.

201 Oleg Budnitskii, “Jews at War: Diaries from the Front,” in *Soviet Jews in World War II. Fighting, Witnessing, Remembering*, ed. Harriet Murav and Gennady Estraiikh (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 60. See also Il’ia Al’tman and Leonid Terushkin, eds., *Sokhrani moi pis’ma . . . Sbornik pisem i dnevnikov evreev perioda Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow: MIK, 2007); Mariia Grigorenko-Girman, *Gorit ego zvezda. Povest’ o Geroe Sovetskogo Soiuza L’ve Gitmane* (Dnipropetrovsk: Porogi, 2002).

202 Gel’fand, “Dnevnik Vladimira Gel’fanda za 1943 god,” accessed April 5, 2021, <http://www.gelfand.de/1943gvv.html>.

203 A typical story is described in the memoirs of the historian Saul Borovoy who had returned from evacuation to Odesa: Saul Borovoï, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Gesharim, 1993), 219, 289–290, 292.

204 Mordechai Altshuler, “Antisemitism in Ukraine toward the End of the Second World War,” *Jews in Eastern Europe* 3 (1993): 52. Compare Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 192.

“incident” that occurred on August 25, 1944, in Dnipropetrovsk, when a Jew named Iosif Petelevich moved into an apartment that was inhabited by Pelageya Orlova, a widow of a Red Army soldier, her two children, and her disabled sister. Orlova loudly protested against the new lodger’s arrival. Her cries drew a crowd of 200 people who started shouting antisemitic slogans and beating Petelevich. Afterwards they burst into the next-door apartment, where another Jew lived, and ransacked it. The most zealous wreckers were detained, including two women, one of whom, as it turned out, was an employee of the secret police.<sup>205</sup>

In November 1944, the “strictly confidential” response from the Party’s Central Committee arrived. It stated that the NKGB’s report was “basically incorrect” and “individual cases of antisemitic manifestations . . . [were] random occurrences and [did] not characterize a mass phenomenon of this kind in Ukraine.” The writer of the report, the head of the NKGB’s second division, had to be fired because he insufficiently considered “the political significance of the work entitled to him.”<sup>206</sup>

This sort of response from the Party’s highest body was arguably a harbinger of the period when the state would openly encourage manifestations of antisemitism. In January 1953 the state news agency TASS broke the news concerning the arrest of a group of doctors, mostly Jews, who were charged with killings of Soviet leaders in 1945–1948.<sup>207</sup> According to the Party’s secret documents dedicated to Dnipropetrovsk, after the news became public, a Jewish student at School no. 9 was called “a traitor” and “Yid,” as his classmates kept shouting: “Beat Yids—save Russia.” In School no. 10, students of the sixth grade asked their teacher, the Party member Zeltser, the question: “Can one call these saboteurs and traitors ‘Yids’?” She replied “Yes,” and then went into the teachers’ room and began to cry.<sup>208</sup> Other reports mention cases when Soviet citizens demanded “to move Jews out” and “to set up a ghetto.”<sup>209</sup> There were cases when medical help from Jewish doctors was turned down based on ethnically motivated

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205 Altshuler, “Antisemitism in Ukraine,” 54–55.

206 Ibid., 68–69.

207 Further details in G. V. Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i antisemitizm* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2003).

208 Mordechai Altshuler and Tat'iana Chentsova, “The Party and Popular Reaction to the ‘Doctors’ Plot’ (Dnepropetrovsk Province, Ukraine),” *Jews in Eastern Europe* 2 (1993): 52.

209 Ibid, 56–57.

prejudices, and when Jews were beaten up on streets.<sup>210</sup> Workers at one of the plants in Dnipropetrovsk even adopted a resolution, demanding, inter alia, to fire all Jews from a healthcare organization, clear the Party of its Jewish members, relocate Jews to remote northern regions of the USSR as well as to limit Jewish enrolment at institutions of higher learning.<sup>211</sup> The Party organs also reported that they initiated a review of all medical documents related to patients of doctors having a Jewish origin.<sup>212</sup>

The prominent Russian writer Friedrich Gorenstein (whose quote is given in the epigraph of this chapter) recalls the extremely difficult, “terrible” atmosphere of Dnipropetrovsk in 1952–53 in his recollections, and notably describes how he survived the execution of his father (a professor of political economy in Kyiv) at the hands of the NKVD and the evacuation during the war.<sup>213</sup> Perhaps the profound experience of the antisemitic campaign in his student years helped Gorenstein develop a remarkable sensitivity to the implicit currents of history and the potential for violence inherent in it.

In 1953, it seemed as if public opinion was being primed for a systematic persecution of Jews, just a few years after the end of the war and the Holocaust. The process of whipping up hatred and revitalizing antisemitic stereotypes was cut short by Stalin’s death in March 1953. Nevertheless, his death did not change the standard Soviet approach to the subject of the Holocaust. Since the first postwar years, the Soviet authorities were very apprehensive about the Jewish communities’ initiatives to mount memorial signs and conduct commemorative ceremonies on the sites of mass executions (although in some cases the authorizations needed were granted).<sup>214</sup> In Dnipropetrovsk, Shulman—the deputy head of the local Jewish community—managed not only to collect funds for establishing a memorial sign on the site where Jews were executed by the Nazis in

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210 Ibid.

211 Ibid., 63.

212 Ibid., 64–65.

213 Iurii Veksler, *Pazl Gorenshteina. Pamiatnik neizvestnomu pisateliiu* (Moscow: Zakharov, 2020): 278. Gorenstein’s experience as the mining engineer in the Dnipropetrovsk region was depicted lately in his novel “The Winter of 1953” (*Zima 53-go*, 1965), and his reflections on Ukrainian-Jewish and Ukrainian-Russian relations were expressed in “Companions” (*Poputchiki*, 1983). For a detailed analysis of Gorenstein’s literary work see Korine Amacher, *L’Œuvre de Friedrich Gorenstein. Violence du regard, regards sur la violence* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004).

214 Mordechai Altshuler, “Jewish Holocaust Commemoration Activity in the USSR under Stalin,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 30 (2002): 271–296.

October 1941 and to secure the Shevchenko Theatre's agreement to have a memorial ceremony performed in its building, but also to receive the municipal authorities' permission to put up a monument.<sup>215</sup> The Council for Religious Affairs (under the auspices of the Government of the Soviet Union and the municipal committee of the Communist Party), however, considered the municipality's decision "politically myopic."<sup>216</sup> Eventually, several officials were dismissed from their posts and Shulman was forced to leave Dnipropetrovsk, eventually moving to Novosibirsk.<sup>217</sup> Meanwhile, the site of the mass execution of Jews remained unmarked in any way. Already in the 1970s when a new main building of Dnipropetrovsk University was opened close to the site, a small granite memorial sign was mounted there. On it, was engraved the inscription: "For peaceful civilians—victims of Fascism." At the same time, the ravine where about 11,000 Dnipropetrovsk Jews were killed was filled with earth and a stadium for students was built there.

### Between Stalinism and Nazism

Stalin's and Hitler's regimes used extraordinary coercion in their political practices and social engineering and tried to change borders in Europe to suit their ideological doctrines. Still, despite common features and mutually borrowed practices, the two regimes were not identical.<sup>218</sup> Under Nazi rule, Dnipropetrovsk retained its Soviet name. The twenty-six months of the German colonial power, however, became yet another socio-cultural experiment in the city's history. Dnipropetrovsk had a first-hand experience of the dominance of the racial theory and its foremost manifestation—the policy of total annihilation of Jewish population.

Late in August 1941, the city experienced the first regime change since 1919. Initially, this alternation caused a lot of people to hope for restitution of

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215 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob'iednan' Ukraïny [TsDAHOU, Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine], fond 1, opys 23, sprava 5667, arkushi 59–60.

216 Ibid.

217 Ibid., arkushi 92–93.

218 See Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Henry Rousso and Nicolas Werth, eds., *Stalinisme et Nazisme: Histoire et memoires comparees* (Bruxelles: Complexe, 1999).



their property and the end of collective farms.<sup>219</sup> Nothing like this ended up happening. The locals who stayed in the city had to adapt to the realities of the Nazi policies. Adaptation-based tactics and the focus on survival shaped the behavioral strategies for most of the local population. Neither a zealous support for the new regime nor the underground struggle against it was a priority. According to historians, the Soviet underground in Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* was small in numbers and inefficient in comparison to Ukraine's northern regions. This was the result of the area's landscape, dominated by the steppe, and of the population's passivity.<sup>220</sup>

The nationalist underground in the *oblast* was even smaller.<sup>221</sup> However, one of its first historians in the 1950s called Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* "the fortress of the Ukrainian underground in south Ukraine" and claimed that it was there, in discussions with local residents, "that the new political, social, cultural and national program of the united (*soborny*) Ukrainian nationalism [later approved at the OUN's Third Extraordinary Grand Assembly in August 1943] grew."<sup>222</sup> This statement significantly exaggerates the facts on the ground. Nonetheless, the author of the strictly confidential report prepared by the Soviet Ministry of State Security in 1950 and titled "A Characteristic of Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*" highlighted that during the war "Dnipropetrovsk became an important center of Ukrainian nationalism."<sup>223</sup>

The problem of Ukrainian-language education and a Ukrainian autocephalous church was again put on the agenda during the Nazi rule. In large measure, although in a cardinaly different context, the discourses focused on these questions as well as the competition of church and education projects continued the discussions of the 1920s and the 1930s, which were cut short by the Stalinist repressions.

The evolution of the subject of antisemitism, too, can be described as a continuous process. The national-socialist propaganda again made relevant and legitimate the antisemitic slogans from the period of the revolutions and the civil

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219 Shchupak, *Holokost u Dnipropetrovs'ku*, 64–65.

220 Slobodianiuk and Shakhraichuk, *Rukh Oporu na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 172–173. See also: I. A. Shakhraichuk, "Antyfashysts'ka borot'ba radians'koho pidpillia na Dnipropetrovshchyni v roky Velykoï Vitchyznianoï viiny (1941–1945)," *Problemy politychnoi istorii Ukraïny* 10 (2015): 143–152.

221 Slobodianiuk and Shakhraichuk, *Rukh Oporu na Dnipropetrovshchyni*, 217.

222 Shankovs'kyï, *Pokhidni hrupy OUN*, 143, 153.

223 Krutsyk and Zhovtiï, *Chekists'ke dos'ie*, 464, 463.





FIGURE 40. Entrance to the Chkalov's park with Stalin's monument. Photo by Mikhail Perepelitsyn from Andrii Portnov's family archive.

wars. Stereotypic statements identifying Jews with Bolshevism were on the top of the list. During the occupation, antisemitic themes always figured in public space, including on the pages of the *Dnipropetrovsk Newspaper*, whose journalists even referred to the Soviet Dnipropetrovsk as “Dnipro-zhyd-ovsk.”<sup>224</sup> There were manifestations of antisemitism among the Red Army soldiers, as well as in the Soviet rear areas. After the war, Stalin even decided to use antisemitic tropes for yet another controlled mobilization of the population against “enemies.” The Soviet dictator’s death thwarted these plans. Jews did not disappear from Dnipropetrovsk’s urban space, but their share in the city’s total population never reached the prewar levels.

In the first postwar years, the Soviet commemorative ceremonies devoted to the Great Patriotic War were mostly “export-oriented.” The grandiose memorial in honor of the Soviet Union’s victory over the Third Reich was built in Treptower Park in the eastern part of Berlin under the guidance of sculptor Evgeny Vuchetich, a native of Katerynoslav.<sup>225</sup> In the Soviet Union, meanwhile,

224 V. Rolik, “Dniprozhydovs’k,” *Dnipropetrovs’ka hazeta*, August 25, 1942: 2–3.

225 More on Vuchetich see in F. F. Shakhmagonov, *Evgeniĭ Vuchetich. Portret khudozhnika* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1970); A. E. Fedorov, *Evgeniĭ Viktorovich Vuchetich* (Moscow: Izobrazitel’noe iskusstvo, 1972), and others.

the monuments dedicated to war heroes were incomparable in scale to the one in Treptower Park in Berlin. In 1946, two memorial sites appeared in Dnipropetrovsk. In the Shevchenko Park, a modest bust of General Karuna—who found his violent death in October 1943 near Dnipropetrovsk—was mounted, and the Karl Marx Avenue was adorned with a light tank T-70 in honor of General Yefim Pushkin, who received the title of a Hero of the Soviet Union for the defense of Dnipropetrovsk in 1941. Pushkin was killed in March 1944. Both generals' remains were buried with much ceremony on Zhovtneva (former Soborna) Square. In addition, on the site of what was once the German-Italian military cemetery, common graves were arranged as a burial site for several hundred Soviet soldiers.

# Brezhnev's Capital

Splendid multi-stored buildings, constantly improving embankment of the Dnipro, a new, almost a mile long bridge across the full-flowing river . . . The wide streets and avenues, numerous parks, wonderful architectural buildings of Dnipropetrovsk give it a charming, unique beauty.

Petro Shelest,  
*Our Soviet Ukraine*, 1970

My dream is that Dnipropetrovsk obtains the status of an open city—that people would come to us freely from all over the world (like to Moscow or Kyiv) . . .

Ivan Sokulsky in a letter to his daughter, 1986

Leonid Brezhnev, a native of the nearby industrial town of Dniprodzerzhynsk (before 1936, Kamianske), was in 1938 (at the age of thirty-two) appointed head of the Ideological Department of the Dnipropetrovsk *obkom*, and in 1940 became secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk regional party's committee on defense issues.<sup>1</sup> From the autumn of 1947 to 1950, Brezhnev served as the first secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk regional party committee and was responsible for the "industrial growth and reconstruction of the ruined city."<sup>2</sup> Brezhnev left Dnipropetrovsk to continue his Party career, which brought him to the number-one-

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1 For details see the most recent biography of Brezhnev: Susanne Schattenberg, *Leonid Breschnew. Staatsmann und Schauspieler im Schatten Stalins. Eine Biografie* (Wien: Böhlau, 2017).

2 L. I. Brezhnev, "Dnipropetrovshchyna naperedodni 30-richchia Radians'koï Ukraïny," *Zoria*, January 13, 1948, 2.

position in Kremlin. As soon as it happened, the Brezhnev myth started to be linked to the city on the Dnipro where the future general secretary started his way to the top.

### Dnipropetrovsk as a Crucial Spot of the Cold War Arms Race

The plan for the post-war development of Dnipropetrovsk was not only to completely restore the old plants, but also to build a new one—"the flagship of the automobile industry in Ukraine."<sup>3</sup> An area of over 400 hectares was allocated for the new plant, seventy-five industrial buildings were to be erected, a network of railroads forty-two kilometers long was to be built, and the factory infrastructure with a Palace of Culture, a hotel, schools, kindergartens, health clinics, and a stadium was to be created.<sup>4</sup>

The construction of the automobile plant—with the use of German prisoners of war—began as early as 1944 on the outskirts of the city. By December 1949, it began the production of trucks and truck cranes. But by the secret decision of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union on May 9, 1951, the plant was transferred to the Ministry of Armament and reoriented to serial production of missile ships—in particular, rocket launchers for nuclear and thermonuclear weapons.<sup>5</sup> Dnipropetrovsk was chosen as the main producer of Soviet missiles by a special commission created by Stalin's order, headed by the future Marshal of the Soviet Union and future Soviet minister of defense, Dmitriy Ustinov, as a large industrial center, in addition, geographically close to Kyiv and Kharkiv.<sup>6</sup> An additional factor in favor of the city on the Dnipro was the fact that the nearby town of Zhovti Vody was already under special status because of

3 R. Krutsyk and S. Zhovtyi, comp., *Chekists'ke dos'ie okupovanoi Ukraïny*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Presa Ukraïny, 2014), 471.

4 Ibid., 471–472.

5 For details see S. Koniukhov, ed., *Prizvany vremenem. Ot protivostoianiiia k mezhdunarodnomu sotrudnichestvu* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2004); A. Agarkov, ed., *My uchim raketky letat'. K 50-letiiu podrazdeleniia ispytaniï i ekspluatatsii KB "Iuzhnoe"* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2012); A. Mashchenko, ed., *Golovnoe KB firmy Iangelia. Istoriia. Dostizheniia. Liudi* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2010); V. Kopeiko, *Zodchie raketnykh kompleksov* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2014).

6 M. V. Poliakov, ed., *"Sekretnyi" pidrozdil haluzi: Narysy istorii fizyko-tekhnichnoho instytutu Dnipropetrovskoho natsional'noho universytetu* (Dnipropetrovsk: Vydavnytstvo Dnipropetrovskoho universytetu, 2001), 20.

the extraction of uranium ore, from which the first Soviet atomic bombs were made.<sup>7</sup>



FIGURE 41. Building of the Pivdenmash plant.  
Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum of Dnipro.

At the Dnipropetrovsk automobile plant, a regime of strict secrecy was introduced. Since 1951, the enterprise received the conventional name of “Mail-box 186.” A restricted admission control was established there, in which the employees had to sign a certificate of responsibility for divulging of state secrets.<sup>8</sup> A special military unit (regiment of internal troops of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs) was created to guard the plant’s workshops and territory. In order to provide human resources for the new enterprise, the specialists in rocket engineering were invited from Moscow. In July 1954, the Pivdenne/Yuzhnoe Construction Bureau (KBİu) that functioned in parallel with the plant was headed by Mykhailo/Mikhail Yangel, a graduate of Moscow Aviation Institute and future academician of both all-Soviet and Ukrainian Soviet Academies of Sciences, who was Hero of Socialist Labor twice and who served as a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee.<sup>9</sup> In February 1956, a successful

7 P. G. Pen'kov, ed., *Uran Ukrainy. Istoriia Vostochnogo gorno-obogatitel'nogo kombinata v vospominaniakh ochevidtsev* (Dnipropetrovsk: Prospekt, 2006).

8 V. Pappo-Korystin, V. Platonov, and V. Pashchenko, *Dnepropetrovskii raketno-kosmicheskii tsentr. Kratkii ocherk stanovleniia i razvitiia. DAZ. IuMZ. KBİu. Khronika dat i sobytii* (Dnipropetrovsk: PO IuMZ-KBİu, 1994), 11.

9 See V. S. Gubarev, *Konstruktor. Neskol'ko stranits iz zhizni Mikhaïla Kuz'micha Iangelia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1977); V. Platonov and V. Gorbunin, *M. K. Iangel'* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1979); Lev Andreev and Stanislav Koniukhov, *Iangel'. Uroki i nasledie* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-

launch of ballistic missile R-5 M with a nuclear warhead was carried out based on the findings of Dnipropetrovsk scientists. And in late 1959, the Soviet Strategic Missile Forces were created. After Yangel's death in 1971, the post of KBİu General Constructor was taken by Volodymyr/Vladimir Utkin (he held it until 1990).

The main center for training engineers for the KBİu was the Faculty of Physics and Technology of the Dnipropetrovsk State University, established in 1952.<sup>10</sup> Promising students from various technical universities of the Soviet Union were transferred to Dnipropetrovsk by government's order.<sup>11</sup> In 1955, the future president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma, —who came to Dnipropetrovsk to study Ukrainian philology—entered this faculty. Other candidates explained to him: “At the philological faculty you will receive a stipend of 180 rubles, and here you will receive 400 rubles!”<sup>12</sup>

Since 1966, the classified enterprise was renamed and became Pivdenny/Yuzhny Machine-Building Plant or just Pivdenmash/Yuzhmash. Its director from 1961 to 1986 was Oleksandr/Aleksandr Makarov.<sup>13</sup> The Soviet strategic missile forces were supplied with missiles manufactured in Dnipropetrovsk. And, according to the official version, Pivdenmash produced tractors and other “civilian” products.

Pivdenmash was the largest (but not the only) secret military enterprise in Dnipropetrovsk. Another important secret plant of the city was the Dniprovsky machine-building plant (DMZ), which started as a second production facility for Pivdenmash and later was separated into an independent enterprise where radar surveillance systems were produced.<sup>14</sup> From 1954 to 1983, Leonid

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Press, 2001); V. Platonov, *Iangel'—sozdatel' oruzhiia vyzhivaniia* (Dnipropetrovs'k: IMA-Pres, 2011); A. V. Degtiarëv, ed., *Konstruktorskoe biuro “Iuzhnoe.” Liudi i rakety. Fotoal'bom* (Dnipropetrovs'k: PP “KB ‘Iuzhnoe’ im. M. K. Iangelia,” 2014).

10 For details see a special publication: Poliakov, “*Sekretnyi*” *pidrozdil haluzi*.

11 “Vynosit' konspekty za predely 3 i 4 ètazheï zapreshchalos' kategoricheskii': Vospominaniia prof. I. A. Reingarda o stanovlenii fiziko-tekhnicheskogo fakul'teta DGU (1952–1968),” *Nashe misto*, April 21, 2001, 3.

12 Leonid Kuchma, *Ukraina—ne Rossiia* (Moscow: Vremia, 2003), 396.

13 Vladimir Platonov, *Makarov. Khudozhestvenno-dokumental'naia biografiia. K 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia A. M. Makarova* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Prospekt, 2006).

14 V. K. Kostrzhitskii, *Nesekretno o sovershenno sekretnom. Ocherki istorii Proizvodstvennogo ob'edineniia “Dneprovskii mashinostroitel'nyi zavod im. Lenina”* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Zhurfond, 2013).

Stromtsov—himself a native of Katerynoslav and a son of an accountant at the Brianskyi plant—was the director of the DMZ.

Other formally civilian enterprises of the city also distributed a range of military products. Thus, postwar Dnipropetrovsk became the key engineering and production center of the Soviet missile industry and one of the significant places on the map of the Cold War world.

## The Typology of Soviet Closed Cities

The history of secret locations linked to military production goes back to the British townships of Eastriggs and Gretha, which were created in 1915. In the post-Second World War arms race, both the Soviet Union and the United States kept (or at least tried their best to keep) secret towns established for manufacturing atomic weapons. Dnipropetrovsk became closed to foreigners (including the citizens of socialist countries) in 1959. By the end of the 1970s, almost sixty Soviet cities were officially closed to foreigners, eleven of them in Ukraine.<sup>15</sup>

Researchers suggested a typology of Soviet closed cities that includes *secret cities* (in that these cities were not plotted on maps and were kept totally closed, like Seversk in Russia and Stepnogorsk in Kazakhstan); *totally closed cities* (cities that were impossible to visit for non-residents and that were known for restrictive workforce selection, like Sillamäe in Estonia and Severomorsk in Russia); *closed cities* (cities that were impossible to visit without necessary permissions, like Ust-Kamenogorsk in Kazakhstan and Sevastopol in Ukraine until 1984); and *cities closed to foreigners* (for example, Russian Murmansk and Estonian Tartu).<sup>16</sup> Dnipropetrovsk—one of the biggest among Soviet closed cities—belonged to the last group.

One could also distinguish between two main types of Soviet closed cities: atomic (subordinated to the Ministry of Atomic Energy) and military, mostly sea and rocket bases (subordinated to the Ministry of Defense). The degree of secrecy and security varied. Some of the closed administrative-territorial units (usually created “from scratch,” relatively small in size and tied to a specific secret production) functioned behind a fenced perimeter, had numbered names,

15 Sergei I. Zhuk, “Closing and Opening Soviet Society,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2011): 147, 151.

16 Michael Gentile, “Former Closed Cities and Urbanization in the FSU: An Exploration in Kazakhstan,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 2 (2004): 263–278. On postwar Sevastopol see Karl D. Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction. Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009).



were not marked on maps or included in official statistics, and were closed even to most Soviet citizens.<sup>17</sup>

Dnipropetrovsk fell into another “semi-closed city” category, which implied a complete ban on official mention of strategic enterprises and on the entry of foreigners. The largest of Soviet Ukraine’s eleven “closed” cities—whose popu-



FIGURE 42.  
Monument to Lenin and Stalin.  
Photo taken in 1952  
from Denys Shatalov’s archive.

lation reached a number of 917,074 in 1970—had to combine the life of an ordinary large industrial city with a special, secret status.

The most obvious element of the city’s “closedness” was the very existence of secret military production, which, of course, was no secret to any of the residents. In addition, postwar Dnipropetrovsk remained the largest center of the metallurgical industry and served as the location of the Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy of Soviet Ukraine. However, it was rocket design and production that played a key role. The face and mood of Dnipropetrovsk in the 1960s and 1970s was

determined by the tangible predominance of technical specialists and trained engineers in the city. At least fifty to 60,000 people worked at Pivdenmash and KBIU, and up to 30,000 worked at DMZ. According to historians’ estimations, people somehow connected with rocket and space production and their family members made up not less than a half of population of the millionaire city.<sup>18</sup>

17 On types of Soviet “closedness” see: T. S. Kondrat’eva and A. K. Sokolov, eds., *Rezhimnye liudi v SSSR* (Moscow: ROSSPĖN, 2009); Thomas M. Bohn, “Das sowjetische System der ‘geschlossenen Städte.’ Meldewesen und Wohnungsmangel als Indikatoren sozialer Ungleichheit,” in *Die europäische Stadt im 20. Jahrhundert. Wahrnehmung—Entwicklung—Erosion*, ed. Friedrich Lenger and Klaus Tenfelde (Köln: Böhlau, 2006), 373–386. See also a special forum: Sergei Zhuk, ed., “Closed City, Closed Economy, Closed Society: The Utopian Normalization of Autarky,” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2011): 123–238. On Siberian Akademgorodok: Paul R. Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited. Akademgorodok, the Syberian City of Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), and others.

18 Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City. The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dnipropetrovsk, 1960–1985* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), 21; Tetiana Portnova, “Tema ‘zarkytoho mista’ v istorii radians’koho Dnipropetrovs’ka 1950–80-kh

As in the rest of the Soviet Union, the huge factory was never *just* a factory. It performed the most important social functions, and served as donor to a whole network of institutions, such as hospitals, schools, kindergartens, apartment buildings, and stadiums. In the case of Pivdenmash, among other things, soccer played a special role.

### Dimensions of Closedness: Soccer and Filmmaking

Formally speaking, there was no professional sport in the Soviet Union. A soccer club could not exist “by itself,” but was always attached to some large enterprise or organization. The Dnipropetrovsk soccer team was created back in 1936 at the Petrovsky plant.<sup>19</sup> In 1962, the club changed its name from “Metalurh” to “Dnipro” and was transferred to the Pivdenmash. Players and coaches of the team were listed as employees of the workshops of the plant—they lived in the houses built by the plant and even formally took part in military service in the factory military unit.<sup>20</sup> Makarov, the director of Pivdenmash, paid a lot of attention to “Dnipro.” He started building a new stadium called Meteor and invited Valery Lobanovsky (the one who would later become famous as the coach of Dynamo Kyiv and the Soviet national team) from Kyiv to be the coach. In 1966, the Meteor stadium located near the buildings of Pivdenmash was opened. In 1971, “Dnipro”—led by Lobanovsky—entered the top league of the Soviet Union. Makarov’s soccer project turned out to be very successful. In 1983 and 1988, “Dnipro” became the champion of the Soviet Union. However, the consequences of such successes and the club’s entry into the UEFA competitions posed a difficult problem: how to combine the ban on foreigners coming to Dnipropetrovsk with participation in prestigious international tournaments? The solution was the decision to hold home matches in the UEFA Cup—not in Dnipropetrovsk, but in Kryvyi Rih. The formal reason was the claim that the new Meteor stadium did “not meet all international standards.”<sup>21</sup>

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rokiv,” historians.in.ua, accessed January 8, 2021, <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/doslidzhennya/2351-tetyana-portnova-tema-zakritogo-mista-v-istoriji-radyanskogo-dnipropetrovska-1950-80-kh-rokiv>.

19 The story of Dnipropetrovsk’s soccer is based on D. V. Moskalenko, *Ot “Al’kara” do “Dnepra.” Istoriia futbolu v Dnepropetrovske*, book 2, 1961–1991 (Dnipropetrovsk: Herda, 2012).

20 Ibid., 168.

21 Ibid. See also A. N. Kosyĭ, comp., *Futbol 88: Spravochnik-kalendar’* (Dnipropetrovsk: Zoria, 1988).

The main “problem” with the stadium was, of course, its proximity to a secret rocket plant. Interestingly, this problem affected not only soccer, but also Soviet cinematography. In 1981, Nikita Mikhalkov filmed his drama *Family Relations* (*Rodnya*) in Dnipropetrovsk. The film, scripted by Viktor Merezhko and starring Nonna Mordyukova, touched on a host of sensitive subjects: divorce and women’s role in the Soviet family unit, relations between town and countryside and between adults and children. The final scene of send-off to the army was an unmistakable allusion to the military intervention in Afghanistan, which had started in 1979 (and was not subject to public debate in the Soviet press). *Family Relations*, which featured Dnipropetrovsk train stations, courtyards, and parks (although the name of the city is not mentioned once in the film) was perhaps Mikhalkov’s most difficult project in terms of overcoming censorship restrictions.<sup>22</sup> One of them concerned scenes at the Meteor stadium, which, according to the story, is right outside the windows of the apartment in which the main events of the film unfold. Scenes at the stadium, where secret objects could get into the frame, had to be reshot in Kyiv.<sup>23</sup>

## Dimensions of Closedness:

### Information Taboos and Punitive Psychiatry

The atmosphere of secrecy and special control on the part of the KGB was primarily felt in the rocket production itself. In particular, its employees were forbidden to use terms revealing the purpose of rocket and space “products” (*izdeliia*) in open correspondence and in personal conversations. Any contacts with foreigners and trips abroad were forbidden. All the mail sent from abroad was perustrated. Transportation of finished products was done exclusively at night. The factory workshops were not marked on the map. Only a narrow circle of workers was allowed to assemble, adjust, and test the “product” as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

22 Mikhalkov himself touched upon this topic many times. See, for instance, Nikita Mikhalkov, *Moi dnevniki i zapisnye knizhki. 1972–1993* (Moscow: Ė, 2016), 321. He also included cut footage from “Family Relations” into his documentary *Anna: 6–18*, released in 1993.

23 Liubov’ Romanchuk, “V Dnepropetrovske Nikita Mikhalkov navodil uzhas na de-tvoru,” *Komsomol’skaia pravda*, accessed January 8, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100602081131/http://www.roman-chuk.narod.ru/8/rodnja.htm>.

24 For details see the memoirs of the former Head of the Security Service of Ukraine Leonid Derkach who started working on the Pivdenmash in 1957 and joined the KGB in 1971: Leonid Derkach, *O chēm mogu rasskazat’* (Kyiv: Avanpost-Prim, 2008).

The regime of secrecy also applied to information that, in the opinion of the authorities, could arouse unwanted emotions or doubts about the correctness of the general course. An example of a state taboo was the prohibition on any mention of the catastrophe that occurred on October 24, 1960 at the Baikonur Cosmodrome. Notably, an explosion occurred during preparations for the test launch of the Pivdenmash-made intercontinental ballistic missile R-16. According to official data (published only in 1989), it killed seventy-four people, including Chief Marshal of Artillery Mitrofan Nedelin, the first Soviet commander of the Rocket Forces.<sup>25</sup> Another example of a Soviet taboo was the silencing of the tragedy of October 15, 1981 at Meteor Stadium, when people were caught in a crush with many victims (including fatalities) at the exit from the stadium.<sup>26</sup>

Soviet authorities concealed not only the facts of disasters and miscalculations, but also certain features of their penitentiary system. For example, the “closed” Dnipropetrovsk seemed to be a proper place for the application of punitive psychiatry. At the regional psychiatric hospital in the suburban city Ihren, a special ninth ward was created where about sixty people accused of “anti-Soviet activities” or attempted escape from the Soviet Union were kept and treated as schizophrenics. This institution is described in the memoirs of Leonid Plyushch,<sup>27</sup> a Soviet mathematician and engineer at the Kyiv Institute of Cybernetics, who was arrested in 1972 for “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda” and sentenced in 1973 to two and a half years of compulsory treatment in a psychiatric hospital.<sup>28</sup> As a result of an international campaign, the Soviet authorities agreed to allow Plyushch to move abroad in 1976, where he recorded what he saw and experienced in Ihren.<sup>29</sup>

25 Aleksandr Zhelezniakov, “Baikonurskaia tragediia,” accessed January 7, 2021, <http://www.cosmoworld.ru/spaceencyclopedia/index.shtml?bay24.html>.

26 Moskalenko, *Ot “Al’kara” do “Dnepra,”* 246–248.

27 Leonid Plyushch, *History’s carnival. A Dissident’s Autobiography*, ed. and trans. by Marco Carynnyk (London: Collins & Harvill Press, 1979), 309–327.

28 More on Plyushch case see in Tatiana Khodorovich, comp., *Istoriia bolezni Leonida Pliushcha* (Amsterdam: Fond im. Gertsena, 1974).

29 Tellingly, Plyushch in emigration continued to define himself as “a Marxist by conviction”: Plyushch, *History’s carnival*, 377. It caused an interesting critical comment from the Moscow-based Russian dissident Tatiana Khodorovich who devoted herself to freeing Plyushch from the psychiatric hospital: Tatiana Khodorovich, “Otkrytoe pis’mo Leonidu Pliushchu,” *Kontinent* 9 (1976): 225–243. On Plyushch’s (un)conscious belonging to the Ukrainian Marxist tradition of the first half of the twentieth century see John-Paul Himka, “Leonid Plyushch. The Ukrainian Marxist Resurgent,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1980): 61–79.

## Dimensions of Closedness: Jewish Life and Orthodox Church

Soviet statistics recorded a gradual decrease in the Jewish population of Dnipropetrovsk: in 1959, 53,400 residents of the city were registered as Jews, in 1970—50,422, in 1979—45,622, and in 1989 there were 37,869 Jews.<sup>30</sup> The decrease in these figures could partly be explained by the possibility of emigration (“repatriation”) to Israel, which began in the 1970s, and was not at all easy. Yuri Burlan, who left Dnipropetrovsk in 1987, described it this way:

Receiving free information is extremely difficult and dangerous . . . Any manifestation of national consciousness is immediately punished. An atmosphere of harassment and intimidation is created around those who want to learn Hebrew or begin attending synagogue, and even more so around those who want to leave the USSR, or at least begin to be interested in leaving . . . In Dnipropetrovsk it is extremely difficult to submit the documents for departure which creates many bureaucratic obstacles.<sup>31</sup>

Another reason for the statistical decline of Jews among city residents was the desire of some Jews (especially those from mixed marriages) to claim their nationality as “Russian” in their passports. This decision was influenced by fact that some nationalities were discriminated against or had their rights restricted in the “internationalist” Soviet Union. Jews, for example, were believed to be likely to have relatives abroad and as a result were not admitted to the Faculty of Physics and Technology at Dnipropetrovsk University.<sup>32</sup>

What did the “closedness” of Dnipropetrovsk mean for Jewish religious and cultural life? By 1970, only one small synagogue (built in 1902 and without permanent foundation) remained active in Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>33</sup> It was not heated in winter. The last rabbi moved from Dnipropetrovsk to Moscow in 1953. The last Dnipropetrovsk’ *mohel*—a person trained in the practice of circumcision—Abram Shulman, was arrested in 1971 for “illegal medical practice”

30 Aleksandr Bystriakov, *Evrei Ekaterinoslava-Dnepropetrovska (XX vek)* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2002), 82.

31 Ibid.

32 This unwritten, but generally known, practice is mentioned in numerous personal accounts. Interviews with Raisa Gorlova (conducted on May 5, 2012) and Abram Epstein (conducted on June 16, 2012).

33 This paragraph is based on an interview with Oleksandr Fridkis (conducted on January 8, 2012).

(he was seventy-three at the time). The last ritual butcher—*shoykhet*—Abram Rogalin died in 1973. The community had no bakery of its own, matzah was brought in from Moscow (its quantity was approved by the Administration for Religious Affairs of the Regional Executive Committee).<sup>34</sup>

The Jewish community was not large and consisted almost exclusively of older people. The community played an important role for the Jews who had come from Eastern Galicia (a prewar Polish territory) and had a much better knowledge of Yiddish and the Torah than Jews brought up in the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup> The small but active congregation managed to hold synagogue services regularly, although the *minyan* (a quorum of ten adult men) could not always be assembled. The authorities did not forbid older people from attending the synagogue, but they tried their best to keep the younger generation away from any semblance of religious congregation. According to the Soviet statistics, in the late 1960s the synagogue in Dnipropetrovsk was regularly attended by thirty-five to fifty people, but on major holidays the number reached 3,000.<sup>36</sup>

A similar logic of regulated tolerance is evident in Soviet policy in their acceptance of certain practices of the Orthodox Church. In Brezhnev's times, the state finally embarked on a policy of "normalizing relations" with the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>37</sup> This meant reducing the intensity of anti-religious propaganda, while betting on maximum control of church life.<sup>38</sup> According to the Soviet statistics, in 1970 Dnipropetrovsk, 34% of all newborns were baptized in the Orthodox Church, and 42% of all funerals in the region were performed according to the Orthodox ritual; the Russian Orthodox Church possessed twenty-

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34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Sergei I. Zhuk, "Religion, 'Westernization' and the Youth in the 'Closed City' of Soviet Ukraine, 1964–84," *The Russian Review* 67 (2008): 668.

37 For general context of Soviet religious policies see Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church. A Contemporary History* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); D. Pospelovskii, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v XX veke* (Moscow: Respublika, 1995). For official Soviet state view on the religious politics see V. A. Kuroedov, *Religiia i tserkov' v sovetskom gosudarstve* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1981).

38 David E. Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1975). Unfortunately, the lack of serious research of the relations between the Soviet State and the Orthodox Church in the Dnipropetrovsk region in 1960–1980s remains pretty telling. I am grateful to Serhii Savchenko for his valuable comments on the topic.



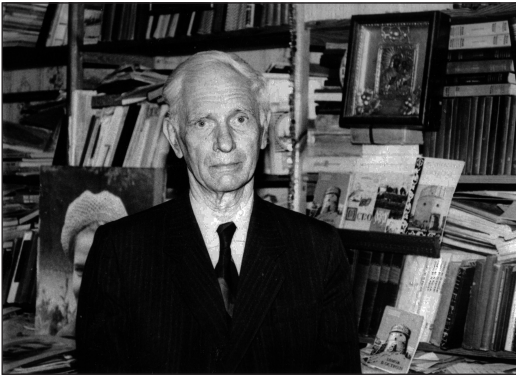


FIGURE 43.  
Mykola Kovalsky.  
Photo from the collection  
of Dmytro Yavornytsky  
National History Museum  
of Dnipro.

ty-five religious buildings, where forty-four priests performed religious rituals.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, so-called “non-traditional religions” (including unregistered congregations of Evangelical Christians and Jehovah’s Witnesses, as well as the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, banned in the Soviet Union) were subject to the greatest persecution by the authorities. The reasons for this were both the fear of foreign (primarily American) influence on neo-Protestants and the Soviet regime’s aversion to any forms and manifestations of unregistered, unrecorded, and uncontrollable societal self-organization—especially in the vicinity of secret missile production.

### **Dimensions of Closedness: Local University and Its Historiographic Miracle**

The proximity to secrecy may have had other, somewhat paradoxical aspects. Namely, it was a prerequisite for expanding the space of scholarly maneuvering. The Dnipropetrovsk State University (DSU), thanks to its Faculty of Physics and Technology, was not subordinated to the republican (Kyivan) Ministry of Education, but directly to the All-Union Ministry of Education in Moscow. The Historical Faculty of the University was, in many senses, second in importance (after the Faculty of Physics and Technology). As archaeologist Irina Kovaleva claimed in her memoirs, “The Historical Faculty, in its essence, has always been the ideological leader of the university, which had its pluses and minuses . . . In the 1960–80s it manifested itself as if in two parallel planes, one of the individual

39 Sergei I. Zhuk, “Popular Religiosity in the ‘Closed City’ of Soviet Ukraine: Cultural Consumption and Religion during Late Socialism, 1959–1984,” *Russian History* 40 (2013): 189.





FIGURE 44. Inside the only synagogue in the closed Dnipropetrovsk in one of the winters of late 1970s.

Photo from Aleksandr Fridkis' private collection.

and one of the team as a whole: a deeply hidden personal level and a loudly displayed public one.”<sup>40</sup>

In late 1970s, the DSU Historical Faculty became a birthplace of the so-called Kovalsky School, which focused on the study of early modern Ukrainian historical sources. It put Dnipropetrovsk's Ukrainian studies on the map of Ukrainian historiography and Ukraine on the map of Soviet history-writing.<sup>41</sup> Fluent in several languages erudite, Mykola/Nikolai Kovalsky, graduate of Lviv University, was appointed the head of the source studies department at the DSU in 1978. While Dnipropetrovsk had no archives dedicated to early modern history, Kovalsky nevertheless encouraged his students to focus on historical sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries preserved in Leningrad, Vilnius, Kyiv, and Moscow.

Kovalsky himself claimed that, “compared to Ukraine's other centers of university education, Dnipropetrovsk in the 1970s and the 1980s enjoyed the most favorable environment for serious research in the area of Ukrainian history of the fifteenth–eighteenth centuries.”<sup>42</sup> The reason for this was not only a relative autonomy from Kyiv, where historical research was subjected to a far

40 Irina Kovalëva, *Zhizn', provedënnia v mogile. Ispoved' arkeologa* (Dnipropetrovsk: Art-Press, 2008), 179.

41 Serhii Plokhyy, “Zhyttieva misiia Mykoly Kovals'koho,” *Dzerkalo tyzhnia* 43 (2006): 6.

42 N. P. Kovalsky, “O vremeni i o sebe,” *Dnipropetrovskiy istoriko-archeohrafichnyi zbirnyk* 1 (1997): 16.

stricter ideological examination than in Moscow, but also the fact that DSU ran its own publishing house. This publishing house made it possible for historians from Dnipropetrovsk to print their works at their *alma mater* rather than enduring complicated bureaucratic procedures at the Kyiv publishing house “Higher Education.” Of course, the content of their works was also subject to official approval, but the manuscripts were sent to Moscow, where the authorities had an easier approach to local themes than in Kyiv.

From 1978–1991, Kovalsky edited ten collections of articles with scholars all around Soviet Union. He supervised over twenty doctoral candidates, in 1984 defended his own habilitation thesis in Moscow, and became a respected member of the all-Soviet informal group of source studies enthusiasts who shared “the ideology of professionalism” and the worship for historical sources. As a scholar, Mykola Kovalsky managed not only to survive several regime changes and ideological turns, but also to become a leader of probably the only Soviet Ukrainian school of historical studies.<sup>43</sup> Of course, the phenomenon of the Kovalsky School cannot be reduced to the closed status of Dnipropetrovsk and the direct subordination of its university to Moscow. Still, it became possible largely due to the masterful usage of the unique (for Soviet Ukraine) institutional capacity: the existence of the university’s own publishing house.

## The Closed Dnipropetrovsk and Its Secretary General

Dnipropetrovsk was “closed” to foreigners in 1959. In less than five years, Leonid Brezhnev became the First Secretary (in 1966 this position was renamed into the secretary general, as was the tradition during Stalin’s rule) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or, in simple words, became the head of the Soviet state.<sup>44</sup>

43 For details see Andrii Portnov and Tetiana Portnova, “Soviet Historiography in Brezhnev’s Closed City: Mykola/Nikolai Kovalsky and His ‘School’ at the Dnipropetrovsk University,” *Ab Imperio* 4 (2017): 265–291.

44 For an overview of Brezhnev’s period of Soviet history see R. G. Pikhoia, *Sovetskii Soiuz: Istoriia vlasti 1941–1991*, 2nd ed. (Novosibirsk: Sibirskii khronograf, 2000). A revisionist publication with a rather obvious “rehabilitation” emphasis, interpreting Brezhnev’s *zastoi* (stagnation) in the context of theories of modernization and regime movement in a more “pluralist” direction, is Edwin Bacon and Mark Sandle, eds., *Brezhnev Reconsidered* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Compare Dina Fainberg and Artemy Kalinovsky, eds., *Reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era. Ideology and Exchange* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016).

The decision to reprofile the Dnipropetrovsk Automobile Plant into a rocket factory in 1951 occurred when Brezhnev was already working as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova. After 1951, he appeared in Dnipropetrovsk rarely and briefly. Still, the impression of city's importance for Brezhnev's biography was made clear in his own memoir, which were published and broadly promoted in the late 1970s, despite the fact that the text of these memoirs does not show any particular nostalgia for Dnipropetrovsk (so very different from the secretary general's reminiscences of his native town, Kamyanske, formerly known as Dniprodzerzhynsk).<sup>45</sup>

Brezhnev's work in Dnipropetrovsk was only one stage of his long way to the post of the Secretary General of the CPSU Central Committee. Nevertheless, the Secretary General was often associated with Dnipropetrovsk both during his lifetime and after his death, and the city itself was called "the forge of leadership cadres" (*kuznitsa rukovodiashchikh kadrov*). An observation, like the one by Mikhail Voslensky: "If you flip through the biographies of the highest nomenklatura men of the Brezhnev era, the disproportionate number of them from Dnipropetrovsk catches your eye,"<sup>46</sup> became a common place. American Sovietologists liked to speculate about Brezhnev's "unusually outspoken loyalty to his Dnipropetrovsk origins."<sup>47</sup>

The well-established notion of the "Dnipropetrovsk clan" is for the most part conventional. More observant Sovietologists have noted that the "Brezhnev group" included not only his colleagues from Dnipropetrovsk, but also people who worked with him in other peripheral areas, such as Moldova and Kazakhstan.<sup>48</sup> After Brezhnev's serious illness in 1975, the actual leadership of the Soviet Union was concentrated in the hands of the "small Politburo" consist-

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45 L. I. Brezhnev, *Malaia zemlia. Vozrozhdenie* (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1979).

46 M. Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura* (Moscow: Zakharov, 2005).

47 Joel C. Moses, "Regionalism in Soviet Politics: Continuity as a Source of Change, 1953–1982," *Soviet Studies* 37, no. 2 (1985): 184–211; Joel C. Moses, "Regional Cohorts and Political Mobility in the USSR: The Case of Dnepropetrovsk," *Soviet Union* 3, no. 1 (1976): 63–89.

48 John P. Willerton, "Patronage Networks and Coalition Building in the Brezhnev Era," *Soviet Studies* 39, no. 2 (1987): 200–215. Compare Andreas Oberender, "Die Partei der Patrone und Klienten. Formen personaler Herrschaft unter Leonid Brežnev," in *Vernetzte Improvisationen. Gesellschaftliche Subsysteme in Ostmitteleuropa und in der DDR*, ed. Annette Schuhmann (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), 57–76; Andreas Oberender, "Das Haupt unserer Partei und unseres Staates. Führerherrschaft und Führenkult unter Leonid Brežnev," in *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Benno Ennker and Heidi Hein-Kircher (Marburg: Herder-Institut Verlag, 2010), 200–215.

ing of Yuri Andropov, Dmitry Ustinov, Alexei Kosygin, and Andrei Gromyko—none of whom had Dnipropetrovsk roots.

In general, the significance of the “Dnipropetrovsk clan” in the management of the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev period is exaggerated. The notion that many of Brezhnev’s prewar Dnipropetrovsk colleagues took high positions in Moscow does not stand up to biographical scrutiny. Only one colleague from the prewar Dnipropetrovsk regional party committee, Konstantin Grushevoi, was brought by Brezhnev to Moscow.<sup>49</sup> The list of the country’s first persons does not include those who worked with Brezhnev in Dnipropetrovsk in 1947–1950. Only one native of Dnipropetrovsk, Nikolai Tikhonov, became a member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.<sup>50</sup> In Brezhnev’s inner circle, there were several people from Dnipropetrovsk, such as his longtime aide Georgy Tsukanov, and the head of his personal security, General Alexander Ryabenko. However, none of them had as much influence as, for example, Konstantin Chernenko, whom Brezhnev met in Moldova and did not part with for the rest of his Party career and life.<sup>51</sup>

The logic of compatriotism—the promotion of “Dnipropetrovskites”—was characteristic not so much of Brezhnev as of his nominee Volodymyr/Vladimir Shcherbytsky, who was a native of Verkhnyodniprovsk in Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*. Shcherbytsky reached a high position already under Khrushchev (from 1961 he was the head of the Ukrainian government and a candidate member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee). Khrushchev dismissed him from these positions in 1963 and “exiled” him to the post of the first secretary of the Regional Party Committee in Dnipropetrovsk. After the fall of Khrushchev,

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49 Konstantin Grushevoi was Brezhnev’s superior and in 1941 served as second secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk regional party committee. Already in his capacity as general secretary, Brezhnev put him in the outwardly honorable but uninfluential post of head of the Political Directorate of the Moscow Military District and made him a colonel general and a candidate for the CPSU Central Committee. In 1976 Grushevoi published his memoirs about the defense of Dnipropetrovsk in the first months of the Second World War: K. S. Grushevoi, *Togda, v sorok pervom . . .* (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1976). The Ukrainian translation of this book was published in 1979 in Kyiv.

50 A year older than Brezhnev, Nikolai Tikhonov reached a fairly high position even before his “countryman” came to power. In 1964, he was Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Planning Committee. Tikhonov became a member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee in 1979 at the age of seventy-four, and in 1980 he became a Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers.

51 A special work on Chernenko is Ilya Zemtsov, *Chernenko: The Last Bolshevik. The Soviet Union on the Eve of Perestroika* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1989).

Brezhnev returned Shcherbytsky to the highest echelons of power: in 1971, he became a member of Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and in 1972, the head of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Still, even when he was the “master of Ukraine,” Shcherbytsky did not exert any real influence over the all-Union level.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, both Brezhnev’s special affection for Dnipropetrovsk and the exclusive role of the “Dnipropetrovsk origin” in the career growth during his reign are somewhat exaggerated. Still, these myths were consciously supported by the local Party functionaries. And the Party officials also hoped to additionally prove and cement these beliefs by a lavish celebration of the city’s anniversary.

### The City’s Bicentennial: No Need to Wait until 1987

Already in the early 1970s, the local authorities had the idea of celebrating the 200th anniversary of Dnipropetrovsk. The pragmatic implication of this idea was obvious: the bicentennial was an ideal occasion for the local party officials to receive governmental awards.<sup>53</sup> There was a “technical” problem, though: Katerynoslav marked its centennial anniversary in 1887. However, there were reasonable fears that Brezhnev might not live until 1987. As a result, the idea came up to “combine” the city’s bicentennial celebration with Brezhnev’s seventieth anniversary in 1976. To do that, it was vitally important to set a new year of reference from which to count the years of the city’s existence. Or, more precisely, to “age” the city by eleven years, propping up this move with “scholarly” arguments.

In December 1971, official inquiries were sent to the Central Military-Historical Archive of the Soviet Union and the Central State Archive of Old Documents. The archives were asked to “advise on the precise year when the city was founded.”<sup>54</sup> The inquiries were formulated so as to unequivocally point to the desired answer. The letter writers especially stressed the fact that the previously recognized year of the city’s birth, 1787, was chosen “in order to gratify

52 Among publications on Shcherbytsky see: V. K. Vrublevskii, *Vladimir Shcherbitskii: Pravda i vymysly* (Kyiv: Dovira, 1993); V. K. Baran and V. M. Danylenko, *Ukraina v umovakh systemnoi kryzy (1946–1980-i)* (Kyiv: Al'ternatyvy, 1999). Compare Ya. Bilinsky, “Shcherbytskyj, Ukraine, and Kremlin Politics,” *Problems of Communism* 32, no. 4 (1983): 1–20, and Ya. Bilinsky, “Shcherbytskyi mizh Kyievom i Moskvou,” *Vidnova* no. 2 (1984–1985): 79–120.

53 A. H. Bolebrukh, ed., *Istoriia mista Dnipropetrovs'ka* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Hrani, 2006), 523.

54 Derzhavnyi arkhiv Dnipropetrovs'koï oblasti [DADO, State Archive of Dnipropetrovs'k oblast'], fond 18, opys 38, sprava 109, arkushi 18–22.

the monarch” whereas “in fact the city had already been in existence by then for more than ten years.”<sup>55</sup> The requested documents included all of Prince Potemkin’s papers, which were related to the region and produced in the 1770s and early 1780s—in particular, a copy of the Azov governor Vasily Chertkov’s report to Potemkin, dated April 23, 1776, about the choice of place for building a new capital. It was Chertkov’s report about “the project of building the administrative center of the governorate—Ekaterinoslav—near the Kilchen River”<sup>56</sup> that underpinned the change of the year of the city’s birth and, accordingly, the year of the city’s bicentennial anniversary, which conveniently “coincided” with the General Secretary’s seventieth anniversary in 1976.

The foreword to a collection of documents published in Kyiv in the run-up to the newly appointed anniversary contained the following explanation: “The recently discovered documents show that the city was founded in 1776. The reason for its foundation was the need to reinforce Russia’s southern border (on account of the risk of military incursion of the Ottomans) and to economically develop this area.”<sup>57</sup> In the quoted passage, Catherine II’s opulent imperial project is replaced with economic and military “need,” although the city’s imperial genealogy is not in the least questioned.

For the same rhetorical reason, probably, the writer of a guide to Dnipropetrovsk (published in 1976), mentioned that “the aristocrats’ bourgeois historical scholarship” which, “being in service of the idea of monarchy, forced upon Ekaterinoslav the presumption about the year of its foundation, taking as the reference point the Crimean journey of Catherine the Great, in the course of which, on May 9, 1787, she was present at the laying of the foundation stone of the Transfiguration Cathedral.”<sup>58</sup>

What happened to Katerynoslav’s Cossack roots in the Soviet commemorative narrative? This theme, picked up from the imperial discourse, was smoothly woven into the Soviet narrative, remaining for the most part a quaint local feature. The reference book on the city’s history mentioned the Cossack settlements

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55 Ibid., 18.

56 Bolebrukh, *Istoriia mista Dnipropetrovs'ka*, 85.

57 I. V. Vasil'ev, ed., *Dnepropetrovsku 200 let. 1776–1976. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1976), 5.

58 A. F. Vatchenko and G. I. Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Putevoditel'-spravochik*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1976), 6.

Polovytsya and Novi Kaidaky “on the site of present-day Dnipropetrovsk.”<sup>59</sup> The 1970 guide contained a romantic description of Polovytsya: “The white thatched adobe houses buried in the verdure of the gardens by a major meander of the Dnieper—this is how we see the Zaporozhian village Polovytsya, which would become a big city over time.”<sup>60</sup> In “City on Three Hills,” a popular account of Dnipropetrovsk’s history written by Mikhail Shatrov with lively language and in almost nostalgic style, an old resident G. I. Lebedev tells a story about “how the locals were weaned from the name of Zaporozhian Polovytsya.” As the story goes, near the wooden bridge over the Dnipro, a soldier stood and asked passers-by: “Where are you going?” When he heard the answer: “To Polovytsya,” he would beat the negligent peasant and invoke: “Not to Polovytsya, but to Ekaterinoslav!”<sup>61</sup> An essay devoted to the anniversary, published in 1976, read: “Ekaterinoslav was built on the site where once stood a Zaporozhian village Polovytsya, mentioned in the official records of the time as a governmental settlement of soldiers. “The future town was allocated a 300-square-meter plot of land stretching from the Dnieper to the Sura River and from Starye Kaidaki to Novye Kaidaki.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, the old Cossack roots of the place were not disregarded, but still not overemphasized.

The imperial genealogy, slightly ornamented with criticism of “the aristocratic-bourgeois historiography,” was preferred for pragmatic and chronological reasons. Meanwhile in the Soviet Ukrainian historical narrative, the Zaporozhian Cossacks were regarded as an example of a massive grassroots movement

59 *Dnipropetrovsk. Dovidnyk-putivnyk*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovsk: Dnipropetrovsk'e knyzhkove vydavnytstvo, 1959), 11. Compare V. Borshevs'kyi, V. Borshchevs'kyi, and V. Chumachenko, “Storinky mynoloho,” in *Dnipropetrovsk s'ohodni*, ed. A. F. Stetsenko (Dnipropetrovsk: Dnipropetrovsk'e knyzhkove vydavnytstvo, 1962), 10.

60 A. F. Vatchenko and G. I. Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Putevoditel'-spravochnik* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1970), 7.

61 Mikhail Shatrov, *Gorod na trëkh kholmakh. Kniga o starom Ekaterinoslave*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1969), 37–38. On Shatrov see M. Kavun, “Mykhailo Shatrov—zhurnalyst, litorator, istoriohraf Dnipropetrovsk'a,” accessed January 04, 2021, <http://www.libr.dp.ua/.../Михайло%20Шатров.doc>.

62 V. Ia. Borshchevskii, ed., *Dnepropterovsku 200. Istoriko-publitsisticheskii ocherk* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1976), 6.



for social justice.<sup>63</sup> Such descriptions were supported by the fact that Karl Marx sympathetically mentioned “a Cossack republic” in his notes.<sup>64</sup>

The Cossack theme had a special local dimension for Dnipropetrovsk if only because most of the fortified Cossack settlements, called *sichs*, were situated on the territory of the present-day Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*. And it was no accident that Petro Shelest, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, wrote in his book *Our Soviet Ukraine* about Dnipropetrovsk: “All the rich and glorious history of this land is most closely linked to the history of the Zaporozhian Sich.”<sup>65</sup> Here it is appropriate to recall once again the famous historian and Cossack enthusiast, Dmytro Yavornytsky, who was director of the local history museum from 1902 to 1933. Yavornytsky's relations with the Soviet authorities were not easy, yet he was nevertheless integrated into the Soviet cultural canon. The Dnipropetrovsk Historical Museum was named after Yavornytsky and in 1961, the historian's cremated ashes were reburied in front of the museum.<sup>66</sup> In 1973, Yavornytsky's house received the status of a historical monument and became a museum. In the guidebook published in 1979, the historian's heritage is judged rather unflatteringly: although “boundlessly in love with his people,” he “somewhat idealized the social and political order of the Zaporozhians” and “did not reveal the deep social antagonisms, severe class struggle that took place in Zaporizhian Sich.”<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the image of the “ethnographic Zaporozhian” Yavornytsky became part of the local mythology, and it challenged neither the imperial nor the Soviet dominant image of the city's history.<sup>68</sup>

63 On post-Second World War Soviet Ukrainian historiography see Vitaliĭ Iaremchuk, *Mynule Ukraïny v istorichnii nautsi URSS pisliastalins'koi doby* (Ostroh: Ostroz'ka Akademiia, 2009). Compare Jaroslav Pelenski, “Soviet Ukrainian Historiography after World War II,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 12, no. 3 (1964): 375–418.

64 Vitaliĭ Sarbei, “Storinky istoriï ukraïns'koho kozatstva v tvorchii spadshchyni Marksa,” *Ukraïns'ke kozatstvo: vytoky, evoliutsiia, spadshchyna* 2 (1993): 68–77.

65 P. Iu. Shelest, *Ukraïno nasha Radians'ka* (Kyïv: Vydavnytstvo politychnoi literatury Ukraïny, 1970), 158.

66 Compare *Dnipropetrovs'kyi istorichnyi myzei imeni akademika D. I. Iavornyts'koho. Putivnyk po ekspozitsii*, 2nd ed. (Dnipropetrovs'k: Promin', 1966), 1971.

67 A. F. Vatchenko and G. I. Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed. (Dnipropetrovs'k: Promin', 1979), 205. See also M. M. Shubravs'ka, *D. I. Iavornyts'kyi: Zhyttia, fol'klorstychno-etnohrafichna dial'nist'* (Kyïv: Naukova dumka, 1972).

68 Good illustration here is a popular book about Yavornytsky written by former Dnipropetrovsk museum associate and published in both Ukrainian and Russian: Ivan Shapoval, *V poshukakh skarbiv* (Kyïv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1963); Ivan Shapoval, *V poiskakh sokrovishch* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1968).

The celebration of Dnipropetrovsk's bicentennial, on the whole, did not deviate from the patterns of official celebrations accepted in the Soviet Union in the 1970s.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps the only original feature was the reference to the general secretary's special ties with Dnipropetrovsk and Dnipropetrovsk's special ties with the general secretary. The commemorative publications were graced with Brezhnev's quotes about "our Dnipropetrovsk." For example, the following words were put onto the flyleaf of a photo album published in Moscow:

I am proud that I belong to those who had the difficult task of restoring Dnipropetrovsk, destroyed by the fascist barbarians, and transforming it into a modern socialist city. I am deeply pleased that the workers of Dnipropetrovsk, under the leadership of the city's party organization, have achieved great successes in the economic and cultural construction, and are piously guarding and enlarging the glorious revolutionary, military and labor traditions of their native city and its working class. Let our Dnipropetrovsk grow and get better!<sup>70</sup>

Solemn speeches delivered at the celebration, which were published in the city's newspapers, emphasized the general secretary's connection with Dnipropetrovsk, the fact that he took particular care of the city and the region. The first secretary of the regional party committee, Oleksii/Aleksei Vatchenko, for example, said: "[The greeting of the secretary general], who worked in Dnipropetrovsk region for a long time and put a lot of work into its development, is inspiring. Leonid Ilyich even now finds time to delve into our affairs and concerns, to give kind advice, and to warmly congratulate us on our successes and landmark events."<sup>71</sup>

Despite the opportune coincidence of the anniversaries, Brezhnev did not attend the city's bicentennial celebration. The keynote speaker featured at the festivities was another high-ranking official from Dnipropetrovsk, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Shcherbytsky, who read out the Order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union on awarding Dnipropetrovsk with the Order of

69 Aleksandr Dmitriev, *Gorodskaia pamiat', iubilei i mestnaia istoriia v poslevoennom SSSR* (manuscript quoted with the author's permission); Iaroslav Isaievych, "Iuvilei mist. L'viv, Kyiv i znovu L'viv," *Problemy istorii Ukrainy: fakty, sudzhennia, poshuky* 16, no. 1 (2007): 75–87.

70 *Zori Dnepropetrovska. Fotoal'bom*, comp. Iu. Ponomarenko (Moscow: Planeta, 1976).

71 *Dnepr vechernii*, May 22, 1976, 3.

Lenin.<sup>72</sup> It was stressed in Brezhnev's address that "the residents of Dnipropetrovsk have deserved this award with their heroic contribution to the revolutionary struggle, exemplary work, dedicated service to the Motherland and the great cause of communism."<sup>73</sup> The points about the vital importance of "revolutionary struggle for establishing the dictatorship of proletariat"<sup>74</sup> and Dnipropetrovsk as "one of the biggest centers of the fight against tsarism"<sup>75</sup> were propped up with Lenin's quote about the 1905 Revolution and his phrase that "barricades are being built and blood is being spilled in Ekaterinoslav."<sup>76</sup> The themes most prominently featured at the celebration were revolutionary history and the Soviet Union's achievements.

Within the context of the city's "revolutionary feats," its imperial genealogy was clearly downplayed. The speeches on the occasion of the newly invented anniversary repeatedly emphasized the differences between the Soviet times and the period of monarchy. This is how a scholar of ferrous metallurgy, Zot Nekrasov, described these differences in his speech: "Was it ever possible, in a situation of social oppression and total illiteracy, to dream about great scientific and cultural accomplishments, to discover and cultivate talents and capabilities of ordinary

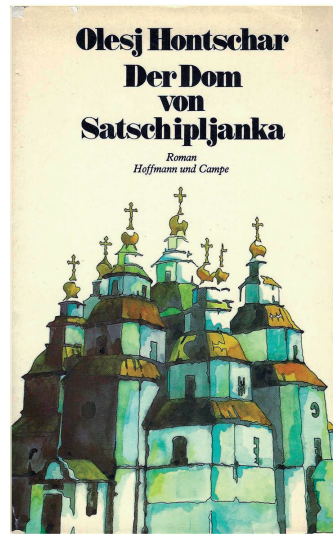


FIGURE 45.  
The cover of West German  
edition of Oles' Honchar's  
"Cathedral".  
From Andrii Portnov  
collection.

72 "Ukaz Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR o nagrazhdenii goroda Dneproptetrovska ordenom Lenina," *Dnepr vechernii*, no. 120 (1341), May 22, 1976, 1.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 "Vystuplenie tovarishcha V. V. Shcherbitskogo, chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS, pervogo serkretaria TsK Kompartii Ukrainy," in *Dva veka bor'by i truda. Dokumenty i materialy o prazdnovanii 200-letia Dnepropetrovska*, ed. A. A. Demianenko and N. A. Ganevskaia (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin, 1977), 18.

76 V. I. Lenin, "Vserossiiskaia politicheskaiia stachka," in his *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th ed., vol. 12 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1968), 2.

people? This is why the accomplishments of the Soviet period are truly wondrous.”<sup>77</sup>

The ceremonial part of the celebration was standard and carefully thought-out fare. It is unlikely that the organizers of the 1976 celebrations studied the experience of the organizers of the 1887 gala, but the ceremonial dimension (even if it was not altogether identical) had stylistic similarities. The city center was adorned with decorative lighting and posters. The official reception took



FIGURE 46.

Ivan Sokulsky. Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

place not in the Potemkin palace (converted by then into a Palace of Students), but in the newly built Theatre of Opera and Ballet, with speeches fitting to the occasion as well as the ceremony of pinning the Order of Lenin to the city banner. The final part of the gala concert featured a panorama of the plant and the appearance of a big red scoop “with iron streaming down from it without a stop, as the most apt symbol of a steelmakers’ city.”<sup>78</sup>

Instead of a “magic lantern” show, the festivities featured an extravaganza called “Two Centuries of Struggle and Achievement” staged at the Meteor stadium, which was newly constructed and opened for the first time. It began with the showing of the figures 1776, spread across three hills, followed with the public reading of Catherine the Second’s Edict. The 1887 centennial celebration was evoked by long factory whistles

from the Bryansky plant, symbolizing “the start of the new era” and “the glorious revolutionary movement of Katerynoslav workers.”<sup>79</sup> Whereas the celebration in 1887 was crowned with the launch of the Bryansky plant, the festivities in 1976 featured the unveiling of a Hryhory Petrovsky monument, installed near the railway station, in proximity to the plant named after him.

77 *Dnepr vechernii*, no. 120, May 22, 1976, 4.

78 Z. Nikol’nikova, “I serdts poët,” *Dnepr vechernii*, no. 102, May 23, 1976, 4.

79 Iu. Kal’chenko and A. Kosykh, “Dva veka bor’by i svershenii. Teatralizovannyi prazdnik na stadione Meteor,” *Dnepr vechernii*, no. 121, May 23, 1976, 2.

The image of “our industrial Dnipropetrovsk” was cemented with a bilingual (Ukrainian/Russian) book of poetry, *My Workers' City*.<sup>80</sup> Both Ukrainian and Russian writers featured in the book enthused over “the city of cast iron and steel” and addressed the themes of the 1905 revolution and the communist underground during the Second World War. They also praised blast furnaces, open-hearth furnaces, steelworkers, factory whistles, acacias, the Dnipro, bridges across the river, and the large avenue (perhaps the only symbol in the book directly related to Catherine II). In a word, the subject of glorification was the city's transformation—only the transformation not into an empire's southern capital but into a workers' megapolis.

On the one hand, the bicentennial anniversary of Dnipropetrovsk, which the local authorities managed to shift to 1976, contrasted the imperial with the Soviet, but on the other hand, it remained within the imperial genealogy. The latter, as it turned out, not only did not interfere with the proletarian pride of the “city-worker,” but gave it a historical-nostalgic charm as an aftertaste of the festivities. The Cossack theme (especially under the sauce of the struggle against “centuries of social oppression”) remained an ideologically innocuous ornament, an element of local color, which had no independent ideological weight in the Brezhnev's jubilee.

### The Growth of a Millionaire City and Its Consequences

According to the all-Union census of 1959, the population of Dnipropetrovsk reached the number of 660,000 people.<sup>81</sup> In 1979 this figure reached 1,660,000, and in 1989 it reached 1,178,000 inhabitants.<sup>82</sup> Thus, by 1979, Dnipropetrovsk became a millionaire city and the third most populous city in Ukraine (after Kyiv and Kharkiv). It occupied an area of about 38,000 hectares and stretched along the Dnipro River from west to east for thirty-two kilometers, and from south to north—for twenty-two kilometers.<sup>83</sup>

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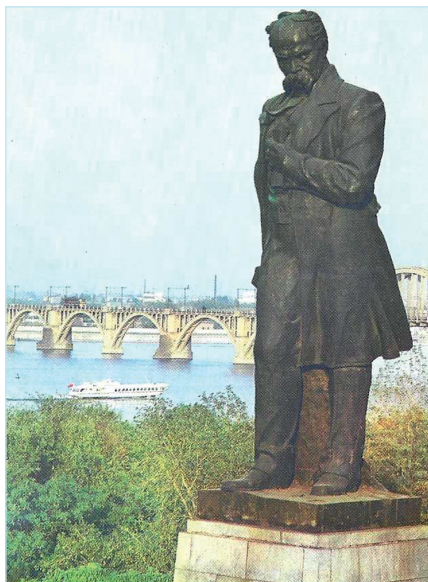
80 *Misto moie robotnyche. Virshi pro Dnipropetrovs'k* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Promin', 1976).

81 V. V. Rozdialovskaia, ed., *Uroven' obrazovaniia, natsional'nyi sostav, vozrastnaia struktura i razmeshchenie naseleniia SSSR po respublikam, kraiam i oblastiam po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda* (Moscow: Gosstatizdat, 1960), 30.

82 V. A. Boldyrev, *Naselenie SSSR po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi 1989 g.* (Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1990), 21.

83 Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 23.

FIGURE 47.  
Taras Shevchenko monument.  
Postcard from 1970s  
from Andrii Portnov collection.



The primary problem of urban development remained the connection between the right (historical) and left (mostly industrial) banks of the Dnipro. In 1966, a new iron concrete bridge named after the fiftieth anniversary of the “Great October Socialist Revolution” was opened in the city. The bridge was one and a half kilometers long. The next construction marvel was Lenin embankment, one of the longest in Europe, over twenty-three kilometers long. In 1969, a twelve-story hotel named “Dnipropetrovsk” and in 1980 a circus were built on this embankment. Both buildings—the hotel and circus—became the visiting card of the new look of the city center and were constantly reproduced on postcards.

In general, the city center remained low-rise after the war. As a rule, no higher than five-story houses were built there due to the lack of mass production of elevators. Occasional exceptions, such as the eighteen-story apartment building erected in 1976 with the House of Books store, only confirmed the rule.<sup>84</sup> On the whole, the late 1960s and 1970s were the time of great construction. Three new avenues were laid out in the city: Gagarin and Kirov (now named after Oleksandr Pol), both on the right, and another avenue named after Newspaper *Pravda* (now Slobozhansky)—on the left bank of the river. The main artery of the city remained Karl Marx Avenue, where the most important objects of culture, trade, and administration were located.

Postwar Dnipropetrovsk occupied a huge area (comparable with the territory of Leningrad) on both sides of the Dnipro River. It included the central part and vast industrial areas, large spaces of the so-called private sector (single-story houses with vegetable gardens and orchards), and new high-rise neighborhoods.

84 N. P. Andrushchenko, S. E. Zubarev, and V. A. Levchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Arkhitekturno-istoricheskii ocherk* (Kyiv: Budivel'nyk, 1985), 120.



The master plan for the reconstruction of the city in 1967 envisioned the extensive erection of new neighborhoods (*mikroraiony*), which over the next twenty years grew like mushrooms after the rain.<sup>85</sup> Overall, during the 1950s and 1980s, six times as much housing was built in the city as in its entire previous history.<sup>86</sup>

Construction was not limited to housing. In 1974, the Opera and Ballet Theater was built in the very center on Karl Marx Avenue in place of the Children's Park (formerly Yakovlevsky Garden).<sup>87</sup> The new theater, as well as the already existing ones—Gorky Russian Drama Theater, Shevchenko Ukrainian Drama Theater, Young Spectator Theater, Puppet Theater, and Philharmonic Hall—were located in the city center. This automatically made the cultural leisure available almost exclusively for residents of the center: there were no night buses or trams and getting to the residential areas was possible only by private car).<sup>88</sup>

Museums were also concentrated in the central part of the city. Most of them were located in the immediate vicinity of the old historical museum building on Zhovtneva (now Soborna) Square. In 1973, the Museum of Komsomol Glory was constructed there.<sup>89</sup> In 1975, within the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War the diorama "Battle for the Dnipro" was opened.<sup>90</sup> In 1977, the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism was established in the Transfiguration Cathedral.<sup>91</sup> In addition, a planetarium was opened in 1968, and in 1987 the building of the former Bryansk Church was converted into an organ hall.<sup>92</sup>

Three regional newspapers were published in the city: Ukrainian-language *Zorya* (in the early 1960s its annual circulation was more than twelve million copies), Russian-language *Dneprovskaiia pravda* (with an annual circulation of more than ten million), and a Ukrainian-language newspaper for youth, *Prapor*

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85 Ibid., 123–125.

86 Bolebrukh, ed., *Istoriia mista Dnipropetrovs'ka*, 517.

87 Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 184.

88 Interview with Raisa Gorlova (conducted on May 5, 2012).

89 Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 193–195.

90 Ibid., 192.

91 Ibid., 198–200.

92 Ibid., 206.



*iunosti*.<sup>93</sup> Since 1957, the city newspaper *Dnepr vechernii* was published. In 1958 the regional television center began its work.<sup>94</sup>

In the closed Dnipropetrovsk there were eight institutions of higher education: State University, Institute of Mining, Medical, Agricultural, Metallurgical, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering Institutes and the Institute of Railway Transportation Engineers. In the late 1970s all these universities had more than 56,000 students and more than 5,000 professors.<sup>95</sup>

The key problems of the rapidly growing city were transportation difficulties (due to the limited capacity of bridges over the Dnipro and the lack of a bypass road), uneven distribution of cultural and educational facilities (in other words, their concentration in the city center), increasingly noticeable problems with air pollution and the immediate proximity of numerous factories to residential neighborhoods, the chaotic nature of new constructions, and weak utility infrastructure (such as the constant problems with hot water, including in the city's center).

At the very end of the Brezhnev era, in February 1981, the ceremonial laying of the subway took place in Dnipropetrovsk. The construction was an initiative of the local leadership, implemented without the personal support of Brezhnev.<sup>96</sup> This symbolically important project was not destined to be completed in Soviet times.

## Everyday Life of the Closed City

The Brezhnev years in the history of Dnipropetrovsk were a combination of perceived stability (the best indicator of which was that the prices of basic foodstuffs that did not change for over twenty years)<sup>97</sup> and a propagandized orientation on the future, which was supported by demographic growth of the population and the appearance of new buildings and neighborhoods. Moreover, the city's

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93 A. F. Stetsenko, ed., *Dnipropetrovs'k s'ohodni* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Dnipropetrovs'ke knyzhkovye vydavnytstvo, 1962), 100.

94 Ibid., 103.

95 Calculation based on Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 169–178.

96 See memoirs of the first secretary of Dnipropetrovsk city's Party Committee in 1976–1983: V. P. Oshko, *Kak éto bylo*, vol. 3 (Dnipropetrovs'k: Monolit, 2008), 364–365.

97 Natalia Perepelitsyna, *Reminiscences of Soviet Dnipropetrovsk* (manuscript in Russian, in the author's archive), 5.

closed status was perceived by many residents not so much as an unfortunate limitation, but as a privilege.

In the recollections of Dnipropetrovsk residents about the times of Brezhnev, there often appears the story that the “capital of stagnation” (“stagnation”, in Russian *zastoi* is a popular term used to refer to Brezhnev's times) was very well provided with food. This privilege was especially noticeable when comparing Dnipropetrovsk, in terms of the food supply, with the provincial Russian industrial cities. One can find, for example, a reference to the fact that before delegations from Sverdlovsk (now Ekaterinburg), a city with which Dnipropetrovsk had a “socialist competition,” came to Dnipropetrovsk, “extra” products were removed from local stores to avoid inappropriate gossip.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, Brezhnev's “developed socialism” looked slightly more developed in Dnipropetrovsk than in central Russia. This does not mean, however, that Dnipropetrovsk did not know scarcity (*defitsit*), one of the key concepts in the lexicon of Soviet everyday life. According to recollections, one common way of gaining access to coveted goods was a shopping trip to Moscow. The evening train from Dnipropetrovsk to Moscow left at six in the evening and was at the Kursk railway station in Moscow at 9:55 the next morning. To the capital of the Soviet Union, the Dnipropetrovsk residents brought lean oil from the market and fruits. Coming back, they brought toilet paper, tangerines, bananas, buckwheat, coffee beans, and green peas.<sup>99</sup>

To buy a piano, a carpet, a car, one had to enroll in a queue and wait for up to several years. There was also a waiting list for housing, usually distributed by one's employer. There was no free housing market in the Soviet Union. Only exchanges (not sales or purchases for money) were officially allowed in the case of divorce or moving to another city.<sup>100</sup>

An important feature of a large industrial city was its proximity to the countryside. Back in 1959, the urban population of Soviet Ukraine was less than half, 46% of the total population. At the same time, in the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* the urbanization rate reached 70% and was second only to Donbas, while in the Stalin (Donetsk) region it was at 86%.<sup>101</sup> The nearness of Soviet cities to the countryside was ensured by the compulsory practice of working on collective

98 V. Chechulo, “Nas snabzhali po pervoi kategorii,” *Nashe misto*, December 19, 2001, 3.

99 Perepelitsyna, *Reminiscences of Soviet Dnipropetrovsk*, 6.

100 Ibid.

101 Rozdialovskaia, *Uroven' obrazovaniia, natsional'nyi sostav, vozrastnaia struktura*, 26.

farms, where students and employees of various urban enterprises were sent: in the spring for weeding, in the fall, for the harvest. In addition, since the 1960s, home canning had become very popular among the townspeople: preserving fruits and vegetables for the winter and making jams.<sup>102</sup>

## The City's Symbols and Rituals

On October 27, 1957, Lenin's monument was revealed to the public in the very center of Dnipropetrovsk on Karl Marx Avenue near the main department store. The torso of the statue and its pedestal were identical to the Shevchenko monument in Donetsk, which the sculptors Mark Vronsky and Oleksy Oliinyk had created two years earlier; only the head and the hands were changed.<sup>103</sup> Behind

Lenin's back stood the Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy of the Soviet Ukraine and the domes of the Orthodox Trinity Cathedral.

The main advantage of the Dnipropetrovsk Lenin was its central location. The main advantage of the Dnipropetrovsk Shevchenko was its height. Made by the sculptor Ivan Znoba, the twenty-two-meter monument to the Ukrainian poet was opened in 1959 in the park that carried his name (formerly Potemkin Garden) on Komsomolsky (formerly Monastyrsky) Island and became one of the highest monuments to Shevchenko in Ukraine.<sup>104</sup> The third largest city's monument was the one to Hryhory Petrovsky, erected in 1976 in front of the main railway station.<sup>105</sup>



FIGURE 48.  
Soviet coat of arms  
of Dnipropetrovsk.  
Source: dp.informator.ua

102 Perepelitsyna, *Reminiscences of Soviet Dnipropetrovsk*, 8; interview with Raisa Gorlova (conducted on May 5, 2012).

103 Ekaterina Shevtsova, "100 let revoliutsii: Istoriia odnogo Lenina v Dnepre," *dp.vgorode.ua*, accessed January 8, 2021, <https://dp.vgorode.ua/news/sobytyia/345537-kak-dve-kaply-vody-pamiatnyk-lenynu-v-dnepre-byl-ochen-pokhozh-na-pamiatnyk-tarasu-shevchenko-v-donetske>.

104 Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 136–137.

105 For more details see Nikolaï Gnatko, "Kak lepili pamiatnik Petrovskomu v Dnepropetrovske," *gorod.dp.ua*, accessed January 8, 2021, <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/120301>.

Throughout the 1970s, the theme of Victory in the Great Patriotic War began to dominate the symbolic space of Dnipropetrovsk, as in most major Soviet cities. This impetus was given by the symbolic reorientation of Soviet policy on the priority of the "Great Victory" of 1945, clearly marked in 1965 (when May 9th became a day off), books, films, songs about the war began to be massively published, the theme of veterans was promoted, and so forth.<sup>106</sup>

Already in 1965, a bronze bust of Stashkov, secretary of the underground *ob-kom*, was installed in Dnipropetrovsk. Near the entrance to the central Chkalov (now Globa) park, a stele with the text of Stalin's order to liberate Dnipropetrovsk was installed. In the yard of the secondary School no. 9, where during the war the Gestapo was located, excavations were carried out, which revealed the remains of 167 executed Soviet citizens. The bodies were reburied in the cemetery, and a memorial sign was installed in the school yard a memorial sign.<sup>107</sup>

On October 31, 1967, the Monument of Eternal Glory (designed by sculptors Vasyl Ahibalov and Mykhailo Ovsyankin) was opened at the end of Karl Marx Avenue looking at the Dnipro River. Its total height was 29.5 meters. On a high quadrangular pylon, a titanium figure of a young woman was installed. The figure, who symbolized the Soviet Motherland, had in one hand a lit torch, a symbol of victory, and in the other, a palm branch, a symbol of mourning the fallen.<sup>108</sup> This monument became one of the most recognizable symbols of the city. Flowers were laid to it on May 9th, and newlyweds came there after their marriage registration.<sup>109</sup>

In 1975, on the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, several new installments were added: a diorama "Battle for the Dnipro," a monument to the secretary of the underground city's Communist party committee Savchenko, and a monument to Alexander Matrosov, the Soviet soldier who covered the muzzle of machine gun in the Wehrmacht pillbox with his body.<sup>110</sup> In 1976, a decorative red brick stele with 5 cast-iron bells was erected in Kalinin Park, on the site of the former German-Italian military cemetery that was in

106 For details see Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society, 1941–1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

107 Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 100–101.

108 Konstantin Shrub, "Taïny Dnepra: Monumentu Vechnoi Slavy—50 let," *gorod.dp.ua*, October 27, 2017, accessed January 8, 2021, <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/138013>.

109 Perepelitsyna, *Reminiscences of Soviet Dnipropetrovsk*, 9.

110 Vatchenko and Shevchenko, *Dnepropetrovsk. Spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 3rd ed., 192.



FIGURE 49. The first secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine Volodymyr Shcherbytsky gives the city of Dnipropetrovsk the Lenin's order during the celebration of centennial in 1976.  
Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

the postwar years turned into a park with a memorial site for the fallen Soviet soldiers.<sup>111</sup>

On June 2, 1970, the Dnipropetrovsk city council approved the emblem of the city (designed by Naum Starodubsky). Its central figure, depicted against the red and blue flag of Soviet Ukraine, was a ladle, which symbolized metallurgy. The industrial accent of the city's appearance was complemented by the “golden dawn lit by workers’ hands,” the waves of the Dnipro, and a steel crown with an inscription in Ukrainian: “Dnipropetrovsk.”<sup>112</sup>

A “proletarian bastion,” a “hard-working city”: these were the unassuming metaphors used to describe Dnipropetrovsk. Back in 1949, Dmitry Kedrin addressed Dnipropetrovsk in a poem: “Hello, city of iron and steel, that survived

111 See my videoblog: A. Portnov, “Pro mistisia pam’iati v Dnipropetrovs’ku (na prykladi parku Kalinina),” accessed January 07, 2021, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t2ajxLVI\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t2ajxLVI_s).

112 “G. Dnepr, do 2016 g.—Dnepropetrovsk,” <http://www.heraldicum.ru/ukraine/towns/dne-pro.htm>.

the battle with the dashing enemy!"<sup>113</sup> "Hello, city, hard-working-city"—this was the beginning of a poem by Robert Rozhdestvensky, first published in January 1981, which became the unofficial anthem of the city. It was laid to music and performed by Iosif Kobzon, a popular Soviet singer, who lived for several years in postwar Dnipropetrovsk and graduated from the mining engineering college in 1956.<sup>114</sup>

The standard wording of the anniversary publication read as follows: "Dnipropetrovsk is a city of iron and steel, mechanical engineering and chemistry, science and culture, a city of glorious revolutionary, military and labor traditions."<sup>115</sup> Such framing was rather typical for Soviet ideological language. No less typical were the demonstrations held all around the Soviet Union on May 1st and November 7th. Not the slightest spontaneity in preparations for the "festive processions of the workers" was allowed; everything related to the ideological sphere was checked by the party organs and was carried out under their control. Annual Soviet demonstrations, in spring and fall, followed a standard scenario: military units of the local garrison marched along the central avenue of the city first, then columns of high school students, then workers of various enterprises with flags and banners, followed by athletic trainers. The Soviet ideological "carnival" did not presuppose the slightest amateurism and did not differ in principle from place to place in the Soviet Union.

Still, despite all the efforts of the Soviet authorities to unify social attitudes, even in the closed city of Dnipropetrovsk there were more-or-less informal cultural practices.<sup>116</sup> There were few who dared to openly express their disagreement in a city of millions. They included: Baptists and Pentecostals; Georgy Sakharov, Mikhail Rytayev, and Jim (Vladimir) Mikhailov, who belonged to the

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113 D. Kedrin, "Dnepropetrovsku," in *Misto moie robotnyche*, 24.

114 "Ego pesnia," *gorod.dp.ua*, accessed January 8, 2021, <http://gorod.dp.ua/news/67701>. Also see: Iosif Kobzon, *Kak pered Bogom (Vospominaniia i razmysleniia)* (Moscow: Izvestiia, 2005). In 1995 Kobzon was awarded the title of honorary citizen of Dnipropetrovsk. In the year of 2014 he was deprived of this title because of active support for the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics". At the same time, the memorial plaque to Kobzon, unveiled in Dnipropetrovsk in 2012, was also removed.

115 G. Nikolaenko and G. Shevchenko, comp., *Vekhi istorii* (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin', 1976), 94. Compare Borshchevskii, *Dnepropetrovsku* 200, 122.

116 Sergei I. Zhuk, "'Cultural Wars' in the Closed City of Soviet Ukraine, 1959–1982," in *Soviet Society in the Era of Late Socialism, 1964–1985*, ed. Neringa Klumbyte and Gulnaz Sharafutdinova (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 67–90. See also his book *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*.



intelligentsia-oriented all-Union dissident movement; Ukrainian nationally oriented youth; young Jews who attended synagogue; the avant-garde artist Sergei Prosvetov, the hippie Valery Nesterenko, the poet Andrei Zhvakin; and the rock band “Sad” (The Garden), which performed both Russian and Ukrainian songs. This list was compiled by Artur Fredekind, who—together with Yuri Dykhan, Igor Byvaltsev, and musician Igor Mikhailov—considers himself a part of a “half-anarchist-half-hippie” group.<sup>117</sup> But the most ideologically dangerous topic eventually became the Ukrainian national identity, considering that Dnipropetrovsk was predominantly Russian-speaking.

### **Soviet Ukrainian Patriotism and Its Limits: Petro Shelest and Oles Honchar**

Leonid Kuchma, who graduated from Dnipropetrovsk University in 1960 and became the director of Pivdenmash in 1986, wrote in his post-Soviet memoirs: “Rocket engineering . . . was an ideal Soviet sphere of activity, that is, supranational. Immersion in this field naturally formed a supranational spirit in me and my colleagues. It seemed to us that only the global political and military tasks of the USSR were truly important . . .”<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, not a single Soviet citizen—not even a responsible employee of a secret rocket production facility—had the right to “supranationality.” In the rarest of cases, one would be allowed to change the mandatory “nationality.” Such privilege was granted to Brezhnev, who, according to his passport issued in 1947, was “Ukrainian,” but when he moved to Moscow, he became “Russian” and in his published memoirs explained that he was “Russian” because his father came to Kamyanske from the Kursk province.<sup>119</sup>

To grasp the relevance of such nuances it is important to remember that the Soviet state had never abandoned the notion of state-sponsored institutionalization of “nationality” as an obligatory legal category based on a person’s ethnic

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117 Andrei [Andrii] Portnov, “Rastrevozhit’ tishinu. O svobode vybora v zakrytom gorode (Fragment budushchei knigi),” *urokiistorii.ru*, accessed January 8, 2021, <https://urokiistorii.ru/blogs/andrei-portnov/3038>. Fredekind produced several leaflets (one of them consisted of the word “Solidarity” and a question mark). He was arrested in 1985 and convicted to three years of prison for “defaming the Soviet system.”

118 Kuchma, *Ukraina—ne Rossiia*, 406. On Kuchma see: Iurii Lukanov, *Tretii prezident: Politychnyi portret Leonida Kuchmy* (Kyiv: Taki spravy, 1996); V. P. Gorbulin, *Zemni shliakhy i zoriani orbity: Shtrykhy do portreta Leonida Kuchmy* (Kyiv: Druk Ukraïny, 1998); K. Bondarenko, *Leonid Kuchma. Portret na fone êpokhi* (Kharkov: Folio, 2007).

119 L. I. Brezhnev, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1982), 14.



descent, not on residence. This category was distinct from citizenship. Furthermore—from the very beginning, when Lenin envisioned the ethno-federalist structure of the new Bolshevik state as a temporary transitional arrangement, and till the very end—the Soviet Union remained a formal “ethnoterritorial federation of republics defined as the polities of and for particular nations.”<sup>120</sup>

The Ukrainian Soviet statehood was rather a form without content, a thing for show (it was in this role that the Ukrainian SSR became, along with the Belarusian SSR and the Soviet Union, one of the founding countries of the United Nations). The Soviet Ukrainian canon in the historical narrative was a minefield where the slightest deviation from the unwritten rules of Soviet Ukrainian patriotism could turn the author into a “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist.”

In 1963, the Communist Party of Ukraine was headed by Petro Shelest, who can be considered the embodiment of the postwar Ukrainian Soviet patriotism. In 1970, Shelest published a book in Ukrainian called *Our Soviet Ukraine* (*Ukraïno nasha radians'ka*), in which he not only spoke of the “progressive role” of the Zaporozhian Sich, but wrote about the Cossacks as “heroic defenders of the Ukrainian people,” whose history was still “underrepresented” in historical and fiction literature.<sup>121</sup> It seemed to many Ukrainian writers and historians, not unreasonably, that under Shelest a demand arose in Soviet Ukraine for local cultural projects that, while not challenging the key dogmas of Marxism-Leninism, came close to a romantic understanding of the national narrative. In particular, under Shelest the historical museum of the Zaporozhian Cossacks on the island of Khortytsya and the museum of traditional Ukrainian architecture in Pyrohovo near Kyiv were opened, and the preparation and publication of the multi-

120 See an eloquent discussion of the issue in Rogers Brubaker, “Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutional Account,” *Theory and Society* 23, no. 1 (1994): 47–78.

121 P. Iu. Shelest, *Ukraïno nasha Radians'ka*, 22. About this book and Shelest see Jaroslav Pelenski, “Shelest and His Period in Soviet Ukraine (1963–1972),” in *Ukraine in the Seventies*, ed. Peter J. Potichnyj (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1975), 283–305; Lowell Tillet, “Ukrainian Nationalism and the Fall of Shelest,” *Slavic Review* 34, no. 4 (1975): 752–768; Grey Hodnett, “The Views of Petro Shelest,” *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States* 14, no. 37–38 (1978–1980): 209–243; Yaroslav Bilinsky, “Mykola Skrypnyk and Petro Shelest: an Essay on the Persistence and Limits of Ukrainian National Communism,” in *Soviet Nationality Politics and Practices*, ed. J. R. Azrael (New York: Praeger, 1977), 105–143. See also P. Iu. Shelest, *Da ne sudimy budete. Dnevnikove zapisi, vospominaniia chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS* (Moscow: Edition q, 1995); and Petro Shelest, *Spravzhnii sud istorii shche poperedu . . .*: *Spohady, shchodennyky, dokumenty*, ed. Iu. Shapoval (Kyiv: Heneza, 2003).

volume *History of the Ukrainian SSR's Cities and Villages* began. This book had no analogues in any of the Soviet republics.<sup>122</sup>

How far could this kind of cultural policy go? At what point did it meet with the accusations of “nationalism”? Oles Honchar’s novel *A Cathedral* (*Sobor*), which touched on several borderline topics, from the Cossack past and Stalinist repressions to environmental issues, was a kind of test for the strength of these questions. Honchar’s novel, as well as his biography, were most closely connected with Dnipropetrovsk.

The future leading figure of Ukrainian Soviet literature was born on April 3, 1918 in the village of Lomivka on the right bank of the Dnipro River, which already in the 1930s was included in the city limits of Dnipropetrovsk. In 1946, Honchar graduated from the Dnipropetrovsk University’s Philology Department and moved to Kyiv. There, almost immediately, he achieved great success: his trilogy about the Great Patriotic War received two Stalin prizes—in 1948 and 1949.<sup>123</sup> In 1959, at the age of forty-one, Oles Honchar became the head of the Union of Writers of Ukraine.

In 1968, Honchar wrote his most important work (at least in terms of his posthumous canonization), the novel *Sobor*. This book tells the story of the metallurgical suburb of a large city, Zachiplyanka (in it one can easily recognize the writer’s native Lomivka). There, an old Cossack cathedral had miraculously survived. Its prototype is obviously the Trinity Cathedral built in 1778 in Novomoskovsk near Dnipropetrovsk. Characterized as “a monument to the forefathers” and “a formula of eternal beauty unraveled by no one,”<sup>124</sup> this cathedral was saved from destruction (suggested by the local Komsomol activist) by a “healthy intuition of the people,” the intervention of the higher party organs, but above all, by the active position of the main character, a student at the Metallurgical Institute, who knows how to *hear* the cathedral.

In general, the plot and characters of *Sobor* correspond to the established norms of socialist realism, including a heroic narrative of self-sacrifice and overcoming suffering, the guidance and the leading role of the Party, and the obliga-

122 Iu. I. Shapoval, “Petro Shelest u konteksti politychnoi istorii XX stolittia,” *Ukraïns’kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 3 (2008): 139. About museum on Khortytsya island see Christian Ganzer, *Sowjetisches Erde und ukrainische Nation. Das Museum der Geschichte des Zaporoger Kosakentums auf der Insel Chortycja* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2005).

123 See more in A. Portnov and T. Portnova, “‘Bez pochvy’ Viktora Petrova i ‘Sobor’ Olesia Honchara: dve istorii ukrainskoï literatury XX veka,” *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 2 (2019): 116–133.

124 Hereinafter the text of *Sobor* is quoted from Oles’ Honchar, *Sobor* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1989).



FIGURE 50. The celebration of the city's centennial on 22 May, 1976 on the Meteor stadium. Photo from the collection of Dmytro Yavornytsky National History Museum of Dnipro.

tory happy ending.<sup>125</sup> The main protagonist has the right social background, listens to older mentors and performs an important social task, the reward for which is happy love. In the world of *Sobor*, people are either good or bad,

125 Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). See also Evgeniï Dobrenko, *Politekonomiia sotsrealizma* (Moscow: NLO, 2007). Compare Ivan Koshelivets', "Pro 'Sobor' Olesia Honchara. Literatura i istoriia, styl' ta in-she," *Suchasnist'* 9 (1968): 44–53; Marko Pavlyshyn, "'Sobor' Olesia Honchara ta 'Orlova balka' Mykoly Rudenka: Navkolyshnie seredovyshe iak tema i argument," in his *Kanon ta ikonostas: Literaturno-krytychni statii* (Kyïv: Chas, 1997), 44–61; Iurii Sherekh, "Zdobutky i vtraty ukrains'koi literatury (Z pryvodu romanu O. Honchara 'Tavriia')," in his *Druha cherha. Literatura. Teatr. Ideolohii* (New-York: Proloh, 1978), 168–179.

without half-tones. While it sometimes skirts such dangerous topics as Ukrainian history and Stalinist repressions, *Sobor* nevertheless does not step out of the social realism of the Thaw. But it was dragged beyond the borders by extra-literary circumstances.

### Soviet Ukrainian Patriotism: Repressions and Insoluble Contradictions

We know from Honchar's diaries that he wanted to write a work comparable to *Anna Karenina* by his fiftieth birthday.<sup>126</sup> What he did produce was *Sobor*, a social realist novel with a Dnipropetrovsk coloring. The city in the text of the novel is easily recognized: by "a steep avenue with huge acacia trees," "a huge building of the Institute in the highlands," or the historical-mythological exposition about the director of the historical museum Yavornytsky. However, Dnipropetrovsk is not named in the novel and its presence does not seem very important. And yet, the text where there is very little of the city as such turned out to have a strong symbolical connection to it.

*Sobor* appeared in the January issue of the Kyiv magazine *Motherland* (*Vitchyzna*) in 1968. In March, Vatchenko—at the time serving as the First Secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast* Party Committee and member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Ukraine—recognized himself in the antagonist, who planned to destroy the cathedral for the sake of a promotion. The enraged Vatchenko initiated an *oblast*-wide campaign of criticism of the novel. In numerous newspaper articles, "ordinary workers" attacked Honchar for "distorting the life of metallurgists," showing "incomprehensible religious ecstasy," and the "lack of a positive hero" in his novel.<sup>127</sup> According to information sent in May 1968 by the Dnipropetrovsk *obkom* to Kyiv, the Communists "regret" and "resent" the fact that "the mature master of literary work . . . departed from the truth of life and showed in a crooked mirror the labor, life, and spiritual world of the metallurgists and collective farmers of the Dnipro region."<sup>128</sup>

126 Oles' Honchar, *Shchodennyky, 1943–1967*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Veselka, 2002), 410.

127 See, for example, the article published on behalf of the "senior metallurgists": K. Tryshyn and V. Kulach, "Ni, ne pro nas tseï roman," *Zaporiz'ka Pravda*, April 17, 1968, 5.

128 Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromads'kykh ob'iednan' Ukraïny [TsDAHOU, Central State Archive of Civil Organizations of Ukraine], fond 1, opys 25, sprava 20, arkushi 23–24. See also: Vasyl' Danylenko, ed., *Politychni protesty i inakodumstvo v Ukraïni (1960–1980). Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv: Smoloskyp, 2013).

Although Shelest tried to smooth over the consequences of the campaign initiated in Dnipropetrovsk, nevertheless, the ready-to-print Russian translation of *Sobor* was not published. Instead, it appeared in *samizdat*, thus making Honchar the only candidate for the CPSU Central Committee who was, at the same time, an underground author.

In the summer of 1968, the Dnipropetrovsk campaign against *Sobor* received an unexpected development. A "Letter from Creative Youth of Dnipropetrovsk" was sent to several Party organizations in Ukraine. Referring to the story of the novel and the ban on celebrating Honchar's fiftieth birthday at Dnipropetrovsk University, the authors of the "Letter" cited examples of oppression of the Ukrainian language and culture and called for a return to the ideals of "Leninist national policy."<sup>129</sup>

To understand the nature of the letter and its main message, it is important to mention the Ukrainian human rights movement, whose most important manifesto was a 1965 work by the Kyiv literary critic Ivan Dzyuba entitled *Internationalism or Russification*, which the author himself sent to leading Party officials of the republic.<sup>130</sup> Dzyuba's text analyzed "the abnormality of the Ukrainian language's situation," described Brezhnev's Russification as "a colossal disadvantage for the cause of socialist democracy," and called for a return to a Leninist national policy.<sup>131</sup> In 1968, Dzyuba's text was printed abroad and translated into several languages. Yevhen Sverstyuk raised the same issues as Dzyuba in his much talked-about positive review of *Sobor*, which was published in 1970 by an émigré publisher in Paris.<sup>132</sup>

129 "Letter" was published several times, including "Lyst tvorchoi molodi Dnipropetrovs'ka," *Suchasnist'* 2 (1969): 78–85. I quote from the edition of the memoirs of one of its authors: Mykhailo Skoryk, *Zyma. Spovid' pro perezhnye* (Kyiv: Pravda Iaroslavychiv, 2000), 69–77. See also idem, "'Treba maty vidvahu znaity pravdu,' abo 'Lyst tvorchoi molodi m. Dnipropetrovs'ka' i navkolo n'oho," *Kraieznavstvo* 3 (2018): 103–114; and Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City*, 53–64.

130 For an overview of Ukrainian dissident movement see Heorhii Kas'ianov, *Nezhodni: ukrains'ka intelihentsiia v rusi oporu 1960–1980-kh rokiv*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv: Klio, 2019); Simone Attilio Bellezza, *The Shore of Expectations. A Cultural Study of the Shistdesiatnyky* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2019). See also Liudmila Alekseeva, *Istoriia inakomyслиia v SSSR: noveishiï period*, 3rd ed. (Moscow: Moskovskaia Khel'sinskaia Gruppa, 2012).

131 Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification? A Study in the Soviet Nationalities Problem*, ed. M. Davies, 2nd ed. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968).

132 Ievhen Sverstyuk, *Sobor u ryshtovanni* (Paris: Ukraïns'ke vydavnytstvo im. Vasylia Symonenka, 1970), 83.

In such a context, the head of the Union of Writers of Soviet Ukraine, Honchar, became a coveted author abroad. The New York Ukrainian-language edition of the novel opened with a preface, which stated that “in its plot, composition, characters, language, and style this novel surpasses almost all Ukrainian prose of the last two decades.”<sup>133</sup> The West-German edition of the novel (published in 1970 in Hamburg) stated that this text, “along with the works of Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, is an important testimony of the time, and it has an honorable place among the major literary works of our days.”<sup>134</sup>

Ivan Dzyuba was ultimately expelled from the Union of Writers of Ukraine in 1972 and soon arrested; in 1973, he was sentenced to five years in prison, but was pardoned the same year after writing a self-incriminating essay.<sup>135</sup> In the same year, Shelest was removed from all his posts and recalled to Moscow with a ban on visits to Ukraine. The formal reason was his book about Soviet Ukraine, mentioned above. Its defeat was presented as an initiative from below. First, in September 1972, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine received a letter from three academics. Then, it sent a letter to the CPSU Central Committee with the message that the book of its first secretary “departs from the Party [line] and class positions on a number of important fundamental questions and damages the cause of international education of the workers.”<sup>136</sup> Soon *Our Soviet Ukraine* was withdrawn from bookstores and libraries, and criticized in an editorial of the magazine *Communist of Ukraine*.<sup>137</sup> The main accusations against Shelest were that he devoted too much attention to Ukraine’s pre-Soviet past; presented an idealized, not class-based portrayal of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, and did not reveal the “beneficial influence of Russian culture” on the historical development of Ukraine.<sup>138</sup>

The most severe punishment was meted out to three young Dnipropetrovsk residents accused of writing and distributing the “Letter to Creative Youth.” The

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133 Oles’ Honchar, *Sobor* (New York: S. Bound Brook, 1968), 3.

134 Olesj Hontschar, *Der Dom von Satschipljanka*, transl. Elisabeth Kottmeier and Eaghör G. Kostetzky (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1970).

135 See details in Iurii Shapoval, “Sprava Ivana Dziuby,” *Z arkhiviv VUChK–GPU–NKVD–KGB* 1 (2011): 259–294; and M. I. Stepanenko, “Oles’ Honchar—Ivan Dzyuba—Petro Shelest: shchodennykova vzaïmopertsepsiia,” *Istorychna pam’iat’* 1 (2010): 5–23.

136 Shapoval, “Petro Shelest,” 144.

137 [Editorial], “Pro seriozni nedoliky ta pomylyky odniiei knyhy,” *Komunist Ukraïny* 4 (1973): 77–82.

138 Ibid., 78.



poet Ivan Sokulsky, who had previously been expelled from the Dnipropetrovsk State University's Philology Department in 1966 "for unworthy behavior and nationalistic manifestations,"<sup>139</sup> was sentenced to four and a half years in a strict regime correctional labor colony. Mykola Kulchynsky was sentenced to two and a half years in a minimum-security penal colony, and Victor Savchenko, to two years of probation with a correctional period of two years.<sup>140</sup> This verdict was not the last in the fate of Sokulsky. He was arrested for the second time in April 1980 and for the third time in April 1985. He did not return from the Soviet prison camps until August 1988; on May 20, 1991, he was severely beaten during a clash of demonstrations by different political forces and died shortly thereafter.<sup>141</sup>



FIGURE 51. Inside Karl Libknecht plant.  
Photo from Denys Shatalov's archive.

139 Skoryk, "Treba maty vidvahu znaty pravdu," 105.

140 Skoryk, *Zyma*, 101.

141 N. M. Sheĭmina, "Uchast' dniproetrovtsiv u dysydents'komu rusi Ukraïny (1960–1985 rr.)," *Prydniprov'ia: istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 13 (2015): 126–127.



Compared with all the examples given above, Honchar's punishment was unusually mild. In 1971, he was deprived of his position of the chairman of the Union of Writers of Ukraine. However, he continued to publish, perform, and travel abroad. In 1978, on his sixtieth birthday, he was awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labor; and in 1982 he received the State Prize of the USSR.

Honchar's literary text became an anti-Soviet work rather against the will of the author. It was not written that way, but it was *read* that way. The accident starting with Vatchenko's reaction to the book turned out to be lucky for the canonization of the author. Extra-literary factors made Honchar's *Sobor* a political event. They also predetermined the brutality of the persecution of Ukrainian dissenters. But neither repression nor handouts solved the principal problem: the national question in the Soviet Union.<sup>142</sup>

This was felt by Shcherbytsky, a graduate of the Dnipropetrovsk Institute of Chemical Technology (1941) and the first secretary of the Party *oblast* Committee, who succeeded Shelest in May 1972 as the first secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine. In his speeches, Shcherbytsky avoided talking about "Ukrainian people," preferring the term "people of Ukraine."<sup>143</sup> Apparently, in this way he expressed support for the notion of "Soviet people" (*sovetskii narod*) as a "new historical community of various nationalities" with a common socialist Motherland, a common socialist economy, a common Marxist-Leninist worldview, and a common goal of building the socialism.<sup>144</sup> This notion was suggested by Khrushchev in 1961 and repeated in 1971 by Brezhnev. However, the notion of "Soviet people" had never replaced the obligatory ethnically defined legal notion of "nationality" and never shattered the nation-state-like structure of the republics. All that the Party ideologists dared to introduce was the cautious thesis of "gradual rapprochement" (*postепенnoe sblizhenie*) of the Soviet nationalities.<sup>145</sup>

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142 Compare Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Alexander J. Motyl, *Will the Non-Russians Rebel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

143 Iu. I. Shapoval, V. V. Shcherbyts'kyi, "Osoba polityka sered obstavyn chasu," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 1 (2003): 124. See also P. T. Tron'ko, "V. V. Shcherbyts'kyi (1918–1990)," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 1 (2003): 118–129; F. D. Ovcharenko, *Spohady* (Kyiv: Oriany, 2000).

144 See the detailed analysis in Yaroslav Bilinsky, "The Concept of the Soviet People and its Implications for Soviet Nationality Policy," *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States* 14, no. 37–38 (1978–1980): 87–133.

145 Ibid.

In the Ukrainian context of the 1970s, this “gradual rapprochement” meant further expansion of Russian language. As the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted in 1961 stated, the Russian language as the “language of international communication.” Correspondingly, the Ukrainian language continued to lose its social prestige. Viktor Nekrasov, a writer and native of Kyiv who left the Soviet Union in 1974, wrote that the Ukrainian language was “gradually dying,” not because of bans and discrimination, but because “this Ukrainian writer . . . prefers to give his son to a Russian school” and dreams “of being published . . . in Russian, in Moscow.”<sup>146</sup> Nekrasov did not mention Brezhnev’s reforms of Ukrainian spelling in order to bring it closer to Russian, or the ban on the use of certain Ukrainian words,<sup>147</sup> but he correctly caught the tendency of losing the social prestige of Ukrainian, the spread of its stereotyping as the language of uneducated people, the language of the village and not urban culture.

It is important to note that the social degradation of Ukrainian was not in direct correlation with the rejection of the Ukrainian “nationality.” According to Soviet statistics, already since the second half of the 1920s the Ukrainians were the most numerous group of population in Dnipropetrovsk, and by 1989 their percentage in the total population tripled compared to the 1920s:

	1926	1939	1959	1989
Ukrainians	36.0	54.6	61.5	62.5
Russians	31.6	23.4	27.9	30.0
Jews	26.8	17.9	7.6	3.2

This increase was motivated by the rapid growth the city due to the general Soviet trend of urbanization. According to the leaders of the Ukrainian dissident movement, this new urban landscape was the of “gradual fusion” of national groups, and “Russification.”<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, on the emblem of

146 Viktor Nekrasov, *Zapiski zevaki* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2003), 191–192.

147 For details see Larysa Masenko, ed., *Ukrains'ka mova u XX storichchi: istoriia linhvotsydu* (Kyiv: Kyievo-Mohylians'ka akademiia, 2005).

148 Compare Bohdan Kravchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985); Roman Szporliuk, “Urbanization in Ukraine since the Second World War,” in idem, *Russia, Ukraine and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), 139–160.

Brezhnev's Dnipropetrovsk the name of the city was written in Ukrainian, the city published Ukrainian-language regional newspapers, the Shevchenko Ukrainian Drama Theatre worked, there were Ukrainian inscriptions, in school Ukrainian was studied from the second grade. However, university education was one hundred percent Russian-language.<sup>149</sup> The constant balancing between Soviet Ukrainian patriotism and "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism" was not an easy and self-evident task. In addition, it could have unintended consequences. As Sergei I. Zhuk put it:

Communist ideologists and KGB officers who controlled cultural consumption in Dnepropetrovsk created a confusing and disorienting ideological situation for the local youth. They promoted Western forms of entertainment such as the discotheque, and at the same time, they tried to limit the influence of capitalist culture by popularizing expressions of Soviet patriotism, including Ukrainian music and history. They feared the rise of "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism" and tried to suppress any extreme enthusiasm for Ukrainian poetry and history, yet, the entire system of Soviet education was designed to promote the progressive cultural models of socialist nations in contrast to the "degenerate capitalist culture" of imperialist nations. As a result, the young members of the mature socialist society in Dnepropetrovsk adopted elements of Western mass culture as well as the controversial ideas of Shevchenko and images of Zaporozhian Cossacks as part of their cultural identification.<sup>150</sup>

The Ukrainian question became even more important in the next decade, in the context of the crisis and collapse of the Soviet Union. The transformations of the state regime raised the question of filling the already existing, albeit often empty, forms of Soviet Ukrainian statehood with symbolic content.

### The Capital of Stagnation?

Ilya Kabakov, the leader of Moscow Conceptual Art movement, who was born in 1933 in Dnipropetrovsk, described the Brezhnev period of Soviet history as a time of "incredible stabilization of social life," when it seemed that "this is the

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149 Perepelitsyna, *Reminiscences of Soviet Dnipropetrovsk*, 11.

150 Sergei I. Zhuk, "Book Consumption and Reading Practices in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk during the Brezhnev Era," *Ab Imperio* 3 (2009): 31.



FIGURE 52. The “Battle for the Dnipro” diorama opened in 1975.  
Postcard from Andrii Portnov’s collection.

order we will have forever.”<sup>151</sup> However, time did not stop: it only froze for some decades before the jerk into the unknown.

The seemingly unshakable and extremely stable Soviet regime entered a zone of turbulence by the second half of the 1980s. The harbingers of crisis were already visible at the end of the 1970s. In 1979, when the population of Dnipropetrovsk reached the million mark, the Second Oil Crisis and Soviet intervention into Afghanistan began. Taking these events into account, as well as the revolution in Iran and the emergence of political Islam, the new economic course in China, Pope John Paul II’s visit to Poland, and other major events, many historians and philosophers call 1979 the “revolutionary year,” “turning

151 Il’ia Kabakov, “O vozmozhnosti postroeniia raia v otdel’no vziatom adu,” in *Perelomnye vos’midesiatye v neofitsial’nom sovetskom iskusstve SSSR. Sbornik materialov*, comp. Georgii Kizeval’ter (Moscow: NLO, 2014), 248; Il’ia Kabakov and Boris Grois, *Dialogi* (Vologda: Biblioteka moskovskogo kontseptualizma Germana Titova, 2010), 27. Compare Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

point,” “key-date,” or “Year Zero” of contemporary history.<sup>152</sup> It was at this time that the Soviet Union began supplying gas to Western Europe. At the same time, despite this outward show of strength, the Soviet officials seriously discussed the possibility of “intensifying scientific and technological development” and the search for remedies for a “stagnant” economy.<sup>153</sup> The disappearance of the communist perspective also became quite evident: the authorities accepted that communism would be out forever of their reach and began to talk about “advanced socialism” and its “further improvement.”<sup>154</sup>

The accumulated socio-economic problems of the Soviet Union were tackled, in part, by the attempted systemic top-down reforms called “perestroika.”<sup>155</sup> The most important component of the “new course” of Soviet foreign policy was the cessation of the arms race and the gradual destruction of nuclear weapons. For a city whose production facilities, educational and social structures were directly dependent on the rocket-space complex, this turn of Soviet policy had fateful consequences.

But for the time being, Brezhnev’s Dnipropetrovsk combined a sense of constant renewal (symbolized by mass construction) and social stability. In their interviews, former residents of the city described its closedness as the quintessence of the Soviet system,<sup>156</sup> a combination of confidence in the present and orientation towards the future.<sup>157</sup> It gave a “non-provincial feeling”<sup>158</sup> and even a kind of “sense of being a capital.” Dnipropetrovsk was perceived as a particularly significant city, located in the informal hierarchy immediately after Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>159</sup> It was the “big city for work,” where rocket-builders and

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152 For the elaboration of the argument and numerous quotes see Frank Bösch, *Zeitenwende 1979. Als die Welt von heute begann* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2020).

153 Dmitrii Butrin, “Piat’ zvezdochek Leonida Brezhneva,” *kommersant.ru*, accessed January 8, 2021, <http://kommersant.ru/doc/3175511>.

154 Kirill Kobrin, “Smert’ postsovetskogo proekta. Chast’ 1. Igra s trupami i reklama vmesto ideologii,” *colta.ru*, accessed January 8, 2021, <http://www.colta.ru/articles/society/13387>.

155 M. S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashei strany i dlia vsego mira* (Moscow: Izdatel’svo politicheskoi literatury, 1987).

156 Interview with Boris Shavlov (conducted on December 19, 2011).

157 Interview with Oleg Rostovtsev (conducted on January 3, 2012).

158 Ibid.

159 Interview with Boris Dolgin (conducted on January 6, 2012).

workers of ferrous metallurgy could fully realize their potential.<sup>160</sup> The narrative of the “capital of stagnation” and the “forge of cadres,” like any other myth, did not arise from nothing. At the all-Union level, it was a product of the discontent of Moscow’s elites, who felt deprived of many government positions. At the local level, this myth was supported in every way by the Dnipropetrovsk officials, who profited from the reputation of “home of the general secretary” and “the city that Brezhnev loved.”<sup>161</sup> The start of construction of the Dnipropetrovsk subway and better food supply than in other industrial centers of the Soviet Union fit into the scheme of “Brezhnev’s special attitude.” This perspective made the republican capital, Kyiv, just one of the other big cities that, unlike Dnipropetrovsk, had no special relationship with Moscow.

Of course, closeness was not perceived as a privilege by everyone. Ivan Sokulsky wrote from the Soviet camps to his daughter that he dreamed of seeing Dnipropetrovsk “open to the whole world. . . .”<sup>162</sup> In 1987, when Sokulsky was still in camp, his dream of an open Dnipropetrovsk came true.



FIGURE 53.  
Leonid Brezhnev’s memorial plaque  
on his Dnipropetrovsk residence.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

160 Interview with Ievhen Chernov (conducted on January 4, 2012).

161 Interview with Alexander P., former employee of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (conducted on April 3, 2012). The name is not disclosed at the request of the respondent.

162 Ivan Sokul’s’kyi, *Lysty na svitanku. Epistoliarna spadshchyna 1983–1988 rokiv, dokumenty, fotohrafii*, book 2 (Dnipropetrovsk: Sich, 2002), 360.



## Epilogue

# Neither the City Number One nor the City Number Two

Gorbachev's policy of "détente" and nuclear arms reduction meant that, by the end of the 1980s, Dnipropetrovsk felt the crisis of the Soviet rocket and space industry in full measure. The loss of Pivdenmash's strategic importance immediately affected the city, where—according to the postwar Soviet tradition—the plant participated in financing of all major projects, from housing construction to erection of the Opera House and the airport. The loss of the former role of Pivdenmash inevitably led to the loss of the city's "closed" status (announced in 1987), and, therefore, to the loss of Dnipropetrovsk's real or imagined "specialness."

### From Talent Pool to the Jewish Capital of Ukraine?

For Dnipropetrovsk, the collapse of the Soviet Union also meant the need for reorientation toward the new capital, Kyiv.<sup>1</sup> In a certain sense, the established model of relations between the "special" province and the capital—when the former "remembers the existence of the capital, constantly has it in mind, compares itself with it" —was transferred from Moscow to Kyiv.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, when Leonid Kuchma (the former director of Pivdenmash) won the presidential

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1 On the collapse of the USSR and the role of Ukrainian communist elites in this process see Ronald G. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Serhii Plokhyy, *The Last Empire. The Final Days of the Soviet Union* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

2 The author of this quote, a renowned conceptual artist Ilya Kabakov, moved as a young man from Dnipropetrovsk to Moscow in 1946 and described his behavior as a "provincial" in



election in 1994, it seemed as if the “talent pool” would retain its leading role in independent Ukraine.<sup>3</sup> Launching of the Dnipro subway (*metro*) on December 29, 1995 with the participation of President Kuchma could have been considered a symbol of such ambitions.<sup>4</sup> Soon afterwards, in July 1996, Pavlo Lazarenko (head of the regional administration that launched the subway) became prime minister<sup>5</sup> and as a result, another native from Dnipropetrovsk found his way into the highest echelons of Kyiv’s power.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, neither under President Kuchma nor later did Dnipropetrovsk become the “second capital” or the main cadre reservoir of Ukrainian politics. Instead, the situation of post-Soviet confusion and loss of meaning became more and more evident. The most striking indicator of the post-Soviet decline of the city was its depopulation. By 2012, the population of Dnipropetrovsk fell below the one million mark.<sup>7</sup> According to a special UN survey, Dnipropetrovsk

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the Soviet capital: I. Kabakov, 60–70-e . . . *Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), 46.

- 3 For an overview of Ukraine’s post-Soviet history see Volodymyr Lytvyn, *Politychna arena Ukraïny. Diïovi osoby i vykonavtsi* (Kyïv: Abrys, 1994); Georgii Kas’ianov, *Ukraina 1991–2007: Ocherki noveisheï istorii* (Kyïv: Nash chas, 2008); Iurii Matsiievs’kyi, *U pasttsi hibrydnosti: zyzgazy transformatsii politychnoho rezhymu v Ukraïni (1991–2014)* (Chernivtsi: Knyhy-XXI, 2016); Mykhailo Minakov, Georgiy Kasianov, and Matthew Rojansky (eds.), *From “the Ukraine” to Ukraine. A Contemporary History, 1991–2021* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2021). Cf. Maksym Bespalov, *Likhiie dev’ianosti: Kuznia kadriv Dnipropetrovs’k* (Kyïv: Tempora, 2016).
- 4 Construction of the Dnipropetrovsk subway began in February 1981 and it was planned to open in 1991. As a result, in 1995 six stations with a total length of 7.8 km were launched. Dnipropetrovsk subway connected the main railway station with some of the city’s industrial areas, and did not cover its central part. For details see the subway and the city’s official web-pages: <https://metro.dp.ua> and <http://gorod.dp.ua/metro>.
- 5 Lazarenko was prime minister for almost a year, until July 1997. Then he found himself in political opposition to Kuchma. In the fall of 1998 a criminal case was brought against the former prime minister on charges of grand larceny of state property. In the winter of 1999 Lazarenko fled from Ukrainian justice to the United States, where he was arrested and convicted of corruption. For details see Leslie Wayne, “A Ukrainian Kleptocrat Wants His Money and U. S. Asylum,” accessed April 21, 2021, [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/07/business/international/a-ukrainian-kleptocrat-wants-his-money-and-us-asylum.html?\\_r=2](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/07/business/international/a-ukrainian-kleptocrat-wants-his-money-and-us-asylum.html?_r=2).
- 6 The list of persons from Dnipropetrovsk in Ukrainian politics and business includes Valery Pustovoitenko, Iulia Tymoshenko, Oleksandr Turchynov, Leonid Derkach, Serhy Tihipko, Viktor Pinchuk, and others.
- 7 The data is from Dnipro’s web portal: “Naselenie goroda,” accessed April 21, 2021, <http://gorod.dp.ua/inf/geo/?pageid=109>.

ranked first among Eastern European cities for the rate of population loss—16% since 1990.<sup>8</sup>

At the symbolic level, perhaps the most visible landmark of the city was the thirty-two-story hotel “Sail” (*Parus*), which was left unfinished (to be more exact, *almost* completed, but abandoned at the last stage in 1995). The construction of this giant building in the central part of the embankment began in 1975 and was originally planned to be completed in 1979.<sup>9</sup> An abandoned huge skeleton, clearly visible from almost the entire Dnipro coastline, was by the late 1990s turned into a billboard for Privatbank—the largest Ukrainian financial institution created and owned (until 2016) by the Privat group led by Ihor Koloomoisky.

Kolomoisky became not only one of Ukraine’s most colorful and controversial big businessmen (“oligarchs”),<sup>10</sup> but also one of the active participants in the development of Jewish community life in post-Soviet Dnipropetrovsk.

As discussed in previous chapters, it was in Katerynoslav where the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem-Mendl Schneerson—son of Katerynoslav rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, expelled by the Soviet authorities from the city in 1939—spent his youth. In 1990, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe sent Shmuel Kaminetsky from New York to Dnipropetrovsk, and Rabbi Kaminetsky’s activity is closely connected with the active development of Jewish community life in the city. In 1996, the Dnipropetrovsk Choral Synagogue was returned to the Jewish community, and in 2000, the synagogue reopened after a grand reconstruction (which did not rely on the historical appearance deformed by the Soviet anti-religious policy). On April 14, 2001, on the site of the execution of the Jews during the Nazi rule in Dnipropetrovsk, the community erected a monument with inscriptions in Hebrew and Ukrainian. Unlike the Soviet me-

8 “Dnepropetrovsk—samyi vymiraiushchii gorod v mire,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://delo.ua/economyandpoliticsinukraine/dnepropetrovsk-samyj-vymirajuschij-gorod-v-mire-187890/>.

9 Anastasiia Panasenko, “Samaia polnaia istoriia gostinnitsy ‘Parus,’” accessed April 21, 2021, [https://dp.vgorode.ua/news/transport\\_y\\_ynfrastruktura/233299-samaia-polnaia-ystoryia-hostynytsy-parus](https://dp.vgorode.ua/news/transport_y_ynfrastruktura/233299-samaia-polnaia-ystoryia-hostynytsy-parus). See also a documentary produced in 2019, “Concrete and Unclear,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9crlu6cAsQ>.

10 For more information on oligarchs in Ukraine see Rosaria Puglisi, “The Rise of Ukrainian Oligarchs,” *Demokratizatsiia: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 10, no. 3 (2003): 99–123; Heiko Pleines, “Oligarchs and Politics in Ukraine,” *Demokratizatsiia: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 24, no. 1 (2016): 105–127; Mikhail Minakov, “The Exsolution of Ukrainian Oligarchy,” in Mikhail Minakov, *Development and Dystopia. Studies in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Eastern Europe* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2018), 122–150.

memorial plaque set up in the same place and dedicated to “peaceful Soviet citizens,” this memorial speaks directly about “10,000 peaceful Jews of Dnipropetrovsk, brutally murdered on October 13–14, 1941 and many more of our holy brothers and sisters, tortured and shot by the fascists (1941–1943).”<sup>11</sup> In September 2009, the community opened the Matseva Jewish memorial complex in one of the city’s former Jewish cemeteries, which had been turned into a park in the 1960s.

The activity of the Jewish community of Dnipropetrovsk, headed by Rabbi Kaminetsky, was not limited to memorial sites. While in the mid-1980s the community’s active members thought that the Jewish presence in Dnipropetrovsk was soon to disappear,<sup>12</sup> by the mid-1990s their community was one of the most influential not only in Ukraine, but in entire Europe. This allowed certain authors to speak about the validity of Dnipropetrovsk’s claims to the status of the “Jewish capital of Ukraine.”<sup>13</sup> The crowning achievement of such claims was the construction in Dnipropetrovsk of the world’s largest Jewish multifunctional community center, Menorah, which began in the winter of 2008–2009 and was completed by October 2012.<sup>14</sup> Menorah is linked to the existing buildings: The Golden Rose Choral Synagogue and the four-storied building of the Community center. The structure consists of seven towers, symbolically representing the seven-branched candlesticks installed in the Temple in Jerusalem. In addition to the Jewish community services, a specialized shopping area, and kosher restaurants, the complex also houses the museum called “The Memory of the Jewish People and the Holocaust in Ukraine.”<sup>15</sup>

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- 11 The detailed analysis of both memorials could be found in Andrii Portnov, “Bat’kivshchynamy’ vs Stepan Bandera: ekskursiia vybranykh pam’iatnykamy Druhoi svitovoi viiny,” in *Sotsiolohiia mista: Navchal’nyi posibnyk*, ed. O. Mikheieva (Donets’k: Noulidzh, 2010), 305–316.
  - 12 Interview with Oleksandr Fridkis (conducted on January 8, 2012). Transcript in the author’s archive.
  - 13 Viacheslav Likhachov, “The Jewish Community of Ukraine—5768 (2007–2008): Twenty Years of Revival,” *Euro-Asian Jewish Yearbook 5768 (2007/2008)*, ed. M. Chlenov (Moscow: Pallada, 2009), 110, 113; Andrii Portnov and Tetjana Portnova, “Die ‘jüdische Hauptstadt der Ukraine,’ Erinnerung und Gegenwart in Dnipropetrovsk,” *Osteuropa* 10 (2012): 25–40.
  - 14 “Press-konferentsiia ob itogakh deiatel’nosti tsentra ‘Menora’ za pervyi god raboty,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://www.djc.com.ua/news/view/new/?id=10363>. For details about the activities of the Jewish community see O. Iu. Rostovtsev, *Ievrei Dnipropetrovshchyny: istoriia ta suchasnist’* (Dnipropetrovsk: ART-PRES, 2012).
  - 15 On the context of establishing the museum see Andrii Portnov, “The Holocaust in the Public Discourse of Post-Soviet Ukraine,” in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed.



FIGURE 54. The Menorah Center with the Golden Rose Synagogue.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

Although Menorah is open to all and has certainly become one of the recognizable symbols of post-Soviet Dnipro, the image of the “Jewish capital” can hardly be called central to the city’s self-identification. At the same time, Dnipro faced other, more pressing questions. The recognition of the importance of the Jewish component in the multidimensional history of Dnipro was less painful than discussions about the proper starting point of the city’s history.

### Searching for the New Foundation Myth

In the early 1990s, Yuri Mytsyk, a historian of Ukrainian Cossacks, published an article proposing to accept 1635 (the year when the Polish fortress Kodak was built) as Dnipropetrovsk’s foundation year. Implying the eclipse of the Russian imperial (Catherinian) genealogy, this proposal was predicated on the view that the fortress “gave rise to several settlements that later became districts of the present-day Dnipropetrovsk.”<sup>16</sup>

But the city authorities of Dnipropetrovsk were in no hurry to abandon 1776 as the date of the city’s foundation. In the history of the Dnipropetrovsk,

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Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 347–370. See also the official museum’s webpage, accessed April 21, 2021, <https://jmhumi.org/uk/about/about-museum>.

16 Iu. Mytsyk, “Iak vynyklo nashe misto,” in *Kozats'kyi kraï: Narysy z istorii Dnipropetrovshchyny XV–XVIII st.*, Iu. Mytsyk (Dnipropetrovsk: Promin, 1997), 153.

published in 2006 by historians from the local university, it was argued that Katerynoslav—when compared to Kodak—was “an emphatically novel urban organism,” in whose history Katerynoslav I (1776–1777) was “the starting point in the first materialization of the city as ‘an urbanistic project,’” and the laying of the foundation stone of the Transfiguration Cathedral in 1787 “marked the final fixation of this project.”<sup>17</sup> Such argumentation seemed politically motivated to some critics; no more than a cover for an attempt “to diminish the organic belonging of the city to Ukrainian history” and “to orient the reader toward a manifestation of Russian political patriotism.”<sup>18</sup> In any case, the search for an older origin point of the city, not connected to Russian imperial politics, continued.<sup>19</sup>

As discussed in chapter 1, there were several Cossack settlements in the area of the future city. This gave rise to several theories about the city’s Cossack roots. Some authors insisted that “territorially and administratively Katerynoslav-Dnipropetrovsk was a successor to Polovytsya.”<sup>20</sup> Others emphasized that Polovytsya only “indirectly influenced” the city’s future, whereas territorially and administratively Katerynoslav was “a successor to the town of Novyi Kaidak.”<sup>21</sup> In 2017, another proposal was announced—this time based on archaeological excavations—to count the history of Dnipro from the Cossack settlement Stara Samar (nowadays Shevchenko village in the Samarsky district of the city), founded in 1524.<sup>22</sup> Thus, if the Brezhnev-sanctioned transferring of the date of city’s birth made Dnipropetrovsk older by eleven years, then this latest proposal increased the city’s age by 252 years.

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- 17 A. H. Bolebrukh, ed., *Istoriia mista Dnipropetrovs'ka* (Dnipropetrovs'k: Hrani, 2006), 78–79.
  - 18 V. Brekhunenko, “Dnipropetrovs'kyi SNID (syndrom naukovoho imunodefitsytu),” *Ukrains'kyi arkhieohrafichnyi shchorichnyk* 7 (2002): 418, 423.
  - 19 Cf. H. K. Shvyd'ko, “Poshuky istyny (do pochatkovoï istorii m. Dnipropetrovs'ka),” *Naddniprians'ka Ukraïna: istorychni protsesy, podii, postati* (2001): 107–121.
  - 20 V. S. Moroz, “Polovytsia ta ii mistse v urbohenezi m. Dnipropetrovs'ka,” *Prydniprov'ia: istoriko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 8 (2010): 49.
  - 21 O. Repan, V. Starostin, and O. Kharlan, *Palimpsest. Korinnia mista: poselennia XVII—XVIII st. v istorii Dnipropetrovs'ka* (Kyïv: Ukrains'ki propileï, 2008), 249. See also V. S. Starostin, “Mistse Novoho Kodaka v proektakh Katerynoslava,” *Prydniprov'ia: istoriko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* 8 (2010): 33–38.
  - 22 “Istoryky znaiishly dokazy toho, shcho Dnipro starshyi na 252 roky,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://dniprorada.gov.ua/uk/articles/item/20285/istoriki-znajshli-dokazi-togo-scho-dnipro-starshij-na-252-roki>.

Nevertheless, in June 2017, the City Council did not support this proposal, leaving 1776 as the official date of the city's founding.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the advocates of the Catherinian genealogy of Dnipropetrovsk argued that “despite all the twists and turns of the twentieth-century history, there is a real line of succession from Katerynoslav to Dnipropetrovsk” whereas there was no direct succession between various Cossack settlements and Katerynoslav.<sup>24</sup> In other words, they held that the Cossack and imperial periods were “not stages of develop-

ment of one city, but parts of “the successive development and decline of different types of urban (and proto-urban) organisms in the area of modern Dnepropetrovsk, which belong to different cultural and urban traditions.”<sup>25</sup>

The historiographical discussion is far from resolved, and the arguments of both sides are noticeably influenced by their political attitudes. To put the discussion into a broader context, one should remember that in post-Soviet Dnipropetrovsk—unlike, for example, Odesa—there have been no attempts to restore the monument to Catherine II or to return the name of the Empress to the central avenue.



FIGURE 55.

Post-Soviet city's coat of arms.

Source: dp.informator.ua

In other words, it was not just the Russian imperial narrative, but also the Soviet narrative that stood against the Cossack (Ukrainian) story, even though (as we have seen in previous chapters) the Cossack topic was never completely forbidden in either imperial or Soviet vision of the past.

The city's symbols approved in 2001 perfectly reflect the same ambivalence and indeterminacy. The Dnipropetrovsk coat-of-arms now prominently features

23 “Mis'krada Dnipro vyrishyla znovy rozhlianyty zminu daty zasnuvannia mista na 252 roky vhylyb,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/28613033.html>.

24 E. A. Chernov, “Nachalo vremeni ‘URBIS’ v istorii Dnepropetrovska,” *Naddniprians'kyi istoriko-kraieznachnyi zbirnyk* 1 (1998): 110–114.

25 M. E. Kavun, “Urbanizatsiia Prychornomor'ia ta Dniprovs'koho Nadporozhzhia v konteksti metodolohichnoho pliuralizmu svitovoï urbanistyky,” *Istoriia i kul'tura Prydniprovia: nevidomi ta malovidomi storinky* 3 (2006): 23–31.



the emblem of a Cossack settlement on the present-day site of the city. Besides, the escutcheon is edged with ribbons and, to use the official description, “the top left carries blue and yellow colors, the same as on the flag of Ukraine, and the top right—red and sky-blue—the colors of the flag of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.”<sup>26</sup> This decision has not been officially revoked so far, but in its current description on the official webpage of Dnipro city council, the mention of the flag of the Ukrainian SSR is simply omitted, and the image on either side gives a ribbon in the blue and yellow colors.<sup>27</sup>

### Brezhnev and Local Pride

On January 25, 2012, the City Council of Dnipropetrovsk assigned the name of Leonid Brezhnev to one of the small, previously nameless streets on the outskirts of the city.<sup>28</sup> In September of the same year, a bronze bas-relief of Brezhnev appeared on one of the eight concrete steles in the center of Dnipropetrovsk, which bore the portraits of fifteen prominent natives of the region.<sup>29</sup> It was not the first attempt to commemorate Brezhnev in the city’s landscape. After his death in 1982, Brezhnev’s name was given to a number of city facilities, notably the Pivdenmash and the Metallurgical Institute. But the cancellation of these short-lived changes after Gorbachev came to power passed almost unnoticed. It seems that Brezhnev’s mythology found its new meaning exactly in the post-Soviet situation of ideological confusion and semantic disorientation. Images of stability, well-being, and, at the same time, the international prestige of the Soviet Union, typical of the post-Soviet memory of the years of “stagnation,” in the Dnipropetrovsk context, were reinforced by local patriotism linked to the image of “neither the city number one nor the city number

26 “Symvolika m. Dnipropetrovs’ka,” accessed January 12, 2012, <http://dniprorada.gov.ua/simvolika-m-dnipropetrovska>.

27 “Symvolika mista,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://dniprorada.gov.ua/uk/page/simvolika-mista>. On this site, the red-and-blue ribbon of the Soviet flag has been replaced by a blue-and-yellow ribbon, but the Soviet ribbon is preserved in the image of the city’s flag, which shows the same coat of arms.

28 “U Dnipropetrovs’ku z’iavylasia vulytsia Brezhnieva,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/short/2012/01/25/69958/>.

29 “U Dnipropetrovs’ku Shcherbyts’koho, Brezhnieva i Kuchmu uvichniuiut’ u bronzi, opozytisia oburiuiet’sia,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/24702729.html>.





FIGURE 56.  
Petrovsky monument  
(to be dismantled on 29 January, 2016)  
and memorial cross to the victims  
of Holodomor 1932–33.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

two.”<sup>30</sup> If post-Soviet Lviv looked for its “golden age” in the times when this city was part of the Austrian Empire,<sup>31</sup> and post-Soviet Odesa—to its history as part of the Russian Empire,<sup>32</sup> then post-Soviet Dnipropetrovsk found its heyday in the times of Brezhnev.

The fascination with Brezhnev is another local example of the secondary utilization of recognizable Soviet symbolic tropes in the absence of symbols capable of adequately reflecting the post-Soviet situation and post-Soviet experience.<sup>33</sup> The local authorities turned to the resources of the Brezhnev myth not immediately after Ukraine’s declaration of independence, but in the second decade of its post-Soviet existence. At the

same time, the inscriptions on all new memorial plaques were made in Ukrainian, the oppression of which Brezhnev was often accused of. Therefore, the seemingly old form here did not restore Soviet ideologemes, but adapted their selective fragments to a different context and, simultaneously, contributed to

30 See Boris Dubin, “Face of an Epoch. The Brezhnev Period Variouslly Assessed,” *Russian Politics and Law* 42, no. 3 (2004): 5–20; O. Iu. Malinova, “Tema imperii v sovremennykh rossiiskikh politicheskikh diskussiiakh,” in *Nasledie imperii i budushchee Rossii*, ed. A. Miller (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), 59–102, etc.

31 See Andrei [Andrii] Portnov, *Uprazhneniia s istoriei po-ukrainski* (Moscow: O. G. I., Memorial, 2010), 63–66.

32 Tanya Richardson, *Kaleidoscopic Odessa. History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Cf. Oleg Gubar and Patricia Herlihy, “The Persuasive Power of the Odessa Myth,” in *Cities after the Fall of Communism. Reshaping Cultural Landscape and European Identity*, ed. John Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, and Blair A. Ruble (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009), 137–165.

33 Sergei Ushakin, “Byvshee v upotreblenii: Postsovetское sostoianie kak forma afazii,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 100 (2009): 760–792.



FIGURE S7. Orange Revolution centered around Lenin's monument in 2004.  
Photo by Andrii Portnov.

the neutralization of the Soviet past as a topic that potentially had political relevance.<sup>34</sup>

The convenience of the Brezhnev's "golden age" mythology for Dnipropetrovsk rested on its ideological uncertainty and amorphousness. The image of Brezhnev's city did not contain the potential for political mobilization. It simply appealed to the "special status" of Dnipropetrovsk, which was now lost, and somehow kept alive the city ambitions regarding its identification with a metropolis. Probably because of that, even during the "decommunization," (to be discussed below) at least one memorial plaque to Brezhnev (planted on his postwar residence) escaped destruction.<sup>35</sup>

34 Here I am following an approach suggested in Il'ia Kalinin, "Nostal'gicheskaiia modernizatsiia: Sovetskoe proshloe kak istoricheskii gorizont," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 6 (2010): 6–16.

35 For more on this modernist house from early twentieth century where Brezhnev resided with his family in 1947–1950 see "Ne priznaiut pamiatnikom arkhitektury: v Dnepre prodaiut rezidentsiiu Brezhneva," accessed April 21, 2021, <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/183271>.

## How the “Eastern” City Became Central and how It “Saved Ukraine”

One could argue that the modern history of Dnipro(petrovsk) became the biggest surprise of the Euromaidan’s aftermath in 2014.<sup>36</sup> Unlike neighboring Donetsk and Luhansk, which, as a result of local separatist movements and the Russian intervention, turned into the centers of two self-proclaimed “people’s republics,” Dnipropetrovsk declared its devotion and loyalty to Ukraine with unexpected strength. How did it happen and why? How to describe the new socio-political processes in the Dnipro region, which were hardly imaginable even during the Kyivan Maidan?

With the escalating conflict in Ukraine, it seemed logical to expect the customary pragmatic wait-and-see approach from Kuchma’s political birthplace, a city used to adapting to any central government. And, at first, this seemed to be the case. In late January 2014, the local authorities, appointed by then-still-president Viktor Yanukovych, brutally dispersed a pro-Ukrainian protest at the building of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration. But Russia’s annexation of Crimea irrevocably put an end to the public passivity of “the worker city.” Within days, Ukrainian flags began to soar, in large numbers, on the balconies of apartment blocks, on business offices, and on automobiles. The visible majority of Dnipropetrovsk residents appeared to want to say: “We are not Putin’s ‘compatriots’!” and “Our Russian language does not need protection!”<sup>37</sup> This message quickly and resolutely found support among the new regional authorities headed by the billionaire chief of the Privat group Kolomoisky. He was appointed the head of the region state administration on March 2, 2014. It was the first political experiment in Ukrainian history when an oligarch was put in charge of the regional power.<sup>38</sup>

Quite soon, especially after the escalation to full-fledged warfare in neighboring Donetsk and Luhansk regions, jokes started to circulate about “Ukraine joining the Dnipropetrovsk Region” and analytical articles began to appear

36 Cf. Marci Shore, *Ukrainian Night: An Intimate History of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

37 Cf. Taras Kuzio, *Putin’s War against Ukraine. Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017) and Taras Kuzio, Sergei I. Zhuk and Paul d’Anieri, eds, *Ukraine’s Outpost. Dnipropetrovsk and the Russian-Ukrainian War* (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2022).

38 For details see Wojciech Kononczuk, “Oligarchs after the Maidan: The Old System in a ‘New’ Ukraine,” accessed March 4, 2019, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2015-02-16/oligarchs-after-maidan-old-system-a-new-ukraine>.

arguing that “the east of Ukraine” has shrunk to Donbas.<sup>39</sup> The sudden “conversion to Ukrainian loyalty” in Dnipropetrovsk was the result of the combined effect of different, often situational, factors. Among them was the resolute stance of the active pro-Ukrainian minority who, even before Kolomoisky’s appointment, defended the regional administration’s building against attacks by anti-Maidan separatists, who did not meet with any resistance in Donetsk. Another factor was the relative weakness of local pro-Russian activists in Dnipropetrovsk. The activists quickly lost whatever authority they had among the public, and many found it impossible even to stay in the city. Finally, also important was the stance adopted by the Privat group, and its managers’ skills in handling conflict. Unlike the elite groups in Donetsk—who from an early stage claimed “neutrality” and put on a show of negotiations with the rebels—he Dnipropetrovsk elites from Privat adopted an unequivocally pro-Ukrainian position from the start and did all they could to establish control over law enforcement.

The Privat group’s leader Ihor Kolomoisky acknowledged in one interview: “Certainly, Dnipropetrovsk was not so explosive a place as Donetsk or Luhansk.”<sup>40</sup> In post-Soviet Ukraine these two cities, unlike Dnipropetrovsk, were a preserve of businesses linked to the Party of Regions and President Yanukovich. The rapid collapse of the long-standing status quo and the flight of the “Donetsk president” from Kyiv created a particular tense situation in those two regions, which shared a border with Russia. Whereas for Dnipropetrovsk the Euromaidan augured, among other things, the fall of the “Donetsk clan,” anticipated not without malicious glee, for many in Donetsk it became the synonym for a breakup of the order that used to appear unbreakable, the expectation of oppression and humiliations, the fear of an unclear future. These attitudes were largely nurtured by geographical and informational factors: Donbas’s closeness to the border (the Dnipropetrovsk Region does not have a common border with Russia) and televised images (Ukrainian in Dnipropetrovsk and Russian in Donetsk and Luhansk).

The newly invented “Ukrainianness” of Dnipropetrovsk was not a creation of Privat group, but it was Privat that helped to turn it into a new dimension of local patriotism. Dnipropetrovsk, which called itself “neither the city number one

39 See Tatiana Zhurzenko, “From Borderlands to Bloodlands,” accessed April 21, 2021, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2014-09-19-zhurzenko-en.html>.

40 Ihor Kolomois’kyi, “Ne dai Bozhe opynytyisia na misti Turchynova!,” accessed April 21, 2021, [http://lb.ua/news/2014/05/16/266620\\_igor\\_kolomoyskiy\\_ne\\_day\\_bog.html](http://lb.ua/news/2014/05/16/266620_igor_kolomoyskiy_ne_day_bog.html).

nor city number two in Ukraine” or “the Brezhnev capital,” has now reinvented itself “as the most patriotic Ukrainian city.”<sup>41</sup> Borys Filatov, one of leading members in Kolomoisky’s team, who later became Kolomoisky’s principal rival and was elected mayor of Dnipropetrovsk in 2015, acknowledged the relevance of situational factor: “The situation could have moved in any direction anytime.”<sup>42</sup> He listed several decisions that were taken by the local elites in Dnipro, but not in Donetsk: “Not to try to sit on two chairs, take an openly pro-Ukrainian position, unite all politically active citizens around the new leaders, begin a political dialogue with their opponents, and strengthen the vertical of power.”<sup>43</sup>

The all-Ukrainian relevance of post-Maidan Dnipro was noticed and acknowledged by international media,<sup>44</sup> as well as the leading Ukrainian intellectuals. The writer Yuri Andrukhovych described Dnipro as “our definite region,” a “factual border between Ukraine and non-Ukraine.”<sup>45</sup> The historian Yaroslav Hrytsak conceptualized Dnipro as a key element in the Lviv–Kyiv–Dnipro chain which kept new Ukraine together and defined it as “patriotic, and, at the same time, bilingual and pro-European.”<sup>46</sup> Such appraisals were echoed by the

41 Boris Filatov, “Dnepropetrovsk vygliadit tak, budto on vperve vliubilsya,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://zn.ua/personalities/boris-filatov-dnepropetrovsk-vyglyadit-tak-budto-on-vperve-vlyubilsya-.html>.

42 Idem, “Esli by my poteriali Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraina by rukhnula,” accessed April 19, 2021, [https://censor.net/ru/resonance/320731/boris\\_filatov\\_esli\\_by\\_my\\_poteryali\\_dnepropetrovsk\\_ukraina\\_by\\_rukhnula](https://censor.net/ru/resonance/320731/boris_filatov_esli_by_my_poteryali_dnepropetrovsk_ukraina_by_rukhnula).

43 Idem, “S vozmozhnostiami Rinata Akhmetova i Sergeia Taruty možno bylo spravitsia s situatsiei v Donetskoï oblasti,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.ostro.org/general/politics/articles/446664/>.

44 Carol Morello, “Ukrainian City Stays Quiet amid War,” *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2014, accessed April 21, 2021, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukrainian-city-stays-quiet-amid-war/2014/06/24/fe7f2e35-a111-4a89-93fa-9b0abdb5aa7e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukrainian-city-stays-quiet-amid-war/2014/06/24/fe7f2e35-a111-4a89-93fa-9b0abdb5aa7e_story.html); Karl Schlögel, “Rocket City am Dnipro,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 6, 2014, 7. The last piece was later republished in idem, *Entscheidung in Kiew. Lektionen* (Berlin: Carl Hanser, 2015), 183–199.

45 Iurii Andrukhovych, “Synio-zhovtyi indastrial,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://zbruc.eu/node/32995>. This point is especially relevant keeping in mind Andrukhovych’s pejorative statements about Dnipropetrovsk in his earlier writings. His first version of them could be found in Iurii Andrukhovych, *Leksykon intymnykh mist: Dovil’nyi posibnyk z heopolityky ta kosmopolityky* (Kyiv: Meridian Czernowitz, 2011), 130–132.

46 Iaroslav Grytsak [Yaroslav Hrytsak], “Holokost—eto ukrainskii vopros,” accessed April 19, 2020, <https://jewish.ru/history/facts/2016/06/news994334217.php>. Cf. Yaroslav Hrytsak, “Ukraine in 2013–2014: A New Political Geography,” in *Regionalism without Regions. Reconceptualizing Ukraine’s Heterogeneity*, ed. Ulrich Schmid and Oksana Myshlovska (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2019), 367–392.

local elites. Filatov claimed, “If we lost Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine would have collapsed.”<sup>47</sup> Kolomoisky emphasized, “Who controls Dnipropetrovsk, controls the entire east.”<sup>48</sup>

In the spring of 2014, Borys Filatov metaphorically described the transformation experienced by Dnipropetrovsk:

Dnipropetrovsk is neither the city number one nor the city number two. It has always been a talent pool. Dnipropetrovsk has always been a proud city. And now this regional, local patriotism grew into national patriotism. Dnipropetrovsk has a large Jewish community. This is the way it always has been. This means teachers, doctors, businessmen. We have Pivdenmash, which also means white collars—engineers, scientists. So, it is very difficult to force anything upon the city. Dnipropetrovsk stands by itself. Yes, it was not interested in general national processes. But not because most people here thought of themselves as Russians. They think of themselves as people of Dnipropetrovsk before all.<sup>49</sup>

Evidently, Ihor Kolomoisky’s team centered their political legitimacy on the maintenance of peace and order. The prize was the transformation of one of the most influential oligarchs into one of the most powerful politicians. Kolomoisky’s associates did not even bother to hide the fact that they sometimes had to act unlawfully.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, Kolomoisky and Hennady Korban (one of Kolomoisky’s deputies) were probably the first influential pro-Ukrainian politicians in post-Soviet years who openly and proudly claimed their Jewishness. They had good relations with the city’s Jewish community: its leader Rabbi Kaminetsky appeared in a patriotic clip “It’s Dnipro, baby” produced by Kolomoisky’s supporters and the local cabaret.<sup>51</sup> There were also other prominent Jews in Dnipro’s latest history: among the fighters of the Dnipropetrovsk volunteer battalion Dnipro-1 there was an Orthodox Jew Asher Cher-

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47 Filatov, “Esli by my poteriali.”

48 Kolomois’kyi, “Ne daï Bozhe . . .”

49 Boris Filatov, “Dnepropetrovsk vygliadit tak, budto on vpervye vliubilsia.”

50 Hennadiï Korban, “Vziav avtomat i kazhu: ‘Anu, suky, stavajte do stinky. Doky vy nabyvajete kysheni, tam liudy hynut,’” accessed April 21, 2021, [http://gazeta.ua/articles/events-journal/\\_vzyav-avtomat-i-kazhu-anu-suki-stavajte-do-stinki-doki-vi-nabivayete-kisheni-tam-liudy-ginut/564393](http://gazeta.ua/articles/events-journal/_vzyav-avtomat-i-kazhu-anu-suki-stavajte-do-stinki-doki-vi-nabivayete-kisheni-tam-liudy-ginut/564393).

51 See “Kabare ‘Veselyi pecets’ i Boris Filatov: Detka, èto Dnepr!,” accessed April 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Zlcar-XSyk>.



kassky, who fled the Russia-annexed Crimea and brought his family to Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>52</sup>

In the summer of 2014, Dnipropetrovsk became a center for medical treatment of the wounded and a place of burial for hundreds of unidentified Ukrainian soldiers who were brought from the frontline. The active participation of the Dnipropetrovsk authorities in the war—which in Ukraine was first officially called “anti-terrorist operation”—gave the authorities special legitimacy in political and business opposition to the central government in Kyiv. The retaliation was brutal: on March 24, 2015, Kolomoisky lost his position as head of the Dnipropetrovsk regional administration; Privatbank was nationalized by the Ukrainian state; and numerous corruption accusations against him were launched not only in Ukraine, but also in the United States.<sup>53</sup>

Importantly, the transformation of Dnipropetrovsk into “the heart of Ukraine” cannot be reduced only to the activities of the governor-oligarch Kolomoisky and the Privat group. Kolomoisky and his team were able to fill the power vacuum in post-Maidan Dnipropetrovsk, and their extraordinary influence was not only a result of the successful crisis management, but also the product of weakness and imbalance of the central government in Kyiv. The new regional authorities with the Privat background were able to skillfully use the peculiarities of Dnipropetrovsk’s self-identification and offer the city a new formula of local patriotism, closely connected with political loyalty to Ukraine. It was in Dnipropetrovsk that Ukrainian political nationalism has manifested itself most clearly—the kind of nationalism that did not involve the abandonment of Russian language or, for instance, Russian or Jewish identity.

Moreover, in 2017, the city of Dnipro regained its millionaire status. Partly due to the influx of temporarily displaced persons from Donetsk and Luhansk regions as well as Crimea, the population of the city now amounted to 1,002,636 persons.<sup>54</sup>

52 See more in Misha Friedman, “The Ukrainian City that’s Become a Haven for Jews Fleeing Another European War,” accessed April 21, 2021, <http://qz.com/347948/the-ukrainian-city-thats-become-a-haven-for-jews-fleeing-another-european-war/>.

53 More on Kolomoisky see Konrad Schuller, “Der Oligarch des Westens,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 9, 2014, 6; Victoria Narizhna, “Team Kolomoisky,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/team-kolomoisky/>; Oliver Carroll, “Star Wars in Ukraine: Poroshenko vs. Kolomoisky,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/star-wars-in-ukraine-poroshenko-vs-kolomoisky/>; and others.

54 “Dnepr snova stal gorodom millionnikom—blagodaria migratsii s Donbassa,” accessed April 29, 2021, [https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/dnepr-snova-stal-gorodom-millionnikom-blagodarya-migracii-s-donbassa-255268\\_.html](https://zn.ua/UKRAINE/dnepr-snova-stal-gorodom-millionnikom-blagodarya-migracii-s-donbassa-255268_.html).





FIGURE 58. The Alley of Glory with bas-reliefs of Brezhnev and Shcherbytsky demolished in October 2016.

Photo by Andrii Portnov.

## The “Decommunized” Dnipro and Its Public Sphere

In Dnipropetrovsk, as well as in Kyiv, the dismantling of Soviet monuments and renaming the streets began during the Euromaidan and before the adoption of “decommunization” laws by the Ukrainian parliament.<sup>55</sup>

On January 22, 2014, the post-Soviet Ukraine, for the first time in its history, faced killings during mass political protests. The very first protester killed on Hrushevsky Street happened to be Serhii Nigoyan from the Dnipropetrovsk region. In Dnipropetrovsk, Nigoyan’s name was given to one of the biggest avenues, previously named after the Soviet official Mikhail Kalinin.

The grassroots initiative to commemorate Nigoyan and other victims among the Euromaidan protesters (called the Heavenly Hundred) was one of the first steps in turning Dnipropetrovsk into “the heart of Ukraine.” Two spontaneous memorial sights emerged. The first memorial sight was the pedestal of the centrally located Lenin monument. It was covered with the photos of people killed in Kyiv and slogans “Glory to Ukraine.” At first, the Lenin stature was still there. But on February 22, 2014, after many hours of strenuous efforts, Lenin was thrown off the pedestal. It happened, as in many other Ukrainian cities, at nighttime and without a formal legal decision. During the first weeks after the disappearance of Lenin’s statue, the self-made memorial to the Heroes of

55 For their detailed analysis see David R. Marples, “Decommunization, Memory Laws, and ‘Builders of Ukraine in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,’” *Acta Slavica Japonica* 39 (2018): 1–22.

Maidan still remained. But soon the entire pedestal was, at first, hidden under the patriotic poster with young girl and a slogan in Russian: “I love Ukraine,” and then completely removed. As of 2022, there is literally nothing at the place of Lenin monument, just an empty space. On May 25, 2014, Lenin Square was officially renamed Square of the Maidan Heroes.

The skeleton of the *Parus* hotel was covered with a huge painting of a trident (emblem of Ukraine) in blue and yellow colors. With that, this symbol of unrealized late Soviet aspirations became the most visible sign of the newly discovered Ukrainian patriotism.

On April 9, 2015, the Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) of Ukraine adopted the package of “decommunization” laws, and the renaming of Dnipropetrovsk became a relevant topic. On the eve of the New Year, December 29, 2015, part of the deputies of the Dnipropetrovsk City Council held a special session at six in the morning, at which they “renamed” the city of Dnipropetrovsk into Dnipropetrovsk (sic!). The point was to link the city on the Dnipro River not with the Bolshevik Petrovsky (subjected to “decommunization”), but with St. Peter. Just the very next day, Borys Filatov, recently elected after Euromaidan as mayor of the city, accepted the decision of the on-site City Council’s meeting. During the mayoral election, Filatov, together with his main rival Oleksandr Vilkul (who was close to the defeated ex-president Yanukovych) declared their adherence to the name Dnipropetrovsk, citing the opinion of city residents who did not accept the renaming as a priority and feared the associated additional costs and bureaucratic troubles.<sup>56</sup>

However, neither the appeal to St. Peter (not the first in the city’s history), nor the amazing solidarity of ideological opponents and the references to the opinion of the city dwellers influenced the decision of the Verkhovna Rada (the parliament of Ukraine), which changed the name of city from Dnipropetrovsk into Dnipro on May 19, 2016. In a video message to the townspeople, the mayor Filatov said that he had asked the Chairman of the Ukrainian parliament not to sign the renaming law and stated once again that most of the city’s residents had

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56 Ol’ga Klinova, “Gorod na Dnepre: tsena dekomunizatsii,” accessed May 17, 2020, [http://society.lb.ua/life/2015/12/25/324239\\_gorod\\_dnepre\\_tsena\\_dekomunizatsii.html](http://society.lb.ua/life/2015/12/25/324239_gorod_dnepre_tsena_dekomunizatsii.html). The sociological poll conducted in September 2015 showed that more than 90% of Dnipropetrovsk residents were against renaming their city: “Ponad 90% vidstokiv zhyteliv Dnipropetrovs’ka proty ioho pereimenuvannia,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/09/24/7082461/>.

not associated its name with the local Bolshevik Petrovsky for a long time.<sup>57</sup> But the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada signed the decree.

By doing so, he apparently felt like following the decommunization logic, and did not reflect on the fact why and how the city's name Dnipropetrovsk—given in 1926 and hardly pronounceable in all non-East Slavic languages—turned out to be surprisingly stable. It was not changed even by the German occupation administration in 1941–43. Dnipropetrovsk lasted much longer than other Soviet city names, such as Stalino, which was renamed in 1961, or Leningrad and Kalinin, which were renamed in the 1990s. Probably, one of the reasons for this was the non-ideological perception of the name “Dnipropetrovsk” and the loss of its connection with the historical character.

In other words, the name of Petrovsky barely provoked any special feelings, even despite some efforts to stress his personal responsibility for the Holodomor 1932–1933. The latest accusation was used by a “group of activists” as a formal reason to destroy Petrovsky's monument near the main railway station—it happened in the middle of the night on January 29, 2016.<sup>58</sup> The newly adopted city name “Dnipro” was previously often used as a shortened city-name in everyday speech. Now, the city's official name became shorter and deprived of any ideological connotations.

The destruction of the Soviet memorial sites was not limited to Lenin and Petrovsky's monuments. Still, not every Soviet monument was removed or violated. Unsurprisingly, the Brezhnev's memorial



FIGURE 59.  
Lenin's monument turned into memorial  
of the Heavenly Hundred in winter 2014.  
Photo by Volodymyr Portnov.

57 “Filatov zvernuvsia do meshkantsiv Dnipropetrovs’ka: navkolo pereimenuvannia bahato spekuliatyiv,” accessed May 17, 2020, <http://glavcom.ua/news/filatov-zvernuvsya-do-meshkanciv-dnipropetrovska-navkolo-pereymenuvannya-bagato-spekulyacyi-352660.html>.

58 See “Pam’iatnyk Petrovs’komu znesly u Dnipropetrovs’ku,” accessed April 29, 2021, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2016/01/29/7097251/>.



FIGURE 60. The Heroes of Maidan Square where previously stood Lenin's monument. Photo by Andrii Portnov.

plagues lasted the longest. They remained untouched during the first wave of “decommunization,” and one of them survived until nowadays. In other words, in post-Maidan Dnipropetrovsk, Lenin, but not Brezhnev, was seen as a symbol of the Soviet oppression. Or, more precisely, it was Lenin who became the most visible association with Putin's Russia and so was removed from the public space in post-Maidan Ukraine.

The removal of old monuments was accompanied by the opening of new ones. Not far away from the regional administration office, a self-made open-air gallery dedicated to the Heavenly Hundred was created. Later on, behind this gallery, the grassroots activists erected a cross to commemorate the Ukrainian soldiers (among others, a dozen of air force soldiers from Dnipropetrovsk who died in the Ukrainian helicopter Mi-8 shot down by the separatists' forces near Slovyansk on June 24, 2014). In commemorating the fallen Ukrainian soldiers, the grassroots initiatives and the local administration went hand-in-hand. Dnipro became a home to the first ATO (“anti-terrorist operation”) museum in Ukraine, which opened as a branch of the city's historical museum. Its exposition included military equipment brought from the battlefield, which was placed outdoors. This part of the museum was opened in May 2016. The indoor part—with various documents and media materials—was opened in January 2017 inside the building of the “Battle for the Dnipro” diorama.<sup>59</sup> This proximity is both symbolic and not accidental—the ATO exposition is supposed not

59 See the museum's official Facebook page: Muzei Hromads'koho podvyhu Dnipropetrovshchyny v podiiakh ATO, accessed April 29, 2021, <https://glavcom.ua/world/observe/>





FIGURE 61. Street exposition of the Anti-terrorist operation museum opened on 25 May, 2016. Photo by Andrii Portnov.

to replace, but to supplement the Soviet commemorative space devoted to the Second World War.

Finally, the “decommunization” in Dnipro meant the first systematic and expansive renaming of streets since 1991.<sup>60</sup> The principal logic of the renaming, approved by the city council, was based on the suggestions of local historians and relied not on giving back historical names (with just a few exceptions like Soborna Square), but on introducing mostly Ukrainian historical figures into the city’s landscape.<sup>61</sup> This involved not only locally important writers, scholars, or politicians, but also such emblematic figures of the nationalist movement as Yevhen Konovalets, Dmytro Dontsov, and Roman Shukhevych. Rather exceptional (but worth noting) was the appearance of streets named after Aleksandr Galich (a Soviet and later émigré bard who was born in Katerynoslav), Rabbi Schneerson, Soviet director of the DMZ plant Leonid Stromtsov, and even Andrey Fabr, the Russian imperial governor. The renaming strived to keep the

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jes-rozpochne-testuvannya-covid-pasportiv-uzhe-u-travni-yaki-krajini-stanut-pershimi-753683.html.

60 Cf. Oleksandra Haïdaï and Iryna Sklokina, comps., *Polityka i pam'iat'. Dnipro–Zaporizhzhia–Odesa–Kharkiv. Vid 1990-kh do siohodni* (L'viv: FOP Shumylovych, 2018). See also Ursula Wooley, “The Securitization of Entangled Historical Identity? Local and National History Discourses in Dnipro during the Poroshenko Presidency,” in *Official History in Eastern Europe*, ed. Korine Amacher, Andrii Portnov, and Viktoriia Serhiienko (Osnaabrück: Fibre, 2020), 319–347.

61 “Povnyï perelik pereïmenuvan' vulyts' Dnipra po raionakh,” accessed April 19, 2021, [http://rename.dp.ua/Dnipro\\_Rename\\_v2.pdf](http://rename.dp.ua/Dnipro_Rename_v2.pdf).

personalities related to the achievements of the Soviet rocket industry out of “decommunization” (even though some of these people belonged the highest echelons of the Communist Party) and to include such important local Ukrainian cultural figures as Vasyl Chaplenko or Ivan Sokulsky. The greatest honor went to a historian Dmytro Yavornytsky—the city’s main avenue was named after him. At the same time, many prominent intellectual figures such as Volodymyr Parkhomenko, Mykola Kovalsky, and Viktor Petrov were given no street names in the city where they lived and worked.

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It is obvious that a city is far more than just monuments and names. The latter are the surface under which lies an ocean of problems: the state of the environment in the recent industrial center and the weakness of its transport infrastructure; grassroots social activism and new cultural and educational institutions; the relationship between the city’s center and its new residential districts, the unfinished subway and the unresolved issues with the airport (the problems with which became not so long ago the main reason for denying Dnipro the right to host matches of European soccer championship in 2012); the religious life of various denominations and the preservation of architectural heritage of imperial and Soviet times; the problems of homeless animals and accessibility of urban facilities for people with special needs; the attempts to establish new local heroes (not just Yavornytsky, but also Oleksandr Pol whose grave was found and excavated with the active support of local authorities),<sup>62</sup> and so forth. This is by no means a complete list of complex and interesting topics, each of which requires an in-depth interdisciplinary study.

A notable common feature of the city’s anniversaries, both of 1887 and 1976, as described in this book was their focus on the future. The imperial Katerynoslav and the Soviet Dnipropetrovsk, in celebrating their jubilees, were much more concerned with new projects than with the restoration of memorial sites. This trend in the self-perception of the city with a relatively short and changeable history was noted by the creators of the new logo of Dnipropetrovsk (2013) with the slogan: “Dnipropetrovsk—new every day!”<sup>63</sup> Probably the best

62 “U Dnipri na rozkopkakh tserkvy znaishly pokhovannia pochesnoho hromadianyna mista, metsenata Oleksandra Polia,” accessed April 19, 2021, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-pidtvrdyly-ostanky-polya/30838519.html>.

63 This information appeared on the webpage of the Department for international relations of the Dnipropetrovsk city council: “Dnepropetrovsk novyi kazhdyi den,” accessed April 1,

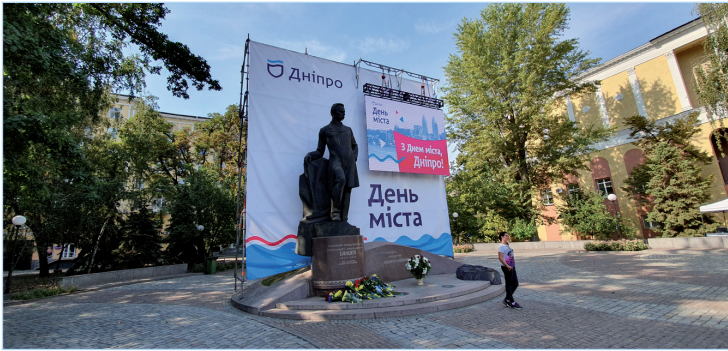


FIGURE 62. The Dnipro City's Day in 2019. Oleksandr Pol's monument at the center of celebration. Photo by Andrii Portnov.

confirmation of their message that the approved logo was soon forgotten and the website for which it was designed was closed. With their own experience, the authors of this slogan proved that their rhetorical choice was a proper one.



FIGURE 63.  
The Sail (Parus) unfinished hotel  
with huge Trident of Ukraine.  
Photo by Volodymyr Portnov.

But how to tell the story that escapes narrating? How to write the story that is unfinished and therefore exceptionally rich? What persists in quickly changing formulated externally or self-imposed images of “new Athens,” “southern Manchester,” “rocket city,” “Jewish capital,” or “heart of Ukraine?” Perhaps, even Petrov’s “no foundation” trope could be read as no less elusive.

Probably, to deal with questions like these, one needs an analytical language which is less essentialized and politicized, which is more dynamic and self-critical towards any “natural” basic interpretative notions. Hopefully, the search for such language will be a matter of books to come.

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2015, <http://dniproinvitesyou.org/RU/portfolio-view/dnipropetrovsk-novyj-schodnya-anhlijs/>. This site is currently unavailable. But confirmation that the logo has been designed and even approved by the City Council can be found here: “U Dnepropetrovska poiavilsia svoi logotip,” accessed April 24, 2021, <https://www.segodnya.ua/regions/dnepr/u-dnepropetrovska-poyavilsya-svoy-logotip-485201.html>.



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*Dneprovskaia panorama*

*Dnipropetrovs'ka hazeta*

*Dniprovi khvyli*

*Ekaterinoslavskaia zemskaia gazeta*

*Ekaterinoslavskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*

*Ekaterinoslavskii iubileinyi listok*

*Iuzhnaia zaria*

*Nasze misto*

*Pridneprovskii krai*

*Ruskaia pravda*

*Shturm*

*Zoria*

*Zvezda*

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# Index

- Afanasev (Afanas'ev) (Chuzhbinskii), A. S.,  
19, 47, 83  
Antonov-Ovseenko, Vladimir, 136, 143, 149-  
151, 162-163  
Babushkin, Ivan, 92-94  
Beauplan, Guillaume Le Vasseur de, 18, 20, 25,  
Belinskii, Vissarion G., 45, 47  
Black Hundred (Chernaia Sotnia), 105, 106,  
111, 119, 166, 203  
Borochov, Ber, 95-96, 99-100  
Borysthenes, 18. *See also* Dnipro River  
Brezhnev, Leonid, 12, 16, 266-267, 276,  
279-282, 286-287, 289, 292-293, 298,  
303, 306-308, 310-311, 317, 319-321,  
327, 329-330  
Brezhnev's capital, 7, 9, 266, 324. *See also*  
Brezhnev's Closed City  
Brezhnev's Closed City, 16, 279. *See also*  
Brezhnev's capital  
Bryansky (Brianskyi) Plant, 70, 73, 91, 94,  
120, 126, 137-138, 159, 162, 176-177,  
190, 270, 288  
Bund, 95, 96, 152  
Byzantine Empire, 18, 29  
Cadets (Constitutional Democratic Party;  
Party of People's Freedom), 104  
capital of stagnation, 9, 293, 308, 311  
Catherine II's Journey to Crimea in 1787,  
35-36, 38, 41, 68, 283  
Catherine the Great (Catherine II), Empress,  
9-10, 17, 24, 27, 29-33, 35-37, 40-46, 48,  
51-58, 66-68, 71-72, 131, 175, 177, 203,  
214, 245, 252, 283, 288-89, 318  
Central Rada (Rada), 134-138, 142, 162, 184  
Census of 1897, 74  
Chaplenko, Vasyl, 213, 332  
Charter for the Rights, Freedoms, and  
Privileges of the Noble Russian Gentry  
of 1785, 31  
Charter of Good Discipline (Police Charter)  
of 1782, 32  
Choudoir brothers, 71. *See also* Choudoir,  
George  
Cheka, 163, 170, 173-174, 178, 194  
Cherniavskiy, D., 38, 113, 190  
Chersonesus, 30, 32, 37, 54  
Choudoir, George, 64. *See also* Choudoir  
brothers  
Civil War, 11, 102, 135, 143-146, 151, 154,  
160, 165, 171, 174, 180, 192, 199, 217  
Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus  
Porphyrogenitus, Emperor, 18  
Cossacks (Zaporozhian Cossacks), 9-11,  
16-17, 22-27, 29, 33-34, 37, 40, 56, 67,  
88, 105, 109, 112-115, 119, 132-133,  
139, 144-145, 147, 149, 152, 165, 184,  
190, 202, 284-285, 289, 299, 300, 304,  
308, 316-319  
Cossack myth of Ukraine, 25  
Crimean Karaites, 50, 77  
Crimean Khanate, 23, 24  
Crimean War of 1853-1856, 72  
Dalman (Dal'man), Vladimir, 94, 96, 100-  
101, 104  
Denikin, Anton, General, 142, 144, 150,  
152-153, 164, 166, 173, 202  
Derkach, Leonid, 273, 313  
Dmytro Yavornytsky National History  
Museum of Dnipro, 16, 19, 39, 47,  
54, 63, 70, 76, 98, 115-116, 127,  
138, 145, 167, 181, 185, 234, 268,  
288, 296, 301  
Dnipro Hydroelectric Station (DniproHES),  
34, 206-208, 220, 246  
Dnipro, 10, 15, 19, 313-317, 319, 322, 324,  
326-328, 330-333.  
Dnepropetrovsk, *passim*  
Dnepropetrovsk, 7, 9-16, 56, 127, 169,  
190-193, 195-210, 212-225, 227-258,  
260-287, 289-290, 292-298, 300-330,  
332-333  
Ekaterinoslav, *passim*  
Katerynoslav, *passim*  
Katerynoslav-I, 33-34, 38  
Katerynoslav-II, 38, 41  
Krasnodneprovsk (Red-Dneprovsk), 190

- Dniprodzerzhynsk, 239, 251, 266, 280.  
*See also* Kamianske
- Donetsk, 12, 65, 121, 184-186, 205, 293-294, 297, 322-324, 326. *See also* Iuzovka, Stalino
- Doroshenko, Dmytro, 87-88, 111-112, 118-119, 138, 140
- Dzyuba, Ivan, 303-304
- Egorov, Aleksandr, 33-34, 48
- Ehrenburg, Il'ia (Ilya), 164-165, 233
- Euromaidan, 12, 322-323, 327-328
- Fabr, Andrei, Governor, 85, 114, 331
- Fadeev, A. M., 48, 55, 59
- February Revolution of 1917, 129, 131, 152, 202
- Filatov, Borys, Mayor, 324-325, 328-329
- First World War (Great War), 11, 75, 119, 122-123, 127-129, 144, 164-165, 170-171
- Galich, Aleksandr, 331
- Gelfand, Vladimir, 216, 218, 255, 259
- Gilyarovskiy (Giliarovskii), Vladimir, 71
- Globa, Lazar, 40, 295
- Gopner, Serafima I., 108, 129, 138-139, 165, 183-184
- Gorbachev, Mikhail, 310, 312, 319
- GPU (OGPU), 166-167, 173-174, 178, 192, 194, 200, 203
- Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933, 11, 196, 199, 201, 203
- Great Frontier (Steppe Frontier), 20-23, 56, 101
- Great Terror of 1937-1938, 196, 203-204
- Greek Project, 29-31, 45
- Grigoriev, Nikifor, 150-153, 166
- haidamak*, 132, 165, 178
- Heavenly Hundred, 327, 329-330
- Herodotus, 18
- Hetmanate, 11, 28-29, 142, 158
- Hitler, Adolf, 238-239, 262
- Honchar, Oles, 16, 258, 287, 298, 300-304, 306
- Iuzovka, 65-66, 121. *See also* Donetsk, Stalino
- Jewish capital of Ukraine, 9, 312, 315-316, 333
- Jewish Socialist Workers Party (SERP), 96
- Jews, 13, 50-51, 61, 75, 78-83, 94-95, 98-103, 105-106, 123, 126, 132, 135, 144-145, 148, 150-154, 160, 176, 205, 218, 224, 230, 232-236, 256, 259-262, 264, 275-276, 298, 307, 314-315, 325-326, 335
- Joseph II, Emperor, 36-37
- Ihren, 231-232, 256, 274
- Kabakov, Ilya, 308-309, 312-313
- Kaganovich, Lazar, 198, 218
- Kamianske, 77, 101, 154, 239, 266. *See also* Dniprodzerzhynsk
- Karamzin, Nikolai, 56
- Karavaev, Alexander, 106, 207
- Karl Marx Avenue, 179, 209, 265, 290-291, 294. *See also* Katerynynskiy (Ekaterininsky) Avenue (*Prospekt*), Kashchenko, Adrian, 112-113
- Katerynynskiy (Ekaterininsky) Avenue (*Prospekt*), 47, 52, 72-73, 75, 77, 85, 112, 127, 128, 144, 177, 179, 268-269.  
*See also* Karl Marx Avenue
- KGB, 12, 167, 173-174, 192, 194, 203-204, 259-260, 273, 304, 308
- Khataievych, Mendel, 199-200, 204, 208
- Kherson, 22, 32-33, 36-37, 41-42, 51-52, 63, 135, 150, 237
- Khmelnitsky, Bohdan, 24, 26
- Khrushchev, Nikita, 281-282, 306
- Kobzon, Iosif, 297
- Kodak (Kudak), 25-27, 56, 316-317
- Kolomoisky, Ihor, 314, 322-327
- Konieczpolski, Stanislaw, Grand Crown Hetman, 25
- Konstantinos XI Palaiologos, Byzantine Emperor, 30
- Kopelev, Lev, 183, 199
- Korzh, Mykyta, 34, 37
- Kovaleva, Irina, 216, 222, 236
- Kovalsky, Mykola, 16, 278-279, 332
- Kozar, Pavlo, 244, 257, 307
- Krasnoselsky, Oleksandr, 177, 208-209
- Kravchenko, Viktor, 129, 160-161, 186
- Kryvyi Rih (Krivoi Rog), 63-66, 184-185, 219, 227, 232
- Kuchma, Leonid, President, 269, 298, 312-313, 319, 322
- Kyiv, 12, 15-16, 18, 22, 36, 73, 75, 79, 84, 93, 95, 103, 111-112, 119, 134-139, 163, 166, 183, 204, 206, 211-212, 238, 242, 261, 266-267, 272-274, 278-279, 281, 283, 289, 299-300, 302-303, 307, 311-313, 322-324, 326-327
- Kyivan (Kievan) Rus, 21
- Lazarenko, Pavlo, 313
- Lenin, Vladimir 61, 95, 108, 131, 171, 174, 177, 180-182, 185, 192, 206, 209, 271, 288, 290, 294, 299, 327-330
- Levin, Shmarya, Crown Rabbi, 81-82, 87, 129

- Lobanovsky, Valery, 272  
 Makarov, Oleksandr/Aleksandr, 269, 272  
 Makhno, Nestor, 11, 132, 145-151, 160-162, 164-167  
 Manchester, 7, 9, 11, 59-62, 83, 102, 205, 215, 333  
 Manzhura, Ivan, 313  
 Mazepa, Isaak, 132-133, 142  
 Mennonites, 75-76, 124, 151  
 Menorah, 13, 315-316  
 Mikhalkov, Nikita, 273  
 Moscow, 26, 36, 39, 41, 47, 81, 84, 86, 93, 104, 128, 137, 139, 141, 144, 167, 175, 190-191, 197, 200, 211, 217, 273-254, 256, 266, 268, 274-279, 281, 286, 293, 298, 304, 307-308, 310-312  
 Mordyukova, Nonna, 273  
 national question, 95, 97, 168, 180, 182-183, 187, 306  
 Nicholas I, Emperor, 53, 88  
 Nicholas II, Emperor, 88, 99-100, 102, 105, 120, 126-127, 130, 143, 161, 202  
 NKVD, 167, 173-174, 192, 194, 196, 198, 200-201, 203-205, 217-219, 227, 241, 261, 304  
 Novomoskovsk, 33, 196, 256, 300  
 Novorossiiia, 31, 48, 51, 120  
 Odesa (Odessa), 34-35, 48, 50, 52, 59, 73, 75, 78, 80-81, 84, 102, 11, 154, 188, 205-206, 237, 248, 259, 318, 320, 331  
 October Revolution, 178  
 Octoberists (Union of October 17), 104  
 Orshansky, Ilia, 79-80  
 Ottoman Empire, 10, 23, 25, 29-30, 42, 45, 138  
 OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists), 225-229, 238, 257  
 Pale of Settlement, 51, 78, 81, 105  
 Paul I, Emperor, 45-46, 56  
 Pereiaslav Treaty of 1654, 26  
 Peter III, Emperor, 27  
 Peter the Great (Peter I), Emperor, 41-42, 87, 131, 181  
 Petliura, Symon, 128, 132-134, 142, 148, 150-152, 158, 170  
 Petrov (Domontovych), Viktor, 10, 164, 209-211, 213-214, 332  
 Petrovsky, Hryhory (Grigory), 91, 93-94, 106, 108, 176, 179, 181, 184, 190-191, 197, 206, 218-219, 229, 239, 272, 288, 294, 328-329  
 Pidmohylny, Valerian, 146-147, 157, 165-166  
 Pivdenmash, 314, 322-327, 268-269, 271-274, 298, 312, 319, 325  
 Plyushch, Leonid, 274-275  
 Poale Zion [Workers of Zion], 95-96  
 pogrom, 66, 80-81, 89-90, 96, 99-102, 104, 108, 120, 129, 132, 144-145, 150-154, 160-167, 172  
 Poland, 15, 18, 22, 24, 26-29, 36, 50-51, 77, 93, 95, 121, 126, 128, 136, 189, 226, 248, 309  
 Polovytisia (Polovitsa), 34-35, 40, 46, 56, 67, 111, 317  
 Pol', Oleksandr, 10, 62-64, 66, 73, 114, 116, 126, 131, 290, 332-333  
 Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 23, 25-26, 28, 50  
 Polonska-Vasylenko, Natalia, 45  
 Poniatowski, Stanisław August, King, 36  
 Potemkin Palace 48, 68, 71-72, 87, 114  
 Potemkin, Grigory, Prince, 7, 9, 17, 30-32, 34-35, 38-48, 51-53, 56-57, 59, 68, 71-72, 85, 87, 114, 12117, 161, 179, 212, 254, 283, 294  
 Privatbank (Privat Group), 314, 322-323, 326  
 Prosvita, 116-117, 119, 127-128  
 Pushkin, Aleksandr (Alexander), 42, 54-55, 156, 177, 206, 229  
 Rapids (Dnipro rapids; rapids on the Dnipro, *porohy*), 10, 17-20, 23, 25, 52, 59, 120, 169, 206, 232  
 repressions, 161, 201, 263, 300, 302  
 Revolution of 1905, 78, 92, 94, 96-98, 102-104, 116, 129, 152  
 Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army of Ukraine, 147  
 Rodzianko, Mikhail, 105, 116, 130  
 Rozanov, Gavriil, Archbishop, 35, 40, 44, 46, 53-54, 59  
 Rozhdestvensky, Robert, 297  
 Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (RSDRP), 61, 93, 95, 184  
 Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, 29  
 Schneerson, Levi Yitzchak, Rabbi, 102, 195-196, 314  
 Schneerson, Menachem-Mendl, Rabbi, 314, 331  
 Second World War, 11-12, 123, 191, 194, 209-210, 215-216, 226, 241, 258-259, 270, 281, 285, 288, 295, 307, 301, 331  
 Shatrov, Mikhail, 284  
 Shcherbytsky, Volodymyr (Vladimir), 281-282, 286, 306  
 Shelest, Petro, 266, 285, 298-300, 303-304, 306

- Shevchenko, Taras, 24-25, 40, 105, 112, 132, 170, 179, 197, 208-209, 236, 262, 265, 283-285, 289-292, 294-295, 297, 308, 317
- Shkuro, Andrei, General, 144-145, 152
- Sich (Zaporozhian Sich), 24, 42, 44, 62, 113, 133, 143, 190, 213, 215, 221, 243, 285, 299, 311
- Sicheslav, 9, 190, 213
- Sinelnikov, Ivan, 35, 42
- Skal'kovskii (Skalkovsky), Apollon, 44
- Skoropadsky, Pavlo, Hetman, 139-142, 151, 162, 202
- Slashchov, Yakov, 167
- Soborna Square, 72, 87, 114, 143, 158, 178, 180, 209, 265
- Sokulsky, Ivan, 266, 288, 305, 311, 332,
- Sovietization, 175, 179
- Stalin, Joseph, 61, 136, 161-171, 189-193, 195, 197-198, 204, 208, 221, 253, 258, 260-264, 266-267, 271, 279, 285, 293, 295, 300, 302, 329
- Stalino, 190, 329. *See also* Donetsk, Iuzovka
- Stromtsov, Leonid, 270, 331
- Stumpp, Karl, 248-249
- Sumarokov, Pavel, 46, 49, 52
- Svetlov, Mikhail, 161-162
- Syniavsky, Antin (Siniavskii, Anton), 88, 112, 115, 202
- Tikhonov, Nikolai, 281
- Tolstoy, Alexey, 122, 147
- Tolstoy, Leo, 156
- Transfiguration Cathedral, 35, 37, 42-44, 46, 53-54, 66, 68, 72, 75, 195, 283, 291, 317
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 1918, 138, 163, 184, 190, 238
- Treaty of the Pruth of 1711, 27
- Trotsky, Leo, 94, 136, 1243, 179
- Trubachev, Oleg, 258
- Tymoshenko, Iulia, 313
- Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), 132, 135-137, 150, 160, 162, 238
- Ukrainian Project, 108, 111
- Ukrainization, 11, 183-184, 186-189, 193-194, 202, 237-238, 242
- Union of Lublin of 1569, 22
- Urusov, Nikolai, Prince, 115-117, 130, 137
- Urusova, Vera, Princess, 10, 137, 152, 155-156, 161, 172
- Ussishkin, Menahem, Mendel, 10, 81, 83
- Verkhovna Rada, 328-329
- Volodimer (Volodymyr) the Great, Kievan Prince, 30, 112-113
- Vynnychenko, Volodymyr, 123, 134
- Vyshnevetsky, Ahapyt (Agapit), Bishop, 130, 166
- Werner, Abraham, 234-236
- Wild Field, 10, 20, 22, 24, 26, 52
- Władysław IV Vasa, King, 26
- Yangel, Mykhailo (Mikhail), 268-269
- Yanukovych, Viktor, President, 322-323, 328
- Yavornytsky (Iavornyts'kyi, Evarnitsky), Dmytro (Dmitry), 14, 19, 25, 44, 48, 56, 62, 114-115, 117, 119, 133, 202-203, 215, 246, 285, 302, 332