Aftermath of the Holocaust and Genocides

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Edited by

Victoria Khiterer and Erin Magee

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To the Holocaust Survivors

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I was inspired for the idea of the conference themes and the volume by numerous memories of Holocaust survivors. When public discussion of the Holocaust topic was banned in the Soviet Union due to state anti-Semitism, I received my original knowledge about the Holocaust and its aftermath through their recounting of their experiences. I am very grateful for the Holocaust survivors' eyewitness accounts and devote this book to them.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my parents Ludmila Brovarnik and Michael Khiterer and to my aunt Elena Sokolovsky who shared with me family stories about their lives in post-war Kiev. My aunt provided the wonderful picture of my family in their one-room thirteen-person apartment in Kiev in 1946, which I am publishing in the Introduction to this work.

Victoria Khiterer
Millersville University

INTRODUCTION

VICTORIA KHITERER

И великой эпохи	Signs of a great era
След на каждом шагу	Haunt every step you go:
В толчее, в суматохе,	The turmoil and the crush,
В метках шин на снегу...	The tyre-marks in the snow…
И в значеньи двояком	The double meaning of
Жизни, бедной на взгляд,	A life that may seem shorn
Но великой под знаком	But marks its greatness by
Понесенных утрат.	The losses it has borne.

Boris Pasternak, *Bacchanalia*[1]

I am a child and grandchild of Holocaust survivors, who returned to Kiev after World War II from the front and evacuation, when the city still was in ruins. Like many other Kievan Jews after the war, my grandparents had problems returning to their apartments, which were occupied by local non-Jews. They lived in appalling conditions as did many other families. My paternal grandparents shared their large room with their two children and nine other family members. When my maternal grandparents and their two children returned to Kiev after the war their apartment was occupied by non-Jews. My grandparents could not regain their apartment, so they lived with their children in a basement with large rats that ran over the walls and ceiling at night.

Like all other Kievans my relatives lost many family members, friends and neighbors in Babi Yar, the place of execution of Kievan Jews and the largest Holocaust site in the Soviet Union. I remember how in my childhood my maternal grandmother recalled her Jewish relatives and friends who perished there. After the war the Babi Yar ravine shocked those who came there: the bones and scalps of executed people with remains of their personal belongings often emerged from the sandy ground. Despite the ban and persecution by the Soviet authorities, Jews and gentiles came to Babi Yar to commemorate their relatives and friends and organized memorial meetings there on September 29, the day the mass execution of Jews began in Kiev

in 1941. The Soviet authorities banned such meetings, persecuted their participants and did not for many years allow the construction of a monument in Babi Yar. According to the official Soviet ideology all Soviet people shared the same fate during the war. Thus, discussion and commemoration of the Holocaust was suppressed in the Soviet Union since the late 1940s.

Figure I-1. Victoria Khiterer's 9-year-old father Michael (sitting on the far left), her grandparents Boris and Vera (standing behind her father), and her great grandparents Yankel and Pesia (standing in the center), and family. Photo taken in their one room where 13 people lived. Kiev, 1946.

After their great losses during the war, Jews in the Soviet Union were further traumatized by the prohibition on commemorating Holocaust victims and erecting monuments for them. The anti-Semitic policy of the Soviet State was also imposed on other communist countries in Eastern Europe, which had a similar prohibition on the discussion of the Holocaust and the commemoration and memorialization of the victims.

Strong popular anti-Semitism persisted after the war in many European countries. Holocaust survivors could not return to their homes occupied by non-Jews or retrieve their abandoned property. In the Soviet Union and Poland Jews became the victims of violent attacks. There were Jewish

pogroms: in Krakow in August 1945, in Kiev in September 1945 and in Kielce in July 1946.[2]

However, neither the great losses during the war, nor post-war anti-Semitism broke the spirit of the Jewish people. Jewish cultural and religious life revived soon in many countries. Jewish national consciousness became even stronger after the war, since after the Holocaust many assimilated Jews reconsidered their attitude toward their Jewishness. Unfortunately, under the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe the Jewish national revival was very brief and during the state anti-Semitic campaigns in the late 1940s all Jewish national and cultural institutions were closed, with the exception of some synagogues.

The trials of Holocaust perpetrators and their local collaborators continued for many years after the war. The first trials took place already during the war, but many Nazi criminals and their collaborators escaped justice and lived under bogus documents in different countries. It took many years, sometimes even several decades, for states and Jewish organizations to find some of these Holocaust perpetrators and bring them to justice. It was often difficult to prove their participation in the Holocaust because of a lack of documentation. The new accessibility of Holocaust documents in archives in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union provided fresh evidence for the trials of accused Holocaust perpetrators, as in the case of John Demjanjuk.[3]

There are many similarities between the aftermath of the Holocaust and those of other genocides. This book discusses the aftermath of the Armenian genocide and the Holodomor (the state organized famine in Ukraine in 1932-33). The survivors of genocides, like Holocaust survivors, suffered deep psychological trauma. They and their descendants searched for justice and sought to punish the perpetrators. The government, scholarly institutions and the general public in present-day Armenia and Ukraine, as well as in the Armenian and Ukrainian diaspora, have put much effort into the international recognition, commemoration and memorialization of these genocides.

While many works have been published on different aspects of the Holocaust and these genocides, their aftermath and impact on society still needs further research and scholarly discussion. This book illuminates unknown aspects of the aftermath of the Holocaust and genocide and discusses trials of Holocaust and genocide perpetrators, the commemoration of the victims, attempts to revive Jewish national life and outbreaks of anti-Semitism after the Second World War. It also discusses the representation of the Holocaust and genocides in literature, press and film. In all, it comprises thirteen selected papers presented at the Millersville University

conferences on the Holocaust and Genocide in 2016 and 2018. Many are based on newly discovered archival materials and reveal unknown aspects of the Armenian genocide, the Holodomor, ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust.

The first part of the book focuses on the aftermath of the Holocaust, the trials of its perpetrators, Soviet state anti-Semitism and the problems of the revival of Jewish national life in the Soviet Union after World War II. **Victoria Khiterer** shows in her paper that despite the hostile atmosphere of increased state and popular anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union after World War II, Jewish intellectuals dreamt of a revival of Jewish national life and culture. **Martin Dean**'s paper raises a question about the reliability of Holocaust testimonies if the witness is himself a Holocaust perpetrator. **Peter Black**'s essay analyzes the investigation of Trawniki-trained guards who participated in the Holocaust in various concentration camps. **Elizabeth B. White** examines how the U.S. Government overcame the legal impediments to pursuing residents who had participated in Nazi crimes through legislation and the creation of a Department of Justice program that developed important precedents and practices for barring and removing not only Nazi perpetrators but also other human rights violators from the United States.

The second part of the book analyses the representation of the Holodomor and the Holocaust in literature and the press. **Gennady Estraikh**'s article delineates the peculiarities of Holocaust-related Soviet publications in the first post-Stalinist decade (1953-63). He shows how the Soviets used these publications for their propaganda purposes. **Marat Grinberg** examines how through a network of multifaceted historical and mythological imagery, Friedrich Gorenstein intertwines the Holocaust and Holodomor traumas to create a fraught literary landscape in his novel *Traveling Companions*. **Nadja Berkovich** analyses the semi-biographical novel *Das besondere Gedächtnis der Rosa Masur* (The Exceptional Memory of Rosa Masur) by Vladimir Vertlib, elucidating this literary account of Holocaust commemoration and memorization in the Soviet Union and the experience of Russian Jewish immigrants in Germany. **Holli G. Levitsky** discusses in her essay how to incorporate memoirs and testimonies into the teaching of the Holocaust. She uses as an example the work of Ruth Kluger.

The third section analyzes early Holocaust films. Soviet documentary cinematographers were the first to record images of Nazi atrocities against Jews and other civilians. **Stuart Liebman**'s essay explores how scholars should assess these films as contributions to the awareness of the Holocaust by Western audiences. **Steven Alan Carr** analyses these early Holocaust

films and shows how much more we can learn from their history and the conditions of their production.

The fourth part focuses on the Armenian genocide, the Holodomor and ethnic cleansing and their aftermath. **Khatchig Mouradian**'s essay examines the humanitarian resistance waged by Armenians, aided by locals and western missionaries, against the Ottoman government's genocidal policies in Syria and explores the challenges survivors confronted in the aftermath of the genocide. **John Vsetecka**'s paper utilizes survivor testimonies, specifically those that deal with teachers and children, to understand the Holodomor from an everyday point of view and to highlight the fluid and non-binary social roles that many Ukrainians assumed in order to survive. **Randall Fegley**'s paper discusses the origins of the concept of ethnic cleansing and the arguments for and against giving it legal definition. He provides suggestions for making distinctions to avoid its misuse in any future international conventions.

This book thus contributes to the fields of Holocaust and genocide studies with an examination of their long-lasting consequences and a discussion of new documentary sources and teaching methods for Holocaust and genocide courses.

Notes

[1] Boris Pasternak, *In the Interlude: Poems, 1945-1960*, trans. Henry Kamen, (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962), 182-185.

[2] Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia. Volume III 1914 to 2008.* (Oxford, Portland, Oregon: the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 605; Anna Cichopek, "The Cracow pogrom of August 1945". In Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed. *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 221–238; Victoria Khiterer, "We Did Not Recognize Our Country: The Rise of Anti-Semitism in Ukraine Before and After World War II (1937-1947)," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 26 (2014): 361-379.

[3] Lawrence Douglas, *The Right Wrong Man: John Demjanjuk and the Last Great Nazi War Crimes Trial*. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016).

PART I

THE HOLOCAUST AFTERMATH AND TRIALS

CHAPTER ONE

LIFE IN THE RUINS: JEWISH NATIONAL REVIVAL IN KIEV AFTER THE HOLOCAUST (1944-48)

VICTORIA KHITERER

When Jews who survived the war and the Holocaust returned to Kiev, they found the city in ruins, and most Jewish apartments occupied by gentiles. Many of their family members, relatives, and friends had perished in Babi Yar. Despite the hostile atmosphere of increased state and popular anti-Semitism, Jewish intellectuals dreamt about a revival of Jewish national life and culture. Kievan Jews combatted popular anti-Semitism in the city, strove to restore Jewish scholarly and cultural institutions, and commemorated the victims of the Holocaust. Some Jewish intellectuals shared Zionist ideas and supported the creation of the State of Israel. Unfortunately, this Jewish cultural revival continued only for a few years, because in the late 1940s the anti-cosmopolitan campaign began in the Soviet Union, when all Jewish institutions and organizations were closed, and many Jewish intellectuals became victims of political repression.

Jewish Life in Kiev in the Interwar Period

To understand the Jewish national and cultural revival in Kiev after the Second World War, we should turn back to Jewish life in the city in previous decades. Many Jews had settled in Kiev both legally and illegally during Tsarist times when the city was exempt from the Pale of Jewish Settlement. When the Pale was finally abolished after the February 1917 Revolution, Kiev's Jewish population grew rapidly because many Jews from provincial cities and shtetls moved to the city. Kiev had one of the largest urban Jewish populations in the Soviet Union. In 1917, 87,240 Jews lived in the city, comprising 15 percent of the population.[1] In 1926 the Kiev Jewish population had grown to 140,256 out of a total of 513,637 (27 percent); and in 1939 224,236 Jews lived in Kiev out of 847,000

inhabitants (26.5 percent).[2] This meant that, after Moscow, Kiev had the highest Jewish population of any city in the Soviet Union. (Figure 1-1)

Figure 1-1. Kreshchatik Street, Kiev, 1941

Kiev was also in the interwar years one of the two largest centers of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union (the other was Minsk). The large concentration of Jews in the city was conducive to the rise of Jewish scholarly and cultural life. Several Jewish cultural and scholarly institutions operated here during the 1920s-1930s: the Jewish Historical-Archaeographical Commission (1919-1929), the Institute of Jewish Proletarian Culture (1929-1936), and the Department of Jewish Language, Literature and Folklore of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (referred to as the Department of Jewish Culture) (1936-1949). During the repressions of the 1930s and 40s many scholars who worked in these institutions were imprisoned and some were executed.

Jewish schools, clubs and theaters operated in Kiev in the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s. However, most were liquidated here as in other places in the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1930s. At that time Soviet policy towards national minorities, including Jews, suddenly shifted. Instead of encouraging the development of the various national cultures of the multinational population of the Soviet Union, the authorities decided to emphasize Russian culture as dominant and to suppress all others.

Jewish-Gentile relations were quite complicated in Kiev during the interwar period. Kievan Jewry changed rapidly in Soviet times. Before the Revolution most Kievan Jews had only been allowed to live in three peripheral districts of the city: Podol, Plosskii and Lybedskoi. Only merchants of the first guild were allowed to settle anywhere in Kiev. After the February 1917 Revolution, Jews were able to live in all districts of the city. The rapidly increasing Jewish population and the presence of Jews in districts where they were not allowed to live before the Revolution greatly irritated anti-Semites. Russian nationalist and former State Duma deputy Vasilii Shul'gin secretly visited his native Kiev in December 1925 and reported that "[o]n Kreshchatik [the main street of Kiev] it is possible to find at least a partial solution of the riddle of where the Jews from Podol had disappeared to. They are here… on Kreshchatik a multitude of Jewish faces is very visible."[3] He tried to estimate the proportion of Jews and gentiles on Kreshchatik and estimated that there were "ten Russians for every forty Jews."[4]

Perhaps Shul'gin's calculation was an exaggeration, but it is obvious that many Jews moved from poor outlying districts of the city to downtown Kiev during the NEP period in 1921-28 when the government allowed small private businesses to function. In downtown Kiev there were good possibilities for trade, which made it attractive. According to Victor Nekrasov's memoirs, a Jewish theater worked on Kreshchatik in the 1930s.[5] There were also many schools, universities, theaters and businesses in downtown Kiev, and so it is not surprising that many Jews preferred to live there rather than in the former Jewish ghetto.

The famine of 1932-1933 (the Holodomor) increased tensions in the city between Kievans and newcomers. Many tens of thousands of peasants fled from rural areas to large cities. The Russian poet of Jewish origins Naum Korzhavin writes that native Kievans did not like the uneducated and rude newcomers and many of them, Ukrainian peasants, did not like Kievans, especially Jews, who lived better than they did.[6] Kievans lived in communal apartments while the newcomers settled in the basements of apartment buildings. According to Korzhavin, a person's place of living became a key indicator of social and cultural status, and the peasants experienced a lack of respect from the older inhabitants of the town.

Jews also experienced hostility from some gentiles and had "bad premonitions of how these people would behave during a war."[7] However, the Soviet authorities suppressed anti-Semitism before the Second World War, declaring it to be a shameful vestige of the tsarist regime. So, anti-Semites were afraid to attack Jews openly, as they could be attacked for counter-revolutionary activity and be persecuted as 'enemies of the

people.' In the pre-war years, popular anti-Semitism was usually limited to personal insults and did not acquire a violent character. But anti-Semitism exploded during the war under the encouragement of the Nazis, who depicted all Jews as Bolsheviks and exploiters of the gentile population.

Unfortunately, the premonitions of many Jews were realized during the Nazi occupation of Kiev. Korzhavin writes that the janitor of his apartment building Mitrofan Kudritskyi, tortured his elderly Jewish family members so sadistically during the first nine or ten days of the Nazi occupation that their execution in Babi Yar represented a liberation.[8] Korzhavin recalled that Kudritskyi organized "a personal Auschwitz in their home" for his relatives:

> Every day, every morning he came to our apartment … with one purpose, to commit outrages against them. He tortured these elderly people creatively, in many ways, beat them, forced them to clean the toilet in the yard with their bare hands and to do many other jobs that were humiliating and beyond their strength. He punished them if they did not adequately fulfill his orders. He was their master and he enjoyed this situation.[9]

Kudritskyi had appeared in Kiev with his family in 1934. He had been "dekulakized" and hated everybody who in his opinion lived better than he did. He was happy when people were arrested during Stalin's repressions. Kudritskyi also hated the Soviet regime which had spoiled his life. He rejoiced when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union and when Nazi aircraft bombed Kiev. But why did Kudritskyi choose elderly Jews who did not have any connection with the Soviet authorities as his victims? Certainly, one of Korzhavin's uncles had owned a building in which he shared an apartment with his brother's family which was confiscated after the October 1917 Revolution.[10] For Kudritskyi, the Soviet authorities were distant and unreachable, and so he directed all of his anger against his Jewish neighbors whose lives he turned into a nightmare. In addition to Korzhavin's relatives, Kudritskyi sadistically tortured two other Jewish families that lived in the building: an elderly couple and a mother with a child. He outlived his Jewish victims but did not survive the war. The Nazis, whom Kudritskyi had praised at the beginning of the occupation, killed him for stealing from them.[11]

Babi Yar

The Nazi occupation of Kiev encouraged popular anti-Semitism in the city, raising it to a new level. Kiev was the first large European city in which almost all of the Jews were massacred.[12] Historians continue to

debate the number of Jews killed at Babi Yar.[13] Depending upon the source, the number of Jews murdered there is given as anywhere from 33,771 to 150,000. It is impossible to know with any precision how many Jews were living in Kiev when the Nazis took over the city on September 19-20, 1941. We don't know how many Jews were evacuated, how many were mobilized into the Soviet Army, or how many Jewish refugees from other places were in the city. At the time of the chaotic retreat of the Soviet Army, nobody thought about such statistics. A few days after the German occupation, on September 28, Einsatzgruppe C, the Nazi paramilitary extermination unit in Kiev, reported that "There are probably 150,000 Jews in Kiev. To check this information has been impossible so far."[14] When the Nazis occupied Kiev, they could not easily identify Jews. Many Kievan Jews were quite assimilated and did not look different from their gentile neighbors. But according to Timothy Snyder, "In Kiev, Ukrainians and Russians helped the German Order Police find and register Jews before the mass shooting at Babyi Iar."[15] Thus, because of this collaboration, almost all the Jews who were in the city during the Nazi occupation were identified and executed.

German statistics of the number of Jews massacred in Babi Yar are not reliable, because they counted the number of executed Jews for only two days, 29 and 30 September 1941. Karel Berkhoff wrote that the Nazis had already begun killing Jews in Babi Yar on 27 September.[16] Ukrainian auxiliary troops continued the mass execution of Jews in Babi Yar until 5 October 1941. Thereafter, periodic executions of Jewish and gentile prisoners of the war, partisans and others continued in Babi Yar throughout the entire period of the Nazi occupation of Kiev, until November 1943.

Life in the Ruined City

Many Jewish and non-Jewish evacuees rushed to return to Kiev soon after the liberation of the city. By 1 January 1947 Jews already constituted 18.8 percent of the population: 132,467 of 704,609 Kiev inhabitants.[17] Although the city was in ruins, the conditions of life in evacuation were harsh, so many evacuees hoped for a better life and to recover their property by returning to Kiev. (Figure 1-2)

Figure 1-2. Liberation of Kiev, Kreshchatik Street, November 1943

However, when surviving Jews came back to Kiev and to other Ukrainian cities, they encountered a new level of vicious, violent anti-Semitism that had not existed in Ukraine before the war. This eruption of popular anti-Semitism can be explained partially by the influence of Nazi propaganda on the local gentile population and partially by the awful conditions of life in the war-torn cities and towns. According to the report of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Ukrainian Territory, over 6,000 apartment buildings and houses in Kiev (over 40 percent of all living accommodations) had been destroyed during the war, and in 1944 over 200,000 Kievans were homeless.[18]

In this situation, many gentiles in Kiev took over the empty apartments of evacuees and subsequently refused to return them to their legal inhabitants when they came home. When Jews attempted to reclaim their apartments, this provoked a sharp anti-Semitic reaction and most of these ‘re-evacuated’ Jews from Kiev failed to regain their apartments and other property. Appeals to the authorities, and even official court orders requiring the restoration of Jews’ property, had little effect. Most surviving Kievan Jews were unable to get their apartments back.

On 5 September 1945, the Vice Commissar of Interior Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, I. L. Loburenko, reported to the secretary of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, D. S. Korotchenko, about a situation that threatened to turn into a pogrom in Kiev after NKGB Lieutenant Iosif Rosenstein killed two local anti-Semites who had insulted and beat him in the street.[19] The Kiev police quickly arrived on the scene of the killings and attempted to pacify the crowd that had gathered there, but the crowd resisted the authorities. Mounted police then came and restored order.[20] Rosenstein was immediately arrested and was soon executed by the decision of a military tribunal.[21]

The funeral of the anti-Semites shot by Rosenstein, which took place on 7 September 1945, turned into open violence against Kiev's Jews, with some three hundred rioters participating. The Kiev Jews Kotliar, Zabrodin, Pesin, and Miloslavsky wrote a letter on 16 October 1945 addressed to the 'Central Committee of the Communist Party, Comrade I. V. Stalin, NKVD USSR, Comrade Beria and the editor of the newspaper "Pravda" Comrade Pospelov,' noting that the funerals had been turned into a pogrom:

> The funerals were organized in a special way. The coffins were carried through the most populous streets and then the procession went to the Jewish market. This procession was organized by the pogrom-makers. They began to assault Jews. One hundred Jews were beaten up on this day; thirty-six of them were taken to Kiev hospitals with serious injuries, and five of them died on the same day.[22]

Solomon Schwarz reported that sixteen Jews were killed during the pogrom.[23]

In their letter Kotliar, Zabrodin, Pesin, and Miloslavsky lamented that they could not recognize their city, 'not only by its appearance, but also due to the existing political situation there.'[24] They said they felt the strong influence of Nazi propaganda:

> You can hear the words 'Yid' or 'Let's beat the Yids' everywhere in the capital of Ukraine: in trams, trolleybuses, stores, markets, and even in some Soviet offices.
>
> In more latent forms it [anti-Semitism] is present in Communist organizations, right up to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.[25]

Ukrainian authorities also reported on the threat of pogroms in the city and took measures to reinforce security.[26] According to a secret report to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Korotchenko by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, V. Riasnoi, on 8 September 1945, the local authorities took the threat of an even larger pogrom in Kiev seriously. Riasnoi wrote,

> Considering the inflamed condition of some part of the population of the city because of the spread of bogus rumours and agitation directed against Jews, we reinforced patrols in the city, moreover giving special attention to the markets, gathering places, and the places of residence of relatives of the murdered Grabar and Mel'nikov.[27]

It is obvious that without the measures taken by the Soviet authorities, the anti-Jewish violence in the city would likely have taken on even greater dimensions.

The authorities explained the increased popular anti-Semitism in Kiev as a result of the influence of Nazi propaganda and the 'provocative behaviour' of the Jews themselves. This latter explanation had often been used by the Tsarist government to justify anti-Jewish pogroms. In his secret report "About anti-Semitism in Ukraine of 13 September 1944 to Nikita Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the People's Commissar of State Security (NKGB) of Ukraine Savchenko wrote that some Jews provoked anti-Semitism themselves. According to the report, Jews spread "provocative rumours" that anti-Semites, including Khrushchev, would be dismissed from the Ukrainian government.[28] Savchenko reported that Genia Izrailevna Brand, who had returned to Kiev from evacuation and failed to regain her apartment, allegedly told her neighbours, "All of the population who lived in occupied territory will be expelled and Ukraine will be settled by Jews."[29] Brand was arrested by the Ukrainian NKGB.[30]

Savchenko also reported the provocative behavior of the Senior Lieutenant Petr Mikhailovich Kovtun, Vice Commander of the 191st aircraft regiment, a Jew (born in 1908) who had come to Kiev from the front on an official visit. Kovtun arrived in an intoxicated condition at the NKGB office in the Zheleznodorozhnyi district of Kiev bringing with him a woman named Chemikhova. In the presence of NKGB personnel, he attacked Chemikhova and tried to shoot her. When the NKGB members disarmed him, he called them "fascists and anti-Semites." Kovtun stated, "I came from the front to defend Jewish people. I will dispose of the Union of Russian People, which exterminated Jews."[31] Kovtun was detained and sent to the Kiev garrison's military tribunal.[32]

The Soviet authorities were especially concerned about Jewish intellectuals who called for a Jewish national revival, claiming that the expression of Jewish nationalism would provoke further tension between Jews and gentiles. Thus the vice heads of the organizational and propaganda and human resources departments of the Central Committee (KP[b]U) wrote in a secret report to the Secretary of the Central Committee Korotchenko on 28 October 1944 that the Yiddish poet David Hofshtein

said that the suffering of Jews "will restore their national consciousness, which was previously lost."[33] The Yiddish poet Itsik Fefer, who came to Kiev for the Congress of the Union of Writers reportedly told the journalist Chaim Tokar', "We, Jews, should have our own state, otherwise there won't be a future for us."[34] The People's Commissar of State Security of Ukraine Savchenko and the vice heads of departments of the Central Committee (KP[b]U) concluded that Zionist and nationalist ideas were spreading among some Jewish circles.

The Holocaust and the rise of the popular anti-Semitism were turning points for many Jews, who had previously been quite assimilated and considered themselves Soviet citizens, but now returned to their national roots. These phenomena provoked a Jewish national awakening and a desire to restore and preserve their national culture and the memory of Jews who had perished. Many Jews attempted to combat the rampant popular anti-Semitism in Kiev (of which I have provided only a few examples) using a variety of methods: by appealing to the local and higher authorities of Ukraine and the Soviet Union; by fighting with anti-Semites on the streets; and by supporting the creation of a Jewish state.

Jewish intellectuals took a prominent role in the revival of Jewish culture. They called for commemoration of Holocaust victims and the restoration of Jewish scholarly, cultural and educational institutions. I will devote special attention to three of them: the Yiddish writer Itsik Kipnis, who formulated the idea of Jewish revival after the Holocaust; the Russian Jewish writer Ilya Ehrenburg, who first depicted the Babi Yar massacre in Soviet prose; and the Kievan Jewish artist Zinovii Tolkachev, whose series of drawings of Auschwitz and Majdanek have been called "a powerful indictment" of the Nazi regime. I focus on these three intellectuals because, despite their very different social background and views on the future of Jews in the Soviet Union, they were pioneers in depicting of the Holocaust in Soviet literature and art. They initiated the commemoration of the Holocaust and tried to bring knowledge about this tragedy to the Jewish and gentile audience so that it would never be repeated.

Itsik Kipnis

Commemoration of those who perished in the Holocaust was of foremost importance for Kievan Jews, because every family had lost relatives, friends and neighbours at Babi Yar. However, when the Yiddish poet David Hofshtein attempted to organize "a mass demonstration [according to another source, a meeting[35]] of the Jewish population on the anniversary of the German massacre at Babi Yar" in 1944, the authorities forbade it,

claiming that it might "provoke anti-Semitism."[36] Despite this warning, many Jews who had returned to Kiev from evacuation came to Babi Yar on the third anniversary of the tragedy on September 29, 1944. Among them was the Yiddish writer Itsik Kipnis (1896–1974). (Figure 1-3) On the same day, he wrote his essay "Babi Yar (On the third anniversary of massacre)." According to Kipnis, many Jews, mostly women, came to Babi Yar, because the men were still fighting at the front. At that time Babi Yar was a terrifying place. At the bottom of the ravine, the sandy ground had washed away, revealing bones, scalps and hair of murdered people and victims' belongings. The weeping of Jews who came to Babi Yar could be heard from a distance.[37] The Kievans' perception of the Babi Yar tragedy was then quite different from that of the present: people cried for the loved ones they had lost there. In this atmosphere of grief and despair, Kipnis called in his essay on Kievan Jews to participate in a national revival. "Let us rise from the earth, stand up to our full height and raise high our banner!... A people of which half or three-quarters has been annihilated is like a globule of mercury. Wrench half of it away, and the other half will become rounded and whole again."[38]

Figure 1-3. Itsik Kipnis

Kipnis was upset that the revival of Jewish culture in Ukraine proceeded slowly. In 1947 he twice wrote letters to the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Lazar Kaganovich, in which he called for the restoration of Jewish cultural institutions in Ukraine. He repeated the request in an article "Following the Session of the Supreme Soviet" in *Literaturnaia gazeta*.[39] As a result, he became one of the first targets of the campaign against 'Jewish bourgeois nationalism' which began soon thereafter.

The immediate cause for the attack on Kipnis as "an active Jewish bourgeois nationalist" and Zionist was the publication on 19 May 1947 of his story "On Khokhmes, on Kheshboynes" (Without Thinking, Without Calculations) in the Polish Yiddish newspaper *Dos naye lebn*. The story had been written in June 1945 and first published on 26 July 1945 in the Soviet Yiddish newspaper *Eynikayt* under the title "Fraynshaft" (Friendship) with major deletions by the censor. This was before the beginning of the campaign against "bourgeois nationalism" and Kipnis had not had a problem after its publication. In 1947 he sent the original uncensored text of the story to *Dos naye lebn*, where it was published without omissions. The mere fact of publishing a work abroad without the permission of Soviet censors was considered a crime in the Soviet Union. Soviet Ukrainian as well as Jewish authors accused Kipnis of including "nationalist content" in his story. Kipnis had written in the story:

> In recent years I have become fanatical. Whatever has survived is very dear to me.
>
> *I see a Jewish student, a pretty young girl, a brave and resolute soldier, an elderly scholar, a member of the Academy of Sciences, a simple Jew, and I want them all to speak Yiddish with me. I want all of the Jews who are now walking the streets of Berlin with firm, victorious steps to wear on their chest, next to their medals and decorations, a small and lovely Star of David. He [Hitler] wanted to make it our badge of shame. He wanted everyone to see that it was a Jew, who they tortured, cursed and spit on. That is why I now want all of them to see that I am a Jew and that my Jewish and human dignity has not been diminished among all freedom-loving citizens.*[40]

The italicized text had been deleted by the Soviet censors but was published in the Polish newspaper version, and the Soviets considered the story an expression of Jewish nationalism.

After the war, Jewish national feelings rose because of the terrible Jewish losses and many Jews perceived the victory over the Nazi regime as a Jewish victory. This view ran counter to the Soviet notion that the war was won by the Soviet/Russian people. At the official celebration of the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany on 24 May 1945 in the Kremlin, Stalin proposed a toast "To the health of Russian people!" and talked about the leading role of the Russian people among all the nationalities in the Soviet Union.[41] Stalin's speech paved the road for the rise of Russian nationalism in the country; expressions of national feeling by other nationalities were not allowed. Hence the entire repressive machine was turned against Kipnis for his story. According to Pinkus,

> The signal for the attacks on Kipnis was given in the newspaper *Eynikayt* in a leading article headed 'Nationalism in the Guise of Friendship of Peoples.' 'Only a nationalist,' the article stated, 'is capable of placing Soviet awards and medals, which symbolize the honor, greatness and courage of the Soviet people, side by side with… the Star of David. Jewish fighters would of course reject this award of Kipnis.'[42]

Kipnis was expelled from the Ukrainian Writers Union and arrested in June 1949. He was imprisoned in concentration camps until 1956.[43] After his release, Kipnis did not receive permission to live in Kiev until 1958, so he initially settled in Boiarka, a suburb of Kiev. His apartments in Boiarka and later in Kiev served as an unofficial center of Jewish culture. Many Kievan Jews came to the Kipnis apartments to look at Jewish books, receive advice about learning Hebrew, and to listen to Kipnis' observations about Jewish literature; this became an important part of their spiritual life.[44] Thus Stalin's repressions and years in the GULAG did not suppress Kipnis' interest in Jewish culture. He helped to recreate a cultural atmosphere without which he could not survive as a Yiddish writer.

The Kievan Parisian Ilya Ehrenburg

Mordechai Altshuler wrote that Ilya Ehrenburg was "one of most complicated and contradictory figures in the history of Russian Soviet literature."[45] Ehrenburg's attitude toward his Jewishness and toward the Jewish people was also quite complicated. He wrote in his poetry in 1912 that he could not live with Jews and felt alienated from them, but that at the same time he loved them as a son, was amazed by their steadfastness and patience, and in difficult times felt himself one of them. He wrote:

Евреи, с вами жить не в силах,	Jews, I haven't strength to live with you.
Чуждаясь, ненавидя вас,	So, hating you, I keep my distance,
В скитаньях долгих и унылых	And when amid my long and dismal
Я прихожу к вам всякий раз.	Meanderings I come to you,
Во мне рождает изумленье	Each time your steadfastness, your patience,
И ваша стойкость, и терпенье.	And your extraordinary fate—
И необычная судьба,	The fate of wanderers, of slaves—
Судьба скитальца и раба.	Arouse in me a cold amazement.
Отравлен я еврейской кровью,	But I am poisoned with Jewish blood,
И где-то в сумрачной глуши	And somewhere in the dusky desert
Моей блуждающей души	Of my desultory soul, I cherish
Я к вам таю любовь сыновью,	For you a son's reluctant love.
И в час уныний, в час скорбей	And in the hour of grief, of rue,

Я чувствую, что я еврей![46] I know and feel that I'm a Jew.[47]

Ehrenburg was born in Kiev in 1891. Although he moved with his parents to Moscow in 1894, he returned to Kiev many times during the summer to stay with his grandparents and lived in the city during the civil war in 1918-1920.[48] He grew up in a very assimilated family and studied in a Russian gymnasium. In his youth Ehrenburg was involved in revolutionary activities and lived in emigration in Paris from 1908 to 1917. (Figure 1-4) He admired European culture, but at same time felt alienated because of the strength of anti-Semitism in France. He returned to Russia after the revolution of February 1917. He at first bitterly criticized, but then served the Soviet regime as a writer and journalist. In the 1920s-1930s Ehrenburg traveled to different European countries as a correspondent for Soviet newspapers and visited France with special pleasure. Yevgeny Yevtushenko devoted his poem "Kreshchatitskii Parizhanin" (The Parisian from Kreshchatik) to Ehrenburg. (Figure 1-5) In his view Ehrenburg combined cosmopolitanism and liberalism, admiration of European culture with Soviet patriotism and Jewishness. Ehrenburg always emphasized his Jewishness but at the same time believed that the future of Jews was in assimilation with other cultures.

Figure 1-4. Ilya Ehrenburg in Paris

Ehrenburg undoubtedly knew some Kievan Jews who perished in Babi Yar. He visited Kiev in the spring of 1941 and read chapters from his new novel *Padenie Parizha* (The Fall of Paris) about the Nazi occupation of Paris to an audience at the Lenin Museum (now the Teachers' House). As a Soviet correspondent in France he had been an eyewitness to this event. Mikhail Kalnitsky noted that "In the Spring of 1941 Soviet propaganda [still] praised the Soviet-German agreement [of 1939]."[49] However,