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## MILITARY COOPERATION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION OF GALICIA WITH THE WEST UKRAINIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC (1918–1923)

**Abstract.** This article examines a little-known topic of both Ukrainian history and European history - the participation of the Jewish population of Eastern Galicia (now – the western part of Ukraine) in the development and combat operations of the Galician Army (Ukrainska Halyts'ka armiiа, UHA), which was created in 1918 by the authorities of the West Ukrainian People's Republic (Zakhidno Ukrainska Narodna Respublika, ZUNR). It also discusses the attitude of Galician Jews towards the emergence of the Ukrainian state and the armed confrontation between Ukrainians and Poles for control of this territory. The article draws on archival documents, memories, and research to clarify the reasons for the appearance of Jewish soldiers in the Ukrainian army, discuss the most famous Jewish service members of the UHA, and analyse the post-war fate of many Jewish militaries of the Ukrainian army. These facts are little known to researchers of the history of Central-Eastern Europe and have not yet been introduced into scientific circulation.

**Keywords:** Ukraine, Poland, Jews, Ukrainians, Poles, West Ukrainian People's Republic, Ukrainian Galician army.

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## ВІЙСЬКОВА СПІВПРАЦЯ ЄВРЕЙСЬКОГО НАСЕЛЕННЯ ГАЛИЧИНИ ІЗ ЗУНР (1918-1923 РР.)

**Анотація.** У статті розглядається маловідома тема як української, так і європейської історії – участь єврейського населення Східної Галичини

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(нині – західної частини України) у розбудові та бойових діях Галицької армії (Української Галицької Армії), УГА), яка була створена в 1918 році владою Західноукраїнської Народної Республіки (ЗУНР). Також йдеться про ставлення галицьких євреїв до становлення української держави та збройного протистояння українців і поляків за контроль над цією територією. У статті на основі архівних документів, спогадів та досліджень з'ясовуються причини появи єврейських вояків в українській армії, йдеться про найвідоміших єврейсько-військовослужбовців УГА, аналізується повоєнна доля багатьох єврейських військових. українська армія. Ці факти маловідомі дослідникам історії Центрально-Східної Європи і досі не введені в науковий обіг.

**Ключові слова:** Україна, Польща, євреї, українці, поляки, ЗУНР, Українська Галицька армія

The historiography of Jewish-Ukrainian relations in the 20th century has been the subject of much scientific research. Most scholars primarily study the topics of Jewish pogroms, the interwar period, the Holocaust, and the preservation of Jewish cultural heritage. Other essential aspects of the relationship between Ukrainians and Jews are of much less attention from researchers. One such topic is the military-political cooperation of Ukrainian and Jewish communities during the revolutionary events in Ukraine from 1918 to 1920. Another is the service of soldiers and officers of Jewish nationality in the Ukrainian Galician Army.

**The purpose of the study.** The participation of the Jewish military in the defense of Ukrainian statehood is an area that has not been fully explored. These topics are worth further research and analysis, as they shed light on the complex and multifaceted relationship between Ukrainians and Jews throughout history. Which, in fact, forms the key goal of our research.

**Analysis of recent studies.** There is a lack of historical research on Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the West Ukrainian People's Republic. Most of the existing works focus on the pogroms that occurred in the Ukrainian People's Republic of Ukraine, and they neglect to mention any instances of positive collaboration between Ukrainians and Jews during that time in the ZUNR. We can mention such scholars as T. Chopard [Chopard, Ukrainian, 2019], C. Gilley [Gilley, Beyond Petliura, 2017], A. Polonsky [Polonsky, 2010] etc. Some researchers include G. Abramson [Abramson, 1999], F. Levitas [Levitas, 2011], M. Gon [Gon, 2002] and H. Aster & P.J. Potichnyj [Aster, Potichnyj, Jewish, 1983], consider this issue in a broader historical context. These researchers are investigating the connections between Ukrainian and Jewish political groups and individual politicians to move beyond stereotypical views on Ukrainian-Jewish relations where the rapport between the two peoples has always been complicated, with Ukrainian national politicians always having hostile policies towards Jewish people. Meanwhile, another group of scientists (G. Gauden [Gauden, Lwów, 2019], N. Davis [Davies, Ethnic Diversity, 1993], K. Mick [Mick, Lemberg, 2016], A. Prusin [Prusin, Nationalizing a borderland, 2005], etc.) have investigated interethnic relations in Western Ukraine, focusing on the relationships between Jews, Ukrainians, and Poles. In particular, they studied

events of November 21-23, 1918, where Polish soldiers and civilians committed a pogrom in the Jewish quarters of Lviv, accusing the Jews of supporting the Ukrainian government. However, there have been few studies of Ukrainian-Jewish military cooperation. Some works that have been done on this topic include those of N. Gude [Gude, Dual, 2019], M. Lytvyn [Lytvyn, Ukrainsko-Polska, 1998], Ia. Tynchenko [Tynchenko, Pid zirkoiu, 2014], and V. Melamed [Melamed, Ukrainian and Jewish], and also in the monograph of the author of this article "Landsknechts of the Galician Army"[Stetsyshyn, Landsknekhty, 2012].

**Presentation of the main material.** Understanding the historical context led to the emergence of ZUNR and UHA. At the end of October and the beginning of November 1918, separate states began to emerge in regions of Austria-Hungary inhabited by national minorities. This included countries like Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which later became Yugoslavia. In Austria, a revolution began in October 1918, which led to the fall of the monarchy and the introduction of a republican form of government. Among the nations that inhabited Austria-Hungary were the Ukrainians (Ruthenians). On November 1, 1918, the Ukrainian state was proclaimed in Lviv (then Lemberg), later renamed the «West Ukrainian People's Republic». The Galician Army was established as the regular military force of the new republic, and the word «Ukrainian» (UHA) was added to its name. After July 16, 1919, the Galician army left the territory of the ZUNR due to pressure from the Polish army. It then joined forces with the military of another Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR), to fight against the Russian Bolsheviks and White Guards.

Despite having a common national origin, there were significant differences between the two Ukrainian states. Politicians led ZUNR with extensive experience working in the parliament of Austria-Hungary or local authorities. Due to the lack of national legislation at the beginning of its existence, the laws of the former Austria-Hungary were used. The West Ukrainian People's Republic was headed by Yevhen Petrushevych, a former ambassador to the Austrian Parliament (Reichsrat). While there were representatives of various political currents in power, ZUNR mostly pursued a right-wing conservative policy that guaranteed political and national rights to national minorities such as Poles, Jews, and Germans. Some of the seats in the ZUNR parliament of the Ukrainian National Council (UNRada) were allocated to these minorities.

Another Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian People's Republic, was proclaimed on January 22, 1918, after the beginning of the Ukrainian-Bolshevik war. From November 1918, it was managed by the Directory, which consisted of politicians of the left direction headed by Symon Petliura. On January 22, 1919, two states united, but one of them, the West Ukrainian People's Republic, maintained its own foreign policy and armed forces. However, due to pressure from the Polish army, the authorities of the ZUNR and the Galician military had to move to UNR territory in mid-July 1919. Consequently, the Ukrainian government went into exile on November 12, 1920. The Treaty of Riga in 1921 led to the Ukrainian state's territory

division between Poland and Bolshevik Russia. Finally, on August 22, 1922, the UNR government in exile handed over its powers to the authorities of independent Ukraine.

### **The attitude of the Jewish community of Galicia to ZUNR. Relations between the Ukrainian and Jewish communities**

The Galician Jewish community in 1918 was very diverse, religiously and ideologically. Its main groups were the Orthodox, who made up the majority of the Jewish community, supporters of the Zionist movement and assimilation. The last two groups were politically the most active and competed for the votes of the Jewish community [Germane, *Exercising Minority*, 2023, p.128]. At the same time, it is impossible to affirm the relationship between the political beliefs of the Jewish population and its religious and confessional affiliation. Assimilationists and Zionists were equally focused on the secular part of the Jewish community. At the same time, among the Zionists, there were many supporters of orthodox Judaism (one can mention, for example, the Mizrachi party). They reformed Judaism, many of whose members opposed assimilation and the rejection of Jews from the traditional kahal life.

After the proclamation of the Ukrainian state on November 1, 1918, in Eastern Galicia, it was the position of Zionists and assimilators competed with each other during the discussion of the expected position of the entire Jewish community of the region. Assimilators from the end of the 19th century advocating the integration of Jews into Polish society considered that the Jewish community should support the young Polish state [Himka, *Ukrainian-Jewish*, 1990, p. 142]. On the other hand, the Zionists believed that until the affiliation of Eastern Galicia was determined at the international level, the Jews should remain neutral until then. The Zionist position won, and the Jewish community declared neutrality. Despite this, many Jews supported the newly proclaimed Ukrainian state, and the Ukrainians recognized them as a separate nation with broad national and cultural rights. The ZUNR authorities proposed a progressive constitutional project for the Jews, recognizing Yiddish and Hebrew as official languages and ensuring proper representation in the Ukrainian National Council [Gude, *Dual Loyalties*, 2019, p. 229].

It was inconsistent with the position of Polish politicians. At a meeting with members of the Jewish National Council of Lviv, one of the leaders of the Polish movement, Count Aleksandr Skarbek, told them that he would not recognize Jews as a separate nation but rather as «Poles of the Mosaic faith» [Stetsyshyn, *Landsknekhty*, 2012, p. 121]. In December 1918, in the recommendations of the Polish delegation at the Paris negotiations with the Entente, it was stated that the relations of the Poles with the Jews were wrong because “Jews always supported our enemies”. As an example, the situation in Lviv was cited when “Jewish soldiers and militia fought alongside the Ruthenians against the Poles”. Similar beliefs were held by leaders of the revived Polish state, including Prime Minister Ignacy Paderewski. While he supported their civil rights and freedoms, he did not empathise with their demands for national self-determination [Mick, *Lemberg*, 2016, p. 172].

Many Jewish people supported the idea of Jews being considered as a separate nation. Before the proclamation of the Ukrainian state, on October 20, 1918, a group of Jewish students held a meeting to demand national rights for Jews. On October 26, representatives from various groups, including Zionism, Orthodoxy, and socialism, held a rally to request that Jews be represented as a separate group in future peace talks [Prusin, *Nationalizing a borderland*, 2005, p. 73-74].

A part of the Jewish community, in particular supporters of the assimilation course, agreed with the policy of merging the Jewish people with other nations. The Ukrainian position looked more attractive to supporters of the Zionist movement and Orthodox Jews. The secretary of the Jewish National Council of ZUNR, Ruben (Reuven) Fahn quoted from an article in the newspaper “Der Jüdische Arbeiter” on November 1, 1918, with a reaction to the pro-Jewish policy of the Western Ukrainian authorities. “For us, Jews, the proclamation of Ukrainian statehood has a special significance since the Ruthenians are the first who spoke in favour of the recognition of the Jewish nation and asked the Jews to send their representatives to their constituent assembly. The Ruthenian people in their struggle for freedom will have sincere support in the person of the Jews” [Fahn, *Istoriia*, 2019, s. 66].

Another reason for Ukrainophilism for a part of Galician Jews (obviously, those who lived in rural areas) was their closer adaptation to the Ukrainian rather than the Polish environment. According to the 1910 census, 1,313,687 Jews lived in Austria-Hungary, 23,615 (1.8%) of whom considered Ukrainian as their spoken language, and 810,460 (62%) Jews spoke Polish at home. These statistics did not reflect the actual state of language proficiency because, during the census, Yiddish speakers were not considered. However, we can interpret the given figures as evidence of the presence of a certain number of Jews in Galicia who were more integrated into the Ukrainian environment than into the Polish one [Jüdische Korrespondenz. 1 November 1918. S. 3].

It should be noted that the cooperation of the Ukrainian and Jewish communities of Galicia began long before November 1918. Their political leaders also supported such interaction between the two peoples. Leaders from both communities supported interaction between their peoples. Nathan Birnbaum (pseudonym “Mathias Acher”), one of the founders of the Zionist movement at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, believed that the Galician Jews should cooperate in its efforts with local Ukrainians because they are not anti-Semite and, like Jews, resist assimilation attempts [Dashkevych, *Vzaiemovidnosyny*, 1990, s. 69–70]. Julian Romanchuk, the leader of the Ukrainian Parliamentary Club in 1905, was the only non-Jewish deputy in the Austrian parliament who called for recognising Jews as a separate nation, along with Zionist deputy Benno Straucher from Bukovina [Markovits, *Sysyn, Nationbuilding*, 1982, p. 162]. In 1907, Ukrainian and Jewish parties cooperated during the elections to the lower house of the Austrian parliament (Reichsrat). The Zionists and the Ukrainian National Democrats agreed to support each other jointly when one of their candidates made it to the second round. The alliance was successful, and the Jewish People’s Party sent four deputies to the parliament



(three in Galicia and 1 in Bukovina). At the same time, the Ukrainian politician Semen Vityk became a deputy after being supported by the Jewish population of his electoral district [Honigsman, 600 let, 1997, s. 21].

After becoming members of the Reichsrat, these Jewish politicians from Western Ukraine started the first Zionist parliamentary faction in the history of the Danube Empire. Ukrainian and Jewish politicians continued their cooperation during parliamentary work. J. Shanes and Y. Petrovsky-Shtern cited an interesting case in which the parliamentary majority did not support a resolution condemning election violations in Galicia. In response, the Zionist deputies, together with the Ukrainians, rose from their seats and began to sing Ukrainian patriotic songs, including “Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna”, which is now the national anthem of Ukraine [Shanes, Petrovsky-Shtern, *An unlikely*, 2009, S. 498, 500]. Cooperation between Ukrainian and Jewish politicians of Galicia continued with varying degrees of success in the following years. Some Polish eyewitnesses recalled active negotiations between the politicians of the two nations in October 1918 on the eve of the proclamation of the Ukrainian state in Lviv [Krysiak, *Z dni grozy*, 1919, S. 9-10].

The joint post-colonial existence of two peoples, who felt like second-class people in Austria-Hungary, in the Russian Empire, and the declared Polish state, played a significant role. R. Fahn explained that the Ukrainian and Jewish national movements converged because they represented peoples whom the same oppressor enslaved [Fahn, *Istoriia*, 2019, s. 54]. According to M. v. Hagen that throughout their history, Poland and Russia treated both Ukrainians and Jews in the same colonialist way [Hagen, *Wartime*, 2015–2016, p. 170]. Another reason for the commonality of views of both national groups is the statement of A.V. Wendland, who researched post-colonial aspects of nation-building processes in Galicia. She noted the common victimized past of Ukrainians and Jews, many of whom were accused by the Austrian authorities of political disloyalty, pro-Russian sympathies and participation in espionage during the First World War [Wendland, *Galizien*, 2013, s. 22, 29].

### **The first Jewish soldiers in the Galician army**

Ukrainian and Polish sources have preserved evidence of the Jewish population's attitude towards the proclamation of the Ukrainian state on November 1, 1918 in Galicia. The emergence caused different reactions from the representatives of three other nations who lived in the Galician region: the Poles, for the most part, perceived this as hostile, but most Germans and Jews reacted to the Ukrainian state quite favourably. According to Polish reports from that period, Ukrainians took away weapons from all other neutral nations but not from Jews [DALO. F. 257. Op. 2. Spr. 1624. Ark.6], who were reported to support the radical Ukrainian movement [DALO. F. 257. Op. 2. Spr. 297. Ark. 20]. The Jewish population was accused of having an unfavorable perception of the Poles and calling them “Blütfeinde” (blood enemies) [DALO. F. 257. Op. 1. Spr. 691. Ark. 16]. On March 1, 1919, the Jewish newspaper “Chwila” cited exciting testimonies from the Polish newspaper “Kurjer Lwowski”. It was a period when, after the November events, the UHA was forced to

leave Lviv and tried in vain to return it. The Polish newspaper printed the testimony of one of its readers, who complained that very often in conversations with Jews, one could hear: «Our troops [that is, the Ukrainian army] will soon return!» 1 Marca 1919. № 47]. The Ukrainian press reported in early November 1918 that “Jews go along with Ukrainians” [Mick, Lemberg, 2016, p. 145].

Immediately after the Ukrainians proclaimed their state, fighting began between the Ukrainian army and Polish formations. According to the ZUNR legislation, only Ukrainians should be protected by the state [Dilo. 2 Padolysta 1918. Ch. 250. S. 1]. Still, it's worth noting that Ukrainians and representatives of other nations, including Jews, defended the West Ukrainian People's Republic. According to archival data, at least 325 (6%) of the 5,442 Galician officers were Jewish [TsDAVO. F. 2188. Op. 2. Spr. 139. Ark. 11-93zv]. Most of them hail from Western Ukraine, while only a few come from other countries like Austria or Poland. Most of these officers were young men aged 20-30, with military ranks ranging from khorunzhyi (sub-lieutenant) to captain. They held various professions, including doctors, paramedics, pharmacists, judges, quartermasters, and veterinarians. Almost 80 officers served on the front line as infantry, cavalry, or artillery units. Military medics like Colonel Teofil Bardach, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Yampoler, and Major Heinrich Glanz held the highest ranks among Galician Jewish officers. Unfortunately, data on the number of Jewish privates and sergeants in the UHA is scarce, making it challenging to establish an accurate figure. Nonetheless, it's estimated that there were at least several hundred of them who served as well.

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on November 1, 1918, many Jewish soldiers stationed in Western Ukraine decided to assist the Galicians in forming their own Ukrainian army. They were among the first to join the ZUNR army, alongside Germans and Czechs. One of the first scouts of the Galician army was Lieutenant Yonat Halpern, who hailed from Lviv. Initially, he helped set up the intelligence service at the headquarters of the UHA, and later served in the 7th Lviv brigade. During a battle, Halpern was seriously injured and captured by the Poles. However, he escaped from captivity a few months later, received financial aid from the diplomatic mission of the ZUNR in Vienna, and was treated in a local hospital [Kuzma, Lystopadovi dni. 1931. S. 269; TsDIAL. F. 581, Op. 1. Spr. 139. Ark. 29].

It is known that several Jewish soldiers joined the Ukrainian army on November 20, 1918. On that day, nine officers of the former Austro-Hungarian army, several of whom were of Jewish origin, joined the Ukrainians. Such as lieutenant N. Gelber from the 35th rifle regiment, corporal N. Landes of the 5th rifle regiment, accounting officer L. Blaustein (Landwehr headquarters) and military pharmacist A. Zimmering from the epidemiological hospital in Radom [TsDAVO. F. 2188. Op. 2. Spr. 51. Ark. 694].

Salko (Solomon) Rotenberg, from Piatnychany village in the Stryi district of the Lviv region, was one of the Galician army's most famous Jewish front-line officers. There were many references to him in the Ukrainian memoir literature of 1920-

1939. He arrived in the Galician army with a group of 17 young Ukrainian officers from the capital of Austria after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in November 1918. Rotenberg, a 77th Austrian infantry regiment sergeant, later commanded a horse-machine-gun company of the 4th Zolochiv Brigade. According to one Ukrainian officer who served in this brigade, Rotenberg's company was «a great combat unit». Another UHA combatant called Salko «a model patriot and defender of Ukraine». The horse-machine gun company fought against the Polish army and later against the Bolsheviks after the army moved beyond River Zbruch. However, Solomon Rotenberg was mortally wounded during the battle for the city of Korosten in September 1919 [Haiduchok, Kinna, 1922, s. 6-7].

One of the combatants of the 24th infantry regiment named after Hetman P. Doroshenko, V. Volytskyi, mentioned that many Jews in Kolomyia expressed their desire to build a Ukrainian state together with Ukrainians in November 1918. Some of them even applied to serve in the Ukrainian army. Jews were also cadets of ZUNR military educational institutions, like the sergeant's school in the village of Birky Velyki near Ternopil and the UHA officer school in Zolochiv [Ivanets, Presova, 1934, s. 10; Matskiv, Pidstarshynska, 1966, s. 148]. Former Deputy Minister of Labour in the Government of the UNR, one of the leaders of the Poalei Zion party, Solomon Goldelman, upon arriving in the West Ukrainian People's Republic in early 1919, was pleasantly surprised by many Galician Jewish militaries. He was especially surprised by the fact that many of them, "Jewish officers and soldiers", joined the Ukrainian army despite the neutrality declared by the Jewish community. In particular, he recalled how, in the spring of 1919, several dozen Jewish servicemen of the Galician Army came to the canteen of the Stanislaviv (now - Ivano-Frankivsk) organization «Poalei Zion» for a festive Passover dinner and same number of Jewish soldiers celebrated Passover in their homes [Volia, 20 November 1920, 4, 9, p. 424-430]. S. Goldelman represented the right wing of the Poalei Zion and supported the Ukrainian People's Republic government, which was different from the left wing of the party that aligned with the Russian Bolsheviks. Goldelman also helped to bring Ukrainians and Jews closer together. He attempted to persuade Jewish leaders in Galicia to support the Ukrainians instead of remaining neutral in the Ukrainian-Polish conflict. Still, the Jewish organizations in Galicia remained firm in their position. An article titled "Ukrainian-Polish War" was published in the newspaper of the Poalei Zion party in Stanislaviv on May 16. The article stated that there was a need to unite both parts of Ukraine and give all the power to the politicians of the Ukrainian People's Republic because they are socialist. The article suggested that such intentions should be supported as much as possible. However, it is unclear whether Goldelman had any involvement in the publication [TsDAVO. F. 2188. Op. 2. Spr. 44. Ark. 614zv].

On August 9th, 1919, the Proclamation to the Jewish citizens and workers was signed by Ukrainian Premier Borys Martos and the Minister for Jewish Affairs of the UNR Pinkhas Krasny. The proclamation mentioned the Jewish soldiers and officers serving in the Galician army. This document was published as the UNR



and ZUNR combined army approached Kyiv after winning several victories over the Bolsheviks. To ease the concerns of the Jewish population living under their control, who were worried about the ongoing pogroms, Ukrainian politicians Martos and Krasnyi issued a statement condemning the violent actions against Jews. They also mentioned the punishment of pogrom initiators and the provision of compensation to pogrom victims. Additionally, they highlighted the presence of Jewish soldiers in the Ukrainian Galician Army as proof of the commitment of Jews to the Ukrainian state and the positive relationship between Ukrainians and Jews. «And the farther and mightier advances the victorious march of the united republican and Galician armies which, by the way, reveal a considerable number of Jewish soldiers and officers in their ranks, the more demoralization increases in the Bolshevik army», - stated by Martos and Krasny [Pigido, Material, 1956, S. 62-64].

As mentioned, many Jews served as medical personnel in the Galician army. This included Jewish doctors, paramedics, and pharmacists who had previously worked in Austrian military hospitals located in Galicia. After the military ministry of the ZUNR published an order on December 1, 1918, Jewish doctors were allowed to be hired if there were no Ukrainian doctors available, with their consent and agreement on payment. Many of these doctors joined the Galician army after this order was released [Vistnyk Derzhavnoho Sekretariatu Viiskovykh Sprav, 1 hrudnia 1918, 1, s. 2].. One of the most mentioned in the interwar memoirs of the Jewish soldiers of the UHA was the doctor Maurycy Juda, who served in the military hospital of Uhniv during World War I and later became the chief physician of the «Stare Selo» combat group. He was known for his dedication to his profession and is remembered as one of the most respected doctors during the interwar period. Dr Juda's work to preserve the surnames of Galician soldiers who died of typhus in 1919-1920 is remarkable and an essential part of UHA's history [Zhalibna knyha, 1968, s. 167-203].

### **The Jewish militia of Lviv: between Poles and Ukrainians**

In November 1918, some members of the Jewish militia of Lviv, created to protect the Jewish community of Lviv during the Ukrainian-Polish conflict, joined the Ukrainian army. In many Jewish communities of Galicia, various forms of Jewish self-defense, militia, or citizens guard were common. After the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, it is estimated that self-defense units existed in about 25 cities and towns in Galicia. Some of these units were located in Eastern Galicia, where the Ukrainian state was declared on November 1, 1918 [Rybak, The Kraków, 2022, p. 17].

While this paramilitary group did not significantly impact the war, it became an ally of the young Ukrainian army and later provided soldiers to replenish its ranks. The Jewish community in Lviv was quite diverse, much like the rest of Galicia [Corbett, Once, 2019, p. 32]. During the armed clashes between Poles and Ukrainians that erupted on November 1, 1918, members of the Jewish community held an emergency meeting to discuss how to avoid becoming victims

of pogroms and protect their lives and property during the war. According to the Polish-language Jewish newspaper “Chwila”, the Jews instinctively felt the danger when the previous government ceased to function on November 1, 1918 [Chwila, 12 Stycznia 1919, s. 1].

The Jewish community in Lviv faced a tough decision as different groups had different opinions on how to deal with a conflict. There were two main groups with opposing views – the Zionists and the assimilators. Ozjasz Wasser, one of the assimilators, later recounted the events in the following way: “A group of people gathered in the Kahal meeting hall, among which many supporters of the Zionist idea, dressed in Austrian officer uniforms. The issue of the safety of Jewish residents of Lviv was discussed, as there was a threat of robberies and disorder caused by the complete absence of law enforcement services in the city. Someone suggested organising a militia force to ensure peace, order, and security in the precinct. The reporter, in that case, stated that the Ukrainian command reported that it does not assume any responsibility for the safety of the residents of the Jewish quarters and, therefore, agrees to the creation of a citizen militia to protect the property and lives of their residents” [Wasser, Rola, 1936, s.1060-1061].

After much discussion, the Jewish community in Galicia established a Committee of Public Safety that declared the neutrality of the Jewish community of Lviv in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict. This committee included representatives from various Jewish communities, such as Zionists, Orthodox, and assimilators, among others [Mączyński. Boje, 1921, s. 257-258]. Julian Eisler, a captain of the Austro-Hungarian army, was appointed to lead the Jewish militia (JM). The political role of the Waldman brothers in the JM was also significant. Dr Israel Waldman, a prominent Zionist leader, had previously headed the «Beitar» organisation in Ternopil. On the other hand, Moses Waldman was one of the co-editors of the German-language newspaper «Neue Lemberger Zeitung,» which provided extensive coverage of the activities of the Kahal, the Committee of Public Safety, and the Jewish militia. Together, they played a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the Jewish community during the conflict [Prawda, 1919, s. 19].

The militia started its patrolling activities on November 1, 1918, and comprised former soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army of Jewish origin and some civilian volunteers. The Jews’ declaration of neutrality in the war was helpful to all participants, as it significantly shortened the front line. However, unlike Krakow, where the Polish leaders were willing to tolerate the activities of the Jewish militia to some extent [Rybak, The Kraków, p. 19], the Polish community in Lviv was hostile to the formation of the Jewish militia. The Polish politicians accused the Jewish community of siding with the Ukrainians through their neutrality during a difficult time for the Poles [Abramson, Prayer for Government, 154]. According to Cz. Mączyński, the commander of Polish formations in Lviv, Jews in the community with Ukrainians of storming Polish positions near the church of St. Anna, situated on the modern Shevchenko and Horodotska streets corner [Mączyński, Boje lwowskie, 1921, s. 9-10]. The Workers’ Council of the Polish Social Democratic

Party expressed its disappointment with the decision of the Jewish community, saying that at their most challenging time, «Jewish nationalists» did not act as they expected [Kurjer Lwowski, 24 Listopada 1918, s. 1]. Assessing the accusations of the Polish side against the Jewish militia and the Jewish population of Galicia in general, one should take into account the fact that many of its figures at that time were anti-Semitic and anti-Ukrainian. Therefore, their conclusions were often biased. It was common to overestimate the influence of Jews on revolutionary events. Jews were often unjustly accused of organising rebellions and aiding the enemies of various states. During that time, many Polish figures held the belief that Jews were involved in uprisings against the authorities and aiding the enemies of Poland. According to P. Hanebrink, this perception was overestimated and was a widespread phenomenon [Hanebrink, A Spectre, 2021, p. 106]. Even the leader of Poland, Józef Pilsudski, had accused the Jews of acting in a hostile manner against the Poles during the Ukrainian-Polish conflict and believed that at the beginning of the war, the Jewish community should have sided with Poland [Mick, Lemberg, 2016, p. 172]. One can agree with the thesis that “the Jews’ unforgivable “neutrality” about Lviv” became “an abiding symbol of Jewish perfidy” well into the 1940s [Miller, The Forgotten, 2019, p. 652].

The claim that Jewish militiamen in Lviv fought alongside Ukrainian forces against Polish formations was false. The clashes that did occur between them were mainly due to soldiers or civilians attempting to ransack shops or flats in neighbourhoods that were under Jewish control. Therefore, the attitude of the Polish side towards the Jewish militiamen was belligerent. According to the press report, on November 3-17, seven Jewish militiamen were killed in Lviv [Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung und Czernowitzer Tagblatt. 21 November 1918. P. 2]. Unlike the Polish formations, the Ukrainian fighters saw the Jewish militia as their allies. It is known that both the Jewish militia and Ukrainian army units patrolled Lviv quarters controlled by the ZUNR authorities. According to the daily reports of the Main Command of Ukrainian troops, on November 7, 1918, among the 23 Ukrainian units of Lviv used by the Galician command to patrol the streets, there were 24 officers and 195 soldiers of the Jewish militia. Six days later, 237 Jewish militiamen and 37 officers helped Ukrainians maintain order in the city [Tynchenko. Chyselnist, 2009, s. 28-30]. The Jewish militia worked towards the betterment of the entire community of Lviv, not just the Jewish population. They played a crucial role in fighting crime and aiding residents and city services in dealing with fires. Furthermore, the health facilities located in Jewish neighbourhoods assisted injured Ukrainian and Polish soldiers, regardless of their ethnicity [Chwila. 19 Stycznia 1919. S. 3].

**However, all these** facts did not improve the negative image of the Jewish militia in the eyes of the Polish community. The newspaper «Pobudka» complained: «In the Krakivske suburbs, the Jews do not observe the so loudly announced neutrality. They added Ukrainian cockades to their Zionist insignia. Our soldiers complain that the Jewish community is shooting from the windows at our patrols” [DALO. F. 257. Op. 2. Spr. 504. Ark. 47]. Some modern Polish historians claim that during

the November battles, the Jewish residents of the Zamarstyniv district of Lviv „joyfully and enthusiastically” greeted the appearance on their streets of Cossacks from the detachment of Ataman Andriy Dolud, who came from Odesa to help the West Ukrainian People’s Republic. When Odesans gathered local Poles to identify among them those who shot at Ukrainians, it was the young Zamarstyniv Jews who helped the Cossacks identify members of the „Polish Legions” [Kania, Lwów 1918, 2008]. It may be true because Dolud’s unit really fought in Zamarstyniv and could use the help of local Ukrainians and Jews.

Until the end of the November fighting in the city, the Polish side did not perceive the Jewish militia as an equal partner. When, during the fighting, both sides agreed on a truce and security guarantees for the residents of Lviv, Ukrainian negotiators suggested creating a tripartite Ukrainian-Polish-Jewish militia, in which each nation would have a third of its soldiers. This formation should ensure order and peace on the streets of the city. However, the Polish interlocutors opposed this idea, which recognized the Jews as a separate people. In their opinion, the united militia should consist only of Poles and Ukrainians, and the ratio of the two nations should correspond to the Polish and Ukrainian population of the city [Neue Lemberger Zeitung. 13 November 1918. P. 2].

A week before the cessation of hostilities in Lviv, the JM’s command informed the Jewish community about the completion of the formation of the first militia company and the beginning of the recruitment of volunteers for the second company. Such people were promised a daily salary of 10 Austrian crowns, free food, and accommodation in the barracks. Instead, they demanded reliability and strict discipline from the volunteers [Neue Lemberger Zeitung. 15 November 1918. P. 2]. It is unknown whether the JM commanders had time to form a second company because the fighting in Lviv ended a week later. On November 21, 1918, considering the significant deterioration of the military situation, the command of the Galician army ordered its units to leave Lviv. Part of the Ukrainian forces were retreating precisely through the Jewish blocks. Many armed Jews also marched with the Ukrainians. «Among the retreating Ukrainian soldiers, I saw a lot of young (14-18-year-old) Jews, mostly merchants,» – says one of the reports of eyewitnesses [DALO. F. 257. Op. 1. Spr. 691. Ark. 22]. Some of these militiamen were officers who commanded units of the UHA in specific areas. They fought alongside Ukrainians at the front, but many of them were later captured by Polish forces after bloody battles in April 1919 [Mączyński, Boje lwowskie, 1921, s. 12].

Jewish sources also told about the joining of some Lviv Jews to the Ukrainian army in 1918. In particular, Elkana Margalit talked about one of the activists of the youth Zionist organisation Hashomer Hatzair from the town of Zolochiv, who joined the Galician army together with a group of Jewish “guardsmen” who escaped from Lviv occupied by the Poles to take revenge on the Poles for the Jewish pogrom in Lviv on 22-23 November 1918. The term “guardsmen” used in Lviv likely refers to youth Zionist group Hashomer Hatzair (The Young Guard) who might have been part of the Jewish militia of Lviv. This version is supported by the fact that there

were persons called “guards” (shomers) in the personnel list of the Jewish militia of Lviv [Margalit, Ha-Shomer, 1971, S. 21-22]. In the book, the author doesn't reveal the name and surname of the Jewish soldier of the UHA. However, we can find out this information from other sources. It is speculated that the soldier might be Arye Karp, a Hashomer Hatzair activist from Zolochiv. His biography is strikingly similar to the one described by E. Margalit. After the war, Karp immigrated to Palestine and resided in Kibbutz Beit Alfa [Nordheimer, Eros, 2014, p. 2]. The story of Chaim (Karl) Kahane, a Jewish soldier who fought alongside the Ukrainians during the fights in Lviv in November 1918, was researched by Israeli scholars Freddy Rothman and Anna Nevzlin [Jewish Heroes. Chaim (Karl) Kahana].

Archives reveal that young Jews from other parts of Galicia also retreated with the Ukrainian army after the withdrawal of the Galician army. For example, there was a letter to the Command of the Lviv District Gendarmerie regarding the search for ten individuals from Brody. The letter mentions that these ten individuals were former fighters of a local Jewish militia and had left the town with the Ukrainian army [DALO. F. 257. Op. 1. Spr. 23. Ark. 43, 48; DALO. F. 271. Op. 1. Spr. 482. Ark.1]. In general, the Jewish militia in Eastern Galicia closely collaborated with Ukrainian authorities and military command. Although they remained neutral, they often patrolled the streets and maintained law and order in cities like Kolomyia, Brody, Ternopil, and Pidvolochysk, controlled by Ukrainian authorities. In exchange for their services, the ZUNR authorities and the UHA command provided the Jewish militia with military clothing and weapons. In some cities like Brody and Ternopil, the Jewish militiamen were given significant powers to perform their duties.

As already noted, the Jewish population of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, as well as the national minorities of the Ukrainian state, were exempted by a particular law from the need to protect the Ukrainian state. However, there were other cases. Thus, in June 1919, during the Chortkiv offensive of the Galician army, when mass recruitment of Ukrainian volunteers from the liberated eastern territory of the ZUNR was carried out, there were also cases when Jewish men were mobilized into the UHA [TsDAVO. F. 2192. Op. 1. Spr. 1. Ark. 222]. On June 19, 1919, the head of the ZUNR, Yevhen Petrushevych, issued a particular order to release from the army Jewish soldiers who were not volunteers [TsDAVO. F. 1. Op. 6. Spr. 1. Ark. 24zv]. It is known that around 40 Jews from the towns of Buchach and Monastyriska joined the Hutsulsky battalion UHA during the Chortkiv offensive. From them and other Jewish fighters in the 11th Stryi Brigade of the Galician army, a separate department with almost 70 people was created, commanded by a Jewish sergeant. However, this unit suffered significant losses in the battle near the village of Cherche, which is not far from Rohatyn [H.H., Bii, 1931, s. 9].

### **Ternopil: from the Jewish militia to the Jewish assault battalion UHA**

In Ternopil, Ukrainian Major Nikifor Hirniak, who commanded the Ternopil Military District, helped create Jewish militia units. He was an officer in the Galician army and was approached by representatives of the Jewish community in 1918. They included merchant Norbert Peterzil and Solomon Leimberg, former second



lieutenant of the 15th infantry regiment of the Austro-Hungarian army. They requested permission to form a company of militia that would protect Jewish living quarters. Hirniak supported this because Ukrainian power structures were still in formation. He gave [Hirniak, 48 dniv, 1983, s. 190] the Jewish militiamen weapons and ammunition and enrolled their officers in the Ukrainian army with corresponding salaries. The creation of a Jewish militia with 800 soldiers in Ternopil in 1918 is also mentioned in the «Encyclopedia Judaica» and one of Leimberg's deputies, Benzion Fett [Encyclopedia, 2007, p. 517; Fett, From an Austrian]. In June 1919, this unit became the base for creating the Jewish assault battalion of the 1st Galician Corps of UHA. S. Leimberg, the commander of the Ternopil Jewish militia, headed it. One of the reasons for its creation was the repressive actions of Polish troops against the Jewish community of Ternopil after the UHA retreated from the city on June 1, 1919, and Polish forces occupied it for two weeks.

The Battalion comprised both Jews and Ukrainians, with the former primarily officers and non-commissioned soldiers. There was a noticeable absence of ordinary Jewish soldiers, which Ukrainian soldiers supplemented [Lekhman, Moï perezhyvannia, 1983, s. 713]. The Battalion consisted of four companies, a machine gun company, a cavalry platoon, a platoon of sappers, a platoon of telephone operators and a radio station crew. The commander of the Battalion was S. Leimberg, his assistant P. Vovk, the headquarters were second lieutenants P. Shapira-Diamant and B. Fett, company commanders were second lieutenant V. Dumanskyi, lieutenants J. Shapira, Y. Lashchukevych, O. Maziar, L. Lerer (machine gun company), the cavalry unit was headed by lieutenant J. Planer, the Battalion rear commander was lieutenant M. Weisglas, the platoon commanders were second lieutenants N. Grosskopf, A. Shapira, and V. Brill. The Battalion doctor was M. Goliger. Although we know the approximate number of personnel of the battalion, we unfortunately do not have data on how many of these soldiers were Jews and how many were Ukrainians [TsDAVO. F. 2188. Op. 2. Spr. 49. Ark. 259a, 317, 373, 514; Fett, From an Austrian].

The Jewish unit fought against Polish troops in the Ternopil region and engaged in battles with the Bolsheviks in the UNR territory. One of their actions was covering the retreat of Galician units through the Zbruch River near Skalat in July 1919. During these battles, the Battalion suffered heavy losses. In particular, in the fight for the defence of the bridge near the village of Trybukhivtsi, the Poles captured the fourth company of the Battalion under the command of the Ukrainian lieutenant Maziar [Lekhman, Moï perezhyvannia, 1983, s. 712]. Many soldiers of the Jewish Battalion died in battles with the enemies, as well as from the typhus epidemic, which killed many soldiers of the Galician army. Some soldiers died on the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic during attempts to mobilise local Jewish youth [Weisglas. During the Days]. The first to tell about the combat path of the Battalion and the exploits of its soldiers in 1921 was a Galician serviceman who hid under the signature Nahman G-r (probably Nahman Gelber, one of the UHA officers), as well as lieutenant P. Vovk, who for some time was an assistant to S. Leimberg. Later,

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the mentioned N. Hirniak, and Battalion officers B. Fett, T. Lehman, M. Goliger, and A. Weisglas left their memories of the Jewish Assault Battalion [G-r, Peredistoriia, 1921, s. 23].

According to the B. Fett and M. Goliger, while on the territory of the Ukrainian People's Republic, its fighters protected local Jews from pogroms. In particular, this happened in Khmelnyk, Balta, Zhytomyr, and Vinnytsia. In August 1919, in Kozyatyn, a delegation of the Jewish Assault Battalion met with the Supreme Commander of the UNR, S. Petlyura. The meeting discussed the need to protect the Jewish residents of Berdychiv from a possible pogrom and the desire of the fighters of the Jewish battalion to be the first to enter the city to protect their co-religionists. According to the author, Petliura received the Jewish delegates kindly and, after some doubts, agreed with their arguments. The Jewish Battalion appeared on the streets of Berdychiv with Petliura's consent, dispersed the crowd of rioters, and walked through the emptied Jewish quarters of the city, singing the song «HaTikvah» and speaking loudly in Yiddish to make the Jewish residents stop being afraid and come out of hiding [Halpern, Sefer, 1949, p. 162].

We have little information about what happened to the surviving fighters of the Jewish Assault Battalion. Some returned to Galicia, while others went to Palestine. S. Leimberg stayed in Ukraine, which was occupied by Bolshevik troops, and joined the Soviet military intelligence service, which was the predecessor of the GRU. He was involved in designing radio equipment and achieved significant career success there. From 1931 to 1933, Semen (who changed his name from Solomon while serving in the Galician army) Leimberg was a member of the leadership of the Intelligence Directorate of the entire Red Army. He led the second production unit of this service, which created spy communication devices. However, at the end of 1933, during the Stalinist repressions, S. Leimberg was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison. After his release, he lived in a settlement in one of the villages of Belomorkanal (the ship canal constructed by forced labor of Soviet inmates), where he managed a local radio station. In 1937, the former commander of the UHA Jewish battalion was imprisoned for the second time, accused of «active struggle against the revolutionary movement as part of the counter-revolutionary governments during the civil war», and sentenced to be shot. The sentence was carried out on April 9, 1938, in Leningrad [Stetsyshyn, Landsknekhty, 2012, s. 250].

### **Ukrainization of Jewish servicemen**

During their service in the Ukrainian Galician Army, some Jewish military servicemen were so inspired by Ukrainian ideas that they even adopted Ukrainian names and surnames. For example, in November 1919, the newspaper "Strilets" reported that the leadership of the ZUNR allowed two Jewish officers to change their surnames to Ukrainian ones. Court Lieutenant Martyn Sommerstein became Litenko, while First Lieutenant Isidor Sonnenreich received the surname Sonenko. Similar cases are also known, such as Srul Singer, a Jewish soldier in the Cavalry Brigade of the UHA, who became Severyn Spivachenko [Shankovskiy, Povstanchyi, 1939, s. 11]. Another participant in the hostilities mentioned First Lieutenant Baruch

Buxbaum, who served as a veterinarian in the 10th Yaniv Brigade. Buxbaum later changed his surname to Burachynskyi [10-ta, 1958, s. 107].

The Ukrainian command also fulfilled the other wishes of Jewish soldiers. For example, in the spring of 1919, many Jewish officers of the Galician army celebrated Pesach. This was mentioned by the famous politician S. Goldelman, who wrote in 1920 in the Viennese Ukrainian journal "Volia", that he was pleasantly surprised to see dozens of Jewish soldiers from the local garrison in the workers' canteen of their party in Stanislaviv who showed up for the Passover dinner. He also mentioned that even more were in the city during these holidays, released from the barracks and the front to visit their homes and families [Volia, 20 November 1920, s. 424-430]. It is also known that in the autumn of 1919, the command of the Galician army supported the religious sentiments of Jewish officers and soldiers by freeing them from military service during Jewish holidays [TsDAVO. F. 2188. Op. 2. Spr. 66. Ark. 241]. There is even evidence of Jewish soldiers participating in Ukrainian religious celebrations. For example, in one memoir, there is information about the participation of the Jewish doctor H. Litvak in the joint celebration of Holy Evening on January 6, 1920 (during that time, Ukrainian churches observed Christmas based on the Julian calendar), with his Ukrainian comrades-in-arms. Lieutenant Litvak and three Ukrainian sergeants hosted the ceremony and sang carols [Lazurko, Deshcho, 1923, s. 23].

Many Ukrainian figures were very optimistic about Jews being more closely involved in the all-Ukrainian cause. One of them was O. Nazaruk, a former government official of the Ukrainian People's Republic, a well-known journalist and editor, and head of the press service of the Galician Army. He stated that if the Jews were "jointly responsible" for the supply of ammunition necessary for the military, then the situation would be much better. In general, Nazaruk emphasized that "When we act wisely with the Jews, we will get an ally who, with his culture, intelligence, and trade skills, can provide us with invaluable services" [Strilets, 19 Chervnia 1919, s. 1].

### **Repression against Jewish servicemen**

Many Jewish soldiers of the UHA faced persecution from both the Polish authorities and the Bolsheviks due to their service in the Ukrainian army. Some of these individuals were Jewish officers who served in the intelligence service of the Galician army, including S. Becher, the son of a mill owner. According to historian L. Shankovskyi's memoirs, Becher was a courageous and combative cavalry soldier. However, upon returning to Galicia after completing his service, he was arrested by the Polish police for taking part in a Ukrainian nationalist organization [Shankovskyi, 1 Kinna bryhada, 1958, s. 216].

In 1920, Galician Jewish officers S. Dorf, N. Tabak, M. Nutman and M. Ruggalter were imprisoned by the Bolsheviks in a camp in Kozhukhov near Moscow. They died during transportation to the concentration camp in the northern city of Arkhangelsk [Maksymchuk, 1930, s. 80-81]. Lieutenant S. Strum, on the other hand, became one of the Bolsheviks in August 1920, when the Red Army was

advancing on Poland. It is worth noting that the “Halytskyi Revkom” was a puppet government of the Galician Soviet Republic that no one recognised. Lieutenant M. Vogel, who managed to avoid death in Kozhuhov, also agreed to cooperate with the Bolsheviks. He decided to take part in sabotage and intelligence work against Poland. In 1921, Vogel, together with a group of Bolshevik saboteurs, was transported to the territory controlled by Poland. However, he almost immediately surrendered to the Polish authorities, telling about all the group members he knew [Maksymchuk, 1930, s. 54, 81; Sidak, 2000, s. 185].

After Poland occupied the entire territory of the West Ukrainian People’s Republic in the second half of 1919, a list was made of persons who, during the “Ukrainian government”, were hostile to Poles. Among several thousands of such “enemies” of the more prominent Ukrainian nationality, there were also Czechs, Germans, and Jews. Some Polish sources accused Jews (and Germans) who served in the Ukrainian army of mistreating captured and interned Poles. Physical abuse during arrests, transportation and stay in the camp, the killing of prisoners, etc, was meant [Pavlyshyn, 2019, s. 100]. Particularly, Ukrainian gendarmes M. Stryer from the town of Yavoriv, M. Eidler (Zhuravno), and H. Mondszejn (Brody), as well as H. Sternik, commandant of the Ukrainian camp for internees in Mykulyntsi, were wanted for their brutal treatment and violence towards Poles. *Furthermore*, the Polish police *began delivering* reminders about the *hunt* for M. Stryer to its *administrative units* in 1938, *nearly two decades* after the *cited* events. There is no information about how their search ended.

### Conclusion

The facts give grounds for asserting that the Jewish population of Galicia quite favourably received the emergence of the West Ukrainian People’s Republic. While the representative structure of the Jewish community, the Jewish National Council, announced its neutrality in the Ukrainian-Polish confrontation, many citizens of Jewish nationality supported the Ukrainian state. Several hundred Jews joined the armed defence of the ZUNR, leaving a visible mark in memoirs and archival documents.

The authorities of the West Ukrainian People’s Republic and the command of its armed forces responded with gratitude to their joining the Galician army. After all, according to the legislation of the ZUNR, only the representatives of the Ukrainian nation had to defend their young independent national state.

In our article, we found out that the first Jewish soldiers began to join the UHA already in the first days after the proclamation of the ZUNR on November 1, 1918. In total, during 1918-1920, at least 325 officers of Jewish origin joined the Galician army. Many of them remained with their Ukrainian comrades in arms until the end of the Galician Army’s existence.

This topic remains understudied by historians and is very promising for further research.

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