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RESEARCH ON CHERKASSY

This article is dedicated to my cousins¹ Jack Marcus, Daniel Marcus, Marcia Partridge, Mark Marcus, Martin Golding, Jud Posner, Betty Schoenberger, and of course my Mother's² cousin May Rice³. I hope that they and their respective families will enjoy reading about Cherkassy, as I enjoyed researching it and writing about it.

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¹ These are the ones that I have a strong contact with. The names of others are visible on Jud Posners **Family Tree**. See ft 5. p. 3

² Nettie Marcus Herschman, the daughter of Edith Golding Marcus, my Grandmother who was born in Cherkassy. The family name was originally **Goldin**, but was changed by the immigration clerks when the family arrived in England.

³ She is The last of her generation, in this part of our family.

<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	3
GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CHERKASSY	
❖ GEOGRAPHY	5
❖ HISTORY	5
❖ DERIVATION OF THE NAME "CHERKASSY"	7
JEWISH HISTORY	
❖ BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY	8
❖ POGROMS	12
❖ ZIONISM	15
❖ THE HOLOCAUST	17
MODERN CHERKASSY	
❖ THE CITY OF CHERKASSY	18
❖ JEWISH CHERKASSY	19
❖ CONNECTIONS WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CHERKASSY TODAY	21
CONCLUSION	23
APPENDICES	
❖ Appendix 1 Books By Louis Golding	24
❖ Appendix 2 Jewish Population in Cherkassy	25
❖ Appendix 3 Property Owned by Jews in Cherkassy	26
❖ Appendix 4 Documentation of the Holocaust	26
❖ Appendix 5 Books about the Holocaust in which Cherkassy is Mentioned	27
❖ Appendix 6 Map of the Ukraine	28
❖ Appendix 7 Map of Pale	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY	30

INTRODUCTION

I heard about Cherkassy when I was a little girl, for my Maternal Grandmother came from there. My Grandmother's youngest brother, Louis Golding, was a famous English Jewish author⁴. Cherkassy was mentioned in some of his books. I was always interested in Cherkassy, and a few times when I was quite young thought of trying to find people who came from there and remembered the family. After reasoning with myself that I would not really discover anything new, I decided not to do anything about it. However, upon visits to Yad VeShem (Holocaust Remembrance Museum, Jerusalem) or The Diaspora Museum (Ramat Gan), I did look up Cherkassy and read whatever information I could.

When Russian Jewry began to arrive in this country, I always asked the ones I met and was able to speak to where they were from, in hope of meeting someone from Cherkassy. I felt good the few times that I did meet someone who knew of the city, though I never had the luck of actually speaking to someone from there.

A few years ago, I received the name of the city Rezneke in Latvia that my Paternal Grandmother came from, from a cousin of my Father. Since I did not know anything about the city, I went looking for information about it. This was not an easy task, but in the end I gathered quite a bit of information, and decided to write about it. I wrote two articles: the first: **The History of the Jews in Rezekne**, and the second: **The Connection Between Rezekne and Ein Zeitim** (Israel). I happened to write my Maternal Cousins in America about what I had done. One wrote back, that if I should research and write about our common origin-Cherkassy, he⁵ would be very interested in reading what I wrote. This remark was probably what caused me to begin this article.

I tried to get information for this article in many ways. I found Cherkassy listed on the Internet⁶, and therefore the connection between Cherkassy and the city of Ofakim, Israel.⁷ I contacted a friend of ours, Professor Jerry Ferman of Ofakim for I thought that he might know someone from Cherkassy, because of this connection between Cherkassy and Ofakim. He gave me the telephone number of a person in Ofakim, who in turn gave me the fax and address of a person in Cherkassy. I found the names and addresses of the Jewish community in Cherkassy and the area on the Internet, and wrote them. I contacted Chabad and asked for their help. They were very nice and helpful, and gave me the names and addresses of their Rabbis and representatives in the Cherkassy area. I wrote to Israeli politicians of Russian origin, asking them if they could help me find more information. I contacted the Jewish Agency and received a phone number from them. Unfortunately many of these leads turned into dead -ends. I believe there may be material in The European Archives, but I had a problem since it is in a general file for Cherkassy, which is not in categories, and is all written in the Russian language.

I did find information from the library of Yad Veshem, Jerusalem, the Zionist Archives, the University and National Library, Jerusalem, and the Diaspora Museum. I want to especially thank Ilana Guri of Yad Veshem for her help.

As I have already written, I found information on the Internet about the connection between Ofakim, Cherkassy and the area of Metrowest,⁸ New Jersey. I also found an email address there, and decided to try it. I was very lucky, for the next day I received a phone call from the Israeli office. This opened up new links and leads for me. I got a bit more information for them, which

⁴ He wrote fiction, short stories, verse, travel, belle-lettre, sport. For a list of his books see [Appendix 1](#), p. xx.

⁵ This cousin, Jud Posner made a Family Tree of our Family, which originated in Cherkassy. This is in **Golding List, Golding Tree**, on my computer. I am willing to forward a copy to anyone who is interested.

⁶ IP, CUT

⁷ CUT www.partner/ofakim.org.il p.20

⁸ The United Jewish congregations of Northeastern New Jersey (Essex, Morris, Sussex, North Union); CUT www.partner.org.il

helped me very much for this way I received actual information about Cherkassy today. What was even more important to me, was that I received the phone number of someone who was actually from Cherkassy and spoke to him. I was very thrilled to speak to Mr. Peter Textell⁹, originally of Cherkassy , and now an Israeli!

Upon looking for information about the similarity of the name Cherkassy, with the name of the Cherkassian people, I had the luck of speaking to quite a few Cherkassians. I thank them all for being so helpful and friendly. Special thanks to Shuki Chur, the curator of the Cherkassian Museum. This has opened up a new field of interest for me.

Here is all the information that I have found:

⁹ PT

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CHERKASSY

GEOGRAPHY

The city of Cherkassy is located in southeastern Ukraine¹⁰, in the district of Kiev¹¹. It is approximately 126 miles from Kiev. It has one of the largest¹² ports on the right bank of the Dneiper river.¹³ The Kremshogsky¹⁴ reservoir is located here.¹⁵ It has been the chief town of the Cossacks since the twelfth century¹⁶. Today it is the capital of the Cherkassy oblast. There is an airport there,¹⁷ which has many connections to the major cities of Ukraine. There is a railroad that has many connections to all parts of Ukraine. There are many highways in the area, most of which have hard surfaces.¹⁸

HISTORY

This region was first settled about 40 thousand years ago, during the Paleolithic period. There have been archeological discoveries showing the way of life in this period. The mighty feudal state of Kievan Rus originated here. Christianity was introduced in the year 988, by prince Vladimir. The Orthodox Church rapidly gained power and influence. The city of Cherkassy was founded in the end of the thirteenth century¹⁹. Cherkassy is first mentioned in documents in 1394, as the fortified city, which protected the principality of Kiev of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania²⁰, from the Tartars of Crimea²¹. The region was captured by Lithuanian²² and Polish feudal lords from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries; but belonged to Poland, after the Union of Lublin²³ in 1569²⁴, and was the seat of their local rulers.²⁵ It was an important defense outpost against the surprise attacks by the Tartars, and in 1532 withstood a 30-day siege by the Crimean armies, of Khan Saet-Geiri.²⁶ The strong oppression from foreign landlords²⁷ and frequent enemy raids caused the appearance of Cossacks. The first Cossack settlement appeared here in the fifteenth

¹⁰ See Map of Ukraine. Appendix 6, p. Z

¹¹ HE, V. 28, p. 1003, JEE, p.12,

¹² EU, p. 419

¹³ JEE, p. 12

¹⁴ Kremenchuk, according to EU, p. 416

¹⁵ JA, p. 76

¹⁶ JEE, p.12

¹⁷ EU, p. 416

¹⁸ IBID, p. 419

¹⁹ FY. p. 1. The city is approximately 600 years old. JA, p. 76

²⁰ EU, p. 416

²¹ FY, p. 1

²² The Lithuanian prince Gidimin captured the area of Kiev in 1333. FY, p. 1

²³ EU, p. 416

²⁴ FY, p. 1

²⁵ It was the center of the Cherkassy district (starostvo). Among its administrators were E. Dashkevych and D. Vyshnevsky. EU, p. 416. JA, p. 76

²⁶ EU, p. 416

²⁷ The landlords' economy was based on cruel exploitation of the peasants, who suffered from humiliation and lawlessness. IP, p. 1

century. The Glory Hill Castle was then erected, by the Tartars, for reasons of defense and is still standing (now on its side).²⁸ Then it became an important trade center on the routes to Moscow and Crimea. The city became a Cossack center,²⁹ as many Cossacks settled there and were the majority of its population.³⁰ It subsequently became their capital until the middle of the 17-century³¹; for then about 1000 Cossacks lived in the area. Therefore it played an important part in the Cossack uprisings³² against Poland, which were followed by, the War of Liberation³³ (1648-54) against the Polish magistrates.³⁴

Chmielnicki led this uprising, and the result was the unification of the Ukraine with Russia³⁵. Chmielnicki then moved the Cossack capital to the city of Chigerin.³⁶ Many Jewish communities in the Ukraine were destroyed³⁷ and many Jews in this respective area were murdered.³⁸ One of his aims was the eradicating of the Jews from Ukraine.³⁹

The decision of reuniting Russia with Ukraine was made on January 8, 1654 at the Pereyaslav Rada (Council). Cherkassy was a regimental city in the district of Kiev, until 1686. After the Treaty of Andrusovo, in 1667, Cherkassy was under Polish rule⁴⁰. In 1793, Cherkassy became part of the Russian empire⁴¹, and was included in the Pale⁴², because of the division of Poland⁴³. In 1797, it became the center of the Kiev district of Russia⁴⁴. Cherkassy, as part of the Ukraine, and with activity of the Decembrists, took an active part in the Patriotic War of 1812.⁴⁵

In the second half of the 19-century, industry began developing in Cherkassy, This was especially true after the construction of the railroad. Capitalism developed rapidly in the area, because of the Bourgeois Reform of 1861. In 1854, a sugar factory was established and in 1878, a tobacco factory was established.⁴⁶ Sugar refining became the leading industry in this area. Other factories and plants were established. In the beginning of the 20-century, capitalism also developed in agriculture. The struggle against czarism in the 1870's strove to raise the peasantry to capture the land and become free. Then Marx's teachings and revolutionary activity began to spread in the Ukraine⁴⁷.

Cherkassy became a center of industry and trade in the beginning of the 20-century. Financial aid came with the founding of the Committee for Savings and Loans, which was founded

²⁸ IP, p. 1

²⁹ FY, p. 1

³⁰ EU, p. 417

³¹ JA, p.76

³² The Cherkassy Local Lore Museum has an exhibit of weapons. Here there are Cossack gunpowder flasks, Cossack flags, a map of military actions of the people during the uprising, and a copy of the first letter (dated 6/8/1648) written by Khmelnsky, which was sent from Cherkassy to the tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch, requesting the reunification of Ukraine with Russia. There is a bust of Khmelnsky in the center of the hall. IP, p. 1

³³This was a great uprising. FY, p.1

³⁴ IP, p. 1

³⁵ EJ, V. 5, pp. 379-80

³⁶ JA, p. 76

³⁷ EJ, V. 5, pp. 479-80

³⁸ JA, p. 76

³⁹ EJ, V.5. pp 479-80

⁴⁰ EU, p. 417

⁴¹IBID, p. 417,JA, p.76

⁴² The territory within the borders of czarist Russia, where residence of Jews was legally authorized. This was because Russia had to adjust to the fact of having a Jewish element within its borders. Most inhabitants of Russia (merchants, townsmen, serfs, Jews) were deprived of freedom of movement and confined to places of residence. EJ, V. 13, pps.

23-28; see **Map of the Pale. Appendix 7**, p. 29

⁴³ JA, p. 76

⁴⁴ EU, p. 417

⁴⁵ There are photographs of Decembricists Mill and Pushkin's Grotto (where secret meetings were held),documents, and portraits of the town council, in the Cherkassy Local Lore Museum. IP, p. 1. See ft 32

⁴⁶ EU, p. 417

⁴⁷ IP, p. 2

in 1907 and had seventy stockholders. By the beginning of January 1909, there were 857 stockholders, and a fund of 8676 rubles. Loans were issued to merchants, tradesman, clerks and independent workers

The workers of the sugar factory in Cherkassy went on strike in the summer of 1905. The Bolshevik activity in the area became very intensive in the summer of 1917. This is also referred to as The Civil War.⁴⁸ The Ukraine was declared a Soviet Republic in December 1917⁴⁹. The sugar industry prospered. Industry and especially the food industry and light industry were expanded during the First Five-Year Plan.⁵⁰

Many new schools, on all levels, were opened.

In 1941, residents proudly became proudly soldiers of the Red Army. Battles in this area began in July 1941. The area was captured in August- September 1941, and a regime of terror and violence was established. A concentration camp was set up near Uman⁵¹, where tens of thousands of people were murdered. Partisans, secret Party district committees, and patriotic groups functioned in the area. Cherkassy was liberated, after fierce battles, on December 14, 1943⁵². Then Cherkasy became a district⁵³.

DERIVATION OF THE NAME "CHERKASSY"

Cherkassy was the official name used for the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Ukrainian population in general, in the laws and state documents of Moscow, in the second half of the 16 and the 17 centuries. The two theories about the origin of the name are as follows:

1) It is derived from the town of Cherkassy, for in this vicinity there were many

Cossack settlements in the given period

2) It is derived from the Caucasian Cherkess peoples, which means that the Ukrainian Cossacks were not of Ukrainian origin⁵⁴.

This name is quite similar to the name of the Circassians (also Cerkaas, Cherkessians). This is a name given to one of the Caucasian peoples, by their neighbors. They called themselves "Agida". During the Middle-Ages, the Russians called the them Cossacks. It is interesting that some of them settled in northern Israel in the end of the nineteenth century and founded the villages of Rehana, Kfar Kama, and Hirbat Cherkass.⁵⁵ They are Moslems by religion. They have special schools where their language is taught, and try to keep their customs and culture.⁵⁶

According to the Cherkess peoples: their ancestors past through southern Ukraine and Crimea; however finally settled permanently in Kavkaz. They ruled, formed colonies and settled in the Ukraine from the fourth century B.C. through the eighth century A.D. Their name was given to a few of these settlements, and remained the name of the settlement. This way, their name was left in the city of Cherkassy.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ FY, p. 3

⁴⁹ IP, p. 2

⁵⁰ EU, p. 417

⁵¹ See **Map of Ukraine. Appendix 6**, p. 28

⁵² IP, p. 2

⁵³ FY, p. 1

⁵⁴ JEE, p. 12

⁵⁵ EJ, V. 28, pp. 1003-4

⁵⁶ EA, V. 7, pp. 620-1, SC IBID,

⁵⁷ IBID, There are settlements with a similar name: Cherkessk and Nuscherkess.

JEWISH HISTORY

BEGINNING OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

There have been Jews in Cherkassy for almost 500 years⁵⁸. Jews settled in the city in the sixteenth century⁵⁹; however it is known that Jews were in the city previously, in the years of 1487-8, and from 1500. These were merchants of peddlers. Jewish wine merchants were beaten and robbed by Cossacks, in 1581⁶⁰. Quite a few Jew worked in renting, from the years of 1616 though 1622⁶¹. In the days of the Decrees of 1647-8 - the Chmielnicki massacres⁶², they fled from the city⁶³. The suffering began in June 1648. As the Cossack leader approached the city, in 1664, the local population murdered the Jews and the Poles. After this, no Jews lived in the city until the end of the seventeenth century⁶⁴. The Jewish community again began in the city in the beginning of the eighteenth century, but suffered greatly from Haidemak⁶⁵ attacks. These attacks again brought an end to the community⁶⁶. The census of 1765 states that one Jew who lived there, was: a farmer and paid taxes. He paid 10,000 florins for general taxes and 400 florins for the saltpeter factory⁶⁷. This seems to be another beginning of the Jewish community in Cherkassy. Zelzenak's forces captured the city in the second half of May 1768. They killed many of the Jews, and expelled the rest of them. This caused a huge drop in the Jewish population. The Jews did own property in the city⁶⁸.

The city's constitution was authorized by Poniatovesky, on November 10, 1791. This stated that Jews were forbidden to live in the city, to work as merchants or in a trade, or to own real estate there. It stands to reason that this was not carried out, for soon after Cherkassy was annexed by Russia⁶⁹. Jewish community life developed⁷⁰, and the Jewish population rose rapidly. In 1797 there were 783 Jews. Then there were 33 Jewish merchants in Cherkassy, in 1802, as opposed to 23 Christian ones.

⁵⁸HE, V. 28, p. 1003. FY, p.1; see chart: **Jewish Population in Cherkassy. Appendix 2**, p. 25

⁵⁹JL, p. 246. In the end of the 16 century..FY, p. 1; HE, V. 28, p. 1003. The 17 century, EJ, V. 5, p. 391

⁶⁰FY, p. 1

⁶¹IBID, p. 2

⁶²Bialik refers to this in his poem "The Killings in the City", Hadoar-10/7/53. ZA

⁶³HE, V. 28, p. 1003; JE, V. 5, p. 391

⁶⁴FY, p.2

⁶⁵IBID. These were bands that disrupted the social order in Polish Ukraine during the 18 century. The name originated from the Turkish word haida, which means move on. The movement was mainly the outcome of social ferment which had developed in the Ukraine during the 16 century, and reached a peak in 1648, in the Cossack uprising led by Chmielnicki. These attacks took the form of robbery and murder of individuals, and later on massacres of communities. Poles also suffered. Their memory lingered in Ukrainian lore and literature, and became a legacy in the Ukrainian national movement. The Ukrainian partisan bands that caused the pogroms of 1919-20 and sided with the Nazis in the Holocaust (1941-44) were referred to, as Haidamacks. EJ, V. 7, pp. 1132-3

⁶⁶JL, p. 247

⁶⁷JEE, p. 12

⁶⁸FY, p.2. See chart: **Property Owned by Jews in Cherkassy. Appendix 3**, p. 26

⁶⁹FY, p. 2; see **HISTORY**, ft 41, p.6

⁷⁰JA, p. 76

The Jewish population grew greatly during the second half of the 19-century.⁷¹ The Jewish community flourished in the late 19 and early 20 centuries. The community supported a hospital⁷² with ten beds, a home for the aged, and a soup kitchen. A charity fund was founded in 1865. A bit later a poor house was opened.⁷³ Jews owned two of the three banks in the city.⁷⁴

The Jews worked mainly as artisans, grain merchants,⁷⁵ and traders⁷⁶. Percentage wise they made a living in the following ways: - artisans 52% (sewing, porters and wagoners, tobacco, day workers, carpentry, metal work, crafts from natural materials); merchants and traders- 29% (agricultural products, building materials, clothing, cloth, furs and skins; free occupations- 19% (education, medicine, religion, real-estate, charity, army)⁷⁷. Some Jews were employed in the sugar or tobacco factories or in the flourmills⁷⁸. Brodesky's sugar factory⁷⁹ opened in 1854, Zeresky's tobacco factory in 1878, and Greenblatt's six floor, steam operated flour mill in 1885. There were 70 Jewish artisans, in 1852, as opposed to 182 Christian ones. At the end of the nineteenth century the Jews made up 20% of the artisans in the Kiev district. Then, according to the census of 1897 women slightly outnumbered the men (5608: 5341). There were seven fairs yearly, and a weekly market day⁸⁰.

Since Cherkassy was a port city on the Dneiper River, there was much trade in agricultural products. The railroad between Kiev and Odessa, which had a station in Cherkassy, was started in the second half of the nineteenth century. With both a port and a railroad, Cherkassy became quite important as a trade center, and the Jews had a knack for trade⁸¹.

As far as the religious organization of the Jewish community goes, there were one synagogue, one study hall, a few smaller Houses of Prayer, two Chadarim⁸², one Talmud-Torah⁸³, one chief rabbi, two slaughterers, and one mohel (one who does the religious rite of circumcision), in 1834.⁸⁴

The development of the Jewish community of Cherkassy, and primarily of the middle class was similar to the other Jewish communities in Ukraine, due to the social and cultural structure of these communities. In this area the influence of the Mitnagdim⁸⁵ wasn't present, as it was in Poland and Galicia⁸⁶.

⁷¹ FY, p. 2; see chart: Jewish **Population in Cherkassy**. **Appendix 2**, p. 25

⁷² The hospital was destroyed during the Civil War (1917); see **HISTORY**, ft,48, p.7. It was rebuilt under the Soviet regime. FY, p. 3

⁷³ JL, p.247

⁷⁴ MW, p. 1

⁷⁵ DM, p. 1; EJ, V. 5, p. 391; HE, V.28, p. 1003

⁷⁶ FY, p. 2; HE, V. 28, p. 1003

⁷⁷ FY, p. 3

⁷⁸ JEE, p. 12

⁷⁹ FY, p. 3; TP, p. 241

⁸⁰ FY, p. 2-3

⁸¹ IBID, p.2

⁸² Cheder is the common name for the old fashioned elementary school for the teaching of Judaism (reading in the prayer book, the Bible, and Talmud). No secular studies were taught. This was privately run. EJ, V. 8, p. 241

⁸³ s This is similar to Cheder, but organized better, for it was run by the community. It was for pupils whose families couldn't afford to send them to a Cheder. EJ, V. 6, p. 413. When the Talmud Torah was run by Rabbi Kaminer, the representative of the government, there was an official visit from Kiev, the visitors were very impressed by the level of the secular studies. HM

⁸⁴ MW, p. 1

⁸⁵ The meaning of the word is "opponents". This is a designation for the opponents of Hassidim. In the course of time, it lost its connotation and became a description of a way of life. This movement was founded by the Vilna Gaon (my Father [the late Oscar Herschman] was one of his descendents.) He lived in Vilna, Lithuania 1720-1797. The main differences are in the prayer book that is used, and that the Mitnagdim stressed study, while the Hassidim stressed emotional Judaism. EJ, V.12, p. 161

⁸⁶ TP, p. 70

Most of the Jews were Hassidim^{87, 88}. The Hassidim of Cherkassy⁸⁹ were followers of the local Rabbi, who was called the GUTE RAV (good Rabbi) of Cherkassy⁹⁰.

Rabbi Jacob Israel Twersky⁹¹, held the post of chief rabbi, from this time (1834) and until his death in 1876⁹². Other famous rabbi of the community was Rabbi Nahum Zalman Schneersohn⁹³, Rabbi Meshulom Zusha Isaac Avruch⁹⁴, Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twersky⁹⁵, and Rabbi M. Zilberman⁹⁶. Rabbis that were associated with the community were Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twersky⁹⁷ and Rabbi Aharon Gedalia Linitz⁹⁸.

Ben Zion Shem Tov succeeded in organizing a Yeshiva, for students to study Gemora all day, but it is not known how long this Yeshiva lasted.⁹⁹

From 1905 and until 1917 Jewish life began to flourish in Ukraine. In 1914, Jews played an important part in the economy and industry of Cherkassy¹⁰⁰. They contributed significantly to the

⁸⁷ A popular religious movement giving rise to a pattern of Jewish communal life, leadership, and social outlook, which developed in the second half of the 18 century. It began in southern Poland. The distinguishing socioreligious marks are: ecstasy, group cohesion and charismatic leadership; EJ, V. 7, p. 1390-1432. It's charismatic founder and first leader was the Ba'al Shem Tov (c. 1700-1760); EJ, V.9, pp. 1049-1058

⁸⁸ JL, p. 247

⁸⁹ A very clear childhood memory of mine is that one Shabbat morning my Grandmother came to visit us before going to the Synagogue. Then the Hassidim of our neighborhood (Crown Heights) were walking down the street on their way to their Synagogues, in their Sabbath dress. Then she said to me that this was what Cherkassy looked like on a Shabbat morning.

⁹⁰ JEE, p.12

⁹¹ FY, p. 3; TP, p.71. Rabbi Jacob Israel Twersky was from the Chernovil (Twersky) Dynasty. He was the son of Rabbi Mordechai of Chernovil. He was born in Chernovil, in 1794. He was the son -in-law of Rabbi David Ber of Lubavitch. He was the Admor (chief rabbi) of Hornistipol until he moved to Cherkassy. His book Emek Hatefilla (The Depth of Prayer), was published by his grandson, who was the inheritor of this post, Rabbi Mordechai of Hornistipol. See CONNECTIONS WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF IN CHERKASSY TODAY, p 20

www.foreveryjew.com/child, p. ; HGG, p. 117. His decisions were honored by the community. HM

⁹² FY, p. 3; HGG, p. 117

⁹³ JL, p.147

⁹⁴ Rabbi Avruch of Talomanch, was from the Anipoli Dynasty (families: Avruch, Mazal, Twersky, Shapiro, and Levenson). He was born in 1819. He was the son of Rabbi Jehiel Michael from Kuriman and the son-in-law of Rabbi Jacob Israel of Cherkassy and of Rabbi Haim of Kosov. He served as the chief judge in Talomanch until his death in 1882. He published the book Torah Extracts, which was written by Rabbi Mordechai of Chernovil. HGG, p.67

⁹⁵ Rabbi Mordechai Twersky of Hornistipol, was from the Anipoli Dynasty (see ft.92). He was born in 1840. He was the son of Rabbi Meshullam of Talomanch. He was the son-in-law of Rabbi Haim of Zanz. He grew up in the house of his grandfather (father, according to TP, p. 71) from Cherkassy (see CONNECTIONS WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY ON CHERKASSY TODAY- www.foreveryjew.com/child, p. X), and therefore received the name Twersky; because of him being his disciple. He became the Admor of Hornistipol, where he was known for his greatness in his knowledge of the Torah and its laws. He wrote the treatises: The Deepness of Question, and A Composition on Pureness (on the ritual hand washing), The Golden Column (on Loans and Interest), and The Depth of the Benediction and The Wonders of Joseph (on the Torah). He also edited his Grandfathers book Emek Hatefilla. He died in 1863. Ibid, p.149

⁹⁶ Rabbi Zilberman was the government sponsored Rabbi, he was famous for his community and Zionist activities. He was also the chairman of the General Zionist Committee. He was a lawyer by profession, and also a judge. R3, p. 438; BW, p. 140. He was murdered in a pogrom. See POGROMS, p. xx

⁹⁷ Rabbi Twersky of Tomashpil was from the Lubavitch (Schnerson, Twersky families) Dynasty. He was the son of Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Nezon and the son-in-law of Rabbi Isaac of Shtavau (Berdetchev). He was called Twersky because his mother's father came from Cherkassy. He was Rabbi of Vartizshon, and then Chief Rabbi of Tomashpil. He died in 1920. HGG, p. 163

⁹⁸ Rabbi Linitz was from the Linitz Dynasty (Rabinowitz family). He was born in 1815. He was the son of Rabbi Isaac Joel and the son-in-law of Rabbi Samuel Abraham Abba Koritz of Solavita. In 1902 he was forced to flee to Podolilve, Romania. He wrote the book Chen Aharon (Aaron's Charm). His son was Rabbi Joseph who was the chief judge of Ahpali; whose father-in-law was Rabbi Jacob Israel of Cherkassy. He died in 1872. IBID, p. 173

⁹⁹ FY, p. 4

¹⁰⁰ IBID, p. 3

development of the local food industry¹⁰¹. They owned 207 stores, 25 work shops (14 of which were tailor shops), about 22 factories(1 for nails, 1 for paints, 2 for bricks, 4 for tobacco, 2 for cigarettes, and 13 for soap, beer, chocolate and candy), 5 flour mills, 7 print shops, 1 lumber mill, and a few warehouses¹⁰². A group of Jewish tailors had already formed a cooperative in 1910¹⁰³.

The cultural level rose, and there was an increase in the amount of Jewish newspapers and literature that was printed. Yiddish was the mother tongue. Approximately 60% of the men knew how to read and write, as opposed to 13% of the women¹⁰⁴

In 1910 the Russian controlled Jewish schools were opened.¹⁰⁵ There were three private schools for boys¹⁰⁶, one of which was a high school¹⁰⁷, and one for girls. This was in addition to the Talmud Torah, and a few Chadarim.¹⁰⁸

In the beginning of the 1920's, there were two Jewish (Yiddish) language¹⁰⁹ schools, consisting of 440 pupils¹¹⁰: one was a vocational school, and the other included academic high school classes. There were also five kindergartens consisting of 315 pupils. There then was an **Educational Institute** in the city, with a Jewish section next to it. When the **Institute** became a Teacher's Seminary, the Jewish section was shut down. In 1924, Jewish schools had 1349 pupils, as compared to 1550 pupils in non-Jewish schools. The number of pupils in the two Jewish elementary schools (seven grade schools) declined to 800, in 1926.¹¹¹

There were a few Jewish libraries. The Culture League ran them. They operated from 1918 to 1921, when they were shut down¹¹².

In 1918, a committee, under Soviet rule, issued the first official expression, of the recognition of the Jews as a nation¹¹³. A third of the representatives of the municipal council were Jews.¹¹⁴ During WWI and the Civil War in Russia, the Jewish community in Cherkassy suffered tragically.¹¹⁵ Then the rulers of Cherkassy changed ten times, the Jews were of course a target. There were three pogroms¹¹⁶ in 1919. During these pogroms the homes of the Jews were robbed many times.¹¹⁷

Therefore in 1919, a Jewish self-defense unit was founded; at first it was a secret unit.¹¹⁸ It existed this way until 1921, when the Soviet government recognized it¹¹⁹. There were similar units in other places in the Ukraine. It is noted that the Cherkassy unit was a particularly strong one.¹²⁰ The city served as a shelter for Jews who fled from the surrounding towns and villages.¹²¹

According to a questionnaire of the year 1923, which received answers from 2118 families, 1823 families were for immediate immigration from Cherkassy¹²².

¹⁰¹ JL, p. 247

¹⁰² FY, p. 3

¹⁰³ JL, p. 247

¹⁰⁴ FY, p. 3

¹⁰⁵ Hadoar, 1/20/56; ZA

¹⁰⁶ FY, p. 3

¹⁰⁷ Students from the area studied there. TP, p. 241

¹⁰⁸ FY, p. 3

¹⁰⁹ JL, p. 247

¹¹⁰ FY, p. 4

¹¹¹ JL, p. 247

¹¹² FY, p. 4

¹¹³ TP, p. 137

¹¹⁴ JL, p. 247

¹¹⁵ EJ, V. 5, p. 391

¹¹⁶ See **POGROMS**, p. 12

¹¹⁷ DM, p.1; EJ, V. 5, p.391; HE, V.28, p. 1003

¹¹⁸ SPO, p. 67

¹¹⁹ DM, p.1; EJ, V. 5, p. 391; HE, V. 28, p. 1003

¹²⁰ SPO, p. 67

¹²¹ DM, p. 1; HE, V. 28, p. 1003

¹²² FY, p. 4

The tobacco factory was re-established in 1923, and three hundred out of the five hundred workers there were Jews. Then approximately 45% percent of the 2,000 factory workers of the city, were Jews. A Jewish society for artisans was established, with a savings plan. Afterwards, there were also Jewish cooperatives for millenaries, tailors, and tobacco workers that had saving plans. The money behind this organization came from the Joint¹²³.¹²⁴ There were many Jews who were without work, therefore they were sent to work in various places, where workers were needed. This is how another 210 Jews began to work in the sugar refinery.

Three agricultural collectives (kolkhoz) were set up in the area, in 1924. The first one: Khlebrob (bread makers) consisted of 287 members (57 families)¹²⁵. The second one: Zemlediets (land workers) consisted of 246 members (46 families). The third one consisted of 116 people (20 families).¹²⁶

A Jewish Court started to operate in 1925.¹²⁷ Yiddish became the official language there in 1930.¹²⁸ Yiddish also became the official language of the Jewish band in the local army¹²⁹.¹³⁰

A Jewish newspaper appeared, by the name of Das Communista Vort (Speaker of the communists), in 1929.¹³¹

The Jewish community institutions were closed by the government in the end of the 1920's.¹³²

POGROMS¹³³

There were three large-scale pogroms in Cherkassy. Each one surpassed the preceding one in scope and savagery¹³⁴.

The first pogrom occurred between the years 1881 and 1884. It took place after the assassination of Czar Alexander II. A rumor was spread in anti-Jewish circles, that the Jews were guilty of his assassination, and that the government authorized attacks on them. He was assassinated by the revolutionary organization Narodnaya Volya. At first, this pogrom was supported by revolutionary circles. This pogrom occurred mainly in the geographical area of southeastern Ukraine. Here there was a combination of aggravating circumstances: traditional rebelliousness among the masses, the tradition of Jewish hatred and persecutions perpetrated by Chmielnicki and the Haidemacks, and the extremist revolutionary movement. The Jews were regarded by all as dangerous rivals.¹³⁵

I remember one Pesach seder, when my grandmother told about a Pesach in her home in Cherkassy, when she was a very little girl. What she actually was saying was that they had no

¹²³ The **Joint Distribution Committee** was founded on November 27, 1914, with the purpose of aiding suffering Jews. EJ, V. 2, pp. 827-832

¹²⁴ FY, p. 4

¹²⁵ This consisted of 67 Jewish families (337 people). JL, p. 247

¹²⁶ FY, p. 4

¹²⁷ JL, p. 247

¹²⁸ TP, p. 137

¹²⁹ This was a section of the police. JL, p. 247

¹³⁰ FY, p. 4. See **POGROMS**, p. 12

¹³¹ IBID, p. 4

¹³² EJ, V. 5, p. 391

¹³³ Pogrom is a Russian word that designates an attack accompanied by destruction, looting of property, murder, and rape. It was perpetrated by one sector of the population against another. In modern history, it is an international term that describes the attacks against the Jews of Russia. There were also pogroms against other nations (Armenians, Tartars) EJ, V. 13, pp. 694- 701

¹³⁴ IBID, V. 13, p. 694

¹³⁵ IBID, pp. 695-6

seders and no feeling of a holiday. The only feeling she had was that she had to hide, and wanted to be near her father. The windows and shutters were all closed and there was no light, and they all had to be QUIET. This corresponds with the date of this pogrom^{136 137}.

The second pogrom occurred between the years 1903 and 1906. There was a connection with the revolutionary agitation in Russia, and the Russian revolution of 1905¹³⁸, which was not very successful¹³⁹. The Russian government, which was struggling against the revolutionary movement, gave the reactionary press a free hand in anti Jewish incitement. This was an attempt to represent the revolutionary movement as being a result of Jewish machinations¹⁴⁰. A pogrom¹⁴¹ was organized in the city, with the help of the municipality, in 1905. As a reaction to this, there was a general strike in the nail and sugar factories, where many Jews worked.¹⁴² Self- defense movements¹⁴³ were organized among the Jewish youth, the organizers mainly from the Zionist socialist parties, and the Bund. These self-defense movements were well praised by the Jewish community.

The third pogrom occurred between the years 1917-1921. There was a connection between these outbreaks and the revolutions and the civil war, which then took place in Eastern Europe. Many Jews were rallied to the Red army and the Soviet regime, and the Zionist movement was strengthened.¹⁴⁴ Non-Jews were also killed because of their political leanings.¹⁴⁵ The weakness of the government, and it being transferred from hand to hand (Communists, White Russians, Ukraine), the organization of the local underworld, the weakness of the local police were among the causes for the need for a local defense movement. The Petleyor government agreed to this organization, which was composed of Jews as well as non-Jews. The groups were organized according to neighborhoods. Since Jews mostly populated the center of the city, they were in charge of this area, in which many riots took place. The Jews learned that they could only depend upon Jewish protection after a few hard incidents.¹⁴⁶ A pogrom¹⁴⁷ was stopped, because of the organization of Jewish soldiers who were serving in the local auxiliary into a band of Jewish soldiers, in 1917¹⁴⁸.

This pogrom can be divided into three, as far as Cherkassy is concerned.

- ❖ The first pogrom (April 30, 1919)¹⁴⁹ was carried out by the soldiers of the Ukrainian National Republic¹⁵⁰, under the leadership of Gregoriov. A mixed unit of the self-defense

¹³⁶ The date of her birth (1882) appears in the Family Tree; see ft. 5, p.3

¹³⁷ I have found no actual reference to this pogrom in Cherkassy, aside from the above childhood memory.

¹³⁸ EJ, pp. 695-670

¹³⁹ BW, p. 137

¹⁴⁰ EJ, V. 13, p. 697

¹⁴¹ This was an answer to the constitution issued by Czar Nicholas IV and the Duma (parliament), which promised democratic freedom. The Ukrainians had a problem in accepting this. In the Ukraine, many Jews suffered badly from this pogrom. Hundreds were killed in the riots, and much property was ruined. The Jews that were able of leaving the area were smart in doing so. Hadoar, 20/1/56, ZA

¹⁴² FY, p. 3

¹⁴³ These self defense movements actually saved much of the community during the period from 1905 to 1919 (when the local government was transferred from hand to hand [communists, White Russia, Ukraine] a few times), and even afterwards. Many of the participants were members of the Zeiriei Zion movement. BW, p. 141

¹⁴⁴ EJ, V. 13, pp. 698-701

¹⁴⁵ BW, p. 154

¹⁴⁶ BW, pp. 154-6

¹⁴⁷ There is an article about this pogrom in Hadoar 12/17 /69. ZA

¹⁴⁸ FY, p. 3

¹⁴⁹ BW, p. 156

organization, which contained 150 Jews, was sent to the area of the sugar factory to ward them off. The Christian members of the unit suddenly teamed up with the soldiers, and the Jews were caught in a difficult situation. Thus the pogrom began. After the pogrom was over, the Jews set out to bury their dead. Many had been decapitated.¹⁵¹

- ❖ The second pogrom (May 16-21, 1919)¹⁵² was carried out by the soldiers of the Cossack hetman Greginov.¹⁵³ In these riots 700¹⁵⁴ Jews were killed¹⁵⁵. The Gregorians usually killed only men, and left the women and children unharmed. In this case however, the women were murdered when they tried to defend their husbands.¹⁵⁶ Of the 300, who were brought to the police station and shot while lying down, 4 managed to survive.¹⁵⁷ About 25 hid in the kindergarten, but they were found and murdered. Among them were Rabbi M. Zilberman¹⁵⁸, and 9 youths¹⁵⁹. Four¹⁶⁰ of these youths were on their way by foot from Bohoslav to Odessa, with the ultimate goal of coming to the land of Israel.¹⁶¹ This part of the pogrom was carried out by the units of Simon Petlyuras Ukrainian National Army, under the leadership of Oberov^{162 163}. The professional units stood against them, but after a short while the non-Jewish members of these units turned against the Jewish members and killed many of them. Some Jews managed to save themselves by bribery¹⁶⁴. Some Jews were hidden in the houses of non-Jewish friends. It is known that these people disguised themselves and then partook in the killings of other Jews¹⁶⁵.
- ❖ The third pogrom (August 18-21, 1919)¹⁶⁶ was carried out by Deniken's¹⁶⁷ soldiers¹⁶⁸, who killed 250 Jews¹⁶⁹. Heavy damage was then caused to Jewish homes and property¹⁷⁰. The soldiers were overcome by the Communists and left the city.

The communists knew that the Jews were loyal citizens and needed a self-defense unit. They also used this unit for their own good, as was their policy whenever and wherever they came into power.¹⁷¹ Later on, the Jewish defense unit became a problem to the Bolsheviks. At this time the Jewish self-defense unit developed. It began to gather funds for getting ammunition from the government and from the Jews, and did so in illegal ways. At first the ammunition was hidden, but

¹⁵⁰ EJ, V. 5, p. 391

¹⁵¹ BW, p. 156

¹⁵² FY, p. 3

¹⁵³ EJ, V. 5, p. 391

¹⁵⁴ More than 700 were killed. R3, p. 437

¹⁵⁵ EJ, V. 5, p. 391; HE, V.28, p. 1003; R3, p. 437

¹⁵⁶ This was so, for there was a false rumor that this was an order which originated in France; R3, p. 437

¹⁵⁷ R3, p. 438

¹⁵⁸ See **JEWISH HISTORY**; ft 93, p.10

¹⁵⁹ Three from Cherkassy were Zev Ortenberg, Joseph Freedman, Joesh Contstinovsky

¹⁶⁰ They were S. Edelman, S. Sernovilsky, and the two Rothman brothers. BW. p. 140

¹⁶¹ R3, p. 438

¹⁶² R3, p. 437. Deniken was the organizer. JL, p. 247

¹⁶³ ED, p. 121

¹⁶⁴ R3, p.437

¹⁶⁵ IBID, p.438

¹⁶⁶ FY, p. 4

¹⁶⁷ Deniken was the leader of the White army in Southern Russia. The aim was to capture this area. The failure caused pogroms against the Jews, among other things. He himself was not responsible for these pogroms but did not intervene in order to stop them. HE, V. 12, pp. 884-5

¹⁶⁸ This was organized by Petlyuras gangs; JL, p. 247

¹⁶⁹ DM, p.1; FY, p. 4; HE, V. 28, p.1003

¹⁷⁰ JL, p. 247

¹⁷¹ BW, p.157

then it was decided to show it off. This was done on Sabbaths and Holidays and gave the Jews a feeling of safety. The heads of the organization, as many of its members were also members of the Zionist organization, in particular of Zeirei Zion. The government defense committee, and the government defense headquarters sponsored the organization of the unit at first. There were similar organizations in the area of Cherkassy, and therefore one aided the other in the time of need. This made an impression on pursuers. An order was issued by the Bolsheviks to disperse with the Jewish defense units.¹⁷²

ZIONISM

As far as Zionist activities go, there were already active members of Chovevei Zion, in the 1880's.

Various Zionist groups began to meet in the 1890's. In the beginning of the twentieth century a group of Zionist socialists began¹⁷³, and Zionism as whole became very strong in Cherkassy and the area¹⁷⁴. At the same time a branch of the Bund¹⁷⁵ was organized.¹⁷⁶ Three social groups influenced the Jews, and especially the youth. They were the Zionists, The Bund, and the S.S (Socialists)¹⁷⁷.

One evening, after Herzl¹⁷⁸ died there was a Memorial service in the Soklovsky Synagogue; Yavzerov gave the eulogy. This new synagogue was used secretly for Zionist meetings, which usually took place after the evening prayers. This way, it appeared as if the service was still in progress. There was an opening in the floor, which led to the sexton's apartment. This was a way to escape, if the need to do so occurred. This apartment was also a center for organizing Zionist activity: advertising stock of the Colonial Zionist bank, selling Zion "Jewish National Fund stamps, and the Hebrew (in Hebrew) school (which developed and had many pupils, and thereby caused the popular knowledge of the language).

There was a children's group "Zionist Children". The children also felt for Zionism and helped sell stamps for the Jewish National Fund. Correspondingly, the Bund also had a children's group The "League of Children for the Bund"¹⁷⁹. All the organizations were then in the underground. The Zionist activities however increased, and in the meanwhile the youngsters grew up, and became an actual part of the Zionist activities.

After the revolution of 1917, the Zionist organization, as did other political groups, came out from the underground¹⁸⁰. The Jewish community was reorganized, and democratically represented¹⁸¹. The Zionist group Zeiri Zion was well represented.¹⁸²

The centers of the Zionist organization of Ukraine were in Kiev and Charkov. Representatives of the centers went to all the local branches to aid the local leaders. There were

¹⁷² IBID.

¹⁷³ FY, p. 3

¹⁷⁴ TP, p. 235

¹⁷⁵ This was the Jewish socialist party founded in Russia. In 1897, after a certain ideological development it became associated with devotion to Yiddish, autonomic and secular Jewish nationalism, and the envisioning of a good Jewish life, similar to the life in Eastern Europe. It was sharply opposed to Zionism and other conceptions of a world-embracing Jewish national identity. EJ, V. 4, pp. 1497-1507

¹⁷⁶ FY, p. 3

¹⁷⁷ BW, p. 136

¹⁷⁸ Theodor (Benjamin Zev) Herzl (1860-1904); father of political Zionism and founder of the World Zionist Organization. EJ, V. 8, pp. 407-421

¹⁷⁹ BW, p.137

¹⁸⁰ Hadoar, 1/20/56. ZA

¹⁸¹ There was strong competition between the different factors of the Jewish population. Community members that were representatives of the government no longer existed. BW, p. 138

¹⁸² IBID.

also connections with Moscow. Of course there were also complaints that these connections weren't strong enough. The pamphlet of Zeiri Zion, New Leadership was published in Hebrew, Russian and Yiddish, in 1917.¹⁸³ A Zionist society was founded in the early 20 century.

Zeiri Zion opened up a sub-organization called Hechalutz (Pioneer organization), which sponsored the idea of agricultural education in most of Ukraine in 1917. Its' development was stifled due to the pogroms of 1917-8¹⁸⁴. Each branch was independent, and worked on a Hebrew agricultural settlement, in the respective area. There, there was practical training in agriculture: wheat, vegetables, gardening, tobacco, vineyard, beets, irrigation, bees, chickens, etc. Hechalutz members also participated in agricultural courses run by the government¹⁸⁵ A branch of Hechalutz was opened, in Cherkassy, in 1920.¹⁸⁶ The group first met and worked in the Freedman garden. This is how this group of Hechalutz members definitely decided that they wanted a future in agriculture. The two organizations planned Aliyah to the land of Israel with the goal of working the land. Therefore they formed a group known as "The Land and its' Work"¹⁸⁷

There was an Odessa Area Committee Meeting in August 1920, with 33 delegates from 17 groups in the respective area. A Directorate Center of the area was formed, and consisted of people from Cherkassy. Michael Winsky, was elected secretary and Kitigordsky was one of the members. They were the ones that carried out most of the tasks of the directorate, which consisted of organizing contacts between all of the branches, and the forwarding of material. An effort was made to send out a newsletter, with information about what was planned to go on in the Centers, such as lessons in Hebrew, and the reading of letters from the Halutzim, who were already in the land of Israel. A local office was opened in Cherkassy. Actual information and aid in planning Aliyah was given on such offices. It was also possible to go to the consulate to receive economic information. The communication between branches was a problem; but this is understandable because of the problems in forwarding mail and transportation by railroad. Most information was therefore passed on by word of mouth. There was to be another Odessa Area Committee Meeting in March, but it was cancelled due to the transportation problems. Then there were about 200 Hechalutz groups in Ukraine. In 1921, members of Hechalutz, who had thorough agricultural training in their particular specialty, army training, and knowledge of the Hebrew language and of the Land of Israel were permitted to go on Aliyah. At this time there were over 50 members in Cherkassy, as opposed to over 2000 members in Ukraine¹⁸⁸

The government permitted the existence of the Hechalutz for it corresponded with government principles¹⁸⁹, which then honored agricultural produce, and gave them land and an apartment that was also used for meetings. Therefore they were also able to continue Zionist cultural activities.

In the early 1920's the Zionist organization Maccabi was founded. The feeling of well being in the Zionist organizations didn't last too long, because of the Boshevik (reactionaries) revolution. Zionists felt an anti Zionist reaction from the Yeveskzia. This reached a height with the arrest of many of them, in 1922. Then about 100 were arrested, and this included the Zionist leaders from Cherkassy.¹⁹⁰ The general feeling of the Jews was bad for there were again uprisings against them. All Jewish activities were again in the underground. Even so, Zionist activities were quite strong, especially those of Zeirei Zion. Meetings were held, but always in different places, and sometimes the place of meeting even changed in the middle of a meeting. The Jewish library

¹⁸³ KC, p. 135

¹⁸⁴ See POGROMS, p. 13

¹⁸⁵ SPO, pp. 64-7

¹⁸⁶ BW, pp. 136-7

¹⁸⁷ Sometimes there was a need for organizations to change their names. SPO, p. 67. .

¹⁸⁸ Michael Winsky is the author of this article. SPO, pp. 64-7

¹⁸⁹ IBID, p. 67

¹⁹⁰ BW, pp. 136-7

was divided up between different people. Economic activities took place in public, for there was no way of telling that these were affiliated with a particular party. They were sponsored by the Zeiri Zion and the General Zionists.

Because of the economic problems, and problems of hunger, an economic cooperative, of a few thousand people, was established. The board of directors was made up of Zionists. This was also a way for exchanging news and opinions. Most of the news about the Land of Israel, during the war and afterwards, came from the Odessa based weekly newspaper, which of course took time to arrive.

The conditions, and Zionist education caused a strong desire to come on Aliyah to the Land of Israel. Young people were willing to face the problems of the journey and settling; but this caused a serious problem for families. The cooperative for Aliyah to the Land of Israel "Hatchiyah" was formed. Then there were 130 members; all of them were heads of families. Because of the persecution, all the activities of Zeirei Zion returned to the underground.¹⁹¹

THE HOLOCAUST

World War 2 finished off what the revolution had begun, and by 1945 the once prosperous Jewish community of Cherkassy had been annihilated.¹⁹²

Cherkassy was captured by the Germans on August 22, 1941. The Jews were ordered to list themselves by October 2, and to wear armbands on their right arm. Those of them, who were between the ages of 15 to 65, were ordered to appear for work every day; and to vote for a committee of three, which would be responsible for the work of the Jews. The Ukrainian Police of the district issued an order on October 10¹⁹³, for all Jews to move to the Ghetto by October 12. This ghetto consisted of only three streets. The Jews were warned that for every official local worker that would be killed, fifty Jews and ten communists would be killed; and for every house that would be burned, one hundred Jews and twenty communists would be killed. During November 1941, more than 300 Jews were shot to death. In late November, almost 900 Jews were murdered in the first "action"¹⁹⁴. Almost all of the rest were murdered in the second "action", in 1942. It seems that after the winter of 1942 the "actions" were continued and the Jewish community was destroyed.¹⁹⁵

The Jewish community was destroyed by the Nazis in 1941.¹⁹⁶

There were many homeless children in Cherkassy. A Ukrainian woman, Alexandra Shulezhko, with the help of a friend organized a Children's Home. In the end of 1942, there were about 100 children there, many of which were Jews. She changed the names and nationalities of the children she was hiding. She succeeded in hiding and saving 25 Jewish orphans.¹⁹⁷ She received a commendation: **Designation Among the Righteous** from Yad VeShem (Holocaust Museum), Jerusalem for this. She knew that she was in great danger for what she did.

Cherkassy was freed in December, 1943¹⁹⁸

There are quite a few documents¹⁹⁹ in the Yad Veshem Archives that relate to the Holocaust and Cherkassy. They give more information about the Holocaust in Cherkassy. They

¹⁹¹ IBID. 138-40

¹⁹² MW, p. 1

¹⁹³ This is the official date of the establishment of the Ghetto. JL, p. 247

¹⁹⁴ JL, p. 247

¹⁹⁵ FY, p. 5

¹⁹⁶ HE, V. 28, p. 1003

¹⁹⁷ JL, p. 247

¹⁹⁸ FY, p. 5

¹⁹⁹ CM

are written in Russian or Ukrainian. We are fortunate to have them for they give the proof of what did happen in Cherkassy.²⁰⁰

MODERN CHERKASSY

THE CITY OF CHERKASSY

Today Cherkassy is a big city²⁰¹, and an important economic and cultural center. The main types of industry are: the chemical complex, founded in 1964; a synthetic fibers and thread factory, founded in 1958; a chemical reagents plant; a light industry silk complex, founded in 1965; factories producing knitted fabric, clothing, hygroscopic cotton wool and fine leather products; the machine building industry, which includes equipment for the food industry and an auto repair plant; the food industry, which includes a sugar refinery, dairy products, a brewery and canneries²⁰² for fruits and vegetables²⁰³, which were founded in 1936²⁰⁴; and the construction industry, which includes reinforced concrete bricks, silicate bricks, and housing construction; tobacco plants, founded in 1878; handicrafts, etc.²⁰⁵ There is an electronic power station in the area, which has been operated by transforming water power since 1972.²⁰⁶

As an educational center, Cherkassy is the home of the following institutes: a Pedagogical Institute; the General Technical Faculty of the Kiev Civil Engineering Institute; of technical colleges specializing in electronics, agriculture, economics, trade, management, business training and others.

As a cultural center, Cherkassy is the home of a philharmonic orchestra, a drama theater, a puppet theater, a concert hall, a planetarium,²⁰⁷ and a regional museum²⁰⁸ which was established in 1918. The oblast newspaper CHERKASSY PRAVDA, is published in Cherkassy. The poet V. Symonenko lived and wrote in Cherkassy.²⁰⁹

Cherkassy is a modern and well-planned city. It was built according to several comprehensive plans. These were carried out in 1932, 1950, and 1962-65 by the Kiev Dnipromisto construction firm²¹⁰.

As far as architecture goes, the finer public buildings in the city, which were erected between 1959-1971, are the House of Soviets, the Music and Drama Theater, the Turyst Hotel, the railway station and the covered farm market. The Sosnivka health resort for treating tuberculosis of the lungs and bones is located in a pine forest south of the city, on the Dnieper River.

Cherkassy became the capital of the Cherkassy oblast in 1954. A rapid growth in the population²¹¹ was caused by these economic, cultural, and industrial developments.²¹²

The Cherkassy oblast lies on both banks of the Dnieper River. This is an agrarian-industrial region. Agricultural specialization is in grain, sugar beets, meat and dairy cattle. There are many collective and state farms. Industry specialization is in food, machinery, metal work, chemicals and

²⁰⁰ See **Documentation of the Holocaust, APPENDIX 4**, p. 26

²⁰¹ JA, p. 76

²⁰² EU, p. 417

²⁰³ JA, p. 76

²⁰⁴ Today these are among the largest canneries in Ukraine. EU, p. 417

²⁰⁵ IBID

²⁰⁶ JA, p. 76

²⁰⁷ IBID; EU, p. 417

²⁰⁸ See **HISTORY**, ft. 32, p.6

²⁰⁹ EU, p. 417

²¹⁰ They were additions to the original plan of 1926, which was made by V. Hest. EU, p. 417

²¹¹ See chart: **Jewish population in Cherkassy, APPENDIX 2**, p.25

²¹² EU, p. 417

light industry. Industrial crops are sugar beets and sunflowers²¹³. There are many railroad tracks and possibilities for connections. Tourism is an important industry because of the picturesque right bank of the Dnieper River and the reservoir²¹⁴.

JEWISH CHERKASSY

The current Jewish population is comprised of Jews who were evacuated during World War 2 and have since returned, as well as those who arrived from other regions following the war. About 50% are elderly pensioners, and most of these are in need of social services. The average monthly pension is 45 Grivne, which is the equivalent of 24 dollars.²¹⁵

There were 5,100 Jews in Cherkassy in 1959²¹⁶.

There are quite a few Memorial Books about which tell about Jewish communities that suffered during the Holocaust. Cherkassy is mentioned in many of them²¹⁷.

Between 1945 and 1990 Jewish religious activity was forbidden in the Soviet Union. In Cherkassy, as in the entire USSR, anyone suspected of such activity was sent to prison. There was a Jewish Cultural Center but it was neutral as far as religion was concerned. But then, on official documents *Jewish* was written for the nationality, and the general attitude towards Jews wasn't very favorable. It was difficult for Jews to get accepted to the universities. During this period the Jews did have a feeling of *Jewish Identity*. This was partly caused by a bit of tradition from the homes and family in some cases, and surely caused by the attitude of the Soviet regime to Jews. Jewish families, who had come to Cherkassy from places where the Soviet regime was not extremely powerful, had more of a possibility of absorbing more of a Jewish tradition from their home and family. Native families of Cherkassy did not have this luxury.

In 1990 the Jewish population was about 4000; then there was a large Aliyah from Cherkassy, as there also was in 1993, 1994, and 1995. Since then the number of people coming on Aliyah is less. Jews also have left Cherkassy for USA, Australia and Germany.

During the year of 1990-1, a group of Jew got together with the aim of celebrating Jewish Holidays. However their knowledge of how to celebrate each holiday was nil. For example, on Rosh Hashanah, they all lifted up glasses of vodka and said "Happy New Year" to each other; and the plan for celebrating Pesach was to have a banquet of pork, salami, bread and vodka. Therefore Peter Textell, whose family came to Cherkassy from Bessarabia after WW2, took on himself the chairmanship of this Jewish organization. For the Passover celebration, he gathered 500 Jews and rented the largest hall in Cherkassy. He placed one table on top of another so that everyone could see, and read from a Haggadah. Afterwards he told everyone to go home and do what he did, and tell what he told. They did so! They wanted this!

Now there are about 2000 Jews left in Cherkasy. Jews are accepted to the universities, as others are.²¹⁸ The financial situation is difficult for all, but a bit easier for Jews, because of the aid from the *Hesed*²¹⁹ organization. This organization also organizes the Jewish cultural life in the city.

²¹³ I was happy to find a connection to sunflower seeds. I remember that my Grandmother once bought a box of sunflower seeds, not to eat but to plant. She said it was part of her memory of her childhood. She went to a neighbor, a Russian Christian, who had a garden, and asked him in Russian if she could use part of his garden. This took a lot of courage on her part for she said he was a Russian and an anti-Semite. She didn't allow me to go into this garden with her, but only to look from outside the gate. She was so happy with the four or five flowers that she succeeded in growing.

²¹⁴ EU, pp. 418-9

²¹⁵ MW, p. 1

²¹⁶ EJ, V. 5, p. 319. See chart: **Jewish Population in Cherkassy, Appendix 2, p. 25**

²¹⁷ See chart: **Books about the Holocaust in which Cherkassy is Mentioned, Appendix 5, p. 27**

²¹⁸ PT

²¹⁹ See the continuation here for an explanation

When there is a major activity everyone comes. Many of the members of the philharmonic are Jews. The late director of the theater was a Jew. The director of the School of Music is a Jew.

The Jewish community is financially independent. The head of the community is also head of the newly founded trade organizations. This aids in the sponsoring of Jewish summer camps for children and teenagers. There is a connection between the Jewish community of Cherkassy, and the smaller Jewish communities of Smela, Shefula, Zevigorodok, and others. This unification is sponsored by charity organizations in The USA²²⁰.

The Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)²²¹, tries to help the Jews of Cherkassy in economic, social, and Jewish cultural ways. Since an actual connection with Jewish culture, and surely a connection tradition was forbidden for decades this is not an easy task. The JDC has combined the Hesed Welfare Center and the Jewish Community Center (JCC) as an address for these needs.²²²

Hesed Dorot was established in 1997, with the assistance of a 50,000 dollars grant from the Harrison estate and the United Jewish Federation of Metrowest, New Jersey. The connection between Cherkassy and Metrowest was started six years ago, through the JDC. The projects are sponsored by the JDC and the JA (Jewish Agency), and, if there are, other contributions²²³. The aim was to provide welfare services for the elderly. A building was purchased which houses offices, meeting and activity rooms, a dining room, and a kitchen. Welfare services range from food packages, communal dining rooms, meals-on-wheels, home care and medical assistance. These services are administered by volunteers and paid professions, who also offer social contact to the elderly. It is also a community center with activities such as programs for the elderly, computers, and Jewish and general activities for children and youth.

- ❖ The **Computer** club gives professional training in desktop and graphics for 30 participants.
- ❖ The **Jewish World** club gives weekend lectures on topics Jewish for 25-30 participants.
- ❖ The **Intellectual Café** club has games, competitions and brainteasers for 40 participants.
- ❖ The **Warm Home** teaches Hebrew to 15 children, and helps with homework in most subjects. About 80 children participate in the summer vacation programs A Hebrew class for adults is being organized. This way parents will be able to study Hebrew while their children are participating in programs.
- ❖ The **Arts and Crafts** club has mostly clay modeling and soft toy making for 20 participants
- ❖ The **Teenage** club offers an English Tea program for teenagers to practice speaking English, on Saturdays
- ❖ The **Kindergarten** gives Jewish education on Holidays and in the Hebrew language for 20 children (aged 3-6) and a discussion group for 18 parents.
- ❖ The **Choir** gives the opportunity for Jewish people to get together and sing Jewish songs and folksongs.
- ❖ The **Mazal Tov** program helps young couples with financial and moral support after a baby has been born, and arranges for these young families to be adopted by older childless couples.

The Metrowest Jewish community is trying to help strengthen the Cherkassy Jewish community by supporting this community financially and morally in the organizing of all of these programs.²²⁴

. There have been three religious organizations in Cherkassy since 1991. Some belong to EZRA (an Ultra Orthodox Zionist Youth Movement), some belong to the Religious Zionist Movement and some to the Chabad movement. The representative area Rabbi from Chabad comes

²²⁰ JA, p. 76

²²¹ See **POGROMS**, ft 124, p. 12

²²² MW, p. 1-3

²²³ CUT www.ujcnj@org.il

²²⁴ MW, pp. 4-5

to Cherkassy sometimes. The Reform movement began in 1991. Many of the Jews in Cherkassy are Zionists. Most of these are young people, and previous members of the Ezra movement. Many of those that come on Aliyah, come for Zionist reasons. There are about 2000 Jews in Israel today who came on Aliyah from Cherkassy.²²⁵

CONNECTIONS WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN CHERKASSY TODAY

It is obvious that there are Jews throughout the world that feel that their roots are from Cherkassy. They have found different ways to express this.

Here are the ones that I found on the Internet:

There are 509 sites about Cherkassy on the Internet. Here are the ones where there is information that I found useful.²²⁶

Cherkassy information portal: www.town.ck.au

Information about the history of the city, and the city today is given here.

www.jewgen.org/ukraine/kiev/cherkassy

March route from Cherkassy- information about a Jew leaving Cherkassy in 1905, and the connection with his family that remained there is given here.

jew.dp.ua/english

Dniepropetrovsk Region Association of Judaic Religious Communities and Organizations

Information about events in the area is given here.

www.foreveryjew.com/child

The Rabbi of Hornostipol explained the influence of the righteous in prayer. He was orphaned as a child and raised by his grandfather the Rabbi-Zaddik (righteous one) of Cherkassy. This story was told by a descendent, Abraham J, Twerski in the book Generation to Generation.²²⁷

www.partner.org.il/ofakim

Partnership Sends Volunteer Counselors to Cherkassy (August 2002)

Six counselors from Ofakim-Merchavim and New Jersey worked in the Cherkassy family retreat, near the city of Saki, on the Black Sea, when hundreds of families from the Cherkassy region went to spend twelve days there. This was the fourth year of this program. The counselors received orientation in Jerusalem before leaving for Cherkassy. This partnership program still takes place a few times a year.

Metrowest- Cherkassy Direct Absorption Project (February 2002)

The Deputy Mayor of Rishon LiZion, Mr. Michael Reif, visited Cherkassy and met there with potential immigrants to Israel in order to persuade them to come to live in his city. In Rishon LiZion, they receive special treatment, to help them have a speedy and easy absorption here. The municipality helps the new residents settle in the city. This has been going on for a few years. An Association of new immigrants from Cherkassy was founded. This is mainly a social organization, which also helps with absorption. A yearly excursion is organized.

²²⁵ PT

²²⁶ CUT

²²⁷ See **JEWISH HISTORY**, ft 88, 92, p. 10

Metrowest-Ofakim Students Headed To Cherkassy as Counselors (July 2001)

Three Israeli students, joined with students from the USA in orientation, and then went to be leaders in summer camps for 70 youth and 30 adults from Cherkassy. The goal of the camps was to enrich these Cherkassy Jews in Jewish and Israeli tradition.

Today We are All Olim (June 2001)

Two Israelis and a few students from New Jersey went to Cherkassy to speak to future immigrants to Israel, and thereby reduce their fears and hesitations connected to personal safety and security in Israel. This article was written at the time of the murders of the young Israelis (of Russian origin) in the Dolphinarium restaurant in Tel Aviv.

Immigrants From Cherkassy Form Organization in Israel (January 2001)

This organization was founded on December 9, 2001. Here the Israeli residents meet, and discuss their advancements and their problems in this country. They help each other in adjusting or with other problems.

Caring is a Universal Language- Cherkassy Camp (September 1999)

Students from Ofakim and New Jersey tell about their experiences with the Jewish community in Cherkassy. They felt that they helped in the rebuilding of the community.

Returning from Cherkassy (August 1999)

Students from Ofakim and New Jersey tell about their experiences with the Jewish community of Cherkassy in the summer camp.

www.partner.org.il

Information about the United Jewish Federation of Metrowest- Essex, Morris, Sussex, North Union is given here.

www.jewishgen.org/uk/kiev

Information about Jews in the Kiev area is given here.

www.agenda@org.il/2001/english

Information about the connection between Cherkassy, New Jersey and Ofakim is given here.

www.ujcnjc@.org.il

Information about the summer camp counselors from Metrowest and Ofakim is given here.

CONCLUSION

As is visible, I did succeed in the end, in collecting a lot of information about the city of Cherkassy, and this makes me very happy. I do believe though that there must be more information that I could not get to because of language or other problems I also think that there is more information that has not been documented, and therefore may be lost.

The Jews of Cherkassy suffered very much. The Jews realized that they had to be responsible for their own defense, and that there was no relying on the government. This suffering caused agitation, especially among the young people. Many turned to Zionism as solution to the problems. I suppose that this is a way of seeing the history of Jews of Cherkassy as an integral part of the history of the Jewish people. I trust in G-d that the State of Israel is an answer to the suffering of the Jews of Cherkassy, and the Jews of the world over.

The work that is done in Yad Veshem and other institutions for researching the Holocaust is very important so that people will know and have proof as to what happened. There is much importance in the translating the information into languages, which are understood by researchers and others who are interested.

In the writing of this article, I found myself wanting to write WE, instead of relating to the people of Cherkassy in third person. I was happy about this feeling. I hope that my cousins and daughters can also feel this way.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Books by Louis Golding²²⁸

Fiction

Forward From Babylon
Seacoast of Bohemia
Day of Atonement
Store of Ladies
The Miracle Boy
The Prince or Somebody
Give Up Your Lovers
Magnolia Street
Five Silver Daughters
The Camberwell Beauty
To the Quayside

The Pursuer
The Dance Goes On
Mr. Emmanuel
Who's There Within?
No News From Helen
The Glory of Elsie Silver
Three Jolly Gentlemen
Honey for the Ghost
The Dangerous Places
The Loving Brothers
Mr. Hurricane

Short Stories

The Doomington Wanderer
Pale Blue Nightgown
Mario on the Beach

Verse

Sorrow of War
Shepard Singaing Ragtime
Prophet and Fool

The Song of Songs, Rendered as a Mask
Poems Drunk and Drowsy

Travel

Sunward: Adventures in Italy
Sicilian Noon
Those Ancient Lands: A Journey to Palestine
Good-bye to Ithaca

In the Steps of Moses the Lawgiver
In the Steps of Moses the Conqueror
Louis Golding Goes Traveling

Belles-Lettres

Adventures in Living Dangerously
Letter to Adolf Hitler
We Shall Eat and Drink Again
(with Andre Simon)

James Joyce
The Jewish Problem
Hitler Through the Ages
The World I Knew

Sport

Louis Golding's Boxing Tales
The Bare-Knuckle Breed

My Sporting Days and Nights

²²⁸ LG, p.2

Appendix 2

Jewish Population in Cherkassy²²⁹

Year	<u>Jewish Population</u>	<u>General population</u>
1765	171	
1775	29	
1778	60	
1787	65	
1795 ²³⁰ , 1797	783	
1847	1568	
1881	5896	
1897	10,950 (37%) ²³¹	29,600
1898	5,884 ²³²	
1910	12,979	39,600 ²³³ /42,062
1923	10,483	
1926	19,886/ 10,886 (28,2%) ²³⁴ , (27,6%) ²³⁵	39,500 ²³⁶
(1930	44,266 ²³⁷	Of the Cherkassy District)
1939	7637	51,600 ²³⁸ /723,51
1959	4,700(5.6%)/ 5,100 (6%) ²³⁹	85,000 ²⁴⁰
1970	(6%) ²⁴¹	158,000 ²⁴²
1971		172,000 ²⁴³
1977		229,000 ²⁴⁴
1979	4400 (2%)	
1983		259,000 ²⁴⁵
1989	3,500 ²⁴⁶	290,000 ²⁴⁷
1990	About 4000 ²⁴⁸	
2003	About 2000 ²⁴⁹	

²²⁹ FY, p.1

²³⁰ JEE, p. 12

²³¹ DM, HE, V. 28, p. 1003. This was 27%, 70% of the population was Russian Orthodox. JA, p. 76

²³² According to JEE, p. 12; There seems to be a discrepancy here which doesn't correspond to the population of the previous year. (1897- 10,950 1898- 5,884)

²³³ EU, p. 417, district

²³⁴ EJ, V. 5, p.391

²³⁵ Ukrainians were 61.9% and Russians were 8.6%; EU, p. 417

²³⁶ IBID

²³⁷ TP, p. 137

²³⁸ EU, p. 417

²³⁹ EJ, V. 5, p. 319

²⁴⁰ Ukrainians were 70%, Russians were 22%, and Jews were 6%; EU, p. 417

²⁴¹ 92.8% were Ukrainian, 6% were Russian. JA, p. 76

²⁴² EU, p. 417

²⁴³ HE, V. 28, p.1003

²⁴⁴ EU, p. 417

²⁴⁵ IBID, p. 416

²⁴⁶ JA, p. 76

²⁴⁷ IBID

²⁴⁸ PT

²⁴⁹ IBID

Appendix 3

Property Owned by Jews in Cherkassy²⁵⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of houses owned by Jews</u>
1784	17
1787	11 ²⁵¹
1789	14

Appendix 4

Documentation of the Holocaust²⁵²

	<u>Document</u>	<u>number</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Language</u>
1	Investigation of Nazi Criminals	M33	571	Russian
2	Information from the area	M40 RCM	21	Russian
3	Orders from the Local Municipality and Local Police	M52	1	Ukrainian
4	Orders Issued by the Chief of Police of Cherkassy, Pertaining to Jews	M52	2	Ukrainian
5	Documents Concerning Nazi Criminals in the Area	M52	5	Ukrainian
6	Documents Concerning Nazi Criminals in the City	M52	6	Ukrainian
7	Evidence Concerning Nazi Criminals in the Kiev Area	M52	7	Russian
8	Documentation from the Royal Archives of Cherkassy	M52	11	Russian
9	Material on Members of the Local Underground and Local Partisans, the Area, and Memoirs of the Orphans Home	M52	16	Russian
10	Protocols and Decisions of the Committee Members of the Area, the city Uman, on Group Activities in the Underground	M52	18	Ukrainian
11	Protocols and Decisions of the Cherkassy Region on Underground Activities, and Partisan Activity inside the City Area and the Area of Uman, during WW2	M52	19	Russian
12	Statistics on the Underground, Partisans, and Associates, in Connection with Anti-Nazi Activities in the Cherkassy Area	M52	20	Ukrainian
13	Documents about Partisan and Underground Members and their Activities During the German Occupation of the Cherkassy Region	M52	25	Ukrainian
14	Documents Pertaining to Nazi Criminals in the City of Gorodishche	M52	20	Ukrainian
15	Excerpts of Information on Nazi Criminals in the City and Area of Cherkassy, During the Nazi Occupation	M52	239	Ukrainian

²⁵⁰ FY, p. 2

²⁵¹ Then there were a total of 51 houses in the city. HE, V. 12, p. 1003

²⁵² This is what is found in the archives in Yad Veshem. It is possible that there are also copies in other institutes which deal with researching the Holocaust

Appendix 5**Books about the Holocaust in which Cherkassy is mentioned**²⁵³

Title	Author	Publication	Place	Date
<u>A Guide to Yivos Landsmanshaften Archive</u>				
<u>American Gathering</u>		Federation of Holocaust	N.Y., U.S.A.	1983
<u>Every Day A Remembrance Day</u> ²⁵⁴	Wiesenthal	Henry Holt & Co.	N.Y., U.S.A	1986
<u>Guide to Unpublished Materials of the Holocaust Period</u> ²⁵⁵		Yad Veshem	. Jerusalem, Israel	1979
<u>Hebrew Subscription Lists</u> ²⁵⁶	Kagen	Ktav	N.Y., U.S.A	1975
<u>Jewish Geneology Finder</u>			N.J., U.S.A.	1983
<u>Latter Day Leaders</u> ²⁵⁷	Rosenstein & Rosenstein	Computer Center for Jewish Geneology	N.J., U.S.A.	
<u>Shtetl Finder</u> ²⁵⁸	Cohen	Heritage	Md., U.S.A.	1989 ²⁵⁹
<u>Where Once We Walked</u>	Mokstoff & Sack	Survivors YIVO Avotanu	N.J., U.S.A.	1991

²⁵³ According to the lists I found in the Bibliography section of the National Library, Jerusalem

²⁵⁴ A Chronicle of Jewish Martyrdom

²⁵⁵ Part 3. v. 5

²⁵⁶ towns where there were subscriptions to Yiddish and/or Hebrew language books in the 19 century

²⁵⁷ sages and scholars

²⁵⁸ This was the only gazetteer of Eastern European Jewry for many years. Towns are listed alphabetically by the Roman alphabet version of the Yiddish name.



Map of the Pale²⁶¹



²⁶¹M2-C

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- Computer Listings, Yad Veshem, Jerusalem, Israel CM

File, Cherkassy, Yad VeShem, Jerusalem, Israel	FY
File- F30/94, Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel	ZA
Internet:	
www.town.uk.ua	CUT
Information Portal	IP
www.infoukes.com/ua-maps/ukraine/ukraine3.gif	M1-C
www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/pale.html	M2-C
Fax from Shuki Chur, curator of the Cherkassian Museum, Rachana, Israel, January 6, 2004. This is in my possession.	SC
Conversation with Peter Textell, a new immigrant from Cherkassy, June 2003	PT