



UCSJ: Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union

"The Voice of Emigration, Jewish Survival, and Human Rights in the Former Soviet Union Since 1970"

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CHRONICLE OF ANTISEMITISM IN UKRAINE: 2002-2004¹

(December 2004)

Abstract

Unlike during the Soviet period, the central government of Ukraine does not have an official policy of state sponsored antisemitism, and has made friendly gestures towards the Jewish community, both rhetorically and in matters of property restitution. Freedom of religion is generally unobstructed by the government, and many Jews have prominent positions in politics and in the business world. Nevertheless, serious problems remain that leave Jews vulnerable.

After a period of relative calm from the mid to late 1990's, the situation for Jews has gotten worse in several parts of the country since 2002. The mass attack on a Kiev synagogue in April 2002 and a Dnepropetrovsk synagogue in June 2002, four different beatings of Jews (three of whom are rabbis) in Kiev in July and August of 2003 and July and September of 2004, multiple assaults in 2004 on rabbis in Odessa, the beating of a yeshiva student in Donetsk in August 2004, combined with the police torture of Jewish pilgrims in Uman in October 2002, are all particularly striking signs of a sharply worsening climate. It is particularly disturbing that with the exception of the 2002 Kiev synagogue attack, all of these incidents received either minimal or no coverage in the Ukrainian media, which is largely under the control of the government or government-friendly businessmen, and that in the majority of cases, no arrests have been made.

Political instability following the disputed presidential election in late 2004 may increase the level of violence.

Introduction

The mostly good intentions of the weak and dysfunctional central government don't always filter down to the lower levels of the bureaucracy, especially the police, prosecutors, the courts and the SBU (the former KGB), which are still largely staffed by officials appointed during the years of Soviet state-sponsored antisemitism. It is reasonable to believe that many of these officials retain antisemitic views dating from that time, as has been shown by the numerous antisemitic statements made by various Ukrainian parliamentarians in recent years, and three recent reports of Jews being singled out for torture or harassment by police officials. President Kuchma himself was secretly recorded using antisemitic language while ordering the murder of an opposition journalist named Grigory Gongadze (these tapes have been authenticated by the US government, though the Ukrainian government continues to contend that they are forgeries).

¹ This report was written by UCSJ's Research and Advocacy Director, Nikolai Butkevich.

There have been several recent incidents of police singling out Jews for harassment in Ukraine. Even law enforcement officials who do not feel antisemitic bias often do little to prevent antisemitic crimes. Enforcement of laws banning the incitement of ethnic or religious hatred is almost non-existent, leading to widespread antisemitic publishing in the country. A law banning hate crimes, which has been on the books for years, was only successfully applied once in the whole post-Soviet history of Ukraine (against skinheads who attacked a synagogue in Kiev in 2002; see below for details).

The Ukrainian press is to a significant extent either controlled by the government or by government connected businesses, or is intimidated by government strong-arm tactics (including murders and assaults), making it very difficult to monitor antisemitic incidents. In some cases, Ukrainian Jewish leaders fear making antisemitic incidents public. Some local officials have hostile attitudes towards the local Jewish community, and the central government appears to be too weak and/or indifferent to check local abuses.

A Worsening Climate for Jews

Antisemitic incidents have become more frequent and violent since 2002. Local officials who are inclined to take antisemitic actions, turn a blind eye towards or support antisemitic hate groups and publications, or make antisemitic statements, are as a rule not sanctioned by the central government. Antisemitic attacks often do not result in any arrests, leaving the strong impression that police do not seriously investigate such incidents.

The worsening climate was noticeable by the beginning of the decade. In April 2001, the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs released a comprehensive study of Jewish life in Ukraine. The report found that:

Reports of increased antisemitism in Ukraine are widespread [my emphasis]. Its growth is attributed to continuing economic distress, Ukrainian nationalism (particularly in western Ukraine), envy of welfare assistance provided by the comparably well-organized and well-financed Jewish community, and, in some cities, to propaganda efforts of Arab students enrolled at local universities and other post-secondary institutions. Contemporary antisemitism in Ukraine emanates ‘from the street,’ rather than from the government as was common during the Soviet period. Jewish youngsters in some areas report routine antisemitic taunting in schools. Public school education in human rights and tolerance is lacking, and teachers and other school officials do not always respond appropriately to incidents of bigotry. Admission to some institutions of higher education is limited by antisemitic quotas. Antisemitic sentiment common in Ukrainian nationalism sometimes appears in new Ukrainian-language literature endorsed by the government in its efforts to encourage use of the Ukrainian tongue.

In January 2002, a synagogue in Nikolaev was vandalized. Vandals smashed windows and scrawled graffiti reading “Kikes, get out of Ukraine” on the walls of the synagogue. In February 2002, a rabbi in Nikolaev told UCSJ that the local press and local officials had not responded in any way to the attack. The Jewish community asked police to investigate, but there have been no arrests in connection with this incident.

Also in January 2002, UCSJ’s Kiev monitor reported that a local Jewish businessman had received antisemitic threats in the mail and that the door of his apartment was painted with a Star of David and a swastika. When he called the police, officers cleaned up the graffiti, not to be

helpful, but because they didn't want to file a report about it. UCSJ's Kiev monitor added to his report about this incident that: "Such incidents are obviously not isolated cases, but Jews in Ukraine have gotten used to them and think of them as so run of the mill that they don't even bother to inform Jewish organizations about them."

In February 2002, around 200 people attended an antisemitic demonstration in Lviv. The rally was organized by the Organization of Idealists of Ukraine—the publisher of the viciously antisemitic newspaper "The Idealist" which regularly calls for the extermination of Jews. Participants shouted "Kikes out of Ukraine!" and "Kikes out of Lviv!" No action was taken by local authorities in the face of this illegal incitement to violence against Jews. In March 2002, the Anti-Defamation League of Ukraine reported that for the third time, charges against "The Idealist" for inciting ethnic hatred had been dropped. However, after a February 5, 2002 protest letter written by seven members of the Ukrainian parliament, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine decided to conduct yet another study of the newspaper's content. In the meantime, the latest issue that I have read calls for "a law on the deportation of kikes from Ukraine" and "The Idealist" has still not been banned.

UCSJ's monitor in Izmail (south-western Ukraine) reported in February 2002 that: "Antisemitism is especially strong in schools. Every [Jewish] child has experienced this phenomenon at least once." He added that the old Jewish cemetery is in a state of extreme disrepair and that local residents have built bike paths on it. When Jewish leaders talked to local residents about this desecration, several of them shared the sentiments of one man who responded: "I don't give a damn that this is a cemetery and that kikes are buried here."

In March 2002, UCSJ's monitor in Izmail reported that a track for motorcycle races had been built on top of a site of a mass shooting of Jews during World War II. Local authorities refuse to allow the installation of a monument to the Holocaust at the site. In addition, antisemites warned the Jewish community in the city that Jews will be attacked if the community dares to become too visibly active. UCSJ's monitor reported that out of "fear of angering the local population and the city administration" Jewish community leaders remain silent about this threat, which received no publicity in the Ukrainian media, and they also refuse to formally complain about the total lack of restitution of Jewish property in the city. Neo-Nazis operate in the city, brazenly hanging portraits of Hitler in their headquarters on Klushin Street.

UCSJ's local monitor in the city of Ivano-Frankovsk reported in April 2002 that "radical right wing ideas are very popular in the city"; that "many people continue to call people of Jewish nationality 'kikes'" and that the local synagogue is regularly vandalized with swastikas and drawings of a Star of David in the gallows. In March 2002, the city legislature passed a resolution that gives those who served in the Halychyna SS division (an ethnic Ukrainian unit that fought on the side of the Nazis) the status of "fighters for the freedom and independence of Ukraine." Ukrainian and international Jewish organizations blasted the decision as rehabilitating Nazis, and the city authorities rescinded it, and even claimed later (in a blatant lie) that such a decision had never been approved in the first place. In contrast to most Ukrainian Jewish organizations, the local Jewish community kept silent throughout the controversy, perhaps due to intimidation.

In late March 2002, as Jews celebrated Passover, a young drunk stabbed an elderly Jewish leader inside the building of the Lutsk synagogue, according to a local UCSJ source. Around 8PM, the man attempted to enter the synagogue, but was stopped by an elderly local community activist who was watching the door named Boris Tsudechkus. The man returned five minutes later and burst through the door. Mr. Tsudechkus—a military veteran—tried to stop him, and as a result was stabbed in the face and head multiple times. The attacker fled after Mr. Tsudechkus screamed for help. According to another source, the attacker yelled antisemitic and anti-Israel slogans. Police were called, recorded the crime and took pictures of the scene. Mr. Tsudechkus was taken to the hospital. UCSJ is not aware of any arrests in connection with this attack.

In April 2002, about 50 youths attacked the central synagogue in Kiev, beating worshippers with stones and bottles and destroying property. The mob marched down Kiev's main street after a soccer game shouting "Kill the Jews!" before attacking the synagogue. Three Jews were injured, including the rabbi's 14 year old son, and 20 windows were broken. Rabbi Moshe-Reuven Azman called the attack "a pogrom" and added that: "It's a miracle that it was not worse."

At least eight suspects were arrested by police, according to various Ukrainian media reports. Top officials, from President Kuchma to police officials and the Foreign Minister, all promised to bring the culprits to justice. However, to the dismay of local Jewish leaders, for several months after the attack, the official version of the event continued to be that it was "simple hooliganism" by soccer fans, rather than a planned antisemitic attack. For example, the MVD issued a statement claiming that: "The act was not motivated by antisemitism, but was an act of brutal hooliganism." Kiev's police chief Petro Opanasenko was quoted as saying: "There are no neo-fascist or antisemitic organizations in Kiev at all."

To the credit of the Ukrainian authorities, when a group of defendants were brought to trial in March 2003, they were charged with a hate crime, perhaps reflecting the large amount of international attention generated by the incident. The case resulted in an important precedent in that for the first time, the prosecution of suspects under a Ukrainian law that prohibits the incitement of ethnic hatred resulted in a conviction, according to a March 4, 2003 report by *Evreyskie Novosti* (Jewish News). While Article 161 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code has occasionally been used in criminal cases against publishers of antisemitic newspapers and magazines, none of those cases has resulted in criminal convictions. The defendants admitted that they had gathered stones on their way to the synagogue, where they shattered several windows and beat three Jews, including the rabbi's young son. In language that is extremely unusual for Ukraine and the former Soviet Union in general, where hate crimes are often classified under the vague term of "hooliganism," the verdict found that the defendants: "Committed pre-planned acts aimed at inciting ethnic animosity and hatred, as well as degrading the ethnic dignity and honor... of citizens of Jewish ethnicity."

Also in April 2002, somebody threw a rock through the window of the Nikolaev synagogue, narrowly missing Rabbi Shlomo Gottlieb as he sat at his desk. This was the second attack on the synagogue in 2002.

Several antisemitic incidents occurred in Dnepropetrovsk in the summer of 2002. On May 19, 2002 a young Jewish woman wearing a Star of David necklace was assaulted in a Dnepropetrovsk nightclub. One of the attackers wielded a knife, but luckily the young woman

was not seriously injured. Witnesses termed the assault an antisemitic attack. Nightclub security guards detained the two attackers, but the police quickly released them after obtaining written promises not to leave the city (no criminal convictions were subsequently reported). On June 9, 2002 around ten skinheads gathered around the city's Golden Rose Synagogue shouting antisemitic slogans and threatening Jews with violence. The neo-Nazis unsuccessfully tried to burst into the building. On June 1, 2002 a group of young men tried to disrupt prayers at the synagogue, again unsuccessfully. Finally, in late June, a swastika was drawn on a Holocaust monument in Nikopol, Dnepropetrovsk region. This is the second time the monument has been vandalized since it was founded in the autumn of 2001. The vandals were eventually caught, but got off with only a warning from the SBU.

On July 30, 2003 an 18 year old Israeli originally from the FSU was attacked in Kiev by a group of skinheads, according to August 3 and 6, 2003 reports by the RUJEN news agency. Anton Miromanov was wearing a tee-shirt with Hebrew writing on it when he and a group of his friends were approached on Independence Square by six skinheads who asked him if he was a Jew. When he replied that he was a Jew and proud of it, the skinheads knocked him to the ground and started kicking him. Fortunately, his friends were able to pull him away. A police source told RUJEN that the authorities were actively looking for the culprits. However, UCSJ is not aware of any arrests in connection with this assault.

On August 28, 2003, a rabbi was attacked by a group of men outside of Kiev's Brodsky synagogue, according to the Jewish.ru website. Rabbi Uri Feinstein—head of a Jewish funeral services firm—was hospitalized with severe head trauma. According to Rabbi Feinstein, his attackers, ages 25-30, got out of a jeep already knowing who he was, and started to verbally harass him with antisemitic slurs. After the first few blows, Rabbi Feinstein lost consciousness and was later found by members of his congregation. The police were called and Rabbi Feinstein was taken to the hospital. USCJ is not aware of any arrests in connection with this assault.

On January 14, 2004 a security guard at the Lviv Polytechnic University entered the university's cafeteria, where members of the Lviv Jewish community give out food to the needy. In a drunken rage, he started insulting the Jews and then attacked them, beating up five. UCSJ's monitor reported that some of the local press put an antisemitic spin on the incident, blaming the Jews for the guard's violent reaction because they allegedly refused to let "a Christian" eat their food. The guard was fired after the incident and the local prosecutor's office later started a criminal investigation, but a Ukrainian Jewish paper reported in November 2004 that the guard's trial is being deliberately dragged out.

On February 26, 2004 the newspaper *Pravda Ukrainy* reported that the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences had released a sociological study which found that only 2.8% of respondents would allow a Jew to marry into their family.

Several windows were shattered on the night of March 23, 2004 in an Odessa synagogue, according to a March 24, 2004 report by the AEN news agency. No injuries were reported. The same thing happened again in July 2004.

On April 5, 2004 the Rosbalt news agency reported that a Holocaust memorial in Kharkov was vandalized with a swastika painted on it.

On May 5, 2004 the AEN news agency reported that the chief rabbi of the western Ukrainian city of Ivano-Frankovsk—Moshe Kolesnik—sharply criticized local police for doing nothing to protect the city’s synagogue against constant vandalism. The previous week, rocks shattered windows at the synagogue for three days in a row. The AEN correspondent explained the week-long delay between the incidents and the news reaching AEN by noting that: “In this city, such incidents have long ago stopped shocking members of the local Jewish community.” AEN then quoted Rabbi Kolesnik, who said that: “We’ve grown accustomed to it... Such incidents happen regularly to our community. We ask for the help of law enforcement agencies, but in response we hear ‘Kids are playing pranks.’ We have already lost hope that the culprits will be found.” AEN then reminded its readers that a few months before, AEN reported that a previously unknown group calling itself “The Front of National Salvation” distributed leaflets in the city calling for the deportation of Jews, whom it accused of ritually murdering Christians.

On July 11, 2004 a rabbi was assaulted by a group of men near Kiev’s Brodsky Synagogue, according to a July 12, 2004 report by the MIGnews.com news web site, which reports on developments in Ukraine. Rabbi Chaim Pikovsky was walking to the synagogue on July 11 dressed in traditional Orthodox Jewish clothing. Several so far unidentified “hooligans” approached him and started insulting him. One then punched him in the face, after which others struck the rabbi several times. There is no indication in the MIGnews.com report of the extent of the rabbi’s injuries. Police started an investigation, but UCSJ is not aware of any arrests in connection with this attack.

On August 23, 2004, two rabbis were assaulted in the middle of the day on one of Odessa’s busiest streets, according to an August 24, 2004 report by the AEN news agency. David Feldman and Fishel Chichelnitsky, who both work at a local yeshiva, were approached on Rishelovsky street by three “obviously drunk” men, who immediately attacked them. The rabbis both fought back, and fortunately, some passersby came to their aid. Police detained one of the attackers at the scene. Later at the police station, the attacker threatened, in front of a police officer, to later “find and kill” the two rabbis and “shoot all the kikes.” According to AEN, this was not the first time both rabbis were attacked in 2004. A few months before, in a previously unreported attack near a synagogue, Rabbi Feldman narrowly escaped “a large group of youth hooligans who didn’t like his clothes and kippa.” At the time, Rabbi Feldman didn’t report the incident to police. A few days later on a nearby street, Rabbi Chichelnitsky was punched in the face by a man. He reported that attack to the police, but so far, nobody has been arrested.

Neo-Nazis vandalized 21 gravestones in the Jewish section of the “Don Sea” cemetery in Donetsk, Ukraine, according to an August 26, 2004 report by the Donetsk-based Novosti.dn.ua news web site, reprinted by the Russian Jewish web site Antisemitizmu.net. Several of the gravestones were smashed beyond repair, others had swastikas painted on them. The vandals were a particularly determined group, having scaled a two meter high fence in order to enter the cemetery grounds. A criminal investigation was opened into the incident. The author of the Novosti.dn.ua report was sharply critical of local law enforcement agencies, who apparently have followed in the past a pattern of minimizing similar antisemitic crimes: “What happened in the Jewish cemetery was not the result of a weather event, which is what they [the local police]

usually love to blame for other rampages there. And it wasn't just 'hooliganism.'" The same day, the local newspaper *Donetsk* added that local Jews believe that: "The rampage at the cemetery is connected with the unpunished distribution of Nazi literature and the beatings of other members of the community." [emphasis added]

That same month, a yeshiva student was beaten by a mob in Donetsk. According to a September 24, 2004 report by the AEN news agency, in late August 2004, Chaim Dubnov—a local yeshiva student—was walking with his family along Pushkin Street, in the center of downtown Donetsk. A group of youths suddenly surrounded them, chanting "Jew, Jew! Kike, kike!" and then knocked Mr. Dubnov to the ground, kicking him several times. The mob seemed to grow in size as the assault progressed; Mr. Dubnov believes around 20 youths participated in the attack, which led to his hospitalization with head injuries. A criminal case was begun after a month's delay because it took a while for Mr. Dubnov to physically and psychologically recover sufficiently from the beating to approach law enforcement agencies and describe the attack. UCSJ is not aware of any arrests in connection with this assault.

Members of the Donetsk Jewish community told the Russian Jewish web site Jewish.ru that: "Over the past six months there have been ten times the number of antisemitic acts as there have been in the past ten years." On October 4, 2004, Jewish.ru reported that several incidents of antisemitic harassment took place over the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. The most prominent of these incidents happened in the center of town, when a group of men shadowed a religious procession near a synagogue and threatened to kill Jews. One of the antisemites reportedly vowed: "We will hang all of you who weren't killed in Dachau." On October 6, 2004 *The Jerusalem Post* reported on a September 22 attack on a Donetsk Jewish orphanage. Heavy stones were thrown through the orphanage's windows, fortunately not injuring any of the children. Police arrested four suspects in connection with that attack.

On September 28, 2004 the Russian Jewish web site Jewish.ru reported that Rabbi Moshe Tyler, a Chabad Lubavitch rabbi, was beaten on a downtown Kiev street while walking with his wife. A group of unidentified people ran up to the rabbi and hit him several times in the face before running off. UCSJ is not aware of any arrests in connection with this assault.

Police Targeting of Jews

Since 2002, there have been three reported incidents of Jews being singled out for torture and harassment by law enforcement officials showing a clear antisemitic bias.

In October 2002, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that: "A group of Uman police officers entered an apartment owned by Bratslavers [Jewish pilgrims who visit Uman annually] and beat them 'almost to death,' according to eyewitnesses. Six of them were then taken to the local police station where they were interrogated and beaten for six hours without being told the reasons for their detainment. The pilgrims were finally released a few minutes before Shabbat... The following Wednesday, a group of local guards employed by the World Committee of Bratslav Hassidim to maintain order at the site caught and severely beat a pilgrim, fracturing his nose, breaking his teeth, and causing a spinal injury. He is currently being treated at Hadassah-University Hospital, Ein Kerem. They also attacked two Bratslavers who came to the victim's

aid. Throughout the assault, claim the victims who fear publishing their names the guards screamed anti-Semitic taunts, including ‘Heil Hitler.’”

Two Israeli citizens found guilty of fraud in a Ukrainian court were released on May 12, 2003 because of time already served in pre-trial detention, according to a report in issue number 16 of the weekly Ukrainian newspaper *Antenna*, which has closely followed developments in the case. Leonid Kamenetsky and Arkardy Shusterman were sentenced to one year and three months in prison for their alleged involvement in a visa fraud scheme. The two had been detained in a Cherkassy pre-trial detention facility since February 12, 2002. According to a February 27, 2003 report by www.Jewish.ru, during the trial, one of the defendants complained of torture, a common problem in Ukraine, to which the judge reportedly responded in a dismissive tone: “Well, in your Israel they kill people!”

In May 2003 in Kiev, local Jews and members of the Christian missionary organization “Jews for Jesus” clashed, according to a May 7, 2003 report by the RUJEN news agency. Police reportedly took the side of the Christian missionaries. According to the report, police arrested both Jews and missionaries for fighting in the street outside a concert hall where Purim [a Jewish holiday] festivities were being held. At the station, both sides were interrogated by a police captain who allegedly offered the Christian missionaries seats, but forced the arrested Jews to stand. “I’m not an antisemite,” the policeman shouted, “but I understand why people don’t like you!” He then went on to lecture the Jews about how “the missionaries are normal guys, and the Arabs are soon going to grind all of Israel into dust.” Only the arrival of members of the Israeli consulate saved the Jews from having to spend the night in jail, where they would have possibly been subjected to physical abuse by the enraged police captain.

Antisemitic Statements by Members of Parliament

Many Ukrainian members of parliament have made public antisemitic statements in recent years, none of which has inspired any sort of condemnation from President Kuchma. Such comments became more frequent as the country’s October 31, 2004 presidential elections approached.

In October 2002, five members of the Ukrainian parliament signed a statement of support for the editors of the antisemitic magazine *Personal*—a publication of the Inter-Regional Academy of Personnel in Kiev. The parliamentarians denied that media reports branding *Personal* antisemitic are accurate, terming these accusations “a political psychosis.” They then compared Zionism to Nazism, writing that: “It’s hard to say where the antisemitism and Nazism are here [in the content of *Personal*]. By the way, the ideological similarity of Zionism with the latter is well known.” In truth, the magazine regularly publishes antisemitic articles, sometimes not even bothering to use the fig leaf of criticizing Zionism and/or Israel in order to attack Jews. For example, issue #5 of *Personal* contained a typical article entitled “The Jews Witness” part of which argues that: “Judaism is filled with a very deep hatred towards Christianity... Every time that he (a Jew) passes by a cemetery, he says a prayer if it’s the grave of a Jew, and a curse against the mothers of the dead if its not a Jew.”

An article in the June 2003 issue of the Ukrainian Jewish newspaper *Evreysky Obozrevatel* revealed that during hearings in Ukraine’s parliament on the 70th anniversary of the 1932-1933 terror famine in Ukraine, which killed millions, a prominent Ukrainian opposition MP put the

blame for the famine squarely on the Jews. The former head of the Ukrainian state committee for information policy—Ivan Drach (“Our Ukraine”)—complained that “our historians don’t touch yet another problem that is extremely important—relations between the Ukrainian and the Jewish peoples... We need to find out exactly what took place, who was at those [food] distribution points, and whether or not Kaganovich was simply just a representative of Jewry, and whether it [Jewry] took part in the liquidation of Ukrainians as a nation, or did it happen differently?” Lazar Kaganovich was an ethnically Jewish official under Stalin responsible for many of the regime’s atrocities. As the only Jew in the highest levels of the Stalin regime, he is a favorite *bete noire* of antisemites in the FSU.

Not to be outdone, Rada deputy Vasily Chervony (also from “Our Ukraine”) reportedly made the wild claim that: “Speaking about the real organizers of the ethnocide of Ukrainians, one has to take into account who really seized power in the leadership of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] and NKVD [the KGB’s predecessor]. The staff of the NKVD in Ukraine was then made up of more than 90% Jews... And they weren’t atheists, they were desperate enemies of Christianity.” The historian M. Shestopad, according to Mr. Chernovy, “has documented that the genocide against the Ukrainian people was organized and carried out by Zionists.”

In March 2004, Ivan Boky, a member of the Ukrainian parliament from the opposition Socialist Party, wrote an article in the opposition newspaper *Silski Visti* defending the paper against accusations of antisemitism. According to a BBC Worldwide Monitoring translation of Mr. Boky’s March 16, 2004 article, Mr. Boky sharply criticizes the Israeli ambassador to Ukraine—Naomi Ben-Ami—and some Ukrainian Jewish leaders, referring to them as “bird-brains” for calling *Silski Visti* a “fascist” publication. He then goes on to call for the ambassador to leave Ukraine: “I think after this Ms Naomi Ben-Ami, if she is a decent person and values her reputation and her state’s honor, should just rush out of Ukraine.” Mr. Boky was full of praise for the author of the antisemitic *Silski Visti* article, Vasily Yaremenko, the author of numerous antisemitic publications based within Kiev’s Inter-Regional Academy of Personnel, calling him a “highly authoritative scientist and a pedagogue” and claiming that everybody, “should agree that these [Yaremenko’s] publications do not incite ethnic strife... They have their own perspective on the current situation in Ukraine, including the outburst of Zionism and the dominance of the Jewish capital. However, they do not blatantly blame the Jewish people for Ukraine’s misfortunes, which is something Yaremenko has been accused of. Yes, they contain criticism of Zionism, but is this a sin? We criticize communism, liberalism and nationalism, why should Zionism be a taboo subject? Should this be so only because you want to have it this way?... I have in mind the contemporary Chabad Zionism which has much in common with fascism... Ukraine does not have to cherish a snake on its bosom no matter how much somebody would want this.”

According to UCSJ’s Lviv monitor, on March 27, 2004 opposition parliamentarian Vladimir Nechiporuk gave an interview on Ukraine’s 5th Channel during which he asserted that Ukraine is ruled by a “kike-mason mafia,” that the Soviet government was “kike-Bolshevik,” and that since Jews make up less than 1% of the population, they should not rule the country. When the interviewer accused Mr. Nechiporuk of antisemitism, he answered, “I am not an antisemite, but a nationalist, a patriot.” According to an October 21, 2004 report by the Prima news agency, a debate of two presidential candidates on state television including Mr. Nechiporuk and Pyotr Simonenko of the Communist Party was marred by antisemitic rhetoric. Attacking his

opponent's party and its dark and bloody history, Mr. Nechiporuk reportedly alleged that since 1917, Communists have always "served the kike-masons" and that these "masters of the Communists" are responsible for the mass murder of Ukrainians under Soviet rule. He promised to ban the Communist party and expel all "Jewish oligarchs" from Ukraine if elected. Within a crowded field of contenders led by "Our Ukraine" leader Viktor Yushchenko and the government's candidate, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, neither Mr. Nechiporuk or Mr. Simonenko were expected to win. Some independent media sources in Ukraine speculated that many of these no-hope candidates, some of whom made public antisemitic statements in the months leading up to the election, were secretly funded by the government in an effort to chip away nationalist votes from Mr. Yushchenko. These allegations, however, remain unproven, but there have been efforts by pro-government media to portray Mr. Yushchenko and his allies as raving mad antisemites.

On July 9, 2004, announcing his long-shot candidacy for the presidency of Ukraine, Bogdan Boyko—a longtime member of the Ukrainian parliament and the chairman of the People's Rukh of Ukraine—accused Jews of being a "fifth column" working against the interests of Ukraine, according to a July 9, 2004 report by the Kiev-based Obozrevatel press agency. Blasting "representatives of large-scale Jewish capital," Mr. Boyko asserted that his party "stands against cosmopolitanism" (a Stalin era codeword for Jewishness) and he called for "the liquidation of the regime of cosmopolitan oligarchy" in the country. According to Mr. Boyko, both the government and the opposition in Ukraine "have the same master—this is the cosmopolitan oligarchy which rules the world" and is committing "genocide" against Ukrainians. "All economic and political levers of power have gone to anti-Ukrainian forces," Mr. Boyko concluded.

On July 17, 2004, member of parliament Oleg Tyagnybok ("Our Ukraine") made a speech on Yavorina ridge (Ivano-Frankovsk region)—the burial site of Klima Savura, a commander of the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army), which fought both the Soviets and the Germans in World War II and some of whose soldiers also murdered Jews.

According to a July 21, 2004 report by the web site Antisemitismu.net, Mr. Tyagnybok made the following statement, which was broadcast by the Inter television network and came dangerously close to openly inciting violence against Jews: "They [UPA soldiers] were not afraid and we should not be afraid now, they took up automatic rifles by the neck and went into those forests, they got ready and fought against the Moskali [a pejorative for Russians], they fought against the Germans, they fought against the kikes and other filth who wanted to take from us our Ukrainian state... We need to give Ukraine, finally, to the Ukrainians. These youths and you, the graying ones [presumably UPA veterans] are the ones whom the Moskali-Kike mafia, which today rules in Ukraine, fear the most."

Although charges of inciting ethnic hatred were filed against Mr. Tyagnybok, they were quietly dropped in early December 2004. It should be noted that, to the credit of the leadership of the "Our Ukraine" bloc, Mr. Tyagnybok was expelled from the bloc for his comments. On the other hand, nobody from the "Our Ukraine" leadership ever explained why Mr. Tyagnybok, who has never hidden his views and once lead a party brazenly called "The National Socialist Party of Ukraine," was ever allowed to become a member of their coalition.

Near the end of August, Yuri Karmazin, a member of parliament and past presidential candidate, also played “the Jewish Card.” According to the news web site Mignews.com.ua, in an interview with the antisemitic magazine *Personal*, Mr. Karmazin called Ukraine’s Channel 1 “Israel Channel 1.”

Conclusion

After a period of relative calm from the mid to late 1990’s, the situation for Jews has gotten worse in several parts of the country since 2002. Several incidents of antisemitic violence and antisemitic rhetoric by members of parliament have been recorded, especially in the run up to the 2004 presidential elections. The majority of these incidents resulted in no legal sanction for the perpetrators, and, in contrast to similar incidents in Russia, were for the most part ignored by both the Ukrainian and the international media. Political instability following the disputed presidential election in late 2004 may increase the level of violence, perhaps depending on how quickly a resolution to Ukraine’s political crisis is reached.