

**THE B'NAI KHAIM IN
AMERICA:
A STUDY OF CULTURAL
CHANGE IN A JEWISH GROUP**

*by Joseph M. Gillman
with the collaboration
of Etta C. Gillman*

The B'nai Khaim in America are the descendants of a common ancestor, Khaim Kaprov the candle-maker, who lived in the ghetto town of Yustingrad in the Ukraine around 1800-1870. Set against the historical background of revolutionary Russia's struggles against feudalism—and the Russian Jew's struggles against segregation, persecution and ever-recurring pogroms—this is a study-in-depth of Khaim Kaprov's 93 descendants who emigrated to America, and their American-born offspring.

Through personal interviews and research, with the aid of many "lieutenants" (younger members of the B'nai Khaim), and by the use of carefully worded questionnaires, the author has investigated in detail the acculturation of the first, second and third (the new, "younger") generations of the B'nai Khaim. Here are some of the questions posed:

What are the educational and economic attainments of the B'nai Khaim in America?

What are their cultural interests?

How closely do they adhere to rituals and traditional observances?

What are their attitudes toward Israel, toward intermarriage with non-Jews, toward the Negro? How strong is the sense of Jewish "identity" in each generation?

The adjustment and acculturation of the B'nai Khaim to life in America, it may well be, is typical of immigrant Jews.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Gillman, who was born in 1888 in the little Ukrainian village of Yustinograd, came to America in 1906. After graduating in 1913 from Western Reserve University with a B. A. degree, he earned his M. A. in sociology and his Ph.D. in economics at Columbia University.

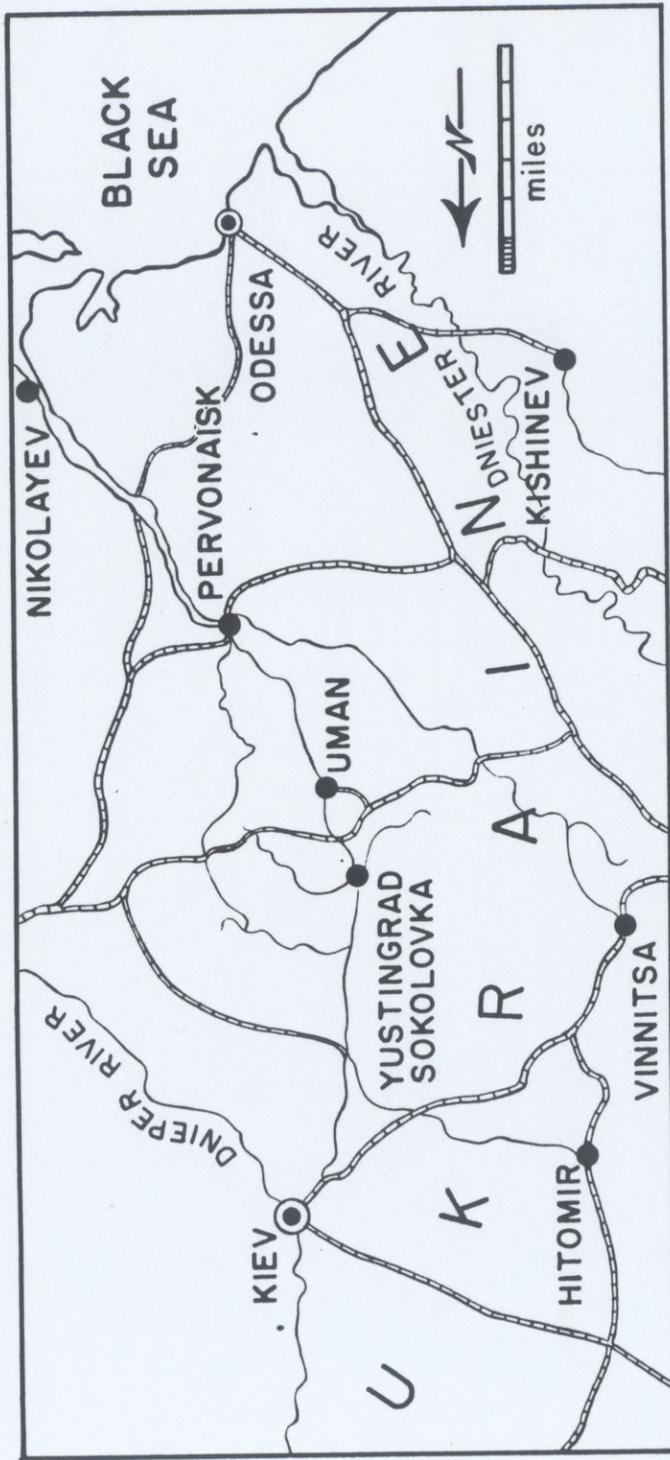
The author's career in economics, as college teacher, government analyst, and writer, spanned more than half a century. His writings, which reflected his wide range of interests, included numerous articles and monographs on race and immigration problems, business cycles, housing and rents, and unemployment. In 1947 he retired from government service to devote all his time to writing. His two previously published books—*The Falling Rate of Profit* and *Prosperity in Crisis* have been widely translated.

At the time of Dr. Gillman's death in 1968, he had just completed the present study and was planning further projects.

His wife, Etta, who helped in the writing and preparation of this book served for many years as a school psychologist in New York City. The Gillmans raised two sons—one is now a mathematician: the other, a psychoanalyst.

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Geographical Location of Sokolievka* — Yustingrad

* The Russian pronunciation and spelling is *Sokolovka* (as on map). The Ukrainians pronounce and spell it *Sokolievka*. (See the town marker page 6.) To the people of our study the town is *Sokolievka*.

Chapter 1

Sokolievka—Yustingrad

In the early 1800's two dwellings stood on "this side" of a bridge which connected the Ukrainian village of Sokolovka south and east with open fields north and west. One of these dwellings was a hostelry; the other was occupied by the candlemaker family, Kaprov.¹ A son of this family was the progenitor of the B'nai Khaim of this book.

The bridge also connected two counties in the province of Kiev. Sokolovka lay in County Uman; the hostelry and the candlemaker's home lay in County Lipovetz. The city of Uman lies almost on a straight line, except for a slight dent westward, between Kiev, 120 miles to the north, and Odessa 163 miles to the south. Lipovetz lies some 60 miles due west, and Sokolovka, some 20 miles due north of Uman. (See map)

The bridge, if 60-year-old memories may be trusted,² was a quarter of a mile or so long. It was a brushwood, dirt-impacted dam built to form a lake from the flow of a stream that passed through the village of Popovka some two miles to the southwest. At the Sokolovka end of the bridge a sluice channeled the flow over the water-wheels of a flour mill. In the middle of the bridge a larger sluice, about 30 feet wide, cleared the overflow of the lake in a waterfall 20 feet or so high, a delight for summer bathers. The fall splashed onto a wooden platform some 30 feet square. From here it slithered down three or four feet into a treacherous ravine. A couple of hundred yards ahead of the platform the flow disappeared, between two rows of birch trees, into an old channel toward the village of Konella about three miles north. A few peasant huts hugged the northward stream and disappeared from view with it. The lake was a bowl, shaped in the form of an open oyster shell. It was narrowest at the bridge and widest on the east-west stretch a mile or so away. A small, tree-covered island at the southeast corner of the

lake was an enticing goal for “long-distance” swimmers. It lay about a thousand feet from the Jewish cemetery.

Except for the hostelry and the candlemaker’s home, “this side” of the bridge was largely pasture land. Twisters and dust blasts were frequent there, even years later when the area had become inhabited. From the bridge level the land rose sharply for a distance of about 500 feet and then flattened out toward the horizon.

This is the way it was when Nicholas I became Tsar of all the Russias in 1825. At that time, in one of his early anti-Jewish edicts, a legend went, he declared that Jews who lived in villages but did not own or cultivate land must be expelled to live in towns of their own.³ Most of the Jews, perhaps as many as 35 families, then living in Sokolovka were subject to that edict. They had been the local shopkeepers, traders and craftsmen and did not own or cultivate land. So, expelled they were, to “this side” of the bridge. Here they squatted in the Kaprov backyard until, during the ensuing months, they built themselves permanent habitations of a sort on the upland, west of the bridge. The land they acquired, by purchase or lease, had belonged to an absentee Polish landlord whose wife’s name, it is said, was Justina. The town that these families built was accordingly named Yustingrad in Ukrainian, or Justingrad in Polish, as seen in the town marker below (Photo 1).

There it stood for a hundred years until, in the Civil War after the Bolshevik Revolution, it was razed in the course of several pogroms. It was in one of these pogroms, in August 1918, that White Guardists lined up and shot to death 138 Yustingrad Jews from 15 to 88 years of age. Older B’nai Khaim in America to this day hold a memorial service every year to mourn these tragic deaths.⁴ The land on which Yustingrad stood is now part of the farm collective just noted.

All that is left of the town is the marker and four blackened huts perched on the bluff overlooking what once had been the lake. This is now a weedy pond, visibly 30 feet lower than the earlier water level (Photo 2). The “island” at the deep end has risen and stretches nearly across the horizon. The bridge, the



Photo 1. Yustingrad marker

The red-roofed structure in left background is a communal building of a farm collective.

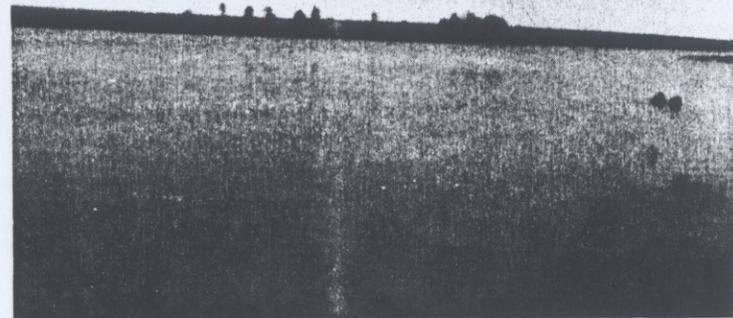


Photo 2. The weedy pond

sluice, the flour mill are gone. The cemetery is gone. What once was the bridge is now a small stretch of the four-lane concrete Kiev-Odessa highway. The ravine of my day and the stream which then flowed toward Konella have been filled in. The white clapboard church that faced you as you crossed the bridge toward Sokolievka is gone. So is the well at the end of the bridge where you began ascent into Yustingrad.

The village Sokolovka can be traced back at least as far as the 17th century when it figured, along with Uman, in the peasant rebellions led by Bogdan Khmelnytsky and the Hetman, Gonta, against the oppressing Polish *shlyakhta*. Two hundred years later the Jews of Yustingrad still recalled with horror the slaugh-



Photo 3. The Sokolievka / Sokolovka marker

ter of Jews in those rebellions. (Sienkiewicz tells this gruesome story in *With Fire and Sword*.) An especially vicious person was called a "Gonta." In the 100 years of its existence Yustingrad

grew to have a population of over 3000. Yet so ingrained was this memory of their Sokolievka origins that they have always referred to themselves as "Sokolievker," the Ukrainian spelling of the name. Even in America Yustingrader worship in "Sokolievker" *shulen*, hold fraternal membership in "Sokolievker" associations and bury their dead in "Sokolievker" cemeteries. But of the village itself little is left today. It is a part of the collective with Yustingrad. When I visited there in May, 1965, I counted no more than two or three dozen scattered huts.

The contour of Yustingrad had the shape of a horseshoe. Peasant huts made up the rim; the Jews filled the interior. A broad avenue running east-west cut the town in half. Side streets made up the rest. There were, of course, no sidewalks in Yustingrad, and there were few trees in the interior of this horseshoe. You could see orchards where the peasants lived and, if you ventured behind their orchards, you could see their farms. The roads were mud tracks in summer, frozen ruts in winter, and bogs in the autumn and spring. Many a wagon got stuck in the mud on the way up from the bridge into Yustingrad after the autumn rains and the spring thaws.

The homes of both the Jews and the peasants were built of mud caked around matted straw and sun-dried into brick. The roofs were straw-thatched. Inside, the floors were crudely stained clay, cold in the winter and clammy in the rainy season. In autumn and spring the roofs leaked and the walls became sodden. In winter the interiors were heated by burning cow dung and horse manure in a hollow wall which partitioned off the living quarters. The dung and manure were gathered by the women with rake and besom after the weekly trading day. The kitchen was kept warm by a Dutch oven, on which people often slept. For the most part, the rooms were bare of furniture, except for a bed and one or two narrow wooden cots in the bedroom, and a table, benches and a bare sofa alongside the heated wall in the living room. Matted straw served to cushion the bed. A "perina"—a feather quilt—kept the bodies warm. Body lice and bedbugs were constant companions.

Cooking was done in unglazed earthen pots. At the table,

only Father used knife and fork. Soup was eaten with wooden spoons from a common wooden bowl. Chinaware was used only on special occasions. The table was always bare, except on Saturdays and holidays when it was covered with a cloth. On the Sabbath eve and on holidays Father blessed the Almighty over a *Kiddush* cup for having created "the fruit of the vine." Candlesticks with candles lit and blessed by Mother decorated the table.

Not until the end of the 19th century could Yustingrad boast one two-story house and one kiln-baked brick mansion, both of these slate-roofed. A few were now tin-roofed and three or four had board floorings. Illuminating gas was unknown and electricity a hearsay. The kerosene lamp had only recently replaced the tallow candle.

The home conditions of these "Sokolievker" were characteristic of their whole economic and cultural life—the cultural and economic life of all ghetto *shtetlakh*.⁵ For the most part, everybody was poor, Jew and gentile alike. Culturally, they can be said to have been living in the 17th rather than the 19th century—illiterate, or semi-illiterate, superstitious, ignorant of their own biological and physiological processes—ignorant, for that matter of their anatomical structure; ignorant of geography; ignorant of history, even of their own history. What they knew of history was what they had learned in *kheder*, which took them back to the Creation, the Flood, the Exodus, the conquests of Canaan, the wars with their ancient enemies, the destruction of the Temple by the Romans—a world of miracles, of myths, of heroes and martyrs. The real world was the world of the God-ordained Tsar, the dreaded Cossacks, and the far-away towns where their sons served in the Tsar's armies. America was a land of strange people who changed their King every four years!

Yet, compared with the *goyim*, the ghetto Jews were enlightened people. For most of the *goyim* the world ended with the white-frame church in Sokolievka across the bridge. The peasantry was almost wholly illiterate, except for the *ouradnik* or peace officer, the village priest, the town clerk, and a few

church elders. On the other hand, all the Jewish menfolk could read the Hebrew prayers, and some even learned to read the Hebrew Bible. Few knew the full meaning of what they read. Hebrew, indeed, was the *Loshen Koidush*, the Holy Tongue that should not be used in daily conversation except as an aside remark to make a subtle point in an argument. Few could read even Yiddish, the mother tongue. This was especially true of the women.

Few could write Yiddish; a handful, Hebrew. Only Jewish boys attended *kheder*, from the age of four until *Bar Mitzvah*, or so long as they could absorb "learning," unless they were needed earlier as family breadwinners. Girls received their "education" from their elders at home. All adults could speak *goyish*, the Ukrainian jargon of the *muzhik*. But very few could either read or write Russian. Most everybody could "figure," mentally, but not many could write the figures down. In this respect Yustingrad was a small sampling of the Russia of the day. In the country as a whole, only 20 per cent of the people were literate as late as 1897, when the first all-Russian population census was taken. Of the Jews, however, 39 per cent were literate, nearly twice the national average. Yet only 13 per cent of the Jewish women could read or write, even Yiddish. The higher literacy among the Jews gave rise to the legend that every minister in the Tsar's cabinet had an *utchennyi yevrei*—a learned Jew—at his side to do his reading and writing for him.

At the outbreak of the First World War, we find *shtetl* Jews writing letters to soldier husbands and sons for peasant wives and parents. A B'nai Khaim who lived there at the time recalls that "being semi-illiterate . . . themselves, these Jewish 'writers' would not always follow the dictation *verbatim* but blandly proceeded to use the words and phrases they knew how to spell." They charged 10 to 15 kopeks a letter, including the address.⁶

At the beginning of the 20th century, few "Yustingraders" had seen a railroad train; still fewer had travelled on one. The telephone was a distant mystery; the telegraph was familiar by hearsay; the nearest post office was in Uman.

In the late 1890's an itinerant entertainer introduced the phonograph to Yustingrad. For five kopecks he would let you stick two rubber tubes into your ears through which you could hear words and music coming out of a contraption on the table in front of you. Few, however, were convinced that the whole thing was not a money-making fake. The very idea of a turning metal disk singing the *Kol Nidre!*

Photography was taboo. To permit yourself to be photographed would be to flout the First Commandment—Ye shall not fashion an image of God. We therefore have few photographs of early B'nai Khaim. Here is one taken of a B'nai Khaim and his wife in 1912.



Photo 4. B'nai Khaim that were ($A_1 B_2 C_1$ *)

There was no permanently settled physician in Yustingrad, or in Sokolievka. A *feldsher*—a male nurse trained in an army hospital—gave enemas, “cupped” to reduce a fever, set a dislocated arm. Old women cast out the Evil Eye. A child seared with scarlet fever was given a new name to fool the Angel of Death.

*This is the family code. For its construction see Chapter 3, below.

To the minds of these people, a baby was conceived in its anatomical entirety. The nine-months gestation was simply a period in which it grew in size to be expelled “when the time came.” Parent cells were unknown to them. A miscarriage was a blessing-in-disguise. It rid the woman of a potential monstrosity—as anyone could judge for herself from the appearance of the undeveloped fetal lump. A child born with teeth could not live. A newborn babe knew the Mystery of Mysteries—the day of the Coming of the Messiah. A child born with teeth could talk and might divulge The Day. God does not want His Children to know. A child born with teeth would not live.

Twice as many babies, teeth or no teeth, it seems, were born than survived infancy. In my own family nine were born, and four survived. My brother's mother-in-law bore 17 and buried 13. Midwives, with the assistance of neighbor-women, delivered the babies. Infants were swaddled until they were nine to ten months old. The children were breast-fed 24 months before they were “weaned.”

In rare cases a doctor was fetched from Uman, or a patient was rushed there. This would happen, for instance, in the case of an attack of appendicitis. Later toward the end of the century, a medical student would be induced upon graduation to get his first practical experience in our town. Usually he stayed no more than a year or two, and then a doctorless hiatus for another year or so would ensue.

Public sanitation was non-existent in Yustingrad as late as 1902 when I left to seek learning in the “Big City”—Uman. Only two homes had outside privies. The rest of the people eased themselves in the open—back of their huts, or in the exposed communal latrine. The communal cesspool was an especial abomination. The bees and flies that infested it spread contagion. All communicable diseases were epidemic.

Water was supplied by water carriers from the well near the bridge at the bottom of the hill and stored in open vats in the kitchens. Standing in the darkest corner, the vats always emitted a musty smell. Only on Christmas Eve was special attention accorded them. Iron nails were driven in them to ward

off the evil spirits believed to be infesting the air that night. In the spring these vats, together with the barrels in which cucumbers, cabbage, and watermelon had been pickled for the winter, were soaked in the lake and sunned on the shore.

Once a week, on Friday afternoon, and also on the eve of a holiday, every Jew cleansed himself in the communal steam bath. The women had their monthly cleansing in a *mikvah* (ritual immersion).

Poverty was endemic, for the Jew and gentile alike. The latter was perhaps a little better off so far as basic food went, since he raised most of it on his farm. The Jew had no such resources, except for goat's milk and cheese—(every Jewish family, it seems, kept one or two goats; a few kept a cow). The Jews earned their livelihood as small shopkeepers and as artisans—blacksmiths, wainwrights, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, etc. The remainder were teachers (*melamdin*), cantors and other employees of the synagogue—grave-diggers, Talmudists and the Rabbi's retainers. There were musicians and even two or three moneylenders, an egg and poultry dealer, and such casuals as day laborers, teamsters (*bal agalas*), etc.⁷

At all times most of these occupations afforded but a scant and precarious living, varying according to the means available to local peasants and the peasants of the surrounding villages. Most of the week's business was done on the one market day which, in Yustingrad, fell on Monday. On that day several thousand villagers would come to town to trade amongst themselves and buy home supplies from the local stores and open stands. For the Jewish youngsters the weekly market day was a gala occasion: an opportunity to mix among the peasants, open the vodka bottles for them and lend them glasses from which to drink. In payment, the peasants would give them a little glass of vodka which the youngsters would pour into a bottle carried for the occasion. In a couple of hours they would have a bottle full of vodka to take home for family use.

Black bread, herring, cabbage soups, occasionally fish or beef, and potatoes were the staple week-day diet. In the summer there would be the fresh fruits and vegetables; in the winter

some of these would be eaten pickled. On the Sabbath and holidays there was the *khalah*, the twisted loaf of white bread; *gefilte* fish; chicken soup and boiled chicken. Prunes boiled with raisins and diced beets made an especially succulent dessert. For the children, the Passover was the favorite holiday, with its special foods, its festive air, and the new spring outfits in which to "show off."

Simkhas Torah, "Rejoicing in the Law," provided another gala occasion. After the morning prayers in *shule*, neighbors and relatives called in groups at one another's homes, chewed nuts, drank vodka, ate honey cake and special holiday pastries, sang songs and played at being tipsy.

"How goes it?" asked one Jew of another, an apocryphal story went the rounds. "Quite well," said the other. "If I didn't fast on Mondays and Thursdays, I'd starve on the Sabbath day." Health permitting, all Jews above age 13 observed the two major fast days, *Tishah B'av* (the 9th day of *Av*)—the Day of Lamentations over the destruction of the Temple by the Romans—and *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.

Few had more than one full shift of clothing besides the daily work clothes. For men there was the clean *kaftan* for the Sabbath; for the women a clean, solid-color dress and the colorful headkerchief or shawl. All the male Jews had beards; not a few wore *yarmulkas* even when asleep. Married Jewish women all wore *sheitels* (wigs)—their own hair having been shorn off on the wedding day. (The photo below, taken in 1910 or 1911, shows a B'nai Khaim wearing a *sheitel*). All girls had their ear lobes pierced when very young, and most wore "gold" earrings. Except for the wedding band and an occasional string of colored glass beads, women wore little jewelry. A few men sported pocket watches with chains across their middle. A few homes had clocks.

Besides holidays and the Sabbath, the occasional family *simkhas* or festivities compensated for the drabness of everyday life. Engagements, weddings, *Bar Mitzvahs*, circumcision rites were occasions to throw off daily cares. Even funerals brought moments of relief, giving the women an occasion for a good cry.



Photo 5. B'nai Khaim with a sheitel | Malka Roubboy (A₂ B₇).

Once a year a fraternal organization, *Bikur Kholim* ("visitors of the sick"), would hold a banquet for the poor, and these were a goodly proportion of *shtetl* Jews. Late Saturday afternoons the youth of the town went *shpatzieren*, promenading on the main street, girls with girls and boys with boys. If there was any flirting I was too young to notice.

Most of the B'nai Khaim were tradespeople and poorer than the Jews who worked with their hands. Hand labor was for the people of a "lesser" breed than the B'nai Khaim!—although Zeide Khaim used his hands to make candles, and one of his brothers was a glazier. Even the artisans considered themselves at the bottom of the ghetto totem pole. The shoemaker, the tailor, the carpenter preferred to have himself inscribed in his passport or other legal documents as a *prostak*, literally a simpleton, a handyman, rather than be identified by his skill. The B'nai

Khaim were the "learned" people of Yustingrad. Not until the end of the century did hand labor intrude on the *mishpokhah*, when two of Zeide Khaim's grandsons had become rope-spinners, two blacksmiths, and one a carpenter. One of his granddaughters did sewing for a living. Several B'nai Khaim families earned most of their annual income selling dried, smoked and salted fish to the peasants in the winter months. The Greek Orthodox Church called for 14 meatless weeks before Christmas and six before Easter. The believers then ate fish. The B'nai Khaim helped supply the fish.

As endemic as illiteracy and disease was the general ignorance and superstition of Yustingrad Jews. Some even believed in the transmigration of the soul. There was the case, whispered about under bated breath, of Shloime the money lender and his faithful dog Dushenka ("little soul"). Dushenka appeared at Shloime's front door from nowhere, it seemed, and for a year would not let him out of her sight. At night she would snuggle up on the porch, with ears cocked. One night Shloime had a dream—a troubled dream. Shmeal-Aba, the *baal agala*, to whom he had lent money to buy a new horse when his old nag had died, stood before him pleading: "I paid you all your money back except the last interest installment before I died last year, but you still hold the note I gave you. Please, tear it up. I cannot rest in my grave until you do that. I have watched over you all this time. This should balance my account with you. Please, tear up the note so I can rest in peace." Shloime the usurer woke in a daze. Rummaging among his files he found the *baal agala's* note. Taking the note with him, he walked out on the porch to relieve his bladder in the clear morning air, slowly tearing the note into small bits. As the last bit of paper fluttered to the ground, Dushenka came up to him, licked his bare feet, stretched out and lay dead!

To probably all Yustingrad Jews before the end of the century, the Earth was flat and the center of the Universe. The Moon, the Sun and the Stars were "up there" as God had put them all at the time of the Creation to serve His people on earth. The worthy Jew might even turn to God for special

favours. So a Khaim Kaprov granddaughter claimed, late in the century, that her father had been endowed by the Holy One with the power to create a *golem* to serve him on the Sabbath day. On that holy day the Jews were not allowed to perform any week-day labors, except to pray, eat and procreate—not even to make a fire to warm them in the winter or to light or blow out the lamps or candles. These menial chores were performed for them by gentile boys and girls for a few kopeks or a hunk of white bread per Sabbath. However, you were not allowed to give them instructions concerning their duties on the Sabbath day; these had to be given on a week day. The *golem* got his instructions before sunset on Fridays.

An apocryphal story circulating among the awakening younger generation illustrates this point: It seems that a gust of wind blew out the candles on a Friday evening in Yankel's home before he had done with all the reading he had assigned himself for that evening. Perplexed, he stepped out into the dark street, when his friend Ivan happened to be passing by. "Friend Ivan!" said Yankel, "I'd invite you for a glass of vodka if there were light in the house." "Why, thanks!" said Ivan, "that can be remedied." He walked into the darkened house, lit a candle and drank his glass of vodka. Then, after exchanging a few pleasantries with his friend Yankel, Ivan blew out the candle and walked out into the dark street.

The "Sokolievker" were God-fearing people. The men would tend to their daily prayers, if not in the *shule* with a *minyón* (the minimum of ten adults necessary to form a praying congregation), then at home. As far as I knew or have been able to ascertain since, no Jew of Yustingrad was ever guilty of a serious crime, although petty cheating in trade was a common practice. Drunkenness was a rarity. Venereal disease was unknown among them.

The women were virtuous homemakers—cooking, washing, knitting, sewing, mending, bearing and rearing children, and at the same time often also tending to the store or a market stall. It did happen that, in the 1890's, a pretty young wife underwent two abortions while her husband was away in the army in

a distant city. Also, a couple of Jewish girls came back "disgraced" from Uman where they had been hired out as housemaids. At the turn of the century a red-headed man from out-of-town set up a shop for cosmetics and sickroom supplies. Within a year, four women, including his wife, gave birth to four red-headed children. It wasn't long after, that he was sent packing to seek new pastures.

In 1901, when I was 13, I "took a census" of Yustingrad with the help of a chum a half-year older. The year before, I



(A₂ B₂
C₄)

Photo 6. The "census-takers" at age 16 (1904)

had learned to read Russian and came upon the concept "classification." Why not, then, "classify" our own people, first of all on the basis of "cultural levels"? Besides, the task was evidently simplicity itself! We "knew," or thought we knew, the members of every Jewish household in Yustingrad, by age, sex and education, and occupation. We also *knew* that the five synagogues in town each had a family membership of about 100. Every family, we figured, consisted of six persons, as our own two families did. Multiplying 5 by 100 by 6, we came up with a total population of Yustingrad Jews in 1901 of 3000. The first official Russian census of 1897, published in 1905, gave the town a total population of almost 3200. The difference, we figured, was accounted for in part by the spread of four years between the census dates, and in part by the *goyim* whose huts rimmed the Jewish settlement. It was from this "census" that the "sociological" data recounted earlier were derived, including the extent of the prevailing illiteracy.

My father was one of the very few Jews in Yustingrad who could speak Russian—he had been raised in a city (Gaicin, 60 miles due west of Uman), where Russian was more commonly spoken than *goyish*. It was for this reason that he was chosen to travel to university cities—Zhitomir, Kiev, Odessa—to find and induce medical graduates to begin their medical practice in Yustingrad. At the end of every two or three years, when the novice had decided he had enough of Yustingrad and left for a bigger city, the community once again raised fare money and sent my father to seek a new recruit.

In this way my father became a "man-of-the-world" in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen. Comparatively, he was also an "enlightened" man, a *maskel*, questioning the occult powers of the *tsadik*, the holy man. Once, on his return home from one of his "recruiting" trips to Kiev, when I had just learned to read Russian, he brought me a tattered copy of a Russian history book which must have been of interest to himself as well. He would sometimes take me along on his business trips to Uman and would delight in pointing out the Big Dipper, the North Star and the Constellations. One early morning when we had

returned from such a trip and had gone to bed, my father remarked to me: "Some people think that the world [earth] is round and the sun revolves around it. That is why, they say, the sun shines on different parts of the earth at different times of the day. So, for instance," he explained, "here it is 4 o'clock in the morning and still dark. In London [!] it is already light."

Despite all his groping for knowledge and his repeated hobnobbing with physicians, my father had but the vaguest ideas of man's physiological processes. When he was 64 I showed him the stages of development of the human fetus preserved in a series of jars in the biological laboratory at Western Reserve University, where I was a senior. He stood transfixed, his lips moving as if in silent prayer. His photograph, below, was taken in Cleveland when he was about 70 years old. He died there in 1923 at age 77.



Photo 7. A "Sokolievker" Man-of-the-World [Moishe Gillman (= $A_2 B_2$)].

UKRAINIAN

It should not be concluded, however, that the primitivism prevailing in Yustingrad at the end of the 19th century was an isolated phenomenon in Russia. Nor should it be thought of as a uniquely Jewish phenomenon, except that the Jews then labored under the handicap of repressive anti-Jewish laws of tsarist Russia. The ignorance was, first of all, Russia's. That country lagged 100 years behind Western Europe in enlightenment. Belief in the supernatural—in the supernatural power of the tsar, for example—was common. Why this was so can be learned from any good college textbook on "Modern European History." The fact is that Russia remained feudal generations after feudalism had been abolished in most of Western Europe. A revolution in St. Petersburg in December, 1825, staged by Russians of the highest rank in the military and nobility to bring their country in line with the enlightenment of, say, France and England, met with utter defeat. The revolutionaries were shot, strung up or exiled to hard labor in Siberia for life.⁸ In the middle of the century, an active segment of the Russian intelligentsia, the Slavophiles, fought against any Westernizing tendencies. They even opposed the building of railroads in their country, arguing that such a move would stimulate industrialization and create a proletariat and much unrest, as in England and France. There were others, of course—most of the great novelists and poets, and the publicists Herzen, Bakounin and Chernishevsky—who labored, at the risk of their very lives to bring modern civilization to Russia. But it was not until the last quarter of the 19th century that light finally began to stream into darkest Russia; and then it came with a bang. When Newton came to Russia he came arm-in-arm with Marx and Darwin. And these, as we know, brought with them precisely enlightenment, industrialization, a proletariat and the Revolution.

For the Jews in Yustingrad, the arrival of industrialization meant the beginning of the end of a petty-trade, handicraft economy. Furthermore, as an industrial-capitalist economy, Russia quickly contracted the capitalist disease known as the business cycle—the alternations between prosperity and depres-

sion. For reasons which need not be developed here, during the years 1899-1909 Russia was in an almost continuous depression.⁹ For the handicraft industries and for small traders, both the rise of capitalist production and the effects of business depressions proved calamitous. The rise of capitalist production meant the progressive displacement of the handicraft means of livelihood for most people in small towns, such as the inhabitants of Yustingrad. It was a repetition of the experience in England and elsewhere centuries earlier in the advance from a feudal-agricultural to a capitalist-industrial society.¹⁰

Before long, factory-made goods began to compete with hand-made goods. Factory-made shoes undersold local hand-made products. Horseshoes made in an iron foundry miles away replaced the workmanship of the local blacksmith. Wheel spokes no longer needed to be planed and chiseled by the local wainwright—they were now shipped from a lumber mill; machine-made harness and reins replaced the hand-made products of Yustingrad ropespinner. Artificial flowers made of fabrics in a factory replaced the more perishable, home-made, paper variety; and so on and on. Even socks were now machine-made!

The continuing depression added to these woes. The unemployed factory worker ceased to be a customer for the output of the farmers; the impoverished farmers ceased to be customers of the local wagon maker and blacksmith and tailor. A *political revolutionary* unrest spread through Russia as the people found the Tsarist government unwilling or unable to relieve their distress. To divert the wrath of the people the governing powers unleashed the traditional pogrom tactics against Jews. At the turn of the century, the pogrom that let loose the emigration of Russian Jews in the 1880's recurred again and again with devastating regularity. "Shpola," "Kishiniev," "Mogilev" threw a pall on Jewish communities everywhere in Russia. On top of it all, on the eve of the Revolution of 1905, came the pogroms in Byalostock, St. Petersburg, Tomsk—a hundred pogroms. "Go to America" became the despairing refrain of the persecuted. The First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Civil War that

followed it and the pogroms that came with the counter-revolution completed the process of devastation. That was when Yustingrad was destroyed and the remnants of its people dispersed.

Go to America!

Notes to Chapter 1

¹The name Kaprov derives from the Czech word *kapr*, meaning karp (generically, fish). The Russian equivalents are Karpov and Karpovich. In the present case it may signify that Khaim Kaprov's family had originally come to Russia from Bohemia, now part of Czechoslovakia.

²A first draft of this and the next chapter was circulated among the "ancients" for correction and amendment. Both my Uncle Avrom, the Rabbi, and my sister Alta, five years my senior, were of particular help.

³Actually, expulsion edicts began as far back as 1795, under Katherine the Great, and for many other reasons than those stated in this legend. Various edicts to expel Jews from villages were issued under Alexander I in 1804, 1807, 1823, and 1825. The edict of Nicholas I, which specifically applied to Jews in the Grodno and Kiev Provinces, was issued in 1835. See Israel Friedlander: *The Jews of Russia and Poland*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1915. The expulsion from Sokolovka must have occurred at one of these later dates.

⁴In 1962, the Jews of Yustingrad origin from Buffalo, New York, erected a commemorative slab for them in the "Sokolievker" cemetery.

⁵*Shtetlakh* is the plural of *shtetl*, a small-town Jewish community. For *shtetl* life in 19th century Eastern Europe, see Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog: *Life is With People*, International Universities Press, Inc., New York, 1952.

⁶As late as 1929-30, when education in Russia had become free and universal (it was not until 1930 that a fourth-year education could be made compulsory, as school equipment and teachers became available), 22 of the 125 candidates admitted to the Soviet Academy of Sciences were Jews—almost 18 per cent. (See *Vestnik* of the Communist Academy, Nos. 35-36, p. 384.) In the total population they accounted for scarcely three per cent. This preponderance of higher learning among Jews in Russia continues today. Jews now account for almost ten per cent of Soviet scientists and for 19 per cent of its Doctors of Science, the highest academic degree granted in the USSR. (Theodore Shabad, in the *New York Times*, August 5, 1962.) In the total population they account for a little over one per cent. I was reliably informed in Moscow that, in 1965, 20 per cent of the economists at the Academy of Science were Jews.

⁷The occupational distribution of the Jews in Russia, as revealed by the 1897 census, was:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 38.7% | Trade |
| 35.4 | Industry; principally handicrafts |
| 3.6 | Agriculture |
| 5.2 | Government and professional |
| 17.1 | Miscellaneous, including 1.1% in the military |
| 100.0% | |

⁸Record of the trials, in Russian, at the Hoover Library in Palo Alto, California.

⁹Willard L. Throp: *Business Annals*, N.B.E.R. 1925, pp. 239-240; and Peter I. Lyashchenko: *History of the National Economy of Russia, to the 1917 Revolution*. Macmillan, 1949, pp. 528 ff.

¹⁰For an illuminating account of the effects of industrialization on the handicraft industries of Russia in the last decades of the 19th century, see V.I. Lenin: *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Collected Works, Moscow Publishing House, 1941-50. The book is a scholarly study by an eyewitness.

Chapter 2

Knyazhe—Uman—The Pogroms

Here, then, lie the origins of the B'nai Khaim—in backward 19th century Russia. We shall follow them to America where, in the first quarter of the 20th century, 93 of them, remnants of a Revolutionary upheaval, came to find a new home. Here they would found new families and strike roots in a new soil. But before we follow them into this new world we must make two additional observations about the old.

Now all the B'nai Khaim that came to America were born or raised in Yustingrad. A number of the "Sokolievker" B'nai Khaim had married into other towns and cities and reared their children there. In some, like Knyazhe, life was very much the same as in Yustingrad. In others, like Uman, they were exposed to an advanced culture compared with that of Yustingrad.

Then, too, my description of "the soil" in Chapter 1 virtually ended with the 19th century. In the next two decades, the people of Russia went through revolutionary convulsions which destroyed the remnants of Russian feudalism and a nascent capitalism all at once. Russia experienced a rapid rise in industry and commerce and a prolonged depression; humiliating defeats in two wars and a moral decadence between; three revolutions; devastating counterrevolutions; a bloody civil war; famine, pestilence and pogroms of increasing ferocity. The Jews of Tsarist Russia had known pogroms before. Repeatedly, over the years, Jews were made the scapegoats for the misery of the peasants, with more and more pogroms as the peasant grew more and more rebellious. Now a "White Army" organized pogroms as a tactic in a counterrevolution. If in the past, pogroms were sporadic, local looting raids, now there was planned, deliberate nation-wide torture, rape and murder—the White Terror. "Ours was the only block left of what once was Yustingrad," writes a B'nai Khaim from Brooklyn. "They had not burned it because

it stood too close to the peasants' haystacks. When the bandits came this time there were 12 of us living in that block. When they left, there were five of us. They did not complete the slaughter because they fled when their sentry shouted, 'The Reds are coming!' " The soil from which the B'nai Khaim were to set off on their trek to America was now soaked with their blood.

Most of the non-"Sokolievker" B'nai Khaim who migrated to America were born or raised in Knyazhe or Uman. Knyazhe, some 16 miles almost due west of Yustingrad, was a village of about 350 families, between 35 and 40 of whom were Jewish.¹ At one time it must have been the domain of a feudal lord of princely title: the official name, Knyazhe-Krenitsa, means *the Prince's Well*, or *Spring*. At the time of our story the village and the surrounding forests belonged to a *graf*—a count—who had it declared a town so that Jews would be permitted to live there. He needed them to supervise the business of his estate. At the turn of the century three of the Jewish families living in Knyazhe were B'nai Khaim, and the head of one of these served the *graf* as *arendar*—as the general manager of the estate. The *arendar's* father managed the inn owned by the *graf*. The *arendar* was also the leaseholder of the pond, the flour mill and the pasture lands. As one of his daughters, now living in California, tells it: "... the river abounded with fish, the rights to which were Father's, and its waters operated the mill, the rights to which the *graf* also gave to Father." The town's beer cellar also belonged to him. He was the "rich Jew" of Knyazhe.

Other members of the innkeeper's family were the rent collectors, managers and bookkeepers of the *graf's* and of other landlords' nearby forest and lumber businesses. These B'nai Khaim performed the services for the *graf* and neighboring landlords which Jews had so commonly performed for feudal lords throughout the centuries, thereby often incurring the hatred of the exploited peasants. The massacres in the Khmelnitzky insurrection, and many subsequent pogroms, were the cruel manifestations of this hatred against the sometime not unwilling tools of greedy landlords. Much of the anti-Semitism still lingering in

the Ukraine today is an echo of these earlier grievances.

There were several other "rich" Jews in Knyazhe besides the *arendar*: those were the owners of the general store and the hardware store, and three or four jobbers in farm produce. The *arendar* acted, however, with the authority of the *graf* and commanded privileges not granted to others in Knyazhe, Jews or gentiles. The communal bathhouse which was open for Jews on Fridays and for the peasants on Saturdays was heated especially for the *arendar*'s family on Thursdays. His was the power to



Photo 8. Taken in Uman in 1917. The *arendar* and his wife, both B'nai Khaim born ($A_1 B_3 C_2 - A_1 B_1 C_3$).

dispense favors and to arbitrate squabbles in the synagogue as well as in the market place. He was *the* influence in town.

His family was also the most "cultured"—his children learned to read and write Russian! The *arendar* was the first "Knyazher" to subscribe to a newspaper—a Jewish weekly from Poland, in 1907 or 1908. All this gave his family "airs" and a certain disdain toward others in town—the disdain which the affluent affect towards the poor, the literate toward the illiterate, and, in the case of ghetto Jews, of those who could speak Russian toward the ones who could speak only Yiddish or *goyish*—the latter, the language of the market place in the Ukraine. Some of his family later affected these airs in America. "What makes you think I am interested in the B'nai Khaim," a young second-generation offspring countered when I telephoned her to introduce myself and explain the project.

The third of the B'nai Khaim families of Knyazhe were poor working people. The father, who in his spare time was a glazier, earned three rubles a week working for the *arendar* as miller and as night-watchman to shoo off poachers. The mother, the direct B'nai Khaim, and their two teenage daughters worked at home as seamstresses.² Later the family also sold piecegoods on market days. All the rest of the "Knyazher" Jews were either handicraftsmen or shopless traders who bought from the peasants small quantities of grain, eggs, poultry which they sold to jobbers and wholesalers in Knyazhe or in nearby Lukoshovka and elsewhere.

Knazhe was as primitive a *shtetl* as was Yustingrad, if not more so, since here the peasantry still lived in semi-feudal state.³ There was no doctor in town, not even a *feldsher*, until about 1910 when a young pharmacist came to town and served as *feldsher*, dentist and pharmacist, all-in-one, for about two years. He pulled teeth, made diagnoses, prescribed medicine and filled the prescriptions in his pharmacy.

There was no post office, telephone, or telegraph service in Knyazhe. The nearest railroad station was 12 miles away. Public sanitation was unknown. Infant mortality was high. The *arendar*'s wife bore 12 children and buried five in infancy. "The

town was unhygienic, filthy. Infectious disease was rampant," writes a Knyazher B'nai Khaim who left that town before World War I at age 17 and is now a practicing physician in Cleveland.

"The people had to wage a constant war against body lice, fleas, flies, bedbugs, and vermin," he goes on. "Roundworm was a common affliction. Drinking water was hauled from a well dug at the lowest level of the town. This well received excrement washed down by the rains. Tuberculosis, typhus, typhoid fever, diphtheria, smallpox, like all other contagious diseases were endemic.

"Food and clothing were of the meagerest, as was true of any *shtetl*. A garment was worn until it could not be patched anymore. Except on the Sabbath and holidays, the food was coarse bread, potatoes, cabbage soup, onions, garlic, salt herring, occasionally dried fish; rarely meat. In summer there would be fresh fruit and vegetables—in winter, pickled cucumbers and sauerkraut.

"Religious rituals were strictly observed as passed down from generation to generation. The women would make sure that upon emerging from the communal bathhouse where they had been declared *kosher* (cleansed) upon their ritual immersion in the *mikvah*, they would encounter a *kosher* being before coming upon a pig or a *goy* and thus become unclean again. As a precaution, one or two young Jewish lads would be stationed at the exit where they would be the first these women would encounter.

"Living quarters were generally confined to a one-room adobe hut 25 feet—30 feet long by 12 feet—15 feet wide. The Dutch oven would occupy about a quarter of the space, but you could sleep on it and on the protruding ledge. The remaining space served as the family living room, dining room and bedroom. On cold winter nights the young calf would share the warmth inside; in spring the newly-hatched chicks would live with us. Occasionally, there would be a guest sleeping in. The *melamed* (Hebrew teacher), often a stranger in town, would be accommodated during the two weeks per season required of each family whose children attended his *kheder*."

Uman⁴ was something else again. By any standard of the time, it was a center of culture. It had a population of about 45,000, a large proportion Jewish. It was the "Big City" in the area between Kiev and Odessa. It was a county seat and the trading center for towns and villages many miles around. Here Russian was spoken. Uman had a seven-year elementary public school with a capacity for 300 pupils; two gymnasia, one for boys and one for girls; a music conservatory; a theater for visiting troupes; a reading and lending library (you paid a small membership fee); a small park in which a brass band played on summer evenings; and a large wooded area, the *Sofievka*, for nature lovers. This park had a national reputation (it still has) for its natural as well as cultivated beauty. Most of the city was destroyed by the Nazis, but the *Sofievka* was miraculously spared. Below is a reproduction of a picture postcard of the lagoon section, which I bought at a kiosk in Uman in 1965.



Photo 9. The Sofievka in Uman

The streets of Uman were cobblestone. Many buildings were two to four stories high, built of brick, and slate or tin-roofed. The town had no sewer system but, for the most part, especially in the "New City," privies were private and enclosed. Most of the homes had running water. Several doctors and two or three hospitals served the town and surrounding villages. There were dentists and *feldshers* in Uman, trained midwives, and lawyers. Electricity illuminated the window displays of the bigger stores and was used for lighting in the homes of the affluent. Pipes for illuminating gas were being laid at the time (1905-06) when I was leaving to "go to America." The city had a police department and a fire department, a telegraph office, a telephone exchange, and a branch of the State Bank; a post office and even a stockbrokerage. Some three miles from town, a railroad station was served by a spur from a main line 20 miles away. Although essentially a trading center, Uman possessed considerable small industry—a couple of iron foundries, steam-driven flour mills, some woodworking shops, a garment-making establishment and smaller tailoring shops, several bakeries and soft-drink bottling factories.

There was no strictly Jewish ghetto in Uman at that time, although the orthodox and the poorer Jews congregated in the "Old City." Here were located the Jewish hospital, the Jewish cemetery, and the orthodox synagogues. The more affluent and the more "enlightened" Jews lived in the "New City." Here was located what we in America call the "conservative" synagogue where female worshippers sit together with their males, whereas in the strictly orthodox *shule* female worshippers are partitioned off in a separate chamber. A *Talmud Torah*, a free school maintained by the Jewish community for the instruction of Jewish boys (I don't remember about girls) gave courses in basic Hebrew and Russian and in both parochial and secular subjects. The home for the indigent as well as for itinerant poor was maintained next to the "Tolner" *shule* (orthodox) in the "Old City." An outdoor privy stood between the two buildings.

Most of the Uman Jews, the B'nai Khaim among them, were merchants, brokers, agents, go-betweens, "fixers," and big and

little shopkeepers. A Jew owned the big drygoods store; his son-in-law operated a fancy haberdashery catering to army officers and other elites of the city and surroundings.

Differences in wealth, of course, created an aristocracy among the Jews as among the gentiles. The Jewish aristocracy was distinguished from the rest of the Jews of Uman by the extent of the secular education of their children. A son and daughter of a Knyazhe-Uman B'nai Khaim attended gymnasias. One Uman B'nai Khaim daughter attended a "progymnasia" (a prep school). A son attended an agricultural institute. All of them received tutored instruction in school subjects at home—"home education," it was called.

Secular education in those years inevitably meant also the absorption of the new, radical social and political ideas that were then penetrating Russia. Many Uman Jews were "Kadety"—Social Democrats—and/or Zionists. Clandestinely, youth—Jews and gentiles—read Marx's *Das Kapital* and Lenin's journal, *Iskra*. (In the library one could read the reactionary and anti-Semitic *Novoe Vremya* and the staid *Kievlyanin*.) Throw-away leaflets and "manifestoes" told of a drive to organize labor into unions; of factory strikes and of peasant riots. Demands for a constitutional monarchy to replace the Tsarist autocracy were discussed openly; calls for a socialist revolution, in secret. Young men and women caught in—or even only suspected of engaging in—these "subversive activities" were imprisoned or sent off to Siberia. Youth was aglow with revolutionary fervor.

The upsurge in commerce and industry gave rise to a free-thinking Russian bourgeoisie, questioning and repudiating subservience to traditional political authority. An ebullient spirit like that of the bourgeoisie of the French Revolution pervaded the people. The brass band always ended its park concerts by playing the *Marseillaise* after the Russian *God Save the Tsar!* This was always received with applause. The people were caught up in a glow of expectation of historic change. Among the younger set and the affluent, this spirit spilled over into dissipation. Young ladies read salacious romances; young men talk-

ed of free love. They made the polka, the valse, the mazurka lascivious, and danced an especially orgiastic version of the minuet. One would not be surprised to hear of a housemaid in the home of a young couple giving birth to a child within a few days of her mistress so that the servant could wet-nurse her master's *legitimate* offspring. The servant's infant was placed in a foundling home.

Then came the war with Germany and the Bolshevik Revolution and spoiled the fun. At first, war with Germany stimulated great expectations of business prosperity. Speculation was rife. "Business was quite good," writes our Brooklyn B'nai Khaim, "when the war broke out. Everybody waited for the war to end so there would be a market in which to spend the money." But the war did not end that way. It ended in the Revolution which shattered the roseate dreams.

For our *arendar* the outbreak of the war meant a rent in his family fortunes. The "Knyazher" peasants blamed the war and especially war requisitions on the Jews in general and on the *arendar* in particular. Life for his family became unsafe in Knyazhe. In 1915 they moved to Uman where they lived until 1918. "Father was still wealthy," writes his California daughter, but it lasted only one year beyond the Revolution. "After the Revolution, Father lost everything he had possessed—the mill, real estate in various cities." Then came the pogroms, and the family managed to get away to Odessa. But "having been a capitalist, Father could not get a job." When the Bolsheviks abolished the *grafs* they had no need for *arendars*. "Starvation and sickness spread over the land, and our family was no exception."

For the "Sokolievker" peasants, the fall of the Tsar was an unmitigated calamity: How would they live without a Tsar-Protector? For the "Sokolievker" Jews, the Revolution was a bewildering mystery. "We were asked to carry flags and shout 'Hurrah for Liberty!'" writes our Brooklyn B'nai Khaim, "but few of us knew what the slogan meant . . . did not know that we had been slaves to the Tsar." Before they could fathom that mystery, the Counterrevolution had begun and the White Army was looting, raping and murdering Jews. "We ran and ran like a

squirrel in a wheel, and that lasted two years until we finally got over into Rumania." By then, however, nothing was left of Yustingrad, and only a few of its Jews remained alive.

In August, 1918, a counterrevolutionary band lined up 138 Jews, from age 15 up, including the 88-year-old "Sokolievker" Rabbi, on the road to Konella and shot them dead, all but one. Mortally wounded and left for dead, this boy crawled back two miles to tell of the horror before he, too, died.

"How could you! We paid all the ransom you asked for," the father of one of the slain boys began upbraiding a White Guardist. "How could you murder these innocent boys, you son of a bitch!" . . . The Guardist thrust his bayonet into the man's groin. The man died on the way to Uman where they rushed him to get medical aid.

"Several days I hid in the chimney when I heard the bandits coming," my sister now living in Buffalo recalls with horror. "Didn't know where the children were. Stopped thinking of them . . ."

"There I was, burning up with typhoid fever," one of my nieces recalls. "My husband goes out for fresh water; perhaps bring medicine. He does not come back. Don't know how many days. Our baby lies next to me. Dead. Unattended. No fire in the oven . . ."

"You would not understand if I told you a thousand times," wept one of the reunited wives in Buffalo in the early 1920's. She had been separated from her husband ten years—ten years of hope, despair, pogroms . . . "You cannot imagine the horrors," she continued. "One has to live through them to *feel* them. One of the pogroms took place on *Yom Kippur*. Everybody was in *shule* praying; fasting. Suddenly, the bandits fall upon the *shule* and proceed raping the women in front of their crazed husbands and horrified children. My father, 70 years old and pious as any man in Sokolievka,⁵ ran about raving, screaming, 'If this can happen to us, here, on this Holiest of Holy Days, then there is no God in Heaven; then I don't believe in a God!' Threw his *talis* in the dust and himself on the bayonet of a beast."

In Uman: "My mother lived through three pogroms," writes

a Los Angeles B'nai Khaim woman. "Hid in a dark attic; days with no food; 30 other adults and 17 children. Through darkness saw gleaming bayonets. When day comes see stores broken in; broken windows; puddles of blood; dead bodies; a wagon-full of corpses being carted away"

"My husband and I still scream in our sleep. I always seem to run; can't find no escape"

It took them from two to three years to escape, into Rumania mostly. There, many found shelter in refugee camps—in Kishinev, in Jassi, in Bucharest—set up by Jews of other lands: by the Alliance Francaise Israelites; the British Jewish Rescue Committee; the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. In anguish the B'nai Khaim, along with thousands of other homeless Jews, wait until word comes that husbands, fathers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, cousins had been located in New York, Cleveland, Buffalo, Chicago. These send money and steamship tickets to carry them to America. In America they will replant the B'nai Khaim Tree.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹This is as I recall it from visits there as a teenager in 1903-05, and as I have recently gathered from personal interviews and correspondence with Knyazher B'nai Khaim in Cleveland, Buffalo, Washington, and Los Angeles.

²One of these girls and a younger brother used to pay the *arendar* three kopeks an issue for the copy of the newspaper after his family was through with it.

³For the life of the peasant in Russia at this time see, for example, M. Olgin: *The Soul of the Russian Revolution*; in particular, Chapter III. Henry Holt & Co., 1917.

⁴This is from my recollections as a student there from 1902 to 1906 (age 14 to 18) and from personal interviews and correspondence with relatives now in America.

⁵There is a poignancy in this remark, "my father . . . pious as any man in Sokolievka," which will be lost on the reader unless explained. This man was not a "Sokolievker" by birth and although his name was Kaprov, he was not a Kaprov-born. He had been a "Nickolayevsky soldat," a soldier in

the cantonment army of Tsar Nickolas I where he had served 25 years beginning at the age of eight. By the time he was discharged he had lost all trace of his family. Wandering in search of them he stumbled into Yustingrad. Here he was adopted by the community, named Kaprov, given a wife, a hut in which to raise a family and a shack in which to sell axle grease for a living. (*Zeide* Khaim's youngest son, who was of about the same age, also sold axle grease.) My sister knew all this. I remember the man only as selling axle grease and as wearing the peaked cap of a Nikolaevsky soldat. However, I knew his family intimately. My brother married one of his daughters, and his only son was a pal of mine.