Jewish scholars under the Chernihiv governor in the second half of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th century

Morozova Anna

1 candidate of historical sciences, chief specialist of the department use of document information; State Archives of Chernihiv Region; Ukraine

Abstract. The purpose of this study is to identify those, who during the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries were elected Jewish scholars under the Chernihiv governor and the definition of the criteria by which the election took place. The purpose determines the task: summarizing biographical data about Jewish scholars by studying archival sources, and clarifying the circumstances of their life and activities in the context of the era. In accordance with the objectives, research methods were selected: general scientific methods of analysis and deduction, a historical-chronological method for studying and organizing events and facts; source research – for the study of archival sources; and the logical-summarizing method – for summing up. The scientific novelty lies in the fact that for the first time information about Jewish scholars under the Chernihiv governor has been summarized. Conclusions. All Jewish scholars under the Chernihiv governor of the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries were installed. The application of research results in scientific and educational activities will expand the idea of the established position of Jewish scholars, their functions, and the characteristics of the representatives of the Jewish community of Chernihiv province who were elected to this position.

Keywords: Jewish scholars, Governor, the Jewish community, Chernihiv province, Chernihiv Province Administration, Russian Empire.
The period of the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855) was marked by a strengthening of the government’s policy towards the Jewish population of the Russian Empire. His personal prejudices were superimposed on the general course, which proclaimed «Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationalism» as the official ideology. The inevitable «fusion» of Jews with the surrounding population, according to officials, along with the assimilation of Jews (with the help of the widest possible distribution of recruitment sets to them, the abolition of kagals, the creation of a system of comprehensive Jewish schools, etc.) did not exclude the possibility of using the Jewish population in their own interests.

Thus, in the territories of the Western provinces of the Russian Empire «returned» from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, recruiting Jews became a way to fill vacant police positions in the region. And in June 1833, Vice-Chancellor Earl K. V. Nesselrode proposed to involve the Jewish population of the South-Western Region in opposing the emissaries of Polish emigrant organizations arriving from abroad. Expecting to use Jewish subjects for their own purposes, it was proposed to establish control over the religious life of Jewish communities, appointing for this purpose «worthy» and «benevolent» provincial rabbis who were well-versed in the intricacies of the creed and enjoyed respect among co-religionists. Discussions in the Ministry of the Interior and the Jewish Committee on the issue of provincial rabbis reached a dead end since the governor-generals could not propose «worthy candidates» for these positions. Because of this, in the fall of 1844, it was decided to establish «as a temporary or transitional measure» the position of «special inspectors under the governors-general to monitor the accurate performance by rabbis of their religious duties». It was decided to regulate the activities of the Jewish inspectors with the help of secret instructions. The development and agreement of the document between all interested persons and departments stretched for almost four years. Only in March 1850, the Minister of Internal Affairs Earl L. A. Perovs’kyi, submitted to the State Council the draft «Regulations on Jewish Inspectors», which defined the general order of their appointment, the scope of their activities and the «benefits» due to the service. A draft
secret instruction for the governors-general was attached to the «Regulations», which contained «explanations and additions» as well as «rules for guidance in the selection and appointment» of inspectors. The Department of Laws of the State Council, having considered both submitted documents, proposed, due to the uncertainty of the range of activities and the lack of the right to carry out any independent actions, to abandon the term «inspectors» and assign the newly established positions the name «Jewish scholars under the governor-general for special assignments» [1].

And on July 3, 1850, Nicholas I approved the «opinion of the State Council» on the appointment of Jewish scholars to the governor-generals for special assignments:

«The State Council, in the Department of Laws and in the general meeting, having considered the proposal of the Minister of the Interior on the appointment of Jewish scholars under the governor-general for special assignments, decided by opinion:

1. Under each governor-general, within the limits of the permanent settlement of the Jews, one or two are appointed from among them, and where necessary, then with the permission of the Minister of the Interior and up to three, to carry out assignments on subjects that require special knowledge of all the rules and rituals Jewish law. Note: The ban on Jews from living in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and non-residents in Riga does not apply to Jews, who are under the governor-general as long as they remain in this position.

2. The said Jews are elected governor-general mainly from rabbis who are trustworthy of the government and enjoy good opinions in their society.

3. When determining to the governor-general, Jews for allegiance to the service are sworn in the synagogue in the provincial cities in the presence of an adviser to the provincial government, and in the district during the stay of the mayor. They remain in this service indefinitely and are dismissed from it either at their own request on a general basis, or at the discretion of the governor-general.

4. These Jews, being completely dependent on the governors-general, who use them at their own discretion, under no circumstances enter into any official relations with anyone without a special order from the governor-general, but only
carry out the assigned on them by the chief heads of the provinces of the order.

5. Mentioned Jews enjoy the following advantages: a) they receive a salary from the sums of the box tax in such an amount as, according to the intercourse between the Minister of the Interior and the governor-general, will be deemed necessary and possible, but not more than 900 rubles in a year; b) are released personally, depending on the class to which they belong, from all personal taxes, recruitment, and other natural duties during the entire time they are in this position; c) for diligent service and distinctions rendered in the position, they acquire the right to be awarded medals and personal honorary citizenship, but in no case, however, before the three-year term of service.

At the same time, the emperor, approving this document, made corrections, «that these Jews acquire the right to be awarded medals and personal honorary citizenship in no case before the 15-year term of service» [2].

After the publication of the regulation, a secret instruction «for a confidential message» was sent to the governors-general within the Jewish Pale of Settlement, which was several times more than the legislative act itself:

«Secret instructions to governors-general about the Jews, chosen and used by them to carry out assignments in subjects requiring special knowledge of the rules and ceremonies of Jewish law

1. The governors-general, when appointing Jews to carry out assignments in subjects requiring special knowledge of the rules and rituals of Jewish law, are obliged to ensure that under no circumstances do Jews belonging to Hasidim and other sects enter these positions; also noticed by the authorities in factoring, snitching, smuggling or other reprehensible acts; moreover, those who were under judgment and left under suspicion; and, finally, involved in criminal cases or investigations during their production.

2. Under the rabbis, from which the aforementioned Jews are predominantly appointed, one must understand those rabbis who are now elected by the Jews, approved by the provincial governments, and recognized by their co-religionists as rabbis of the order, appointed to serve the service, but
rabbis who have positive knowledge of purely Old Testament teaching and are able to on the basis of the rules thereof, perform prayers and all the rites of the Jewish law and pronounce teachings in synagogues and prayer schools.

3. The governors-general use these Jews, under their own direct supervision, in matters of the Jewish faith, in all cases where a moral influence is needed to weaken: a) fanaticism, resulting from a misinterpretation or misconceptions about the true Old Testament teaching; b) those Jewish rules that do not correspond to general civil laws.

4. Based on partial information that has reached the governors-general about any harmful actions of rabbis or Jewish societies, they instruct the Jews chosen by them to make sure on the spot, without any publicity, and to report the consequences of their inquiries with all the details and with their conclusion. However, even without third-party information, governors-general can instruct them to find out what fanaticisms exist among local Jews that prevent them from getting close to other residents; find out on what their delusions are based on, and report about it in full detail.

5. When executing such orders, the Jews used by the governors-general do not start any correspondence and do not reveal to the Jews the assignment entrusted to them, but limit themselves to verbal explanations with rabbis and members of prayer societies, advising them to leave prejudices harmful to them, drawing sources for these councils from the Old Testament, and thus, by means of moral persuasion, they try to weaken the fanaticism that stems from the misinterpretation of the Old Testament by the Talmudists.

6. The governors-general also entrust the aforementioned Jews, when they deem it necessary, to survey synagogues, prayer schools, and all charitable institutions and societies existing with them and the boards themselves. Orders of this kind are assigned to them by the orders of the governors-general, which must be presented by those Jews in the proper places. In carrying out these commissions, they will be able to delve into the spirit of prayer societies, their rabbis, and other persons belonging to prayer or the performance of ceremonies, such as gabay, cantors, circumcisions, gravediggers and the like, and to fulfill exactly what is
prescribed in §§ 4 and 5 of this duty instructions.

7. The governors-general immediately bring to the attention of the Minister of the Interior the attachment, in the latter cases, of the aforementioned reports.

8. If information about any actions of the Jews, although based on their fanaticism or fanaticism, but clearly contrary to existing laws, would be brought to the attention of the governors-general in an official way, that is, notices, complaints and reports from police stations indicating those responsible for In this case, the governors-general dispose of the discovery of the perpetrators and subject them to the action of laws, not allowing the study of learned Jews used by them in matters of the Jewish faith.

9. The governors-general may evenly use these Jews to inspire confidence in their co-religionists in the government’s guardianship of them and to convince them of the benefits of proper education and to destroy unfounded fears among them about the persecution of their faith and the Jewish law itself.

10. In general, governors-general should entrust orders to the Jews chosen by them with all possible care, so that, with the fanaticism of the Jews, they would not show them the real purpose of the government, and therefore, under no circumstances should they be vested with the designated persons with any authority or impose duties on them. fiscal, which could deprive them of the confidence of the Jews.

Signed: Minister of the Interior earl L. A. Perovs’kyi» [3].

During the following years, the provisions of this document were repeatedly clarified and supplemented, which were finally reflected in «Code of Institutions and Charters of the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Confessions Christian and Non-Christian»:

«1338. In places of permanent settlement of Jews, under the governors of Vitebsk, Mogilev, Minsk, Poltava, Chernihiv and under the mayor of Odesa, there is one learned Jew, and under each governors-general either one or two, and where necessary, then, with the permission of the Minister of Internal Affairs, and three learned Jews, to carry out assignments in subjects requiring special knowledge of all
the rules and rituals of Jewish law. In order to fulfill these orders in the Livonia and Courland provinces, the position of a learned Jew was established at the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Note. The prohibition for Jews to live in the city of Kyiv, and for those from other cities in the city of Riga, does not apply to the Jewish scholars mentioned in this article as long as they remain in their positions.

1339. Jewish scholars are elected, according to their affiliation, by the Ministry of Internal Affairs or, in consultation with the Minister of Internal Affairs, governors-general, governors and the mayor of Odesa from persons who have received education in higher or secondary educational institutions. By definition, they take an oath of allegiance to serve in the synagogue: in a provincial city in the presence of an adviser to the provincial government, and in a district city in the presence of a district police officer or chief of police (where the city police is not subordinate to the district authorities). They remain in this service indefinitely and are dismissed either at their own request, on a general basis, or at the discretion of the authorities that determined them.

1340. Jewish scholars are completely dependent on the Minister of Internal Affairs, governors-general, governors, and the mayor of Odesa and are used at their direct discretion. Fulfilling their instructions, they under no circumstances enter into any official relations with anyone without a special order from their superiors.

1341. Jewish scholars who are affiliated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, governors-general, governors, and the mayor of Odesa enjoy the following advantages: 1) they receive salaries from the sums of the Jewish communal tax in such an amount as according to the intercourse of the Minister of Internal Affairs with the local authorities, is recognized as necessary and possible, not more than, however, 900 rubles a year; 2) are released personally, depending on the class to which they belonged, from all personal taxes and natural duties during the entire time they are in this position; 3) for diligent service and distinctions rendered in the position, they acquire the right to be awarded medals and
personal honorary citizenship, but in no case, however, before 15-years of service» [4].

Until May 1870, Ginzubrg was a Jewish scholar under the Chernihiv governor. Unfortunately, no information about him could be found yet.

May 29, 1870 – November 5, 1891 – Freydin Yefrem (Efraim) Gilelevich (Illich) (1837 – November 5, 1891)

Efraim G. Freydin came from the burghers of the Minsk Province. From October 15, 1856 to July 1, 1860 he studied at the Vilnius rabbinical school, after which he received the title of teacher of state Jewish schools of the 1st category [5].

He was first elected Chernihiv public rabbi on January 23, 1862, and was then constantly re-elected. In 1875 and 1879 he was elected a member of the Chernihiv Orphans' Court, and from January 1, 1879 he was elected speaker of the Chernihiv Duma [6].

On May 29, 1870 Efrem G. Freydin was appointed a Jewish scholar. At the same time, he also retained the elected position of a public rabbi, which speaks of respect from the Jewish community and trust from the provincial government. For him, the amount of salary was preserved, as with his predecessor – 600 rubles. per year [7].

On December 24, 1882 Efroim G. Freydin was awarded a gold medal with the inscription «For Diligence» on the Stanislav ribbon [8]


Isaak A. Kaminer graduated from the medical faculty of St. Volodymyr University and on July 28, 1866 received a diploma with the title of county doctor [9].

Isaak A. Kaminer was actively involved in commercial activities, promoting non-traditional methods of treatment that were popular at the time. Thus, on July 21, 1881 he submitted a request to the Chernihiv Provincial Government to grant permission to open in the village Papernya Tumans’ka of Horodnya district of Chernihiv Province producing koumiss. In addition to the actual production of the medical drink, the opening of a small medical institution like a boarding house was also planned, in which treatment was offered for 3-6
weeks, and the cost of treatment including accommodation and food. After eliminating the shortcomings in the organization of this institution, it began its activities and received patients at least until the end of the summer of 1882 [10]. And in July 1885 Isaak A. Kaminer decided to open a private pharmacy in Papernya Tumans’ka, but the medical department of the Chernihiv Provincial Government refused him this because of the presence of a pharmacy and a medical center in the neighboring district, which met the needs of the local population [11].

On March 3, 1892 Isaak A. Kaminer submitted a request for the appointment of a Jewish scholar to the Chernihiv governor, and already on April 21, 1892 the Department of Religious Affairs of Foreign Confessions granted permission for his appointment [12].

It is interesting his sons adopted Orthodoxy in Ladinka of Chernihiv county: Boris – January 18, 1892 after graduating from the law faculty of Kharkiv University [13], Joseph, who at that time lived in Baku, – August 4, 1898 with the name «Nicholas» [14].

On July 2, 1892 submitted a request for the appointment of a Jewish scholar to the Chernihiv governor and Wulf – the son of the deceased Efrem G. Freydin, who graduated from the law faculty of St. Petersburg University on November 21, 1891. But the petition was rejected, since Kaminer I. had already been appointed [15].

1901–1917 – Hormiz Mordukh (Mark) Yakovych

On April 12, 1901, Hormiz Mordukh Yankelevich submitted a request to the Chernihiv governor to grant him «the position held by Your Excellency as a person in charge of Jewish affairs» [16]. A diploma was attached to the request: «The bearer of this, Mordukh (aka Mark) Yakovlevich Garmiz, the son of a tradesman, of the Jewish faith, born on January 15, 1870, after satisfactory endurance at the Imperial University of St. Vladimir in 1893–1894. semi-course test and by offsetting the number of semesters determined by the charter at the Medical Faculty of the Imperial Kharkov University in September and October 1899, with the following successes: very satisfactory in descriptive anatomy, very satisfactory in histology, very satisfactory in pathological anatomy and pathological histology, Satisfactory in operative
surgery and topographic anatomy, very satisfactory in physiology, very satisfactory in general pathology, very satisfactory in medicinal chemistry, very satisfactory in pharmacology with recipes and teaching about mineral waters, very satisfactory in pharmacy with pharmacognosy, satisfactory in particular pathology and therapy, according to the doctrine of nervous and mental illnesses, satisfactory; satisfactory in fractures, satisfactory in ophthalmology, satisfactory in obstetrics with the teaching of women's diseases, satisfactory in the surgical clinic, satisfactory in the ophthalmological clinic, satisfactory in hygiene and medical police. Therefore, on the basis of the Highest approved opinion of the State Council on November 5, 1855, Mr. Hormiz at the meeting of the medical examination commission on October 16, 1899 was awarded the degree of doctor with honors with all the rights and benefits named both in the aforementioned Highest approved opinion of the State Council and in Art. 92 of the Statute of the Universities of 1884. As evidence of this, this diploma was given to Mr. Gormiz with a proper signature and with the seal of the Kharkiv Educational District Administration. The city of Kharkiv. November 30, 1899» [17].

At the same time as Y. M. Hormiz, the request for the position of a Jewish scholar was also submitted by the Chernihiv public rabbi, lawyer Turin Yezevil-Oleandr Isaakovich, Konotop public rabbi doctor Sh. G. Goldenfarb, Gluhiv public rabbi doctor Zhuk Peysakh Aronovych, Chernihiv doctors Danyushevsky Yosef-Abramovych, Moisei Borisovych Kogan, Avel Kononovych Segal.

At the same time, each of them gave his arguments for why he should have taken this position. Yes noted that, firstly, community rabbis always combined this position (except Kaminer) with the service, secondly, the salary was supposed to provide him with a more stable financial condition, and thirdly, «the Chernihiv Jewish community, as in others in the provinces, cities where Jews were settled, it was customary to see a Jewish scholar and a public rabbi in the same person. It will attribute my non-appointment to the position of a Jewish scholar to inattention and mistrust of me on the part of Your Excellency, as a result of which my authority as a rabbi will begin to significantly weaken and my priesthood..."
will inevitably fall» [18]. Goldenfarb decided to run for this position, «knowing well the life and customs of Jews and possessing considerable erudition in Jewish religion and rabbinic literature» [19]. But for P. Zhuk asked the Kyiv merchant of the 1st guild, entrepreneur, philanthropist and public figure David S. Margolin. In his letter to the Chernihiv governor, he urged «to support a worker, who under difficult conditions, to the point of being able to get himself a piece of intellectual labor bread. By fulfilling the request, you will do a good deed». [20]. Danyushevsky’s Y-G. A. decided that the decision of the Chernihiv governor would be influenced by the listing of information about his education and job: «After graduating from the Chernihiv Gymnasium in 1885, entered the Kharkiv Imperial University at the medical faculty, where he graduated in 1891 with the title of doctor with honors. After graduation, went to Berlin and Vienna to improve. From 1892 to October 18, 1894, when I had the honor of being confirmed by Your Excellency in the title of the city public rabbi, I served in the household of Princess Wittgenstein in the Borysovs’k district of the Minsk province” [21]. A. V. Segal also made a bet, so to speak, on education: «...before entering the university, I completed a science course at a rabbinical school, where, among other general education subjects, the ancient Hebrew language and literature were thoroughly studied» [22]. Kogan M. B., who held the high rank of court adviser, indicated that he «studied Jewish subjects at home» [23].

On September 27, 1901 the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Confessions informed the Chernihiv Governor E. Andrievsky that there were no obstacles to the appointment of Mordukh Y. Harmiz as a Jewish scholar under the Chernihiv governor [24].

The further fate of Mordukh Y. Harmiz is interesting. Having been mobilized during the First World War, he was taken prisoner in 1917, where he remained until the end of 1918. Since January 1919 he has been a court physician in Chernihiv, and since December 1920 he has been a consultant to the hospital fund and an assistant to the chief physician of the Chernihiv hospital. As Mordukh Y. Harmiz noted in the questionnaire on May 14, 1920, his native language was Russian, and he knew German [25].
Thus, in the second half of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th century, Jewish scholars were appointed to the positions of the Chernihiv governor. Persons with higher education, life experience, who enjoyed the respect of fellow believers, and most importantly, the trust of the authorities, was appointed.

References:
HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

Chernihivs`koi oblasti – State Archives of Chernihiv Region. [in Russian].


[16] Fund R-2201, Inventory 1, Case 262, Sheets 83 – 84 zv. Derzhavnyi arkiv Chernihivs`koi oblasti – State Archives of Chernihiv Region. [in Russian].