This is the first study of the military experience of some one million to one-and-a-half million Jews who served in the Russian Army between 1827, the onset of the conscription of Jews in Russia, and 1917, the demise of the tsarist regime. The conscription integrated Jews into the state, transforming the repressed Jewish victims of the draft into modern imperial Russian Jews. The book contextualizes the reasons underlying the decision to draft Jews, the communal responses to the draft, the missionary initiatives directed toward Jews in the army, alleged Jewish draft evasion and Jewish military performance, and the strategies Jews used to endure military service. It also explores the growing antisemitism of the upper echelons of the military toward the Jews on the eve of World War I and the rise of Russian Jewish loyalty and patriotism.

Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern teaches Early Modern, Modern, and East European Jewish history and culture at Northwestern University. He is the author of The Anti-Imperial Choice: The Making and Unmaking of the Ukrainian Jew (forthcoming). He has also published about forty scholarly essays in journals such as East European Jewish Affairs, Jewish Social History, Jewish History, Jewish Quarterly Review, AJS Review, POLIN, KRITIKA, Ab Imperio, and The Ukrainian Quarterly. He has been a Fellow at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University, a Rothschild Fellow in Jerusalem, a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, a Sensibar Visiting Professor at Spertus College in Chicago, a Visiting Scholar at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and a recipient of multiple fellowships and grants, including the National Endowment for the Humanities and Fulbright.
Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917

Drafted into Modernity

YOHANAN PETROVSKY-SHTERN
Northwestern University
To the blessed memory of my grandfather

Semen Vasil’evich Petrovsky
(Shimon ben Meir Shtern)
1897–1972

World War I Russian Imperial Army Volunteer
После обязанностей—права
Котели мы. Но мысли здраво
Обязанности вышие прав.
Скажите, разве я не прав?

The duty we fulfilled. And hence
The rights we sought. But common sense
Prompts duty overrides them all.
Now try to tell me I am wrong!

David Samoilov, “Iulii Klompus”
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Acknowledgments

This study was a collective enterprise. To thank everybody to whom I owe gratitude is to tell my life story, a task that exceeds the capacities of the acknowledgments. My apology to all those who are not mentioned here: I hope to be able to catch up with you in my next book. Conversations with Henry (Hillel) Abramson, Benjamin Nathans, and Paul Radensky informed my decision to switch my focus from comparative literature to the study of Jewish history. Gershon Hundert, Moshe Rosman, and Shaul Stamper made me into a historian of Jewish people with broad interests in social and quantitative history and comparative analysis. Arthur Green, Reuven Kimelman, and Jonathan Sarna turned my years at Brandeis into a rewarding spiritual journey. My Brandeis dissertation advisor, Antony Polonsky, has been amazingly generous intellectually. He read four, if not five, versions of my dissertation, helped me to reshape it into a book (first, Russian; later, English), and was a guardian angel for me and my family through our first years in the United States. Antony’s adage “context is everything” has framed and is still framing my research. Notes of Gregory Freeze and Michael Stanislawski, the readers of my dissertation, provided me with excellent ideas leading toward this book. I am indebted to John Bushnell, a senior colleague, friend, and a connoisseur of Russian military history, whose suggestions and corrections in the margins of my manuscript deserve a separate publication.

Tatiana Burmistrova, Olga Edelman, Aleksei Litvin, Binyamin Lukin, Ludmila Uritsky, and Hanna Wężynek took me through the labyrinths of Israeli, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian archives; some of them should be credited for instructing me how legally to obtain twenty files per day whereas the rigid archival former Soviet Union rules allowed not more than five. Yaroslav Tynchenko and Alexei Vasilyev consulted with me on some murky aspects of military history. The staff of the Kyiv Judaica Institute – Leonid Finberg, Miron Petrovsky, and Galya Likhtenshtein – uncovered, scanned, and provided me with most of the illustrations for this book. My profound thanks to the annoyed reviewers of the Russian version of this book – I am glad I
managed to find some valuable critical points in their aggressive escapades and used those points to improve my English narrative. Seymour Simckes was a great help as an editor on the first stages of this project, and Lisa Ferdman painstakingly edited the final version of the book. It was a rewarding experience to work with Angela Turnbull, my Cambridge University Press copy editor: her consistency and curiosity greatly contributed to polishing the final product. But I bear the entire responsibility for errors and misconceptions in this book.

The Rothschild Foundation, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, Ruth Ann Perlmutter, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Northwestern University generously provided their support, which enabled me to conduct research for this book in five countries. My wife, Hanna, and children, Sara Sofiya and Shlomo Efraim, stoically endured my absences – overseas or at home – when I was working on this book.


Lewis Bateman was an epitome of good taste, strategic planning, and efficiency: it took him two days to assess my manuscript and two months to obtain the reviewers’ responses. I deeply regret I cannot thank the late John Doyle Klier: he read my dissertation, my Russian book, and the manuscript of this book, supported me at each and every stage of my career, and penned an enthusiastic review for the Press, which, among other things, suggested how to make my narrative tighter and my conceptualization more compelling. May John’s memory be a blessing.
Note on Transliteration, Names, Figures, and Dates

Towns whose names have an accepted English-language form are given in that form; some examples are Warsaw, Kiev, and Moscow. The only exception is Vilna, used in its traditional form accepted in English-language historiography. In bibliographical references, abbreviations are used for the most frequent references, as, for instance, “M.” for Moscow and “SPb.” for St. Petersburg. Towns and cities of the Russian Empire, including western provinces of the Pale of Settlement (what today is Ukraine, Belorussia, and Lithuania), are given in contemporary Russian transliteration, as they appear in Russian military or governmental documentation of the nineteenth century. In most cases, but not in all, towns of the Kingdom of Poland and Polish towns in western provinces that had a majority Polish population are given in their official nineteenth-century Russian spelling, immediately followed by their original Polish spelling, for example, Lodz (Łódź). Small towns, shtetls, and villages of the Kingdom of Poland are given in their Polish spelling only. In cases when Polish, Lithuanian, or Ukrainian geographical names appear as the names of Russian army regiments, Russian spelling is retained, as for instance, Belostok (not Białystok) infantry regiment.

The Library of Congress system is used for Russian and Ukrainian languages. Russian geographical names are also spelled according to the system of the Library of Congress, except that they are spelled without a single prime for the soft sign. In the case of personal names of the well-known Russian Jewish public figures who have an established European form of name both names are given, as, for instance, Baron Gintsburg (Guenzburg). Transliteration of Yiddish follows the YIVO system, except for the names of the people, where the spelling they themselves used has been retained. In transliterating Hebrew words no distinction has been made between aleph and ayin. Het is written h except words that have an accepted English form; khaf is written kh; yod is written y when it functions as a consonant and i when it occurs as a vowel; tsadi is written ts; kof is written k. The sheva na is represented by an e. The dagesh hazak is not represented, except in words that have more or less acquired normative English spelling, as for instance,
kaddish. Hebrew prefixes, prepositions, and conjunctions are followed by hyphens when they are transliterated, for instance, Ha-Melits. Capital letters are not used in the transliteration of Hebrew except for the first word and proper nouns in the titles of books and geographical names. The names of Jewish soldiers are given only in their Russian form as they appear in primary Russian military documents. No attempt to reestablish their original first or last name is made. Therefore, it is Itsik-Mordke Vulf, and not Isaac Mordekhai Wolf. However, if the name is mentioned in Hebrew or Yiddish-language primary sources, its respective Hebrew or Yiddish spelling is retained, as for instance, Yakov Yabets.

Figures in the tables appear as they are in the primary documents and reflect the contemporary Russian nineteenth-century sense of calculation. All dates follow the Julian calendar, which was twelve days behind the contemporary Gregorian calendar in the nineteenth century, when most of this study is set.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGAD</td>
<td>Archiwum Glówne Akt Dawnych (Central Archive of Old Documents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAHJP</td>
<td>Central Archive of the History of the Jewish People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMRS</td>
<td>Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch.</td>
<td>chast’ (part of the collection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>delo (file)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVO</td>
<td>Derzhavnyi arkhiv Vinnyts’koi oblasti (State Archive of the Vinnitsa district)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>fond (collection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GARF</td>
<td>Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>Leningrad</td>
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<td>l.</td>
<td>list (page)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Moskva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBU</td>
<td>Natsional’na Biblioteka Ukrainy (Vernadsky National Library of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>op.</td>
<td>opis’ (inventory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pb.</td>
<td>Peterburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pg.</td>
<td>Petrograd</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSZ</td>
<td>Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii (Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>razdel (chapter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGME</td>
<td>Russkiy gosudarstvennyi muzei etnografii (Russian State Museum of Ethnography)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGAVMF</td>
<td>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv voenny-morskogo flota (Russian State Archive of the Navy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGIA</td>
<td>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (Russian State Historical Archive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGVIA</td>
<td>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv (Russian State Military History Archive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEER</td>
<td>Slavonic and East European Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>st.</td>
<td>stol (lit.: table; here: a Russian ministerial subdivision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sv.</td>
<td>sviazka (lit.: bundle; here: a set of documents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVM</td>
<td>Stoletiie voennogo ministerstva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPb.</td>
<td>St. Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Socialist Democrats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Socialist Revolutionaries</td>
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<td>t.</td>
<td>tom (volume)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TsDIAU</td>
<td>Tsentral’nyi derzhavnyi istorychniy arkhiv Ukrainy (Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>URP</td>
<td>Union of the Russian People</td>
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