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978-0-521-51573-3 - Jews in the Russian Army, 1827-1917: Drafted into Modernity

Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern

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Jews in the Russian Army, 1827–1917

Drafted into Modernity

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.

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To the blessed memory of my grandfather

Semen Vasil'evich Petrovsky

(Shimon ben Meir Shtern)

1897–1972

World War I Russian Imperial Army Volunteer

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Posle obiazannostei–prava
Khoteli my. No myslia zdravo
Obiazannosti vyshe prav.
Skazhite, razve ia ne prav?

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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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 Gintzburg (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,

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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.

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Abbreviations

AGAD	<i>Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych</i> (Central Archive of Old Documents)
CAHJP	Central Archive of the History of the Jewish People
CMRS	<i>Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique</i>
ch.	<i>chast'</i> (part of the collection)
d.	<i>delo</i> (file)
DAVO	<i>Derzhavnyi arkhiv Vinnyts'koi oblasti</i> (State Archive of the Vinnitsa district)
f.	<i>fond</i> (collection)
GARF	<i>Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii</i> (State Archive of the Russian Federation)
L.	Leningrad
l.	<i>list</i> (page)
M.	Moskva
NBU	<i>Natsional'na Biblioteka Ukrainy</i> (Vernadsky National Library of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine)
op.	<i>opis'</i> (inventory)
Pb.	Peterburg
Pg.	Petrograd
PSS	<i>Polnoe sobranie sochinenii</i>
PSZ	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii</i> (Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire)
r.	<i>razdel</i> (chapter)
RGME	<i>Russkii gosudarstvennyi muzei etnografii</i> (Russian State Museum of Ethnography)
RGAVMF	<i>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv voenno-morskogo flota</i> (Russian State Archive of the Navy)
RGIA	<i>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv</i> (Russian State Historical Archive)
RGVIA	<i>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv</i> (Russian State Military History Archive)

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Abbreviations

<i>SEER</i>	<i>Slavonic and East European Review</i>
st.	<i>stol</i> (lit.: table; here: a Russian ministerial subdivision)
sv.	<i>sviazka</i> (lit.: bundle; here: a set of documents)
SVM	<i>Stoletiie voennogo ministerstva</i>
SPb.	St. Petersburg
SD	Socialist Democrats
SR	Socialist Revolutionaries
t.	<i>tom</i> (volume)
TsDIAU	<i>Tsentral'nyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrainy</i> (Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine)
URP	Union of the Russian People

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