

## Vladyslawa Moskalets, Jewish Industrial elites in Drohobych and Boryslav, 1860-1900

This well-conceived thesis seeks to examine the role of Jewish entrepreneurs in the initial stages of the oil industry of Drohobych and Boryslav (one of its strengths is that it clearly delineates the difference between these two very different towns). In this period, which began around 1860, this industry could be divided into three distinct spheres of activity—the first involved the extraction of ozokerite, the second its purification in refineries and the third the production of candles principally for Jewish and Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical use. Entrepreneurs of Jewish origin dominated all three branches, which were all on a fairly small scale and did not require a high degree of capitalization. After 1890, the industry became much more capital intensive and concentrated on the extraction of oil for industrial and mechanical purposes. Some Jewish entrepreneurs were able to manage the transition to this higher degree of capitalization, but most now abandoned the industry, often using the profits they had made to move to Vienna or L'viv

The thesis is based on the extensive use of archival sources and printed material in Ukrainian, Polish, German, Hebrew and Yiddish. Among the archival sources consulted are the materials in the Krakow National Archive (ANK) on the Boryslav oil industry and the Teki Sznajdera deposited here, which contain valuable material on the oil industry as well as on the Jewish communities of Drohobych and Boryslav (including poll books dating back to 1867), the materials in the Central State Historical Archive in Lviv (TsDIAL) on the ownership of property in Drohobych (the 'tabular books'), the microfilm collection at the Central Archives of Jewish People (CAHJP), the Herman Diamand Collection in the Lviv National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library of Ukraine, the Central Zionist Archives (CZA) and the Austrian State Archives. Among the published sources consulted are legal regulations of the oil industry in Boryslav, inspectors' reports from Vienna and Kraków, the press, Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian, Jewish sermons and religious publications, published lists of firms involved in the industry and memoirs and fiction dealing with it.

The thesis is a very successful attempt to describe how participation in the oil industry led to the establishment of a network of economic connections which transformed the Jewish community of Drohobych and created a new Jewish business elite. It thus investigates a well-known problem in a new way which goes significantly beyond existing research, most notably Alison Fleig Frank's *Oil Empire: Visions of Prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

It is made up of three chapters and an introduction setting out the work's theoretical framework. This introduction is one of the most valuable parts of the work and examines the issues raised by the study of the economic history of the Jews, the nature of 'modernisation', the character of the socialist movement in Galicia, family history and the creation of networks and the problems of acculturation, integration and assimilation.

In the first chapter, the author outlines the general situation regarding the participation of the Jews in the oil industry analysing the structure of the industry. She explains why Jews

were dominant in the first period of its development and why this situation altered at the turn of the century. The second chapter describes how some of the most successful entrepreneurs in Drobobych and Boryslav achieved their success. It concentrates on the firm Gartenberg, Lauterbach and Goldhammer whose members were linked not only by kinship but by business contacts and discusses how far this case can be seen as typical for the region.

The third chapter examines the cultural and communal activities of Jewish entrepreneurs. It analyzes how the concept of charity altered in the new economic conditions and also the changes in the self-perception of Jewish entrepreneurs. This is done through memoir material and, above all, through an analysis of the German language *Drohobyczer Zeitung*

The thesis is well-written and the English is generally without mistakes although the editorial hand seems to have been less firm in chapter 2, which does need some stylistic revision. I was also not happy with the discussion of the election to the Austrian parliament in the town of 1911. This is too brief and sketchy and needs to be rewritten and expanded. I have no hesitation in declaring that the thesis fully satisfies the requirements for a doctorate in historical science. Provided the changes I have suggested are made, I also strongly support its publication.



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