In the Ukrainian intellectual tradition, there is no other author who has written as extensive-ly on the Jewish issue as Ivan Franko (1856–1916). He turned to this issue in various ways: in his poetry and prose, as a political leader and a journalist, and through his research in the Biblical tradition. The volume and richness of Franko’s production stands in stark contrast to the rather modest amount of research devoted to it by scholars. This paucity may be partly explained by the Soviet tradition of eliminating Jewish topics from public and academic discourse. In Soviet Ukraine, this tendency seemed to take a more extreme form than in any other Soviet republic. In the case of Franko, it led to the passing over in silence of his writings on the Jewish issue, some of which were considered covert propaganda for Zionism.

There is yet another difficulty in studying Franko’s attitudes toward Jews, and that is the ambivalent and sometimes controversial character of his statements. Indeed, Franko’s writings may be read sometimes as philosemitic, sometimes as antisemitic. There has been a telling discrepancy between Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian authors: while the former explored Franko’s positive statements on Jews, the latter often speak of him as another Ukrainian antisemite. The following paper seeks to analyze these two controversial facets of his lore as an expression of an essential controversy within his ideology. In a broader comparative context, the paper addresses the issue of antisemitism and its various historical expressions, using case of Franko as an interesting case study for late nineteenth century Central and Eastern Europe.

Setting the Context: A Borderland on the Threshold of Modernity
Franko’s lifetime was distinctive as the period during which there emerged modern move-ments and ideologies that shaped the whole of twentieth-century European history. At the
time he started his career (1870s), there emerged all the possible new words—nihilism, materialism, socialism, assimilation, antisemitism, decadence, and others—that by the time of his death (1916) already dominated the political and intellectual scene of his native Habsburg Galicia. Franko himself was very instrumental in spreading these modern concepts and ideas—to the extent that he was regarded as “an epitome of modernity” by his numerous followers and as a “great demoralizer” by his no less numerous foes. Like most East European intellectuals, he faced, however, a great challenge: how to implement these modern concepts that emerged from outside of his region and had little relevance to the local social and cultural circumstances? For one thing, modern ideologies required from their adherents clear-cut loyalties and identities. Galicia was, however, a typical borderland marked by wholesale confusion of identities. Until the very final days of Habsburg rule, two major local ethnic groups, the Ruthenians and the Jews, were engaged in debates about to which nation they belonged: Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, or a separate Ruthenian nation in the first case, or German, Polish, or Jewish in the latter case. The third major group, the Roman Catholic Poles, was saved from these debates due to the existence of a heavily populated stratum of intellectuals and politicians with a strong feeling of their Polish identity. Polish elites strove to establish their political dominance in the province. Polish nationalism faced, however, a problem similar to the one that confronted both Ukrainian and Jewish nationalisms: how to integrate into the single body of a modern nation a largely illiterate and traditional population who were either apathetic or sometimes even hostile to nation-building projects.

The Galician situation was hardly unique. It was rather typical for the whole of Eastern Europe, where large expanses of space without internal geographical divisions and with a diverse population led to contests over the definition of territorial and ethnic boundaries. Galicia was distinctive, however, in one sense: the ways in which the local crisis of identities might be resolved had a major impact on neighboring Russian provinces that were populated by the same set of ethnic and religious groups. The importance of Galicia was further aggravated by the fact that when the Polish and Ukrainian movements were repressed in the Russian empire in the 1860s, they shifted the center of their activity to the Austro-Hungarian empire, with its more liberal political regime. Each of them saw the region as their “Piedmont,” that is, an embryo of their future national state. Their ambitions were treated as a threat of irredentism by the Russian imperial regime. Small wonder that Galicia became a major casus belli between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires during World War I and between the newly emergent Polish, Ukrainian, and Soviet regimes in 1918–1920.

Galicia was a modern society in the making, or, as some economic historians prefer to name it, a “post-traditional society.” This point has to be especially emphasized to counterbalance the stereotyped image of Galicia as the epitome of a traditional society barely touched by modernization. To be sure, Galicia was an overwhelmingly agrarian province. Truth is, however, that Habsburg rule introduced here a peculiar kind of modernization—“modernization through bureaucratization”—in which the main agents of change were not entrepreneurs or bankers, but state clerks. Among other things, Habsburg bureaucrats turned L’viv (Lvów/Lemberg), the administrative capital of Galicia, into a modern metropolis. This Galician capital became one of the few really modern cities in Central and Eastern Europe, if judged by the criteria of maximum use of city infrastructure for the needs of everyday life and the support of urban culture. Due to its modern metropolitan character, L’viv had become a major center of a highly modern, flourishing urban culture that radiated throughout all of Central Eastern Europe.
Since the mid-nineteenth century, the region had been gradually losing its insular character as radical modern changes made deep inroads into Galician society. The last feudal restrictions were lifted: the serfdom was abolished (1848), and Jews were finally granted equal rights (1867–1868). The first elements of a capitalist economy, such as industry and railways, were introduced. Even though Galicia remained a province with a high level of illiteracy and a short life expectancy, new demographic and cultural processes—similar to those that were underway in Western Europe—slowly but surely transformed the local lifeways. Social changes were accompanied by political modernization. A series of international defeats in wars with Prussia and Italy pushed the empire toward constitutional experiments. In 1869, two years after the Compromise with Hungary and the reorganization of the empire as the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, Galicia was granted a broad autonomy. Galician autonomy and further reforms opened new avenues for public activity and mass politics.

Under the pressure of demographic and economic changes, the Christian (Polish and Ruthenian) and Jewish communities started to lose some of their traditional features (such as their total dependence on meager natural resources). In order to survive, many migrated to neighboring provinces of the Austro-Hungarian, Prussian, and Russian empires; some went overseas to North and South America. The most active portion of those who stayed looked for ways either to intensify old or to explore new realms of economic activity.

Like Jews everywhere, Galician Jews tended to establish themselves as an exclusively commercial class when they entered a country less developed economically. Traditionally, they were involved in trade, handicraft, and small industry. The lifting of anti-Jewish restrictions allowed them to acquire new social roles; for example, they played an important part in the development of the Galician oil industry in Boryslav. And, most significantly, they became increasingly visible in the agricultural sector, where they bought lands from impoverished landlords and peasants. But there they clashed with emerging Ukrainian and Polish peasant cooperatives, which considered agriculture as their legitimate field of activity. This created new tensions. Each group felt increasingly endangered by the other. On the Christian part, there were talks about the gradual disappearance of peasants (and, in the Polish case, land aristocracy) as a result of “subversive” Jewish activities. Among Jews, there were fears of anti-Jewish violence; especially after the 1881 pogroms occurred in Russian provinces relatively nearby.

And above all, there was a feeling of a gradual disintegration of traditional society, with its classes and ethnic groups. Socialists and liberals applauded these changes; conservatives abhorred them. There was, however, a broad consensus that the current situation was not tenable anymore, and political programs had to be brought in line with the new circumstances. For rival political movements, it was important to respond to changing circumstances in a way that might increase their chances to win in the contested region. Under these conditions, for the Polish and Ruthenian-Ukrainian parties the Jewish issue was increasingly becoming a point of reference without which it was very hard, if impossible, to imagine their own class or nation.

It could scarcely be otherwise: with the exception of a few towns that had the medieval privilege de non tolerandis Judaeis, Jews were omnipresent in Galicia. The ratio of Jews to non-Jews there was 1:9 compared to 1:26 in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a whole. Throughout his life Franko lived in precisely the localities that had the largest numerical presence of Jews. He was born in the Eastern (Ukrainian) part of Galicia, in village of Nahujevychi was a few miles away from the county seat of Drohobych/Drohobycz. In the local
antisemitic literature, this town was nicknamed “the capital of Galician onion-eaters” (a derogatory term for Jews). Here Jews made up over 50 percent of the population. By the time he was a successful adult, the 1900 census recorded that the region held three-quarters of all Galician Jews. In neighboring Boryslav, a center of the Galician oil industry, their share exceeded 75 percent. In 1875, Franko moved to Lviv, which, until the early 1900s, was the city with the largest Jewish population in the Habsburg monarchy (it was then overtaken in this respect by Budapest). Galician Jews suffered from a bad public image: they were considered dirt-poor, barely literate, and arrogant. Ein typischer Galizianer was one of the nastier insults that a Western or Central European Jew might direct at an East European Jew. The poverty of Galician Jews was striking: despite inroads into trade and agriculture, half of them were Luftmenschen, people devoid of any stable means of life and who lived on the charity of the Jewish community. The bitter irony was that in Eastern Galicia they faced Christian peasants who were likewise poor and, most often, even more illiterate. Despite their common poverty, Jews and local peasants rarely empathized with each other.

This is attested by, among other things, a rich collection of Galician Ruthenian proverbs that Franko compiled and edited. It presented an overabundance of Judeophobic stereotypes: Jews were shown as cowards and imbeciles, deceitful and impure, a source of contagious diseases. Jews were represented as a caste of untouchables, worthy of contempt only. But, in the imagination of Ruthenians, this was a caste of untouchables of a peculiar kind, since in the social hierarchy they stood above, and not below, the Christians: they exploited the latter and brought them to ruin. Jews were presented as absolute “others,” alien and hostile in every possible way. They were not deserving of sympathy in this world and would not be saved in the next. By this token, these proverbs specifically condemned those Christians who helped or served Jews.

Franko and his Writings in Dilo and Zerkalo

A large number of these proverbs Franko collected in his own village and vicinity. But it seems that he himself was not affected by Judeophobism as a child. As he explained in his memoirs, it was because of his mother, Maria Kulczycka, a woman from a petty noble family, who taught her children not to believe in stories about Jews. Jews were among the best friends of his childhood, his classmates in the Drohobych Gymnasium and the Lviv universities, and among his colleagues when he participated in the Galician socialist movement. Paradoxically, during the time of his socialist youth (the 1870s–80s) Franko had more contacts with the world of the impoverished Jewish artisans and workers than his colleagues, socialists of Jewish origin. Through his numerous contacts with Jews in his childhood and adolescence, he was very well informed on many aspects of Jewish life and had a good command of Yiddish. His knowledge was reflected in his numerous stories, novels, and verses on Jewish topics. Among these writings was a novel, Boa Constrictor (1878), a story told from the point of view of a Jew—something quite exceptional for non-Jewish East European literature.

Franko was exceptional in another way: his Judeophilic attitudes stood in contrast with the prevailing mood among Galician literati. Franko’s youth was a time when, in the words of a Jewish publicist, antisemitism was present “in all walks of life.” As a student in Drohobych, he witnessed a three-day anti-Jewish pogrom (1863) initiated by students of the local Gymnasium. He started his literary and political activity in Lviv in milieux that were overtly Judeophobic. Leaders of rival trends within the Ruthenian camp shared a common
view that in the Ruthenian–Jewish relationship the survival for Ruthenians as a group was at stake: Jews were blamed for the impoverishment and demoralization of local peasants and for bringing them to the brink of disappearance as a social and national group. This mood mirrored largely peasant attitudes. Galician Ruthenian peasants were expecting a major war that would erase Jews from the face of the earth. They placed their hopes on the “White Tsar”—the Russian monarch—who was supposed to come to Galicia to expel all the Polish landlords and Jews.

This mood reached a climax in the aftermath of the Russian pogroms of 1881. There were both fears and expectations that something similar might occur in Galicia. Franko recorded and translated local Jewish songs that emerged after pogroms. Reflecting his fears, his own verses on that subject were full of sympathy toward Jewish victims and condemnation of the irrational and senseless character of the pogroms. Again, Franko's attitudes toward this issue stood in contrast to the position taken by some socialists (Ruthenian-Ukrainian socialists included), who saw in the Russian pogroms a beginning of the great socialist upheaval for which they were waiting.

Franko must be given credit for his distance from these plans. In general, he had many chances and occasions to become more antisemitic. He was often harshly criticized for his philosemitism—to the extent that some of his critics believed that he was a Jew himself. Nonetheless, he was not consistent in his attitude toward Jews. In 1883, he wrote a long article titled “Pytannia zhydivske” (“The Jewish Question”) that was published as an unsigned editorial piece in the leading Ukrainian newspaper Dilo. It marks a clear departure from everything that Franko wrote before—or for that matter after—to the extent that Pavlo Kudriavtsev, a leading expert on the topic of “Franko and Jews,” has refused to believe that this piece belongs to Franko at all.

In “Pytannia zhydivske,” Franko claimed that antisemitism had become a universal phenomenon. As such, it could not be relegated to the social or religious realm only. The roots of antisemitism, according to him, were deeper and therefore much more dangerous. He saw them in the “demoralizing supremacy of Jewish capital and Jewish exploitation” and in “Jewish impudence and provocation.” Franko wrote that in many cases it was the Jews who were to blame for the eruption of violence: they were provoking pogroms to get direct profits, he alleged. As proof, he referred to the fact that perpetrators of pogroms—“simple” Christian workers and peasants—suffered much more than their victims. While the former were caught, shot at by the army and punished, the latter stayed safe and were given compensation by Jewish organizations (such as Alliance Israélite) and the state.

Franko suggested a program for averting pogroms in the future. Some of his suggestions were in a tune with his socialist spirit: he recommended workers to create self-reliance organizations and cooperatives in order to fight back against the exploitations of the Jewish capitalists. But some of Franko’s points sounded strikingly non-socialist. For example, he called upon Christian priests to do their best to ensure that “Christians would not serve Jews and by that token [not be] alienated from their religion and their folk.”

The strange case of Franko’s antisemitism did not finish there. The next year (1884), he published the poem “The Travels of Schwindeles Parchenblütt from the Village Derychlop to America and Back” (“Швинеделеса Пархенблюта вандри́вана з села Дерихлопа до Америкі і назад”). Here he made maximum use of several Jewish stereotypes—the Jew as a leech, parasite, exploiter. This was not a poem of great artistic value, to say the least. What is also worth nothing is his emphasis on the solidarity of Jews versus their victims.
Jews were exploiting peasants because Talmud permitted them to do so. So exploitation of Christians, according to him, was at the core of Jewish identity. Franko implicitly extends responsibility for this exploitation to the whole Jewish community.

The poem was published in the Ukrainian satirical magazine Zerkalo (later Nova Zerkalo). This publication waged a systematic literary war against the “three best friends of Ukrainian peasants” (using ironic names for the three alleged worst enemies of the Ukrainian people), as embodied in the symbolic figures of “Us” (the Russophile hierarchy of the Greek Catholic Church), the “Patriots” (Polish nobility), and the “Schwindeles Parchenblütt” (Jews). It is unclear whether Franko invented the latter image himself. But he definitely exercised a certain influence on the editorial politics of Zerkalo: the chief editor Vasyl’ Nahirnyj was his friend, and he had published extensively there and even came up with ideas for some cartoons. In any case, Franko’s poem enjoyed enormous popularity—to the extent that when the editor advertised for subscriptions for the next year, he referred to new installments of the poem as a “real jewel” awaiting readers.

Among his works, Franko’s article on the Jewish issue and his poem on Parchenblütt can hardly be classified as of marginal importance. Both were published in leading Ukrainian periodicals, and had all the formal appearances of important publications: the article was an editorial printed on the front page, and the poem was highlighted as a main attraction for readers. The question is: does it suffice to identify those two pieces as a programmatic statement of Franko’s antisemitism? Or were they just an accident in his biography?

The Debates in Przegląd Społeczny (1886–1887)

This question can be answered by referring to Franko’s later (1886–1887) writings, when he tried to bring his ideas on the Jewish issue into a certain system. An occasion was provided by a debate that was held in the Lviv-based journal Przegląd Społeczny. In the stifling intellectual atmosphere of Austrian Galicia of the 1880s, the journal was really an outstanding phenomenon. It was a truly international magazine that brought together Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish, and Russian authors of leftist trends from both empires.

In 1886, a young Jewish intellectual by the name of Alfred Nossig published in this journal a long essay entitled “An attempt to resolve the Jewish issue” (“Proba rozwiązań questii Zydowskiej”). It was one of the earliest political manifestos of Zionism. The publication made a splash: for years, Nossig had been a leader of the Polish assimilation movement, and now he was declaring that assimilation was not tenable and the only viable solution to the Jewish question was Zionism. Nossig became a subject of attacks from assimilationists; Franko intervened to support him, and thus drew sharp criticism toward himself. He responded to his critics with the article “Semitism and Antisemitism in Galicia” (“Semityzm i antysemityzm w Galicji”) published in Przegląd Społeczny (1887). This essay could be considered as programmatic: in many ways, his later writings would mostly continue to repeat and elaborate on the points that he made here.

Much of what Franko said during this discussion was a reiteration and support of Nossig’s statements. Both stated explicitly that the Jewish Question was neither a racial nor a religious issue: for them, it was a national issue. Jews were supposed to be recognized as a separate nation with all the necessary cultural and political implications. Above all, Jews were entitled to make their own decisions as to their future and were expected to recognize the same rights for other nondominant ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians in Galicia. This
was quite an original idea whose importance could hardly be underestimated. According to
the Habsburg legislature, Jews were considered to be a religious group, not a nation, and this
view also prevailed among local politicians and intellectuals. So by their recognition of Jews
as a *nation*, both Nossig and Franko made quite a revolutionary statement.

Nor did either writer stop there. They went on by formulating their vision of how the
Jewish issue was to be solved. Their solution suggested two major options for Galician Jews:
1) a voluntary assimilation into the local non-Jewish population; 2) for those who were not
willing to assimilate, emigration to a land where they could live as an independent nation.
For those Jews who would not be willing to accept either of these solutions, Franko suggested
a third option: to remain in Galicia, but with the legal status of “aliens” (deprived of certain
political and civic rights).

Intellectual historians have been intrigued by the second point of Franko’s program:
the emigration of Jews to a land where they could live as an independent nation, seeing
here the embryo of Zionism. They have generally ignored, however, the fact that it was
not Franko’s own original idea; rather, Franko reiterated the concept already articulated by
Nossig and *Przegląd Społeczny*. It seems that, for Franko at that time, the Zionist option was
actually of marginal importance—most likely because he did not believe in the plausibility of
its implementation. On one occasion, he referred Zionism as the “most dangerous” political
trend among Galician Jews and mocked their ideal as “childish dreams.” Franko’s personal
contribution—as distinct from Nossig’s—was the idea of granting some Jews the legal status
of “aliens.” But then again, he was not completely original in that: such a solution was widely
discussed by Jewish newspapers in the Russian empire in the wake of the 1881 pogrom.

Franko explicitly referred to these discussions in laying out his “alien” option.

The true originality in Franko’s approach is found in his understanding of assimila-
tion. He does not see it as “baptization and consumption of pork.” Quite to the contrary,
Franko stood for a preservation of the Jewish religious rite and was against the conver-
sion of Jews into Christians. He also opposed the pattern of assimilation suggested by
Moses Mendelssohn, that is, assimilation into the “high culture” of the countries where
Jews lived, but without denial of Judaism. He feared that the Mendelssohn formula might
alienate the Jewish intelligentsia from the poor classes—both their own and those of other
nondominant ethnic groups—which made up a bulk of the population in the borderland
provinces of the Austrian and Russian empires. He envisioned assimilation as granting Jews
all political rights, but on the condition of Jewish “solidarity with [working] people’s ideals
and working towards their implementation.” This conditional understanding of assimila-
tion turned Franko’s proposal into a social utopia: for most of the Jews, solidarity and as-
similation with “working people” (i.e., local peasants) was out of the question. It also eroded
the very concept of assimilation to the extent that, as an analyst noted, “there was nothing
left of it.” Even though Franko placed assimilation “in first place in our Jewish politics,”
he made it practically impossible.

There were further problems with the translation of Franko’s preferred program into
a language of pragmatic solutions. He stated that the political emancipation of Jews must be
accompanied by the economic emancipation of Gentiles. There had been a certain asym-
metry in Jewish–Gentile relations—while Jews were denied rights in the political realm, they
dominated in economics, holding control over 60 percent of the industry and 90 percent of
the trade in Galicia. Therefore, not only did Jews require legal protection, but Gentiles had
to be defended, too.
Following this line, Franko argued for certain anti-Jewish restrictions. First, he demanded that Jews be legally stripped of their right to buy land. According to him, by acquiring lands, Jews were aggravating a severe land hunger that had already been plaguing Ukrainian and Polish peasants. He also believed that Jews could not handle agricultural households efficiently and that they did not possess adequate skills in farming. Secondly, Franko proposed introducing a law that would prohibit rabbis from excommunicating any Jew from the Jewish community. He was inclined to think that rabbis were abusing this right in order to support economic exploitation under the disguise of confessional solidarity. On this point he was supporting a program proposed by Galician Polish liberal Teofil Merunowicz. He believed, however, that such changes in law had to be initiated not by Gentiles, but by those educated Jews who sought to get equal rights.

Franko’s views of the Jewish issue were full of ambivalence and contradictions. On the one hand, he suggested granting Jews large-scale political rights to the extent of recognizing them as a separate nation; on the other, he was willing to impose on them certain restrictions. No wonder the latter part was read as antisemitism. Dr. Karl Lippe, a Zionist from Romania, went so far as to name Franko’s program one of numerous “manifestations of mental disease” (that is antisemitism) that were plaguing Europe in the 1880s.

To be sure, to call Franko an antisemite was not doing him full justice: it implied ignoring his positive program and his usually sympathetic attitudes toward Jews. In contrast to the 1883 article and poem, his publications in Przegląd Społeczny did not exploit overt antisemitic stereotypes. All of the three publications contained, however, one common topic that could be read, at least implicitly, as antisemitic. This was a statement on the inner solidarity of Jews vis-à-vis Gentiles. Franko believed that Jewish solidarity was a major source of Jewish domination in certain sectors of the Galician economy.

A Comparative Context: The Case of France

Antisemitism, like any other “ism,” is a very broad phenomenon that eludes a clear-cut definition. There is no consensus over whether all Judeophobic violence can be defined as antisemitism, and whether and to what extent nineteenth-century antisemitism is ontologically connected with the ugliest and most criminal forms of it in the twentieth century. Some antisemitic statements of Franko’s seem to fall into the category of so-called “progressive antisemitism.” This is a brand that seeks to instrumentalize the Jewish issue for revolutionary moods and actions. In contradiction to “conservative” antisemitism, the “progressive” form opposes chauvinism and racism, and also stands against any attempts to use antisemitism for the defense and legitimization of ancien régimes. Even though such a classification of antisemitism implies a clear-cut division between “progressive” and “reactionary” types, in the political history of East-Central Europe there are not that many cases when public figures had positioned themselves only in one or another way. There was, however, a minimum program that no progressive antisemite would ever violate under any circumstances: support of Jewish assimilation combined with programmatic resistance to any “reactionary” (conservative, Christian, right-wing) antisemitism.

Franko’s antisemitism arose from his experience in the socialist movement. Beginning in the late 1870s and early 1880s, he was actively involved in the creation of an international (Ukrainian/Polish/Jewish) socialist party (“commune”) in Galicia. It was supposed to unite peasants, artisans, and members of the intelligentsia regardless of their ethnic origin. He and
his colleagues succeeded in establishing the editorial boards of the socialist newspaper *Praca* and, later, *Przegląd Społeczny*, as prototypes of such a commune. But, on the level of mass politics, their attempts proved to be a major failure. To a certain extent, this was because of the repression and harassment by local authorities of the socialist movement and its leaders (Franko himself was jailed in 1877–1878 and again in 1880). Harassment and repression could not, however, disguise the basic fact that Galician socialists were not able to find larger support among the “toiling masses” whom they sought to represent. Especially depressing for them was the behavior of the Jewish poor, whom they considered to be their “proletariat.” In Franko’s understanding, it was a strange kind of a proletariat: even though it was often starving, it still looked for means of survival through the exploitation of “alien elements.”

There is a striking similarity between the image of Jews in Ruthenian folklore and the one that was provided by Franko and Nossig. Both believed that “on average, a Jewish type is stronger in the struggle for survival, but morally stands lower than a non-Jewish type; he displays more flexibility and endurance, but also more arrogance, ambition and unscrupulousness.” Stripped of antisemitic overtones, this image reflects a certain type of social reality that cannot be adequately understood only as something exclusive to Galician Jews and their relations with local gentiles. A broader treatment was suggested by Aleksander Hertz in his *The Jews in Polish Culture*. As a Polish social scientist of Jewish origin who emigrated to the U.S., he managed to combine several cultural perspectives. A comparison of the Jewish community of Central Eastern Europe with African American communities helped him to introduce the sociological concept of a caste. This concept, he argued, was central for understanding relations between Jews and non-Jews. Jews made up a caste, that is, a closed group with a number of strict rules which, among other things, imposed a certain solidarity, and which were very hard, if impossible, for any individual to break. These rules persisted even when class distinctions began to be more pronounced. The Jewish community functioned as a caste, not a national group in the modern sense of the world, until the end of the nineteenth century, and in some regions until World War II.

Following the Hertz interpretation, one can identify a source of Franko’s caustic remarks on Jews. He and his fellow socialists believed in an overwhelming social progress that was about to bring radical changes. Jews, as well as other traditional groups, were to undergo rapid transformation. They were supposed to evolve into “modern” classes and nations. When this did not happen, Franko blamed not his utopian beliefs, but certain social strata for resisting progress: authorities, aristocracy, priests, rabbis—and last but not least, the Jewish proletariat, who failed to exhibit class solidarity with the poor of other nationalities. Franko defended poor Jews against any kind of oppression, but he blamed the whole Jewish community, the paupers included, for their collective solidarity in exploiting Ukrainian peasants rather than joining forces with them.

It took him a long time to reconsider the critically socialist ideals of his youth. His long and complicated ideological evolution can be presented as one from socialism to nationalism. The climax of that evolution was an acceptance, after long hesitations and inner struggle, of an ideal of an independent Ukrainian state, which he had originally opposed as a right-wing invention. It may be expected that along with this evolution, Franko’s antisemitism should increase, not decrease. This did not happen. Quite to the contrary: among the works that he produced during this stage of his thought, like those written in the years of his youth, one can hardly find any antisemitic statements. Moreover, there are strong reasons to believe that his evolution occurred under the influence of Zionism. A telling illustration was
his enthusiastic reaction to Theoder Herzl’s _Judenstaat_ in a review that he wrote immediately after the book had been published.57

Franko’s case particularly, and the Galician Ukrainian case in general, seems to defy a conclusion by Peter Pulzer in his comparative study of political antisemitism that “it was stronger among ‘unhistorical’ nations than among ‘historical’ ones.”58 This is more in tune with his other observation that antisemitism was weaker in ethnically “mixed” regions, where the need for allies counterbalanced the sharper tempers and greater mutual suspicions.59 This observation, however, has to be adjusted: besides pragmatic calculations of “counterbalancing,” there were ideological considerations that could hardly be ignored.

For a comprehensive evaluation of Franko’s views, it makes sense to compare them with the attitudes of other Central European intellectuals toward the Jewish issue, especially those whom he personally knew, corresponded or exchanged ideas with, and so on. I will choose three examples: Viktor Adler, leader of the Austrian social-democrat party; Eliza Orzeszko, Polish poetess; and Czech President Tomáš G. Masaryk. Each of them, in a way, relates to a part of Franko’s versatile personality: Viktor Adler as a socialist, Eliza Orzeszko as a writer, Tomáš G. Masaryk as an ideologue on the “nonstate” nation.

Viktor Adler was Jewish by origin, and his marriage was held according to Orthodox Jewish ritual. His three children were, however, baptized. On this occasion, Adler used to quote Heinrich Heine that “[d]er Taufzettel ist das Entréebillet zur europäischen Kultur” (“Baptism is an entry ticket to European culture”). Like many other Jews of their generation, he and his wife Emma fell under the spell of socialism while it promised emancipation not only of the proletariat, but specifically of Jews as well. Jewish leftist intellectuals saw themselves as leaders of the exodus of their compatriots from traditional society into a modern world. In Viktor Adler’s case, this implied national and religious assimilation. His socialist views were accompanied by a racist antisemitic mood, which he openly revealed—to a great dismay of his wife—in private conversations in a circle of his closest friends.60

Eliza Orzeszko was, in a sense, Franko’s _alter ego_: she was the first Polish writer who treated the Jewish issue systematically. She saw some similarities in the historical fate of Poles and Jews. As in the Franko’s case, her works are full of very sympathetic descriptions of Jews and Jewish life (the similarity was accentuated by the fact that both displayed a very strong moralistic and didactic tone). Orzeszko consistently condemned antisemitism—an act that required courage, given the rampant antisemitic mood among Polish intellectuals (exemplified in Bolesław Prus’s _Lalka_ (Doll, 1890) or Władysław Reymont _Promised Land_ [1897–1898]). Like young Franko, she denied the practical value of Zionism, and considered assimilation to be the most efficient way to release tensions between Jews and non-Jews. The similarity of their views was further illustrated by the fact that she—unlike Adler—was against religious conversion of Jews to Christianity. A major difference was that she understood assimilation as the integration of Jews into the Polish nation only. She denied their right to be a separate modern nation while they did not possess their own modern national language.61

And finally: Tomáš G. Masaryk was born in a village where, like Franko, he heard and learned a lot of anti-Jewish stories. He could not overcome some of the Judeophobic bias and superstitions that he inherited during his early years. His intellectual magnitude could be measured by the fact that, despite these biases, he combated antisemitism. In 1900, he raised his voice in defense of a Jew accused of a ritual murder and wrote a book to that effect—and was ostracized, as a result, by his colleagues, professors, and students at the Czech university in Prague.62
A comparison with Adler and Orzeszko helps to identify the position of Franko within the trend of “progressive antisemitism.” Two moments make his views distinctive: the first is opposition (in contrast to Adler) of Jewish assimilation in a national or religious sense; the second is recognition (in contrast to Orzeszko) of Jews as a separate nation. An analogy with Masaryk suggests another perspective: both were raised and acted in milieux where it was much easier to become an antisemite than a philosemitic. Like Masaryk, Franko was criticized by his compatriots for his sympathy toward Jews. The fact that Franko wrote a pamphlet that explained to rank-and-file members of Ruthenian-Ukrainian Radical Party—a party of which he was the leader—his attitude toward Jews makes us think that even his closest milieu of Ukrainian socialists was not immune to the antisemitic mood.

Conclusion

The case of Ivan Franko serves as an illustration of the fact that the various manifestations of antisemitism in the nineteenth century cannot be that easily classified and generalized. It seems to undermine the views of those historians who draw a direct line between the antisemitism of 1870–1914 and the antisemitic manifestations after 1914, especially in the 1930–40s. From the perspective of studies on Franko, a much more productive approach for an evaluation of antisemitism was suggested Peter Gay. In a series of essays on German antisemitism of the nineteenth century, Gay criticized the image of German history “as a prologue to Hitler.” He stated, “Nineteenth-century German antisemitism, however unpalatable even at the time, however pregnant with terrifying future, was different in kind from the twentieth-century variety. . . . It was a culture in which clusters of ideas we would regard as grossly contradictory co-existed without strain in the same person.”

Franko’s attitudes toward Jews were very ambivalent. But so were his attitudes toward Marxists, feminists, peasants, priests, and, for that matter, Ukrainian nationalists. This is neither to excuse nor to eulogize him. It is just to call attention to the fact that there was more in his attitudes toward Jews than antisemitism. To discredit any nineteenth-century intellectual on the basis of his or her antisemitism is an approach that smacks of teleology. The victims of this misplaced historical hindsight might include Marx, Dostoyevsky, and Freud, to mention the most famous historical figures only.

The nineteenth-century antisemitism seemed to be universal phenomenon, and even the most “enlightened” intellectuals were not immune to it. In this sense, the case of Franko is hardly unique. Therefore it is not enough to state that Franko was an antisemite—it is no less important to explore what he did with his antisemitism. Did he make it the core of his intellectual and political activity? The analysis of this chapter demonstrates that in fact Franko juggled various attitudes, and in his body of work as a whole the most antisemitic of them were marginalized.

Notes

1. The few exceptions are: Pavlo Kudriavtsev, “Yevreystvo, yevreï ta yevreyeka sprava v tvor-akh Ivana Franka,” *Zbirnyk prats’ yevreïskoi istorychno-arkheografichnoi komisii*, vol. 2, ed. A. I. Kryms’kï (Kiev, 1929), 1–81; Volodymyr Polieck, “Ivan Franko ta yevrei (Odna storinka z litopysu


16. Suffice it to say that in the 1880s, L’viv had more newspapers and magazines per capita than Moscow, the second largest city of the Russian empire—see: Korneli Heck, “Bibliografia Polska z r. 1881 w porównaniu z czeską, węgierską i rosyjską,” Przewodnik naukowy i literacki. Dodatek miesięczny do, Gazeta Lwowska 10 (1882): 1097.


23. Istvan Deak, Essays on Hitler’s Europe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 47.


36. The low artistic value of the poem was admitted by some of Franko’s friends. See Doroshenko, “Ivan Franko.”

37. Omelian Ohonovsky, one of Franko’s professors at university, claimed that Franko was the “soul” of the magazine. Omelian Ohonovskii, *Istoriya literatury ruskoï*, vol. 3, pt. 2 (L’viv: Nakl. T-va im. Shevchenka, 1893), 1069.


42. In a later (1893) article, he defined Zionism as the “most dangerous” political trend among Galician Jews and mocked its ideal as “childish dreams”: Iwan Franko, “Żydzi o kwestji żydowskiej, ” *Tydzień* no. 12 (20 March 1893): 93.


55. Franko was especially frustrated by industrial developments in Boryslav, which at some point brought about a large confrontation between Christian and Jewish workers (see my article: “Franko’s Boryslav Cycle: An Intellectual History,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 20(1–2) (Summer–Winter 2005): 169–90.
59. Ibid., 135–36.
60. Emma Adler (Vienna: Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, 1989), 2–3, 10, 14. This is an excerpt from the unpublished memoirs of Emma Adler.
64. Ibid.
67. Heiko Haumann, one of the best experts on history of Eastern Jews, has reached a similar conclusion—see his “Wir waren alle ein klein wenig anstisemitisch.” Ein Versuch über historische Masstäbe zur Beurteilung von Judengegnerschaft [separatum].