



## Jewish Corruption in Ukraine

### Description

“At the same time, fifty Jewish families own 80% of all wealth. Where do you see the Ukrainian oligarch? I don’t know any. They are all Jews. Their wealth betrays their own bragging rights: Rolls-Royces, planes, castles, hotels, casinos owned in Monte Carlo. Aircraft and yachts under foreign flags. And, of course, they don’t pay taxes. And plants and factories were bought by them not at a real price, but stolen from the entire Ukrainian people.”

Serhiy Ratushniak, Former Mayor of Uzhhorod

With Russia now slowly escalating its ‘special military operation’ against Ukraine on the eve of its first anniversary, I find myself drawn once again to the complex but stark phenomenon of extreme Jewish corruption in the latter nation. While it’s become commonplace to note Volodymyr Zelensky’s Jewishness, and perhaps also that of Volodymyr Groysman, the first Prime Minister to serve under Zelensky, I have yet to read a detailed discussion of the major Jewish players in the ongoing saga of Ukrainian oligarchy and its political affiliates. If anything, the present conflict is a huge distraction from the fact that, for decades, the biggest threat to Ukraine hasn’t been Russia, but financiers and speculators operating with impunity within Ukraine’s borders to exploit ethnic Ukrainians and plunder their resources.

Speaking in general terms, of course, Ukraine is an extremely corrupt country, with the culture of fraud and graft stemming in large part from the Soviet legacy and saturating all levels of society. Crooks of all ethnic backgrounds are ubiquitous in the nation. Bribery is systematic, where it’s accepted as a basic fact of life by ordinary citizens and extends even to such mundane tasks as vehicle inspection.

As well as infesting politics, bribery and other forms of corruption remain endemic in the police force, higher education, health care, and the justice system, with the result that Ukraine ranks alongside some of the worst African nations in Transparency International’s assessment of corruption perception. According to 2015 data, politically connected businesses accounting for less than 1 per cent of companies in Ukraine owned more than 25 per cent of all assets and accessed over 20 per cent of debt financing. In the capital-intensive mining, energy and transport sectors, politically connected

businesses accounted for over 40 per cent of turnover and 50 per cent of assets.

Far from being the beacon of freedom presented to us now by the mass media, Ukraine is a nation bankrupt in social trust and well-accustomed to the yoke of exploitation. There has been little internal outcry over the massive trafficking of its women for sex, both inside and outside the country, with coastal cities such as Odessa becoming sex tourism hubs for the worst of the Turkish and Israeli middle classes. Ukraine now has the highest adult HIV prevalence outside Africa, with sexual contact outpacing injection drug use as the primary form of transmission since 2008. The National Institute on Drug Abuse points out that substance abuse in Ukraine has been at epidemic proportions for the last 15 years.

Ukraine is on multiple levels a deeply flawed and troubled state, and like any bloody carcass it has attracted its share of hyenas. I believe, however, that Jewish corruption in Ukraine, despite Jews only comprising around 0.5% of the Ukrainian population, is of a character significant enough to merit special attention. In the following essay I want to explore some of the key players and their interconnections, as well as to offer some thoughts on the reasons why anti-Jewish attitudes have not taken hold in Ukraine, and why they are unlikely to do so in the future.

### **How 'Anti-Corruption' Is Zelensky?**

Now overshadowed by his reinvention as a kind of Second Coming of Winston Churchill, Zelensky's first great transformation was that of a close associate of the worst of Ukraine's oligarchs (Ihor Kolomoisky, discussed below) into an "anti-corruption" populist. Zelensky's relationship with Kolomoisky goes back to around 2012, when Zelensky and the Jewish brothers [Serhiy and Boris Shefir](#), began making content for Kolomoisky's TV stations through their production company, Kvartal 95.

As is now well-known, Zelensky's political ascent began after his starring role in the political satire 'Servant of the People,' which began airing on Kolomoisky's 1+1 network in 2015. The 1+1 channel had been founded by another Jew, [Alexander Rodnyansky](#). Servant of the People starred Zelensky as a school teacher whose anti-corruption rant in class is filmed by a student, goes viral, and wins him the presidency. Zelensky turned to real-world politics, capitalized on widespread public anger at corruption, and ended up winning the Presidency with ease just three-and-a-half years after the show's launch.

Zelensky is entirely a media creation, a blank canvas upon which anything can be projected. Before the war, the German Council on Foreign Relations pointed out that "Zelensky has so far been very vague about his policies and vision for the future. So it has been extremely difficult to tell what he stands for or fact-check his largely policy-free statements in the way the experts have for other candidates. He rarely mentions facts."

Zelensky's 2019 campaign was dogged by doubts over his authenticity given his close association with Kolomoisky. Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs [astutely observed](#) that, even if Zelensky was earnest in his claims to oppose the corrupt, "he cannot govern without *systema* [the oligarchic structure] and will bow to its interests."

In the heat of the campaign, an ally of incumbent Petro Poroshenko (rumored to have a Jewish father), journalist Volodymyr Arieiev (who also claims Jewish ancestry), published a chart on Facebook purporting to show that Zelensky and his television production partners were beneficiaries of a web of

offshore firms, which they had set up beginning in 2012, that received \$41M in funds from Kolomoisky's Privatbank. Many of these allegations were proven correct after the leaking of the Pandora Papers, millions of files from 14 offshore service providers, to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

The documents show that Zelensky and his Jewish partners in Kvartal 95 set up a network of offshore firms dating back to at least 2012, the same year the company began making regular content for Ihor Kolomoisky. The offshores, which filtered Kolomoisky's money through the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Belize, and Cyprus in order to avoid paying tax in Ukraine, were also used by Zelensky associates to purchase and own three prime properties in the center of London.

The documents also show that just before he was elected, Zelensky gifted his stake in a key offshore company, the British Virgin Islands-registered Maltex Multicapital Corp., to Serhiy Shefir — soon to be his top presidential aide. And in spite of “giving up his shares,” the documents show that an arrangement was soon made that would allow the offshore to keep paying dividends to a company that now belongs to Zelensky's wife.



### ***Zelensky and Serhiy Shefir***

Besides providing financial support during Ukraine's 2019 election, Kolomoisky supplied Zelensky with cars, and the bulletproof Mercedes Zelensky used on the campaign trail was owned by Kolomoisky associate Timur Mindich — who is on the board of trustees of the Jewish Community of Dnipropetrovsk, a body of which Kolomoisky was president. Although Zelensky continued to deny that his relationship to Kolomoisky was anything but professional, the *Kyiv Post* reported in April 2019 that Zelenskiy traveled a total of 11 times to Geneva and an additional two times to Tel-Aviv, during precise periods when Kolomoisky was in these locations.

Zelensky's travel companions during these trips included Jewish oligarch and close Kolomoisky

associate [Gennadiy \(Zvi Hirsch\) Bogolyubov](#), and the brothers [Hryhoriy and Ihor Surkis](#) both whom have been accused of serious corruption. They are among the wealthiest people in Ukraine and are Jewish through their mother Rima Gorinshtein. The very Jewish character of these trips should come as no surprise given that, where possible, Zelensky likes to surround himself with Jewish aides. In the aftermath of the outbreak of war, for example, it emerged that he sought advice on public relations [from two Likud-backing Israelis](#), Srulik Einhorn and Jonatan Urich.

Zelensky hasn't exactly turned on the hand that fed him, and his rise coincided with the downfall of several of Kolomoisky's opponents. After Zelensky became President, Kolomoisky's nemesis at Ukraine's central bank, Valeria Gontareva, was subjected to a sustained campaign of intimidation. Criminal proceedings were brought against her for alleged abuse of office during her time at the central bank, her Kiev flat was raided by the police, a car belonging to her daughter-in-law, also called Valeria Gontareva, was torched, and her house outside the Ukrainian capital was set ablaze and destroyed.

Under Zelensky, Ukraine's parliament passed a measure that prevented Kolomoisky from having to pay higher taxes on his mining operations, and prior to the start of the war with Russia all indications pointed to the renewed influence of interest groups opposed to reform. First, in March 2020, was the dismissal of the government of prime minister Oleksiy Honcharuk (who didn't help his case by attending a concert headlined by an anti-Jewish heavy metal band), followed, a day later, by the removal from office of the reformist prosecutor-general, Ruslan Ryaboshapka. Then, in April, came the Constitutional Court's blocking of judicial reforms, and a ruling by the same court, in October, that effectively paralyzed the work of the National Agency for Corruption Prevention.

In July 2020 Zelensky forced the resignation of Yakov Smolii as National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) governor. After leaving his position, Smolii referred to "systematic political pressure" on the bank, and did not rule out a coincidence of interest between the President's Office and Kolomoisky. He said that the President's Office wanted to replace the NBU's leadership with people it could control. Smolii's resignation came shortly after Ukraine had received the first tranche of a new \$5 billion IMF stand-by arrangement. A key condition for continued IMF support was the independence of the NBU, and the IMF had made it clear that it held Smolii and his team in high regard.

Seeking international assistance in the aftermath of Russia's "special military operation," Zelensky has done much to give the appearance of fighting corruption while actually doing very little. Western media and politicians in the last few weeks have lavished praise on Zelensky for a series of raids and dismissals tackling corruption in the country, but few charges have been brought and the raids have been perfectly timed with EU accession talks and attempts to obtain European financial and military assistance.

Political commentator Yuriy Vishnevskyi pointed out the uselessness of the raid against Kolomoisky, stressing that "detectives knew perfectly well that they would most likely not find anything there, since Kolomoisky was not an official at [government bodies suspected of tax evasion]. It is doubtful that he compiled documents at home that would prove his involvement in criminal schemes." Rumors that Zelensky has stripped Kolomoisky of his Ukrainian citizenship, along with the Ukrainian citizenship of Jewish oligarchs Hennadiy Korban and Vadim Rabinovich, have prompted counter-rumors that this is nothing more than a clever sleight of hand designed to free these figures from already weak anti-oligarch laws passed in 2022.



## Ihor Kolomoisky – Supreme Parasite

Kolomoisky, who also holds Israeli and Cypriot citizenship, is probably one of the worst thieves to ever walk the earth, and there has been no greater parasite feeding on Ukrainians. Once named by the Center for Corruption and Organized Crime Research (OCCRP) as being in the top four most corrupt individuals on the planet, Kolomoisky used his ownership of PrivatBank to defraud customers of around \$5.5 billion in deposits, which amounted to 40% of all private deposits in Ukraine.

Although now banned from entering the United States, where he has numerous assets, Kolomoisky has never been arrested in Ukraine and Zelensky shows no indications of ever bringing him to justice. Regarded as criminal by almost anyone with a brain, Kolomoisky is a hero of the international Jewish community. In 2008 Kolomoisky was elected President of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, and in 2010 he was elected president of the European Jewish Council.

In keeping with centuries of the same historical pattern, large-scale Jewish financial crime perpetrated by small numbers key actors continues to benefit the general Jewish population. Jews internationally have benefited for years from Kolomoisky's plundering of the Ukrainian people. In March 2021 it [emerged](#) that two Miami-based Jews, Mordechai Korf, 48, and Uri Laber, 49, were acting as Kolomoisky's middlemen in the United States.

As well as laundering his money in various assets, the pair donated more than \$11 million to nearly 70 yeshivas and religious charities (Jewish Educational Media, Colel Chabad, among others) in Brooklyn and across the state of New York. Kolomoisky is also a listed donor for Yad Vashem. Both Korf and Laber also held shares in PrivatBank, and are reported by *The Forward* as having pumped "about \$25 million into Jewish nonprofits between 2006 and 2018."

Kolomoisky is of course the patron of "Menorah," the largest Jewish center in the world. Entirely appropriate given its existence is owed to international robber barons, the center is home to travel agencies and banks. The official website says that the building is something "every Dnipro resident can be proud of," to which I can only reply that I'd hope so given that, willingly or not, some of the savings and deposits of every Dnipro resident went into its construction.



### ***Menorah – Largest Jewish Community Center in the World***

One of the best examples of how Kolomoisky conducts business is his ownership of Dnipro Airport. In 2009 Kolomoisky bought 99.45% of shares in the airport through his company Galtera, Under the terms of the investment agreement, Galtera was to invest UAH 882.1 million in the development of the airport, and had to hand over the runway, radio beacon system, and land plots to the state.

By 2015, Galtera had invested only UAH 142,145, and failed to turn over any real estate to the government. A sequence of litigations began, but with Ukraine's justice system fully in thrall to the oligarchy, no resolution was ever reached. Kolomoisky, meanwhile, made flying from the airport so expensive (one commentator explained that even short flights carried fees that would elsewhere take one to space) that the citizens of Dnipro overwhelmingly opted to drive three hours to Kharkiv rather than pay the airport's extortionate and inflated prices. On the bright side, they have an absolutely gargantuan Jewish center they can be proud of.

### **Jewish Invisibility in Ukraine**

The lack of outcry over Ukrainian money going into Jewish pockets might seem surprising to Western observers but is perfectly explainable. There have certainly been no shortage of Jews acting parasitically in Ukraine. In addition to Kolomoisky and others named above, Hennadiy Kernes, Pavel Fuks, Andriy Yermak (now Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine), Hennadiy Korban, Vadim Rabinovich, Alexander Feldman, and Victor Pinchuk have engaged in fraud, corruption, and the amassing of vast amounts of wealth and power at the expense of the Ukrainian people.

In Ukraine, however, pronounced examples of corruption and oligarchy are also found among other ethnic minority groups like Muslim Tatars (e.g. Rinat Akhmetov) and among ethnic Ukrainians themselves. The country is so corrupt that even clear examples of ethnic cohesion, such as the overlapping Jewish circles of Zelensky and Kolomoisky, fade into a broader picture of socio-political

decay.

Discussion of the particularities of Jewish corruption in Ukraine became more difficult in September 2021 when Zelensky signed a new law defining the concept of anti-Semitism and establishing punishment for transgressions including imprisonment up to five years. The new laws mean that outbursts such as that by Vasily Vovk and Nadiya Savchenko will become a thing of the past.

Vovk, a retired general who held a senior reserve rank with the Security Service of Ukraine wrote in a 2017 Facebook post that Jews “aren’t Ukrainians and I will destroy you along with Rabinovich. I’m telling you one more time — go to hell, zhidi [kikes], the Ukrainian people have had it to here with you. Ukraine must be governed by Ukrainians.” In the same year, Savchenko, a fighter jet pilot who was elected to parliament in 2014 while she was still being held as a prisoner of Russia, said during an interview “I have nothing against Jews. I do not like ‘kikes.’” She later said Jews possess “80 percent of the power in Ukraine when they only account for 2 percent of the population.”

Investigations into Jewish criminality are also being hampered by accusations of anti-Semitism, as witnessed in the May 2020 case involving Mykhailo Bank, a senior police official in the Ivano-Frankivsk region of Ukraine. As part of an investigation into “transnational and ethnic organized groups and criminal organizations,” Bank wrote to Yakov Zalischiker, the head of the Jewish community in the city of Kolomyia, demanding the names all Jewish community members as well as those of foreign Jewish students staying in the city.

Reading between the lines, one assumes that Bank had good reason to believe that these “transnational and ethnic organized groups and criminal organizations” were Jewish. Unfortunately for Bank, he was singled out by Eduard Dolinsky, Ukraine’s incarnation of the ADL’s Jonathan Greenblatt, who portrayed the demand as implying an impending Holocaust. “This is called stigmatization,” complained Dolinsky. “They [the National Police] did not send such a letter to the Greek Catholics or the Orthodox to compile lists in connection with the fight against organized crime. They turned to the Jews. This shows deep xenophobia.”

The case was further amplified by the involvement of Jewish politician Igor Fris, who personally lobbied Zelensky about the matter. The head of the Department of Strategic Investigations of the National Police of Ukraine, Andriy Rubel, and the head of the National Police, Ihor Klymenko, were both forced into groveling apologies. Within weeks Bank was spontaneously “discovered” to have been involved in corruption and was quickly fired.

Finally, since Kolomoisky was one of the main funders of Ukrainian ultra-nationalist groups like Right Sector, was linked with the Svoboda party, and was involved with the Azov Battalion, Ukrainian ultra-nationalism has a strangely non-ethnic quality; or rather, it is concerned more with defining itself as being against Russia than in pushing for any kind of “Ukraine for Ukrainians” platform. As such, Ukrainian ultra-nationalism has become a kind of aggressive civic nationalism, harmless to Jews and other minorities but incendiary enough to play a part in provoking the massive conflict currently absorbing the attention of the world.

What kind of Ukraine will emerge from the ruins remains to be seen. What seems certain is that luxury homes in Florida, London, Geneva, and Tel Aviv will long continue to host those who've fattened themselves on Ukrainian money, and who continue to hoard their stolen profits while tens of thousands of body bags continue their somber transit to the graveyards of Kiev and Moscow.

by Jonas E. Alexis

By Andrew Joyce

**Category**

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Main

**Date Created**

02/21/2023