

## Uman Public Library on the Pages of Periodicals in the End of 19<sup>th</sup> - Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

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Уманська громадська бібліотека на сторінках періодичної преси  
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Crisis phenomena in the cultural and spiritual sphere of the modern society make it necessary to turn to the historical experience of cultural life. Coverage of the public initiative, its support by the state, and the promotion of the establishment and activities of educational centers will help to rethink the experience, which will facilitate the search for ways of reviving culture, charity and enlightenment traditions. Thus, arguing the relevance of the declared theme, the authors presented information about the creation of a public library reading room in the district center of Kyiv province - the city of Uman. Having worked out the annual sets of two provincial newspapers – “Kievlyanin” (“Kyiv citizen”) and “Life and Art”, the authors systematized the materials published in them about the Uman Public Library Reading Room. The article draws attention to the multiethnic nature of Uman, because the initiators of the reading room were Jewish youth, to the difficulty of opening a reading library, which emerged as a result of the implementation of a public initiative. The sources of public reading room funding, among which donations of rich people prevailed, have been identified. Based on newspaper reports, it has been shown that the role of management in opening and maintaining a library-reading room has not been significant. It has been emphasized that the very fact of publication of materials about the Uman Public Library Reading Room on the pages of provincial newspapers, which had a large distribution area, testifies to the importance of its formation, and to the dissemination of the experience of such public initiative manifestation. The conclusions of the article summarize that the newspapers “Kievlyanin” and “Life and Art” need a comprehensive research as a source of library affairs study in the territory of Ukraine in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as cultural enlightenment in general.

**Key words:** the newspaper “Kievlyanin”, the newspaper “Life and Art”, Kyiv province, Uman, Uman public library, public initiative, cultural enlightenment, library reading room.

Кризові явища в культурно-духовній сфері сучасного соціуму зумовлюють необхідність звернення до історичного досвіду культурного життя. Висвітлення вияву громадської ініціативи, міри підтримки її державою, популяризація створення та діяльності просвітницьких осередків сприятиме новому осмисленню досвіду, що полегшуватиме пошук шляхів відродження культури, традицій благочинності та просвітництва. Так аргументуючи актуальність задекларованої теми, автори представили інформацію про створення громадської бібліотеки-читальні у повітовому центрі Київської губернії – місті Умань. Опрацювавши річні комплекти двох губернських газет – «Киевлянин» та «Жизнь и искусство», автори систематизували опубліковані в них матеріали про Уманську громадську бібліотеку-читальню. У статті звернено увагу на поліетнічність Умані, адже ініціаторами влаштування читальні була єврейська молодь, на труднощі відкриття бібліотеки-читальні, яка з’явилася у результаті реалізації громадської ініціативи. З’ясовано джерела фінансування громадської читальні, серед яких найбільшими були пожертвування заможних осіб. На основі газетних публікацій показано, що роль управління у відкритті та підтримці бібліотеки-читальні була не значною. Підкреслено, що сам факт публікації матеріалів про Уманську громадську бібліотеку-читальню на сторінках губернських газет, які мали великий ареал поширення, свідчить і про важливість її утворення, і про поширення досвіду такого вияву громадської ініціативи. У висновках статті резюмовано, що газети «Киевлянин» та «Жизнь и искусство» потребують комплексного дослідження як джерела вивчення бібліотечної справи на українських землях другої половини XIX – початку XX ст., а також культурного просвітництва загалом.

**Ключові слова:** газета «Киевлянин», газета «Жизнь и искусство», Київська губернія, Умань, Уманська громадська бібліотека, громадська ініціатива, культурне просвітництво, бібліотека-читальня.

**Introduction.** The study of cultural enlightenment at different stages of historical development and in different geographical frameworks is still relevant. It is reinforced by the need of rethinking the historical experience of different cultural and educational societies and centers functioning. The historical retrospective of their activity complements the idea of the cultural development of the society at one stage or another. Studying the historical experience of cultural and educational centers formation and activity expands the understanding of the needs of communities, social groups or the people in general, of the forms of expression of public initiative and the social challenges at different stages of society development. In this regard, the history of the public reading library in Uman is of great interest.

The town of Uman in the 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was the center of the Uman district, which had the second place in terms of area and the third in terms of population. It was the third among the twelve counties in the Kyiv province. As of 1897, 31016 people lived in Uman, 17709 of whom were Jewish, accounting for 57.0% of the total amount (Kuznets, 2005). That is, the town was more than half Jewish and remained such until 1920, since the census conducted at that time had a population of 45488 people and a percentage of Jewish among them was 57.1 (Kuznets, 2005). The share of representatives of other nationalities in the total population of the town in 1897 was as follows: Ukrainians - 30.6%, Russians - 8.7%, Poles - 2.9%, Germans, French and other - 0.5%. The multi-ethnic structure of the population determined the peculiarities of the cultural life of Uman. The town had former educational traditions. It was Uman which was the first in the Russian Empire to focus the Jewish educational movement - the Haskala. The school was founded in Uman in the 1920s according to the advanced ideas of the Enlightenment. And although Haskala became obsolete as a liberal educational movement by the end of the nineteenth century, the ideas of Enlightenment continued to exist and marked the peculiarities of Uman cultural life. One of them was the creation of various cultural and educational societies, including Uman Public Library Reading Room in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The location of the library reading room was clarified by the local historian V. Davydiuk, who in the context of the study of Uman streets history addressed the publication about it in local newspapers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Daviduc, 2017: 262-271). I. Melnyk also mentioned about the public reading library in Uman in her dissertation (Melnyk, 2018). But the creation and functioning of Uman reading library was not the subject of separate research. Therefore, information

about it from the periodicals has not been studied. Most of this information is contained in the daily literary, political and artistic newspaper "Life and Art", published by M.E. Krayinsky in Kyiv. The newspaper was published in 1894-1900. More than ten publications about the opening of the library in Uman have been published on its pages. Some information about the problems of the Uman public library was also covered in the newspaper "Kievlyanin", which was published in 1864-1919 and was considered to be one of the best in the Russian Empire.

*The purpose of the study* is to systematize the publications of the above mentioned Kyiv newspapers about the Uman Public Library Reading Room. This will expand the source base for the study of cultural enlightenment in Ukrainian territories in the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tasks of the study were to identify publications in the newspapers about the library reading room in Uman, to systematize information and to create a generalized sketch of such a center of cultural enlightenment.

#### **Methods**

The research has been carried out with the help of general scientific methods: structural-system, method of analysis, comparison. Special historical methods have been also used. They are as follows: the method of historical reconstruction, problem-chronological, synchronic.

The use of these methods made it possible to present the newspaper publications about the Uman Public Library Reading Room as a single system, the structural elements of which were issues about the opening and election of the reading room management, information about sources of funding and sponsorship of the institution, information about the shutdown of the library.

Methods of analysis and comparison required the involvement of other sources, including the library's 1911 report. These special-historical methods ensured the presentation of the material found in the periodical press in a chronological order, and thus contributed to the historical reconstruction of the process of creation and functioning of the Uman Public Library Reading Room.

**Results and Discussion.** In the course of the study of the newspapers "Life and Art" for 1894-1900 and "Kievlyanin" for 1900-1919, more than ten publications have been found about the public library reading room in Uman. Supplemented by publications from other historical sources, they give a fairly clear idea of its creation and problems of its functioning.

In the issue of March 25, 1897, the newspaper "Life and Art" announced that it had obtained permission to open a public reading room in Uman. It has been noted that the main initiators of this were young people of "middle Jewish class". The approved statute stated that a committee of five would be in charge of the reading room. Among them there should be one representative of the spiritual and one of educational institution. The head of the commission had to be a person of Christian confession.

A library, where books could be taken home, was formed by the reading room. The financial basis for the reading room functioning were membership fees and readers' fees: the membership fee was six rubles per year, and a fee from readers was set by a special commission. The statute allowed arranging reading concerts, performances, literary and dancing parties. The newspaper wrote the following according to the expediency of a public reading room opening: "... it is enough to remember that in Uman there are about 30,000 Jews and there is nowhere to get the book. Sometimes, an Uman reader is going to read a certain book for several years and can not get it, and most Uman readers do not see magazines and newspapers at all" <sup>1</sup>(*Life and Art*, 1897. №84: 3). The newspaper noted that young people from the Middle Jewish community were the main initiators of the opening of the reading room and library.

The newspaper of May 2, 1897 reported that on April 27, elections were held for members of the board of the Uman public reading room. The majority elected tax inspector V.M. Repinsky to be the chairman, G.S. Chomsky to be the treasurer, and A.G. Alter to be the secretary. The election was attended by 59 people who made membership fees of six rubles a year. But collected 354 rubles were not enough to open a reading room, and so they decided to collect donations. Interestingly, 50 people were Jewish among the first 59 persons who paid membership fees<sup>2</sup> (*Life and Art*, 1897. № 120: 3).

So, the reading room opening was delayed. Chomsky, the treasurer and board member, renounced his position, and an attempt to convene a general meeting and elect a new treasurer failed. The public interest in arranging a library reading room gradually subsided. The newspaper of June 11, 1897, emphasized the need to speed up "this extremely sympathetic affair." "It seems to us that the board should take a more vigorous job: to send out its statute; to recruit as many members as possible, it is good that the annual fee is not very large (6 rubles), and most importantly, to hurry with the opening of the reading room, in which there is a great need"<sup>3</sup> (*Life and Art*, 1897. №159: 3). It was reported that about one hundred people were enrolled in the reading room, but there could be more readers.

A correspondence from Uman, published on July 31, 1897, announced that the reading room opening scheduled for June, 24 had not taken place. Subscribed newspapers and magazines had already begun to arrive, and the opening had been still delayed. Previously, the reason for this was the lack of premises, but that issue had been already resolved: a suitable apartment had been rented. "What else are they waiting for?" asked the readers of the newspaper<sup>4</sup> (*Life and Art*, 1897. №200: 3).

And only on August 1, 1897, the public reading room was opened. It received seven magazines and seven newspapers, but it was reported that there was a near-term prospect of opening a library, from which books would be given for home reading for a small fee. The "Life and Art" newspaper reported that "the public reading room ... owes its existence to the local Jewish youth, who raised capital and attracted the intellectual class to this sympathetic affair"<sup>5</sup> (*Life and Art*, 1897. №217: 3).

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<sup>1</sup> Budushchaia chytalnia-byblyoteka. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1897. №84. S.3.

<sup>2</sup> A.K. K otkrytiyu chytalny. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1897. №120. S.3.

<sup>3</sup> Oblastnye vesty. H. Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1897. №159. S.3.

<sup>4</sup> Oblastnye vesty. H. Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1897. №200. S.3.

<sup>5</sup> Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1897. №217. S.3.

Formation of a library at the reading room depended on the financial support of this case. Therefore, different sources of raising funds were sought, as it was foreseen in the statute. On September 7, 1897, the newspaper reported that a charity performance had been staged in support of the public reading room by a society of artists led by Mrs. Borysova, who was touring in Uman. Potapenko's comedy "Strangers" was a great success. 185, 25 rubles were transferred to the Uman reading room fund. In addition, individual donations of money and books began to arrive. Mr. Fishman was one of the first to send 50 rubles for the reading room<sup>6</sup> (*Life and Art, 1897. №247: 4*). And on December 28, 1898, a dance evening was organized in the premises of the Cyclists Club, the funds for which were sent to the reading room fund<sup>7</sup> (*Life and Art, 1898. №6: 3*).

In addition to the funds, the successful development of the reading room required more clear and competent guidance. Election of the chairman of the board, the tax inspector V.M. Repinsky, was a formal affair because he had other responsibilities and had little interest in reading. Therefore, at the general meeting, Mr. Adamson was elected in charge of the affairs of the reading room, and Mr. Zagaykevich was his alternate. But the Kyiv governor did not approve these applicants and there was no real leader in the reading room.

"It is therefore not surprising that in the affairs of the reading room there has now been a complete standstill; soon there will be nothing to pay not only for the apartment, but also there will be nothing to pay the only servant of the reading room"<sup>8</sup> (*Life and Art, 1898. №97: 3*). It has been reported that there was a book of readers' orders in the reading room and there were already a lot of wishes to take a book, but they were not fulfilled.

Fundraising for the reading room continued. The newspaper reported that on August 23, 1898, a charity concert was held to support the reading room. The concert was attended by the pianist M. Romanovska, singer M. Lebedev and a pupil of the imperial S.Petersburg Conservatory violinist L. Kutsyn. The audience met the performers enthusiastically. The fee for the concert was 352,50 rubles, of which 230 rubles were transferred to support the reading room<sup>9</sup> (*Life and Art, 1898. №251: 3*). An anonymous author of a newspaper note stated that the concert organizers deserve thanks: they gave tickets for the concert to all wealthy Uman residents, inviting them to participate in such a charity event, although sometimes the residents were indifferent to it. It was requested that the city government should also support the public reading room and provide it with an annual subsidy.

There were no reports of response from the city government to the reading room support request, but funding was gradually adjusting. New sponsors emerged and even the public reading service was cheaper. At the general meeting of members of the reading room on February 20, 1899, the chairman of its management I. Shchegliatiev reported that such donations (50 rubles) had been received from the owner of the town of Talne Count P.P. Shuvalov and his wife. The nobleman F.E. Brendel also donated 50 rubles. For this the meeting decided to select these philanthropists to be honorary members of the library-reading room<sup>10</sup> (*Life and Art, 1899. №78: 4*). The meeting also changed the way the books were used. Until then only members of the reading room who paid an annual fee of 6 rubles had the right to take books home. Non-members could read in the reading room for 25 kopecks per month. The meeting also decided to give the books home to anyone who wished for 20 kopecks per month and with a guarantee of 1.5 rubles. And instead of 25 kopecks visitors paid only 15 cents per month for reading in the reading room. That is, the library reading services became more accessible to the general public.

In one of the May issues of the newspaper in 1899, it was reported that "there was a marked revival in the life of the Uman public reading room"<sup>11</sup> (*Life and Art, 1899. №129: 3*). The board of directors wrote a petition to a City Council according to the city budget payment to expand the library's scope of business. The reading room suggested to the city council to arrange a "Pushkin department", which would make books for the people and children and for the use of which the payment would be 5 kopecks per month. The Council considered the petition and decided that instead of a one-time financial aid, a free room should be allocated for the reading room, and the proposal for a "Pushkin department" was rejected.

At the general meeting of the library reading room on April 30, 1899, gratitude was expressed to Doctor L.M. Khatskilievich for handing over a large collection of books on medicine to the reading room. An appeal was made to other wealthy Uman residents to support such a charity event. And for the expansion of the library's fund, the meeting made an appeal to Russian writers asking for a free copy of one of their works.

Problems of material nature accompanied the Uman reading library in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In November 1910, the newspaper "Kievlyanin" wrote that "the library-reading room is in dire need of material means"<sup>12</sup> (*Kievlyanin, 1910. №303: 4*). In search of funds, it was decided in 1910-1911 to hold five public lectures in Uman and to transfer the proceeds from them to the library's reading room. This decision of the Uman city authorities was approved by the Kyiv governor.

1914 was critical for the Uman reading library. However, its closure was not related to the conditions of wartime, the reasons were different and they accumulated gradually. On February 20, 1911, the Uman newspaper, *Voice of the Province*, reported that one of the main reasons for the diminution of the interest of the Uman citizens to the public reading room was defined at a reading room meeting. The reason was a distance from the city center<sup>13</sup> (*Voice of the Province, 1911. №188: 3*). But soon the issue was resolved: the library reading room was moved to the city council<sup>14</sup> (*Report of the Uman Public Reading Room for 1911. Uman, 1912: 4*).

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<sup>6</sup> Быстрый рост хорода. Новое блаhotvorytelnoe obshchestvo. K delam chytalny. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1897. №247. S.4.

<sup>7</sup> Oblastnye vesty. H. Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1898. №6. S.3.

<sup>8</sup> A.K. H. Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1898. №97. S.3.

<sup>9</sup> Oblastnye vesty. H. Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1898. №251. S.3.

<sup>10</sup> H. Uman. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1899. №78. S.4.

<sup>11</sup> A.K. H. Uman, Kyevskoi hub. Zhyzn y yskusstvo. 1899. №129. S.3.

<sup>12</sup> Uman. Kievlyanyn. 1910. №303. S.4.

<sup>13</sup> Obshchee sobranie chlenov obshchestvennoi byblyoteky-chytalny. Holos provyntsyy. 1911. №188. S.3.

<sup>14</sup> Otchet Umanskoi obshchestvennoi byblyoteky chytalny za 1911 hod. Uman: Typohrafiya «Enerhiya», 1912. 26 s.

But the dream of the organizers of the public reading room was their own room. Baron Yu.F. Meyendorf initiated a petition before the Kyiv governor for permission to raise funds for the construction of a library building. *The Provincial Voice* newspaper of March 16, 1914 reported that Kramarenko's message about obtaining the governor's permission was reported at a meeting of members of the reading room on March 15, 1916. Attendees at the meeting first handed over 385 rubles to the fund for the future construction of the premises<sup>15</sup> (*The Provincial Voice*, 1914. №63: 4). On March 19, 1914, the Uman City Council decided to extend the one-year lease for the public library reading room<sup>16</sup> (*The Provincial Voice*, 1914. №68: 3). It seemed that the affairs of the reading room would get better.

On April 11, 1914, the public library was visited by representatives of the police and several teachers of the Uman Men's Gymnasium, who announced to the board of the library the decree of the Kyiv governor to suspend the reading room. And before that, a senior adviser of the provincial government Tinkov visited the reading room and saw two Taras Shevchenko's portraits of in the library<sup>17</sup> (*Kyiv thought*, 1914. №102: 4). And the official decision on the library reading room closure in Uman was made by the Kyiv provincial government. Reporting this to the Senate, the governor of Kyiv reported that the library had banned literature, young people were given books, which were not prohibited by law, but were not desirable in moral and educational terms. In this way, the board of the library reading room compromised itself<sup>18</sup> (*The Provincial Voice*, 1914. №154: 3).

Distributed throughout the entire Southwestern region of the empire, the newspaper "Kievlyanin" on May 3, 1914, also announced the closure of the public library in Uman. The reasons were as follows: Kyiv Province drew attention to the failure of the library board to approve rules for readers by the governor; the library board decided to find the funds to pay the fine of the responsible person; indifference of the person responsible for the library to his duties<sup>19</sup> (*Kievlyanin*, 1914. №121: 3). The reasons seemed to be contrived, but the library was closed.

### Conclusion

Thus, publications about the Uman Public Reading Library, which were found on the pages of the periodical press of the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, can be organized according to three directions: information about opening a reading library in Uman; reports of financial problems (search for sources of funding, charitable actions in support of the library, sponsorship of the library); publication of the formal reasons for the library reading room shutdown in Uman. Among all the newspaper publications about the Uman Public Library, almost sixty percent of the issues relates to financial problems: the search for sources of funding, the search for the best building for the library reading room, the formation of a library stock. The revealed publications as a whole create a generalized sketch of the cultural enlightenment center in Uman as they reproduce the process of creating a library reading room, show the foundation of the financing system, personify the leadership of this educational center, shed light on the attitude of city authorities to the public library. Newspaper publications give reason to conclude that the creation of the cultural center in Uman in the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century was a manifestation of the initiative of the educated middle class to meet the growing cultural and educational demands of the population of the large county center, which was a characteristic feature of social life of that period.

A comprehensive research of the Kyiv newspapers "Life and Art" and "Kievlyanin" as a source of study of the history of library affairs in Ukraine, as well as of cultural enlightenment in general, needs special attention.

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<sup>15</sup> Vesty. Provyntsyalnyi holos. 1914. №63. S.4.

<sup>16</sup> Vesty. Provyntsyalnyi holos. 1914. №68. S.3.

<sup>17</sup> Zakrytye umanskoj obshchestvennoj byblyoteki. Kuevskaja mysl. 1914. №102. S.4.

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