population. Under the subsequent Soviet occupation, almost all memory of the Jewish community was annihilated. And after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, which throughout history has had strong nationalist trends, continued to erase the past and the presence of any non-Ukrainian peoples.

UNLIKE POLAND, UKRAINE HAS not experienced a Jewish renewal nor a philo-Semitic movement. "Jewish history is simply not part of the agenda of modern Ukraine," states Yaroslav Hrystak, director of graduate studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University. "If Jews are mentioned at all, they are mentioned as part of the Holocaust, not as part of the economy, or the social fabric. But how can we teach the history of Ukraine if we do not study the Jews? The Jews were an integral part of Ukrainian society for centuries."

"Poland has rewritten its narrative to include and even embrace the Jews," Hrystak continues. "But Ukraine has not even begun this process. Ukrainian history has always been taught as local history and only now are we attempting to integrate that local history into its global context."

In fact, Ukraine has been singled out many times by Jewish and international organizations as the country that has done the least to restitute Jewish property and compensate Jewish communities and individual Jewish heirs. At this time, says Wallach, there is a "window of opportunity, in which the authorities are willing to let us do our work. Who knows what will be in the future. In Russia, for example, we had free access to archives, until Putin decided to close them."

In August 2010, the Executive Committee of the Lviv City Council announced an International Competition for the Sites of Jewish History in Lviv, also known as Lvov, or Lemberg. But at the same time, despite domestic legislation that protects historical sites, many of the sites of Jewish cemeteries, synagogues and public buildings have been razed or fallen into abject ruin and neglect, as in Podhajce.

Wallach speaks gingerly, aware that relationships with the Ukrainian Republic are complicated, based not only on the history of anti-Semitism but also on the diplomatic relations that the State of Israel is attempting to forge, irrespective of the country's treatment of its Jewish legacy. In August 2010, for example, Israel and Ukraine signed an agreement canceling visas between the two countries, in a mutual attempt to increase tourism.

"At the least," Wallach says, "we could expect the authorities to obey their own domestic legislation, which mandates that they protect historic sites."

Dr. Semion Goldin, from the Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and European Jewry at the Hebrew University and a researcher for the Ludmer Project, adds carefully, "It is important to understand that we, as Jews and Israelis, are not coming here to take revenge – we are hoping that as they build their new, modern nation, there will be a place for Jewish history, too. There are Poles and Ukrainians who can trace their family lineage back to the 16th century – but I, a Jew, don't know the names of my great-grandfathers. The majority of us did not come from well-known or high-placed families, and so it is as if we do not have a past. As individuals and as a people, we must know where we came from to know who we are. The Ukrainians understand this."

AT THE CENTRAL HISTORICAL Archives of the Ukraine in Lviv, Manekin confidently holds a heavy book of archives, bound in dark brown, its ancient pages yellowing and giving off the paper-smell of history.

Because Lviv was under Austrian rule for so many centuries, careful records of all kinds of written documents have been kept, all catalogued and grouped according to a precise system that, once decoded, enables historians like Manekin to research the lives of Jews.

But it is a highly complicated process. Goldin notes that archival research about Jewish communities in a multicultural region like Galicia, which went through so many upheavals, requires sensitive, in-depth socio-political knowledge and, in the case of Ukraine, familiarity with at least six languages: Polish, German and Russian, because of the changing sovereignties; Yiddish and Hebrew, used by the Jews; and Latin, the official language of the courts and the church.

The Ukrainian authorities have made a small room and several volumes of archives available to the group. Many of them list generations of births, deaths, weddings and census accounts, some dating back to the 16th century. Excited, clearly in her academic element, Manekin explains that "archives reveal much more than these lists." She holds a volume of records, dating to the early 18th century, in which she finds the protocol of the trial and verdict of the Reitzes brothers, Jews who were accused of trying to convince an apostate to return to Judaism and were tortured and eventually burned in Lviv. "Until this record was discovered," she says, "it wasn't even known if this was a legend or an actual event."

She finds a receipt for a debt paid by the Jewish community, recorded in Latin, on which an unknown 17th century court registrar has drawn an anti-Semitic caricature of a group of Jews holding bags of money and added the word, "stinking," in Ukrainian. "He must have been bored, so he doodled," Manekin quips.

In another part of Lviv, now a city of some 900,000 residents, the tiny Jewish community has established a small hostel, kosher dining room and community center. The room is long and dank, electric wires strung precariously along the walls, *siddurim* (prayer books) scattered over tables and a small holy ark in a corner.

Meylech Sheykhet, affiliated with the Chabad movement, greets the group. A former expert in telecommunications systems, he has become increasingly involved in Jewish life and now lives as an Orthodox Jew. Sheykhet is using his own and donated funds to buy up former Jewish properties throughout the Ukraine, hoping to make at least some of them into museums that would attract Jewish travelers and bring some income to the financially and organizationally struggling community.

At the end of the long room that doubles as dining and prayer room, a wooden door leads out to a littered courtyard. At the far end, a heavy gate opens into a vast space. Here, too, the lintel over the entrance reveals that this was once a synagogue, now overrun with trees and weeds, recognizable only to a dreamer like Sheykhet.

"This was a wonderful synagogue, hundreds of years old" he says. "We will rebuild here, too."

"The Jews have been erased from Galicia and Bukovina," says Wallach. "We at the Ludmer Fund want to respond to this – to bring the history of the Jews to consciousness, in the Ukraine and among the Jewish people.

"This region is covered in the blood of Jews," concludes Wallach. "The study of their lives is the memorial we are obligated to create." ●