



## “The Man Who Meant Too Much: Domestic and International Implications of the Beilis Case”

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In Kiev, in 1911, in the weeks before Passover, a man discovered the body of a thirteen-year-old Christian boy, Andrei Iushchinskii, riddled with approximately forty-seven stab wounds. Far right wing organizations and the Russian imperial government saw the murder as an opportunity to accuse Kievan Jews of ritual murder. They thought they could use the case to rally the Russian population behind a shared ideology of anti-Semitism, in order to support the decaying empire. Accusations of ritual murder, also known as blood libel, have plagued Jews since the 1100s. These accusations consist of claims that Jews murder Christian children and drain their blood in order to bake Passover matzo.

Under the guidance of Vladimir Golubev, a local leader of the far right-wing group the Double Headed Eagle, and a nineteen-year-old student at the local university, the police arrested Mendel Beilis in the fall of 1911. Beilis was a middle-aged, non-practicing Jew who happened to work at a factory near the cave where the body was found. He had no connection to Iushchinskii, or to the Jewish community in Kiev. In the fall of 1913, after being held in prison for 2 years, Beilis went to trial. The state posed a 2-pronged charge—firstly, that the murder was ritual in nature, and secondly, that Beilis himself had committed the crime. The jury found

Beilis innocent by a vote of six-to-six, but agreed with the state's vision of the killing as a ritual murder, seven-to-five. My thesis investigates Jewish life in Kiev prior to the case, the role of antisemitism in the case itself, and the response to the case in Great Britain and the United States.