



# The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I

*S. Ansky*

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**Finally available in English, the great Yiddish writer's account of a neglected time and place**

In late 1914, S. Ansky, the influential Jewish-Russian journalist, playwright, and politician, received a commission: to organize desperately needed relief for Jews on the borderlands, who were caught between the warring armies of Russia, Germany, and the Austrian Empire. Thus began an extraordinary four-year journey meticulously documented by Ansky, a peerless witness of his time.

In daily accounts, Ansky details his struggles: to raise funds; to lobby and bribe at the tsar's court; to procure and transport food, medicine, and money to the ravaged Jewish towns, which, in the course of the war, were conquered and reconquered by Cossacks, Germans, Polish mercenaries, and Russian revolutionaries. Ansky depicts scenes of devastation—convoy of refugees, towns looted and burned to the ground, villagers taken hostage and raped, prey to all comers. Speaking to maids and ministers, farmers and recruits, doctors and profiteers, Ansky hears and sees it all, as the tsar's army disintegrates and the winds of revolution sweep across the land.

A wide-ranging view of a world at war, *The Enemy at His Pleasure* is at once powerful and poignant, a rare and invaluable addition to the historical record.

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