

CHAPTER SIX

THE VAAD HAYESHIVOTH AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Although Rav Chaim Ozer was in the front ranks of those who fought against the enemies of Torah Yiddishkeit, because of his staunchness and sincerity, he was universally respected by Jews of all parties and all ideologies. In 1917 during the brief Kerensky regime, the famed Jewish lawyer, Grusenberg, who had defended Mendel Beilis, was elected to the Russian Senate. When the time came for him to be sworn into office, Grusenberg demanded that he be permitted to swear a Jewish 'shvuah' and one administered only by Rav Chaim Ozer who was then in Petersburg. Such was the reverence which a man who had never tasted a religious background and had been raised without the slightest trace of religious education, had for Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky, whose very appearance was awe-inspiring.

The Minister of Culture in the Kerensky government invited Rav Chaim Ozer to serve as consultant to Judaism to the government. The Polish Government often sought his advice on Jewish matters. The Polish President in exile, Ratzkowitz, during his stay in Vilna, extended to Rav Chaim Ozer many honors and consulted him many times on Jewish affairs.

The respect which Rav Chaim Ozer commanded often found its way into the Soviet government hier-