

THE COLLAPSE OF RUSSIA'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE JEWS

Effort to Wreak Vengeance on Suffering Race for Her Own Incompetence Said to Have Failed

By HERMAN BERNSTEIN, Editor of "The Day."

THE Russian conspiracy against the Jewish people has collapsed. Thousands of Jews have been executed by the Russian troops without trial on the general charge that they have betrayed Russia. Close to 750,000 Jews have been driven from their homes by the Russian armies, which have burned, plundered and destroyed Jewish settlements. Jewish children were killed in the course of the campaign. In the pogroms, Jewish women were outraged, many old and young people were driven insane and Jewish houses of prayer were desecrated and demolished by the Russian troops.

And behind this terrible Jewish catastrophe, behind this attempt to exterminate all Russian Jewry, the commander in Chief of all the Russian armies and his Generals have been trying to hide their incompetence, demoralization and corruption as well as the treachery of the Russian system that has led to the unparalleled defeats of the Russian troops.

The Russian military authorities caused the expulsion of the Jewish population from many provinces in Russia, declaring this to be a military measure for safeguarding the Russian armies from the Jews, whom they accused as spies and traitors. The Russian courts, even the military courts, have failed in their attempts to prove even in a single instance that this accusation had any substantial basis. But Russian officers of the highest rank, members of the Department of the Minister of War, in error have been convicted and hanged for high treason. Nevertheless the Russian military authorities have spread the cruel legend against the Jews in Russia and in the lands of the Allies and the poison thus disseminated has already caused untold misery and suffering and prejudice and hatred.

By these expulsions the Russian authorities have been endeavoring to prove that the Jews are disloyal and treacherous. For they had no other proof. Having been defeated upon the field of battle by the Russian troops by their own demoralized system, they wreaked their vengeance upon the unfortunate, unarmed Jewish men and women and children—relatives of the 600,000 Jewish soldiers in the armies—and sought to justify themselves before their own people and before the whole world—by justifying the collapse of their military forces by blaming the Jews.

No one can tell with any degree of certainty that this inhuman policy of vengeance, this cowardly hiding behind the women and children, this deliberate poisoning of the economic life of whole provinces, not for military or strategic purposes but out of vengeance and mockery, this concentration of the attention of the military authorities on the persecution of the Jewish people in the hands of the inhuman and the entire Russian people—no one can say with certainty that all this is not largely responsible for the terrible calamities that have befallen the Russian forces.

The hand of historic justice has manifested itself in a nation that has consistently and cruelly oppressed and persecuted the weaker nationalities constituting its own population cannot pose as the savior and defender of weaker nationalities abroad.

A government that has pursued a policy of vengeance against its own population can hardly pose as a saint in international politics. It is hypocritical in mad.

When the military authorities who have been in supreme command of Russia showed themselves as traitors and all their cruelty, when the press of America and elsewhere commenced to make known to the world the horrors that have been committed by the Russian military authorities, when the representatives of the Russian people finally began to voice their indignation, when the Duma Ministers in the Russian Government, perplexed and confused, decided to make certain concessions to its own people.

The conspiracy against the Jewish people involved in the charge of wholesale treason has now collapsed. The concession made by the Council of Ministers in enlarging the Pale of Settlement proves that Russia herself does not believe in the legends the Government has invented against the Jews.

A few days ago I inquired of Premier Goremykine whether Russia was planning to abolish the Pale of Settlement, or whether Russia would remove the restriction which prohibits the Jews from settling outside certain provinces set aside for them. I received the following telegram from the Premier in English: "The Council of Ministers in view of the extraordinary circumstances of war times and henceforth until general revision in established order of acting regulations concerning Jews authorized the Home Ministry to permit Jews to abide in cities out of lines of their general settlement except the capitals and localities belonging to Cossack settlements."



Jews fleeing from Lublin when their homes were destroyed by the Russians in their retreat from Galicia.

No sooner had the autocracy regained its power than one reform after another was revoked, and the Russian Constitution became, in the term of the late Count Witte, a corpse. There is no law in Russia with regard to the Jews that does not contain the word "except." Thus the new concession contains the clause "except the capitals and localities belonging to the Cossack settlements."

And besides, according to Premier Goremykine's statement, the Jews will be permitted "to abide in cities out of the lines of their general settlement," which means that they will not be permitted to settle in villages, that they will be prohibited from acquiring land and tilling the soil. These discriminations and exceptions make the new concession of but slight importance.

In fact, the *Noroye Vremya*, the semi-official organ of the Government, has hastened to assure its readers that this concession should not be regarded as a change in the course of Russia's policies toward the Jews. The *Birzhevoye Yedovost* correctly comments on this subject: "We must not swear, we must not turn away from the only practical solution of the question, which cannot be solved by half measures. We must do the duty of our conscience and reason—abolish the Pale of Settlement once for all, without any humiliating exceptions for the country and for the Jews. No other solution is possible."

What the Russian Government and the military authorities have done to the Jews during the war, how Jewish communities have been uprooted, how hundreds of thousands of men, women and children have been driven from their homes and left to shift for themselves under the open sky and then driven away again is recorded in the following account which is based upon press articles from the Russian newspapers, authenticated by the Russian censor, and which therefore gives only a pale picture of the horrors.

The material has been carefully gathered from the legal Russian press by the Jewish Relief Committee of the Union in Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

Last year the Foreign Committee of the Bund (the union of workmen's organizations) appealed to the public opinion of the civilized world and called attention to the medieval barbarism of the Russian Government which had undertaken a crusade of annihilation against millions of Jews. It pointed out that, aside from the traditional pogroms, the Government commenced to resort to wholesale expulsions of Jewish communities from various regions, which do not stir the imagination as pogroms and the violation of women and the mutilation of bodies, but which are worse even than pogroms because of their ruinous and destructive consequences.

Since that time eight months have elapsed. The expulsions of Jews have not only not been stopped, but have become ordinary everyday occurrences. That which had seemed impossible even in Russia, justly styled the land of unlimited possibilities, has now become a sad actuality: the wholesale expulsions of Jews have assumed colossal proportions and are extended beyond the boundaries of Poland to Lithuania and the Baltic provinces.

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In a few minutes this hill rushed into the street and ran off shouting and crying to the train. They carried children, old people, packs of their belongings. They pushed one another as they climbed into the cars. All platforms, every inch of space, every roof, were covered with human beings. It was a sort of a live snake of human bodies.

According to the most conservative figures (Navy *Voshkod*, No. 5) there came to Warsaw in the last days of January not less than 30,000 Jewish refugees. These figures are doubtless much below the actual number, which may be seen from the fact that in two days, January 25 and 26, 20,000 Jewish refugees arrived in Warsaw (*Haint*, No. 22, of January, 26).

The picture of wholesale ruination of human beings appears before us in all its horror even on reading the dry accounts of the arrival of the refugees in Warsaw, as described in newspapers scrutinized by the Russian censor. Thus, the *Haint*, on January 28, said: "All day yesterday and all night waters were passing through the streets of Warsaw with old men and women, with young women and children, shivering with cold and pressing close to one another. Behind them went men and women, the men for whom there was no room in the wagons. All night long the chilled Jews wandered through the streets of Warsaw, not knowing where to rest their heads and where to turn for aid."

"From time to time the stillness of the night was broken by the cries of the cold and hungry children and by the sobs of the women. . . . Only an insignificant number of the enormous mass of refugees were furnished with food and shelter. The rest were left to shift for themselves in the open air. Those who were too poor to hire a wagon, or those from places removed from the railroad line, came to Warsaw on foot. Yesterday and to-day the first party of refugees who came on foot arrived at Ostrov, but were not allowed to enter the town (*Yevreiskaya Nedelya*, No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 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992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000).

Since the end of January the expulsion of the Jews has not stopped. The newspapers recorded these expulsions as ordinary occurrences in Russian life. Thus, the *Haint* recorded the raid upon Jews outside the Pale of Settlement. The *Noroye Voshkod* of February 27 said: "New parties of refugees are continuing to arrive in Warsaw from all places, particularly from the Government of Suwalki. The new refugees tell of the horrors they experienced on the way. News has also been received of wholesale 'flights' from the Government of Lomza. The inhabitants of Yedvabna had to flee, in a haphazard manner, in various directions, and there were cases of murders of women and of plunder."

How large the number of Jewish refugees in Warsaw may be seen from the fact that in May it was necessary to give relief to 140,000 people (*Rassvet*, No. 21). But by Warsaw alone it is impossible to judge the extent of the expulsions. In the expulsions have gone to many centers in the Polish provinces. Thus, 1,000 Jewish refugees from neighboring towns arrived in Kietz in January and 1,500 in Radom (*Haint*, Nos. 23 and 24).

In March, according to the *Diennik Polski* (No. 95), in the Governments of Kietz and Radom, in certain districts near the region of military operations, they commenced the expulsion of the entire Jewish population. All Jews, without regard to age, station or means, were expelled. In the beginning of May 15,000 Jews were expelled from the Governments of Kietz and Radom to the Government of Lublin; three districts were set aside for them in the Government of Lublin, Lubat, Radinsk and Sokolov districts (*Haint*, No. 127).

Even in unfortunate Lomza, whence the Jews were fleeing, there gathered 900 families of Jewish refugees. These were for the most part from Yedvabna who were driven to Lomza, and then there were also inhabitants of Novogorod and Plesk, suburbs of Lomza, whence the Jewish population was also expelled (*Yevreiskaya Nedelya*, No. 2).



Premier Goremykine.

Kietz the most prominent Jewish representatives and rabbis were arrested and expelled to distant parts of Russia. In Novaya Alexandria alone, which is the centre for these hostages, there were forty rabbis a few days ago."

During the month of July the number of refugees in Warsaw has not grown. This was due to the fact that the authorities no longer allowed them to come there, but directed them to the right bank of the Vistula. This course led to still greater privations for the refugees, for more or less adequate relief could be given them only in large cities having a large Jewish population. Thus the Jews expelled in May from Mowlinsk, of the Government of Warsaw, 5,000 of whom were sent to the right bank of the Vistula, spent three days under the open sky, having nothing with which they could cover themselves, since they were compelled to leave their town in the night and had not the time to take anything along with them. The refugees from Rozhant, of the Government of Lomza, about 150 families, were in the same predicament. For two days they were lying in the fields near Ostrov, but were not allowed to enter the town (*Yevreiskaya Nedelya*, No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688,