

∴ A CITY OF DESPAIR ∴

By Leo Wolfson.

Paris, May 21.—Jewish news which reaches Paris is bad and getting worse every day. It causes much concern, much worry, lots of anxiety, and efforts of all kinds and in all directions are being made to do something effective, but it seems that all is of no avail. Complete reports of the latest outrages in Vilna have been received. The information is very reliable and is to the following effect:

About four hundred Polish legionaires arrived in Vilna by a train on April 18th. From the 19th to the 21st there were continuous street fights. Ostensibly the fights were against the Bolsheviks, in fact they were directed against the Jews. Thirty-five Jewish hostages were taken, including state Secretaries Rosenbaum's and Rachmilowitz's wives. All of them were taken to Wilkomir and nothing is known or can be ascertained as to what became of them, although every possible effort has been made to that effect. During the fight mobs of weaponed Poles started a terrible pogrom. The Chevra Kadisah reports two thousand two hundred (2200) victims lying on the cemetery. Many of the victims were attacked and ruthlessly murdered. All of the Jewish synagogues, houses, stores and cellars were plundered and robbed, the damages and losses being immense. About ten thousand (10,000) Jews were then deported to Lida, and it is not yet ascertained where they are and what became of them.

The Chief Rabbi Rubinstein was ill treated and arrested because he refused to confirm the statement which the Poles gave out, that the pogrom was organized by the Bolsheviks. Three days after, when all the horrors and outrages had been perpetrated and all the damage done, General Pilsudsky arrived. He made his brother commander of the town and order was re-established. Rabbi Rubinstein was released and a municipal council of four Poles and four Jewish merchants was appointed to give semblance to Polish sympathy.

The boycott still continues, the Poles refuse to sell food to the Jews and there is a terrible famine now raging in the Jewish quarters. The report closes with a demand that every possible effort should be made that the entente powers should intervene and prevent further pogroms, that they should also demand the immediate release and return of the ten thousand deported Jews and that the Polish Government be required and forced to make restitution of the robbed property and pay the damages sustained.

The Committee of Jewish Delegates to the Peace Conference of which Louis Marshall is now chairman, since Judge Mack left Paris, has considered this matter at a meeting held today. A committee consisting of Marshall, Syrkin and Wincheswsky of the United States, Goldstein and Neldich of Ukraina, and Aleinikoff of Russia, has been appointed to organize a Jewish defense organization, and also formally bring the report of these atrocities to the attention of the members of the Peace Conference in charge of Polish affairs. The members of the committee are indignant beyond words, and will vigorously prosecute their work to prevent, if possible, the

repetition of such disasters. They hope to accomplish something. The Russian delegates particularly are very much worried about the future. Things look dark and great horrors may be expected any day from East Europe. In fact all of the great and foremost Jews of England and France whom I have seen and talked to, but whose names, at their request, I must withhold for the present, have anticipations of pogroms, in comparison with which Kishineff will have been trivial. All of them seem to be well informed and see the tide coming and yet are absolutely helpless. Some of them have wrung their hands in despair and almost with tears in their eyes deplored that there seems to be no way of avoiding the coming disaster.

Time and time again the attention of the members of the Peace Commission has been called to the impending avalanche, to the threatened disaster, and to all the remonstrations they have turned a deaf ear. One of the diplomats is reported to have said that the Peace Conference has indeed something more important to do than to worry about the Jews. Another diplomat is reported to have said that this Jewish business is getting on his nerve, all the time he seems to hear nothing but about Jews and their interests.

The fact of the matter is that Jewish matters and interests are getting very scant attention at the Peace Conference, although the committee of Jewish delegates is doing all it can possibly do, under the circumstances. The allies are so engrossed in their own interests, seeking to gain all the advantages they possibly can get for themselves that they simply do not want to pay any attention to any other matter. Diplomacy as at present played, is the same old selfish game—"get everything you can get for yourself, and let the others do the worrying themselves." No one in Paris—men who have given Jewish matters their attention daily for the last several months, and who know all the ways and means of getting everywhere and to everyone, are absolutely unable to find a way to deal with this pogrom question and to stop their continuous perpetration.

Some talk of world wide protests. The French Society of les Droits des Hommes—a non-Jewish organization is arranging a monster mass-meeting in one of the great halls in Paris to protest against the outrages and pogroms against the Jews. It is desired that in all cities non-Jewish organizations hold such meetings and cable their protests to the American Commission. Others talk about actually arming the Jews and placing them in a position to defend themselves with force, and to organize defense forces in all Jewish centers. In the great despair every suggestion—the wildest and most impossible is given consideration. From the only source which could help—the Peace Conference, none seems in sight, although superhuman efforts are being made to awaken the conscience of the Conference to the unusual and unprecedented conditions.

One of the Jewish delegates, one holding a most important position in the Jewish world, asked me to call upon the American Jews to bestir themselves and let their voice be heard

strongly and unmistakably. They can and ought to make the cause of the Jews—America's cause. America's voice is the only one that is being listened to here respectfully and with attention. America's press ringing with protests would be heeded and perhaps the disaster could be avoided.

American Jews awake, a great catastrophe, without hesitancy, and strongly.

POLISH POGROMS STILL CONTINUE.

Two new pogroms in Poland are reported in a cablegram to the Zionist Organization of America via Copenhagen, one by Polish legionaires on May 22nd, at Porvek Volhynia, where 18 mostly women and girls were killed, and another at Czenstochau on May 27th, with a death toll of 9. The Jews of the latter city proclaimed a fast day on the 29th.

The Jewish members of the Polish Diet, on May 22nd, addressed an open letter to Premier Paderewski, detailing the outrages and setting forth that the soldiery of General Haller's army have been particularly conspicuous in the many attacks on Jews. The letter criticized the government's passive attitude, and pointed out that the government's organs are guilty of provoking the anti-Jewish agitations. The issue of the Cracow Dziennik, in which this letter was published, was confiscated.

Isaac Heilblum, who was charged with being one of the two men who attempted to shoot Premier Paderewski has been liberated after the accusation against him was changed from attempted assassination to making insulting remarks. At Bialystok, the authorities have decreed that all notices, including religious announcements by the rabbis must be in Polish which very few of the Jewish population can read.

In Pinsk all the Jewish prisoners have been set free. Six of them have lost their reason as a consequence of their suffering. The rabbi has refused to sign a statement which the military commandant has asked him to

make that the meeting which terminated in the killing of over 80 Jews was a gathering of Bolsheviks. The synagogues are all closed. The military commandant notified the rabbi that he would permit two to be reopened on condition that the massacre would not be discussed. The rabbinate declined to accept this "favor" and have forbidden public worship. All Jewish business houses remain closed in spite of an order by the commandant that they be reopened.

♦♦♦♦♦ PALESTINE ♦♦♦♦♦

Mrs. H. Segal of Fort Worth is visiting her mother and sister, Mrs. M. Grossman and Mrs. Sam Brooks.

Jerome Hurwitz is home from Austin where he attended the university.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Henry have returned home after a visit to relatives in Bryan.

Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Pearlston and children are leaving for a three months stay in Dallas.

Mrs. A. Rosenthal, who has been quite ill for several weeks, is convalescing now.

Palestine suffered a keen loss in the death of Mr. M. Winner, who was in his 78th year, and who was only ill one day. Mr. Winner spent more than 40 years in Palestine, where he was engaged in the jewelry business. His widow, eight grown children, and 14 grand children survive him, besides an honorable name that will ever be recalled to mind in love and reverence. Mr. Winner lived an exemplary life, and all who knew him loved him and respected him, and his passing away leaves a void in the Jewish community that will be hard to fill as he was first in all that meant Judaism, as he once officiated here as rabbi and taught Sunday school for a number of years. All Palestine mourn with his bereaved family and its only men who lead the life of Mr. Winner that inspires us to higher and nobler deeds.

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