

CONDITIONS IN THE UKRAINE RESPECTING TREATMENT
OF JEWS.

M E S S A G E

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING,

IN RESPONSE TO A SENATE RESOLUTION OF DECEMBER 20,
1919, A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
SUBMITTING A REPORT ON THE ACTUAL CONDITION IN THE
UKRAINE WITH RESPECT TO THE TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF
THE JEWISH RACE.

JANUARY 12, 1920.—Read; referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and
ordered to be printed.

TO THE SENATE:

I transmit herewith a report from the Secretary of State, in response to the resolution adopted by the Senate on December 16 (calendar day, December 20), 1919, requesting the State Department to transmit to the Senate such information as may be available, not inconsistent with the public interest, showing the actual condition in the Ukraine with respect to the treatment of members of the Jewish race.

WOODROW WILSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
12 January, 1920.

The PRESIDENT:

The undersigned, the Secretary of State, has the honor to lay before the President, with a view to its transmission to the Senate, if his judgment approves thereof, the following report in response to the Senate's resolution of December 16 (calendar day, December 20) 1919, reading as follows:

Resolved. That the attention of the Senate having been called to the reported massacre of members of the Jewish race in the Ukraine and to the existence and execution of pogroms, which indicate a determination to exterminate the Jews of Ukraina, it is requested of the State Department that such information as may be available, not inconsistent with the public interest, be transmitted to the Senate showing the actual conditions in the Ukraine.

The most recent first-hand information furnished by an American official which the Department of State has received on the subject matter of the resolution is contained in a report by Brig. Gen. Jadwin, United States Army, upon a tour of inspection made by him in the Ukraine during the latter part of September last. The pertinent part of that report reads as follows:

The story of the Jews is a serious one. A Jewish committee furnished me with a statement giving the names of certain towns, dates of pogroms, and number killed at each place. The total of this list was 10,712. They also furnished the names of other towns and some totals bring the number, September 9, up to 29,000. They did not, however, produce exact dates or exact number reported to be killed at each town. This was, of course, difficult for them to do as the Government of Kiev had changed hands several times and most of their towns were in Petlura territory and their information came in by rather irregular ways. They promised to give these dates and exact numbers but had not produced them up to the time I left Kiev.

I have no good reason for doubting the 10,712 figure and would not be surprised if the 29,000 figure was substantially correct.

They claim that besides these there were doubtless many others killed of whom they have no record. Most of those killed are reported to have been done away with by bands, but information available was to the effect that bands had also killed about 450 Poles, largely landowners and bourgeoisie.

When the Russian Army broke up, many of the soldiers are said to have taken their weapons home and to have secreted them. In the absence of a general stable government throughout the country these weapons are brought out at times under different leaders. Those especially mentioned include Petlura, Gregeroff, Struck, Zylony, and Sokolow. There was nothing to show whether the killings were with the knowledge or connivance of these leaders or had been done independently by some men who at other times were in their bands. Proof was not furnished that the actions were concerted or that any one man was responsible for a large number of the deaths. There were many killed during the last spring, but the figures for the past few months have been much less.

An officer of Petlura's army said that when Kiev was taken there were many prisoners sent back to Winnica. On one trainload of prisoners sent back there were six Jews who had been bolshevik commissars. When the train arrived at Winnica and the prisoners taken off it was found that the six commissars had been killed by the other prisoners. The latter claimed that the commissars led them into their difficulties.

There are about 20,000 Jews from other parts of the country now taking refuge in Kiev under the protection of Denikin's volunteer army.

Denikin's officers advised that orders against excesses had been issued from general headquarters: also that one major general was relieved from his command because he was not considered to have exerted sufficient efforts to prevent a pogrom. Several soldiers were sentenced in Kiev from 10 to 15 years' hard labor for attempting to steal from Jews. At Lozonja some officers and soldiers had been arrested and are to be tried for alleged participation in excesses.

One pogrom happened while we were at Kiev. The Jews alleged that a large number were slaughtered at Fastow. I saw several Russian officers who stated that at the time in question, which was during the big bolshevik attack on Kiev, the brigade commander stationed at Fastow had sent all his troops except his personal staff, personal guard, and train crew out of Fastow to the front. While in this situation the train was suddenly surrounded by a number of townspeople, among whom many Jews were recognized. They were armed with pitchforks, axes, etc. An attempt was made on the life of the engineer of the train, but the brigade commander succeeded in getting the train under way and joined his forces on the front. The town was in the hands of the bolsheviks for one day. It was the scene of heavy fighting for four days, in the course of which some 400 are understood to have been killed. I noticed in driving through the town of Fastow that many houses had crosses on them and on inquiry was told that these crosses indicated the residences of Christians.

At the invitation of Lieut. Gen. Bredow I attended a review of part of his troops on a Sunday following my arrival in Kiev. The metropolite of Kiev, Anthony, who is the head of the Russian Church for Southern Russia, and who had been removed by Petlura and confined in prison in Ukraine and Poland for some six months, had just returned to Kiev. In connection with the review the metropolite blessed the troops, a most impressive ceremony. The religious piety of the young men was marked and very impressive.

Having had experience with the entry of the Polish troops into Minsk where I had seen the good effect of a proclamation to the civilian population by Mr. Morgenthau, and of a pastoral letter to the people and soldiers by the Roman Catholic bishop of Minsk, I called on the metropolite, talked the Jewish situation over with him, and requested him to issue an encyclical letter to all his flocks enjoining restraint from any attempts on the lives of Jews. The metropolite felt that much of the trouble for the Jews resulted partly from their own actions and teachings and stressed some teachings of the Old Testament and other Jewish writings as to the relations of the Jews with other peoples, teachings which are at marked variance with the enlightened ideas of to-day. He, however, referred with pride to a sermon on the subject of the Jews which he had preached in 1903 while bishop of Zytomir, and which was translated into English, French, and German. He promised that he would issue an encyclical letter which would be sent to all the bishops, priests, and congregations in southern Russia.

The Jews felt that the attacks have been made upon them because they have been confused with the bolsheviks. They deny that as a rule more than a proportional percentage of the bolsheviks were Jews. A few of them, however, admit that there may be a higher percentage of Jews among the bolsheviks than their proportional percentage, but say that this was because bolshevism had a stronger hold in towns than in the country, and almost all the Jews lived in the towns. They also say that many Jews who became bolsheviks renounced Judaism and claim that they are internationalists or communists and not Jews.

The fact that Trotsky, Bela Kun, and many of the other prominent men are Jews, together with the fact that the Russians have not been accustomed to seeing many Jews in authority, furnished a basis for a propaganda to connect the Jews more closely with bolshevism than they should be.

There was one rumor to the effect that there is an organization working among the cossacks who are understood to have disliked the Jews for many years; that the object of the order is to stir the cossacks up against former army officers, the bourgeoisie and the Jews.

The situation of the Jews is evidently precarious but will naturally improve greatly when order is established, the population disarmed, a gendarmerie established, the land question improved, and education becomes more general.

It may be of interest to the Senate to know that the Department of State has recently made a decided effort to obtain further and more recent first-hand information. With this in view it has sent Mr. Evan E. Young, an experienced consul general in the Consular Service, to Odessa, and has obtained from the Navy the services of Rear Admiral McCully, who has had a long experience of Russian affairs and is conversant with the Russian language. Admiral McCully has been designated as special agent of the Department of State and instructed to proceed to the south of Russia for general purposes of observation. Both he and Mr. Young are now en route; but it is feared that the recent military advances of the bolsheviks may prevent their penetrating into the Ukraine.

The situation in the Ukraine, especially with respect to the condition of the Jews there, is receiving the constant attention of the Department of State, whose intention it is to do everything practicable to keep in touch with developments in that quarter.

Respectfully submitted.

ROBERT LANSING.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, January 7, 1920.