

— REPORT ON YAGOTIN .—

( From the Yagotin Jewish Committee )

Yagotin, like the rest of the cities, has gone through all the evil days that fell to the lot of the Ukrainian Jewry. Amidst the horrors of the pogrom wave the bloody invasion of crazed Denikin detachments has registered on the pages of the history of Yagotin the darkest reminiscences. Everywhere there are signs of destruction, at each step - widows and orphans, poverty, diseases and unemployment. Aside from several pogroms by Denikin the Jews of Yagotin endured also a number of raids from petty bands who plundered away the pitiful remnants of property left after Denikin's exploits. At the present time Yagotin is in a specially sad state. Before the war the population of Yagotin was composed of small traders and artisans who thrived more or less satisfactorily. The imperialistic war at once undermined the material well-being of the citizens. Mobilizations rooted out the most productive elements of the population who left their homes and families without any material support. But all this pales into insignificance compared with what happened later during the civil war period. The first detachments of soviet armies confiscated all merchandise from the Jewish traders; mass arrests for speculation also brought ruin to the population; while enraged by its failures the Denikin army vent its wild wrath upon the helpless Jews. A number of persons had lost their lives before the arrival of the enraged Denikin troops. The latter let loose help upon the city, invaded the Jewish Homes destroying and pillaging everything they could not take away with them. Frequently they would murder the Jews whom they dragged from their hiding places; rape women and girls, in many cases under 14 years of age, leaving in the wake the horrible consequences of venereal diseases. Still greater miseries befell the towns around Yagotin. Towns, settlements and villages had gone through heart-stirring experiences. A number of localities, formerly populated by Jews, are at present desolated stretches of land, and the Jews have been driven from their old habitations. Families fortunate to remain alive but in rags and barefooted escaped to Yagotin as the nearest refuge place hoping to find there some protection of their brother-Jews. The wave of refugees swelled from day to day. Yagotin has become a camp of beggars, widows and orphans. All this crowded mass of Jews not only could not offer any help to the poor but itself felt the pinch of hard times. Then typhus broke out and as the medico-sanitary conditions were far from being able to meet the new situation many young people died prematurely. Very often the typhus carried away the head of family leaving it to shift for itself. Thus the Jewish population of Yagotin found itself in awful conditions which lasted till the inauguration of the new economic policy. With the latter the condition of the Jews became somewhat improved, but not in any conspicuous degree. While petty commerce and trades showed a certain development, heavy taxes and the continued high cost of living in conjunction with low wages soon left themselves to be felt. During the famine year 1922 more than half of the population of Yagotin went hungry and some cases are on record of people died of starvation. About that time a group of social workers organized a relief committee which has been getting its funds through collections and self-taxation. Finally we have addressed the Yagotin Landsmanshaft in America with a request for aid. In response we have received 100 parcels thanks to which many a family has been saved from death by starvation. But all this proved to be a drop in the ocean. The American Kungmen have ceased sending anything in spite of a number of letters

of gratitude sent to them and an exhaustive explanatory statement on distribution. At the present time the Jewish population is in great need of credits; as there is no Loan Kassa here big firms and cooperatives drive the small trader and the handicraft worker out of the market. Thus the present position of the Jewish population is very critical. Everyday the Committee is being besieged by new and new applicants who, however painful it may be, are refused any kind of assistance because of lack of means. Therefore, the Yagotin Jewish Committee pleads before the Kharkov Office of the JDC for assistance of Yagotin, hoping that the Kharkov Office of the JDC will take urgent steps for the amelioration of conditions of the population. We deem it necessary that the Yagotin Committee should receive not less than 50,000 roubles issue 1923, with the object of opening at least a small-sized Mutual Credit Kassa, and also purchasing various products to feed the hungry widows and orphans, as well as to obtain shoes, underwear and medicaments for the sick persons. In addition to this the Jewish Committee should obtain at its disposal a few beds at the Yagotin Hospital. All this would give the Yagotin Jewish inhabitants a chance to breathe freely after years of torture and sufferings. Children deprived of any bringing-up and whose parents are not able to send them to schools, because of the latter becoming self-paying institutions, are also looking forward toward your assistance. There is a Committee which again places at your service; what are needed are funds only. We hope that our voice will not remain a voice crying in the wilderness.

With brotherly greetings ,

Representative of the Yagotin Committee ( signature )

LANTON

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