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## RELIEF OF PERSECUTED JEWS

Violent persecution of Jews in Christian countries has again broken out. The newspapers daily report fresh outrages—here the burning down of a Jewish village—there the destruction by a furious mob of the Jewish quarter of a large town; in another place, a mere village, an attack made by twenty peasants armed with hatchets, cudgels, and scythes, upon an old man, very poor, whom they murdered, driving the women of the family into the fields. Well is it said that “nothing short of madness seems to have seized upon the people of Hungary and of South Russia,” the ignorant peasantry who not only rob and murder, but destroy, wholesale, the property of villages, towns and districts.

It was estimated by Russian Government authorities that during the anti-Jewish riots of 1881-1882, above twenty-two million pounds' worth of property had been destroyed, and now the same insane work is being revived in Russia, and carried on in Hungary. Millions worth of property is annihilated; life is sacrificed in a thousand ways by the mob, and in Russia the State—the Government itself—is helping forward the work of destruction by closing to the Jews industry after industry; here ruining by one stroke of the pen 20,000 Jewish agriculturists by abolishing their leases; there driving thousands of manufacturers into bankruptcy by a sudden edict commanding them to dismiss all their Christian employees. Because “the employment of Christians by Jews proved, on the one hand, to be opposed to the national spirit of the Russians; and on the other hand, a lengthy intercourse between Christian employees and Jewish employers is found to be subversive of the religious feelings of the workmen, who become indifferent to religious ceremonials, and are even found to absent themselves from church on Saints' days and festivals!” This is a quotation from the official Russian document.

During the whole of last year, riot and plunder, massacre and expulsion, were brought to bear upon sixteen out of eighty-six districts in Russia, where alone Jews may dwell. In one town 6,000 persons were driven out during an outbreak lasting only a few days; in another large city 20,000 Jews were systematically expelled, and so on, until it became wearisome to read the repetition of similar occurrences in hundreds of places, large and small. The last twelve months have been remarkable for the promulgation of new and grinding edicts, which multiply tenfold the disabilities under which Jews have hitherto existed. And now the acute symptoms of persecution with violence have reappeared. There is one most grave feature now to be observed in South Russia and in Hungary. Special agitators are going about stirring up the ignorant people and leading the mob against the Jews. In Hungary bands of peasants, from 100 to 1,000 strong, have appeared in various parts of the country, usually led by some one who, though dressed as a peasant and

wearing a mask, betrays himself by his style of language and deportment as belonging to the better classes. There is good reason to believe that the money and the emissaries who act thus are provided by the German Anti-Semitic Party, who have long been preaching an active crusade against the Jews. Shall we say, as some do, that the Jews have brought all this upon themselves by their usury, their greed, and their fraud, goading to madness those whom they have oppressed?

Long acquaintance with the Jewish people, and acquaintance with their habits, convinces me that in these matters they have been unjustly accused. It is well to remember that neither race-hatred, religious fanaticism, brutish ignorance of the masses, nor all of these combined, can account for what is now going on. Not only in barbarous Russia and uncivilized Hungary, but in enlightened Protestant Germany, are to be found thousands who hate Jews with a blind, unreasoning hatred, and combine to do them harm.

We feel that the causes lie deeper than those alleged in the newspapers of the day. The hand of Divine Providence can be traced in the convulsions which are shaking the Jews out of the lands of their dispersion, and preparing them, even by the sufferings which they are enduring, for return to their own land.

To succor those ready to perish is a Christian duty. "Relief of persecuted Jews in token of Christian sympathy," is felt to be one means of softening the hearts of the sufferers towards Christianity. Amid all the distressing accounts of cruelties inflicted by Christians it is comforting to turn to the record of Christian effort to relieve, to hear of the refugees placed in safety in Cyprus, even though but a few families; and that a beginning has been made, and that under British protection Jewish hands are at this moment at work upon the land granted to them at the instance of Lord Shaftesbury, that they have begun to dig their wells, and to prepare for sowing their seed in that island—known to us chiefly by its New Testament history.—*Watch Tower*.

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— December, 1883 —



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