

JEW S IN RUSSIA.

**HOW THEY ARE ILL-
TREATED.**

**DENOUNCED BY RUSSIAN
PRIESTS.**

RIOTING AT EASTERTIDE.

**A SYDNEY RESIDENT'S
EXPERIENCES.**

"The priests of the Greek Catholic Church—which is the Church of Russia—are wholly to blame for this persecution of the Jews," was the opinion expressed to an "Evening News" reporter by Mr. Louis Brodsky, a Russian Jew of Odessa, who is at present in Sydney.

Odessa, which is on the shores of the Black Sea, is only about 120 miles from Kishineff, the scene of the latest reported outrages, and the conditions of life at both places are, therefore, not dissimilar. At any rate, the same rooted antipathy to the Jews exists in each town.

In a chat of a quarter of an hour's duration, Mr. Brodsky threw a good deal of light upon present day conditions affecting the Hebrew race in Russia. His narrative of events was the more graphic by reason of the fact that he had himself been a sufferer on account of the racial animosity of which he was speaking.

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nearly half the population of Odessa, which is a city almost as great as Sydney, consists of Jews, there being from 150,000 to 200,000 of the race, Mr. Brodsky explained, within its boundaries. The Hebrew race, too, forms a large proportion of the population of Kishineff.

"What businesses are they engaged in, principally?" asked the reporter.

"In nearly all the trades, such as tailoring, shoemaking, furniture-making, and various other forms of industry, as well as in shopkeeping, and the different branches of commercial life," was the reply.

"The building trades, also?"

"No; they do not go in much for the building trades. You see, conditions there are different to what they are here. The building is done mostly by tradesmen who travel, and who come down at certain periods from the interior of the country. For building in Odessa can only be carried on during the summer months. The Jews do a great deal, though, in trading in wheat, as produce merchants, exporters of grain, and so on."

"They are very much disliked, apparently?"

"Very much, indeed; much more than you can imagine; and it is all the fault of the Russian Church. The priests tell the people that the Jews are everything bad. They tell them that we are the people who killed Christ. They even preach from the pulpits that the Jews kill Christians, and use their blood for the rites of the Passover."

"Have you heard them say that?"

"I have heard a priest of the Greek Catholic Church denounce the Jews as the murderers of Christ. There was then a demonstration against the Jews, upon which he called upon his people to desist, and said that it was not the Jews of to-day, but the ancient Jews, who were guilty. But soon afterwards he went on to say that the punishment, to be sufficient to atone for Christ's death, should descend from generation to generation.

"The published statement that the outrages are

The published statement that the outrages are acts of vengeance directed against Jewish money-lenders is all rot," continued Mr. Brodsky. "There is a law in Russia which makes extortion on the part of a money-lender, whether Christian or Jew, a punishable offence. In this country, interest to any amount may be charged; in Russia, a percentage limit is fixed by law, and anybody charging more is liable to very severe punishment.

"No; the trouble is from the Greek Church, in which the people are fanatical believers. It must be remembered that the people of Russia are still steeped in ignorance. Only 7 per cent. of them can read and write. Prior to the eighties, village schools were unknown. They believe everything their priests tell them, unquestioningly.

"Proof of what I say," continued Mr. Brodsky, "is afforded by the fact that for years past these riots and attacks upon our race always occur at Easter time. The Russian Easter commences on Sunday, but for the first three days of Easter week, in any big town, such as Odessa, you won't see a Jew abroad in the streets. At the same time, there are patrols of mounted Cossacks everywhere."

"Keeping the peace, or looking for Jews who may have been foolish enough to venture out?" asked the reporter.

"Well, they are supposed to keep the peace," replied Mr. Brodsky, with a shrug of the shoulders which indicated that they might not be averse to a little relaxation of the alternative kind; "but their presence shows that the authorities expect trouble at that time. A feature of Easter week, too, is a show, attended by thousands of country people, and held in a large open space in the centre of the town. Before each Easter the Governor of Odessa publishes a ukase, ordering that the gates of all buildings near the show ground, wherein Jews are living, shall be kept shut. And if they got hold of one of our race at the show ground they'd kill him."

"Do you attribute the present outrages to the Eastertide?"

Eastertide?"

"I do; allowing for the fact that the Russian calendar is 12 days behind yours, and that the news would probably take some days to reach London from Kishineff, the outrages must have taken place, as usual, at Easter."

"The great riots at Odessa in 1881, when many of our people were killed, and many others seriously injured, commenced on the first day of Easter week. And so have all the other great uprisings in Russia against the Jews. The arrival of the Easter week is always heralded by the Russians with the firing of guns into the air——"

"And if they see a Jew about they have a shot at him, do they?" asked the reporter.

"That's just what it means; so members of the Hebrew community take all sorts of care they are not about just then."

"Have you had any personal experiences of such attacks as these?"

"Well, I was in Odessa when the riots occurred three years ago, and a number of Jews were killed, but I was not myself attacked. My brother was, but he escaped. The houses there, you must know, surround immense courtyards, to which entrance is gained by a sort of lane way, closed with gates. One great house may be the home of hundreds of families. When there is danger the gates are at once shut.

"These particular riots were caused by an attack on the Jews by the soldiers, which was started by the fact that a larrikin who had stolen a 5-rouble note from a soldier in the street had run into a Jew's shop to escape. Three days' slaughter followed. Christians and Jews had long butchers' knives, and had stand-up fights in the streets.

"My brother was walking along the street with a grey-bearded man, when he found that the gates of the place where he lived had been closed, and a fight was going on inside. Some hundreds of men who had been locked out caught sight of them, and pursued them. My brother saved his life by flight, but he could do nothing to help his companion, who was caught, and so

to help his companion, who was caught, and so much injured that he afterwards died.

"My own experiences only illustrate the general detestation we are held in. About four years ago, for instance, I was coming home from some bicycle sports with two companions, when I was struck in the middle of the back with a brick. The pain almost prostrated me, but I looked around and saw about 50 men and boys behind me, all laughing heartily.

"On the same day about 200 little Christian boys got hold of a Jew with a long beard, and pulled him all over all the place by it, besides beating him with sticks and stones, injuring him so much that he had to be taken to the hospital."

"But don't the authorities afford any protection from such attacks?"

"In the case I have just mentioned, the Cossacks came up on their horses as it was going on, but the boys simply scattered, and they didn't take the trouble to make a single arrest."

"The Jew, then, in Russia, is treated by the Christian boy much the same as the Christian boy in this country treats the common or garden variety of Chinaman, when he gets a chance?"

"Worse—ten thousand times worse! Compared with the Jew in Russia, the Chinaman in this country is an idol. Whenever a Jew passes 10 or 15 Christian young fellows in Russia, they are sure to start after him, to throw bricks or stones

at him, and to try and injure him in every way possible."

He pulled up his shirt sleeve.

"That," he said, displaying a large scar on his wrist, "is the mark of a knife wound, inflicted some years ago upon me by a big fellow, the leader of two or three who were 'chasing me for fun,' as I suppose they called it. I outdistanced the others, but this fellow caught me, and as I turned when he reached me, and asked him what he wanted, he struck at me with a large butcher's knife, at the same time calling

a large butcher's knife, at the same time calling me the Russian equivalent for 'a — Jew.' He caught hold of me, but I struggled desperately, seeing the others coming, and, when he tripped, I got free and escaped."

"Surely the authorities inflict some punishment, though, when such murders and outrages as these now reported, occur?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure they do. After the great riots in Odessa three years ago, they actually arrested no fewer than 2000 of the offenders, and, as a punishment for having killed and maimed many Jews, they gave them two months' imprisonment. But that was exceptionally severe. As a rule they don't try very hard to catch them at all."

"You may easily imagine that when Jews are being killed and crippled in this way, their property is not respected. Their houses and shops are robbed and sacked, and what is not stolen is destroyed."

Mr. Brodsky related another experience, which is interesting, as throwing a light upon Russian methods.

"I had joined the Socialist party some time ago," he said, "and it must have become known in some way. About 2 o'clock one morning there was a knocking at the door of my home. Five officials were there, with a warrant to search the place. All my relatives were compelled to get up and stand under guard.

"They could find no papers to convict me—mainly because they did not look in the right place—but I was marched off to gaol, and kept there six weeks, upon suspicion of being what is termed 'a political criminal,' before being released. If they had found the papers, I should probably not be here now.

"They deal very effectively with political criminals in Russia," the speaker continued. "They merely disappear, and nothing more is ever heard of them.

"Which means—what, that they are murdered?" inquired the reporter.

"Exactly. It is accomplished quietly somehow

Exactly. It is accomplished quietly somenow in the gaol, and no fuss is ever made about it. I had a cousin who joined the Socialist party, and who soon afterwards disappeared, and was never heard of again. As a rule, in such cases, the victim is decoyed away by some means and arrested 'unofficially.' "

The "Evening News" representative inquired whether Mr. Brodsky was not afraid that a Russian gunboat or other expedition might be sent out to capture him for having spoken thus unreservedly for publication.

He laughed. "Not in this country," he said. "One may speak freely here, and be protected, too. But in Russia—ah, well, it is no safeguard there to be able to prove what you say. There it is a crime to try and show that a fact is a fact, if the fact be not a pleasant one for the authorities to be reminded of."
