

CORRESPONDENCE

In the house of Rabbi Pesses

Berdytchew*, Russia, July 29, 1894 10 P.M.

My Dear All,

This has been the saddest day of sight-seeing of all My life. I had seen filth and poverty before, but never anything To equal those I beheld here today. I had been amply Prepared for these sights, prior to my coming here, but the Reality surpassed in abject misery even the worst anti-cipations. Berdytchew is a city of 70,000 population of which 65,000 are Jews, and, bearing a few exceptions, the filthiest I have ever seen. Our filthiest quarters in our slums at home, even China town of San Francisco, is a Paradise compared with these. There are no streets, No pavements, no houses, no shops. A mass Of one-story huts and shanties irregularly thrown together & separated by a few courts and crooked allies, relieved here & there by a church or synag. Constitutes the main part of the city. The stores are mainly on benches or on the ground in the streets or in holes in the ground or along the shanties. The so-called streets are in a frightful

*Berdichev

condition, one's life is not safe walking through them. The grown folks are in tatters & rags, the children scarcely half clad, and there is a tremendous number of them. Of sanitary arrangements they have absolutely none here, & nothing of modern improvements, not even Gas, except such as is generated by the filth of the town. 50% of the people live off trade, mostly among themselves, 25% are paupers, the other 25% are merchants, or laborers waiting for all sorts of jobs. These are men of enormous strength. I have seen some of them carrying loads, that seemed to me would break down a horse, and all for a paltry few pennies. They have no moving wagons and few carts here, these men's backs take their places. The few droshkies, horrible to behold, are owned by Jews and driven by them.

The cause of much of this sad state of affairs must be traced to the driving of the Jews from the Villages to the cities. There is no room for them here, yet the Gov't. will not permit them to live in the

Villages, but crowds them into a few cities, to eat each other
Up & to choke each other to death. As many as five families
are frequently crowded into one room. Every aesthetic sense, every sense
of modesty & common decency is blunted, if not killed.
For want of means few of these people emigrate. They are
Compelled to stay here and rot to pieces.

The blame for this miserable state of affairs
rests not entirely with the Jew. Though the Jews
form 95% of the population, they have no right
to vote. The government of the city is in the
hands of Russian Christians, as these alone have
the right to vote for & elect the mayor & the
city elders. The filth of the city is the best
proof of the excellence of their government.
As I walked through the town in company with
The Rabbi, they all rushed to the doors, some with trembling
& blanched faces, suspecting me to be a Govern-
ment official inspecting their quarters with
evil intentions. The whole place has the

Appearance of a huge tipsy camp. I doubt whether there is a Negro settlement in any part of the United States as wretched as that of the Jews here. And yet the Rabbi here speaks well of their industry Sobriety, peacefulness, & morality. There is one quarter Here a little more respectable, occupied by the well-to-do of our people, and by Russian Gov't. officials.

I shall have much more to say of this place in due time. My heart is too sad at the present moment to continue this lamentation. I shall leave within a few moments for Warshau, expecting to reach there to-morrow night. I was received here upon my arrival by Rabbi Pezzes, & Dr. Sperling (?) who had been apprised of my coming. They showed me every attention in their power. These gentlemen are to be pitied. They are lost here. They droop & wither for the want of cultured surroundings. There is nothing here either for the eye or ear or mind except the sight & contemplation of misery.

Your Devoted,

Krauskopf

Warschau July 31 1894 11 P.M.

My Dear All,

Am about to say Good Bye to Russia, at least for the present. Leave At 11.45 for St. Gallen via Vienna & Munich, expecting to reach there Aug. 2nd. to find the Kohns there. I shall hold myself ready for a call to St. Petersburg any time. Have been kindly received here and have spent a profitable day & a half in the former capital of Poland. I am very favorably impressed with this city and its people and its institutions of which I shall have much to say in due time. I was delighted with the cable from home received yesterday. It was the first message I had from you since June 20, received = Stockholm early = July. I shall undoubtedly find much mail in St. Gallen. I am anxious to get here & to get some rest. I am pretty well worn out. With love to all of you, esp. to the little darling. From Your Devoted Krauskopf

Kiev, Hotel 'Europe July 29, 1894

My Dear all,

Having a few moments to spare before leaving for Berdytchew, The mecca of Russian Jews, I shall devote them to giving a brief account of yesterday's happenings, and for the want of a Postal card or letterpaper, shall make use of this paper of my note book. Arrived here at noon yesterday, after a fifteen hours journey from Odessa. Was received at station by Mr. Weinsein a young attorney here having been ordered to await my arrival by Mr.

Margulis of Odessa. We drove to the house of counselor Baratz one of the most prominent and intelligent Jews of Russia, a member of the council of Jews at St. Petersburg which convened at the call of the Russian Govt. Was pleasantly received by him, having been informed of my coming by friends from cities which I have already visited. After lunching with him and family we drove for an hour through the city seeing nothing particularly noteworthy & suffering considerably from the most wretched cobblestone paving I have just had the misfortune of travelling upon. This torture over, we called at the house of Dr. Mandelstam, said to be one of the most prominent eye-physicians of Russia. Together with him we then went to the palatial home of Mr. Brodsky, the Rothschild of Russia, a man estimated to be worth about 20 millions Rubels. There, a number of other prominent gentlemen & ladies awaited my arrival, having been informed of my coming, and gathered seated in a large semicircle-their exquisitely beautiful garden listened attentively to the story of my entrance into Russia, of my work at St. P. of my observations _____* since comments & discussion followed; and then Dinner, in the garden, which proved to be a most sociable affair, one of the guests being a personage no less distinguished than Baron Guinsburg of St. Petersburg. After dinner a general chat ensued about Russian & American affairs & I secured much interesting information. They coaxed me real hard to go to Kiev another day but I had to decline with sincere regrets as my time was limited, although myself would have liked to have spent another day in such pleasant company. Much of my conversation with the ladies young & old was conducted in the Engl. Language. The Russians are remarkably fine linguists. They are really compelled to study foreign languages, as few foreigners study their miserable tongue.

It was after 9 when we left to take tea at the home of Dr. Mandelstam, where I whiled away another pleasant hour chatting with his very intelligent family. Thence we returned to the home of Counsellor Baratz, taking tea again (in Russia the tea machine never leaves the table & I have taken to tea drinking like a duck to water) & chatting about American freedom & Russian tyranny till midnight, when they escorted me to this hotel, & where I am now awaiting young Mr. Baaratz to accompany me to the train to Berdytchew, where the greatest number of Jews of any Russian city-about 90% of the population are said to live crowded together in the most abject misery. Goodbye all. Of course I am still without mail from home & I have almost given up hope-for letters. They will prob. Turn up after my return home. Love to the darlings from their Papa.

* Unable to decipher.

Aug. 4, 1894
My Dear All,

I am in civilized lands once more, and breathing once more free air. What a contrast__this land of the free & noble Swiss and yonder land of oppression! I can scarcely realize the change yet. I have been walking as if in a dream, ever since I am here, drinking in full draughts not only the invigorating Alpine air but also the elevating spirit of the free & noble Swiss. Until I arrived here I did not know how tired I was. The reaction set in almost immediately after my arrival, and so strong was its hold upon me that until now I could not summon energy enough to write a line, not even to my dear ones at home. The cause of this neglect, however, was not entirely due to my exhaustion, but also to a new condition which arose, & which considerably unsettled my plans. A telegram arrived from St. Petersburg yesterday. Signed by the Chairman of the Jewish Com. of St. P. saying that conditions have arisen which require my immediate return to St. Petersb. I instantly wired to the American Minister asking what these conditions are, & whether my return is absolutely necessary. Have not received an answer yet, & cannot tell whither my course now will lead, whether back to Russia, or further on in Switzerland & into Italy. It is this fact also that has prevented my calling to you, as I had intended, to relieve your fears about me by a knowledge that I am no longer within the grasp of Russian autocracy. Of course the first inquiry after my arrival here was for mail. A visit to Magelin & Co. was rewarded with one letter, #6, dated July 19. As I had received but the first letter the intervening four letters must be awaiting me somewhere, but where I do not know. However, as the one received was the latest, and its content assured me that all was going on well at home till that time, I was quite contented. Please to accept my heartiest thanks to both of you, Nettie & Mona, for the detailed information about my dear ones, for the assurances that they are well & happy, & for your kind efforts in making them so. Was glad to hear that Harold's & Etta's birthday parties were such a perfect success, and that the former suffered in no wise because of my absence. I feel sure that of the two I felt the absence infinitely more than he did. Glad that my cable arrived in due time, in fact, arrived even before I sent it considering the difference of eight hours betw. Cape May & St. P. I had all along even doubted whether my messages, being mainly in cipher, were permitted to leave Russia, but it seems plain now that the Govt. had resolved to extend to me every freedom.

I was disappointed not to find Mr. Kohn & Harry here, as we had agreed. If I am not obliged to return to Russia, I shall hunt them up, somewhere in the interior of Switzerland, where Mr. Kohn is taking a cure. It is probable that all of my missing letters are in Harry's possession. As to your returning to Philad. making your arrangements so as to be home again on the last day of August, on which day, if all goes well. I expect to arrive, latest in Sept. Three numbers of the Lyceum arrived here, at Pulaski's office, containing the first two or three instalments of my Diary, & also some sad news, such as the death of Messrs. Abeles, Waldauer & the son of Abe Wein. I shall write to their families to-day or to-morrow.__ I have been very pleasantly entertained at the _____* last evening, & have an invitation from them for an Ausflug into the mountains. Oh how I wish I could stay here a month or so, for rest, recuperation, & inspiration. I love Switzerland & its mountains more than any other scenery in the world. I wish all of you

*Unable to decipher.

were, & could remain here a couple of years or so. Mind & body, heart & soul would be lastingly benefited by such a stay. Who knows but that this wish may yet be realized! I suppose Henry & Flora & Alb. & Clara & Sarah had written in some of the letters not yet received. I hope they are all well, & that you Hen & Flora are getting your much needed rest. Sorry to hear that you Clara are still having stomach trouble with the little ones. I do hope that you are in Cape May now. If so, together with the Armholds, you all must form a congenial party. I must stop. Mr. Pulaski will not give me more time. He wants to make a * _____ with me. With love Your Devoted Krauskopf.

- Unable to decipher.

Jekatermoslaws July 23/11 1894

My Dear All

Since last I wrote you, I have experienced much hardship, but have also gained much useful knowledge. The past two days have been the most enjoyable of all my trip. They were spent among the Jewish colonies in this province, about two hundred miles from here. The first hundred miles were made by rail, the last hundred on country wagons, over country roads, amidst insufferable heat and dust. The hardships however were more than counterbalanced by the joy I felt in seeing Jewish colonies of real farmers, of mingling with them, of watching them at their work, and of sharing home-life. I have never seen a set of harder working toilers in all my life. They do all the work themselves, and their women and children are as active on the fields as the men themselves. This being harvest time, I had the best opportunity of seeing them at work. Their farms are superior to those of their Russian Gentile neighbors, and their houses certainly cleaner. Their homes are adobe buildings, with thatched roofs and floorless. There are no trees in this part of Russia, and no coal, and wood therefore is a great scarcity, as is also water. Irrigation is not yet known here. Of the 17 colonies in this province I visited five. Of my reception and entertainment among them I shall have much to say and write upon my return. Taken all in all, Sunday & Monday of this week were two of the pleasantest days I have spent for some time, though strain was quite great. Every bone of my body aches from the jolting of two days of wagon-rides, and I feel burnt & parched & suffocated from the heat and dust. Besides, I am longing for a night's rest. Of the last seven nights I have had my clothes off but twice, the other five nights were spent either in the trains or in the wagons. And to-night I have another such sleepless night in the train. I shall leave here 4:30 this afternoon for Odessa where I expect to arrive at 8 to-morrow evening, travelling by rail till to-morrow morning, and by boat the remainder of the trip. Mr. Bramsen, the young attorney, my pleasant companion from St. Petersburg through the Colonies, to here, leaves me to-day, and Mr. Hoffman, Secretary of the Colonial Association, accompanies me to Odessa. I shall meet a number of prominent people at that place, who will aid me in the continuance of my investigation. From Odessa I proceed to Kiev, thence to a number of smaller cities in the neighborhood, thence to Warschau, Kowno, Wilna, Nita, Lieban, & Riga, & then probably back again to St. Petersburg. I shall very likely have companions throughout my tour through Russia. As you know by this time my Norwegian tour has been altogether given up, also my trip to Bayreuth. It now looks as if I shall have to sacrifice the Switzerland & Italian tour. In other words I shall have no vacation this summer, but lots of hard work instead. But I don't mind if the studies I make are worth the sacrifice. I begin now for the first time to understand the Russian problem, his wrongs, limitations and future. If only I were not cut off from all news from home! If I should not get forwarded mail at Odessa to-morrow I shall be exceedingly disappointed. It's five weeks since I have heard from home, and am impatient beyond endurance. I trust all is well at home. Considering the intense heat in this Southern part of Russia, & strains, and poor diet, & dirt, and want of sleep, I am feeling remarkably well.

I am writing this in the office of one of Russia's most prominent Jews, Mr. M. Mandansky, who has taken a deep interest in my mission. I don't know whether I have written connectedly or not, but I am in a hurry. I have but little time for writing now. I

shall have to have much leisure to do justice to a descriptions of my observations & experiences. Please share this with the family, Klonower, & others as you have done with my other communications. Love and kisses to darling little Manfred, & sweet little Eleanor, and to Papa's boy, Harold & to all of my dear relatives & friends.

Your,

Jos. Krauskopf