

The Proskurov Massacre

By Mark Shvidler

Excerpt from Jewish Pogroms 1918-1921. Moscow, 1926. We thank Dr. Mel Werbach for having this translated.

The Proskurov massacre was the brightest picture of the Petluras' bloodiness in their anti-Semitic actions.

Until the year 1919, Proskurov was a calm and secure town. But then everything changed suddenly. In February of 1919 the local revolutionaries and the 15th Belgorod and 8th Podolsk regiments together decided to combat "Derictoria." To repress the rebellion in Proskurov, the Zaporzhnian band of Cossacks named after Petlura, and the 3rd regiment of the Gaidamacs, were moved in. The anti-"Derictorian" rebellion was put down and the revolt digressed to Felshtin and other small towns.

To celebrate their victory, the regiment of Gaidamacs with their Ataman Semosenko decided to take revenge on the enemies. Semosenko declared the main enemies of Ukraine are Jews; thus all the rage of the Cossacks was directed against peaceful townspeople only because they were Jewish.



Semosenko acted advisedly and cold-bloodedly. The Gaidamacs, divided in groups of five or 10 men, entered into the

homes and killed everyone irregardless of gender, age and state. The massacre lasted four hours, and 1,600 people were killed. It was not customary in Russia pogroms for the Cossacks to take any belongings; they only killed. The swashers [boastful soldiers] kept silent; even next-door neighbors did not know what took place nearby. Thus, nobody was prepared to run away or hide anywhere. Only after four hours of the massacre, Commissar Taranovich was informed about the bloody actions. He appealed to the commandant of the main military body, and after that the massacre was stopped. It was February 15, 1919. The massacre was undertaken by Ataman Semosenko combined with Liverchuk, the Commandant of Proskurov.

Then swashers went to the next cities, Felshtin and Yarmolintsky. In Felshtin the Cossacks under the leadership of Semosenko during a few hours killed about 600 people. One of the main "heros" of the massacre was doctor Sorokin, who killed everyone with distinctive

barbarity. That doctor-bandit shamelessly bragged that he on his own killed the young Jewish beauty to whom other swashers had been merciful.

By contrast, both Acting Commissar Taranovich and Verchola, a member of the Proskurov Duma, publicly denounced the bloody actions of the Petluras. They saw to it that Semosenko was publicly informed about the massacre which was very important for the safety of those who still alive.



Ataman Semosenko, a Petluran, the "hero" of the Proskurov massacre, in which 1,600 people were killed in four hours. The picture was taken in the Proskurov hospital where Semosenko was treated for syphilis.