The Second Pogrom

The second Częstochowa pogrom took place on Tuesday, 27\textsuperscript{th} May 1919. A. Ch. [Alkona Chrobolosky] describes this same pogrom at length in his article, entitled \textit{``The Guilty''}, in the \textit{Częstochower Tagblat}, dated Monday, 2\textsuperscript{nd} June 1919:

Also [here] with us in Częstochowa - the holy residence that houses the Godly Mother, the patroness of Poland and symbol of human love - the black heroes of liberated Poland have finally reaped the fruit of their long, hard labour with a full hand: five people’s lives were taken in the most horrible manner, dozens were beaten to death, [and] an entire array of houses [were] robbed – [there are] many widows and orphans, hundreds of bloodied corpses and thousands of bleeding wounds in the midst of the entire Jewish population.

[All] this happened on the eve of the sacred Christian holiday of the Feast of the Ascension [\textit{Wniebowstąpienie Pańskie}].

They have all the right to be proud with their work so far. The killings, the cruelty of the frenzied mob, which trampled the dead bodies underfoot until their entrails came out; who so cruelly spared neither young nor old, neither men and nor women. The revelry and dancing of the small children around the corpses of the killed [and] the large number of Polish school youth took in the robbing and killing – showed quite clearly how thorough had been their work to poison the souls of the masses with hatred [for] human beings and wolfish blood-thirstiness.

[All this is] not surprising. Or [perhaps] not – it is [indeed] a wonder that we emerged with just these victims. Please, do read all the notices, articles and proclamations in the \textit{Gonicz Częstochowski} and the \textit{Kurier Częstochowski}\textsuperscript{1} (two Polish newspapers that were published in Częstochowa). Take good note with what consistency the hate work is conducted. Every day, another news item [appears, on] how the Jews-Bolsheviks are bringing misfortune to Poland; [how] they assault the Polish military in Lemberg [Łwów], Pinsk [and] Wilno, shooting at them from [around] the corners; [how] they make every effort to prevent Poland from becoming unified, interfering with the Paris Peace Conference [1919-1920], conducting Bolshevik propaganda and, above all, [how] they are making Poland starve and causing the great price increases – and you will glean a concept of how people have been turned into blood-thirsty animals.

But upon calling out the beast out, in its most terrifying form, even the trainers themselves were fearful of it - and a few individual priests, who had for so long preached from their pulpits the true “love of mankind” of hating Jews, attempted to hold the raging multitude back in some isolated cases.

But it was already too late. “You have called me, and I am here!”’, argued the beast with the tongue of Balaam’s ass\textsuperscript{2}. “Until now, you have incited us against the Jew - and now you are protecting him yourself!”, shouted the wild mob. “You have sold yourself, Holy Father, into the sack!”\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} [TN: Częstochowa Herald and Courier, respectively.]

\textsuperscript{2} [TN: See Numbers 22:22-33.]

\textsuperscript{3} [TN: Viz. blinded by money, you have fallen into his trap.]
What the Kurier wrote is actually absolutely correct - that these bloody disturbances were called out by secret, accused enemies of Poland. But what is not true is that they were secret and unknown. Not true! Everyone knows Poland’s true enemy very well. Ah, all too well! Yet no one hinders them in their work - their newspapers are not closed down, their proclamations are completely legal, [and] no pogroms are perpetrated on their clubs. Nobody [even] considers laying a hand on them. On the contrary, they occupy the foremost positions in all representative [bodies] of the people - from the high Sejm to the City Council.

The chronicle of the Częstochowa Jewry’s most fearsome day was as follows:

Poland was in the midst of its armour of the [land]-grabbing wars which started immediately with Poland’s liberation. Among the different military units billeted in Częstochowa, as a city near Oberschlesien [Górny Śląsk or Upper Silesia], where the fighting against the Germans was taking place, were also “Hallerczykes” - the legion that [Józef] Haller, a former gymnastics school teacher in Lemberg [Lvów], had organised in France - and “Poznańczykes” - Germanised Poles mobilised in the Poznań region, which had been given over to Poland after the First World War. They could not speak any Polish but, to compensate, they knew well the work of cutting off Jewish beards and bashing Jewish heads. On a daily basis, this happened throughout Poland, and also on the streets of Częstochowa.

Unemployment and hunger reigned among the masses. The factories were emptied. The impoverished masses maintained their souls with “darmocha” [Pol., charity] - the aid that they received, mainly from America. Frequent demonstrations were held in front of the Town Hall by the unemployed, demanding jobs. The embitterment of the masses grew and, together with it, [grew] the agitation against Jews. The municipal authorities organised a little public work in paving the streets. On that day, a large number of these same workers were working with spades and pick-axes on the Second Aleja.

Into this embittered and heated atmosphere, whether by accident or organised intentionally, a blazing match was thrown, as if into a powder keg. This was the rumour that Jews had shot a Hallerczyk. In truth, nobody had been shot. An inquest later revealed that a soldier - not a Hallerczyk - had been struck on the head with something, but with what and how could not be determined.

Almost at the same time - this was at lunchtime, two policemen went to the Jewish barber-surgeon Mojsze Nasanowicz, who had a hairdressing salon on the Second Aleja, and called him to the aid of an injured person. Nasanowicz took his instruments and went along with the constables. Somebody had spread a rumour, amongst municipal workers in the street, to the effect that the Jew who had shot the Hallerczyk had been arrested and, here, he was being escorted. At once, they set upon the barber-surgeon Mojsze Nasanowicz, who was walking in the company of [the] two policemen - and they killed him on the spot with spades and pick-axes. The municipal workers were soon joined by other hooligans, soldiers [and] school youth. The mob sallied forth onto the poor Jewish streets and the gory work began.

The pogrom, in general, was murderous and gruesome. The mob was brutal and acted wildly. Any Jew found in the street was murderously beaten. A great many Jewish shops and houses were robbed. A great number of military, from different units, took part in the pogrom. The pogrom lasted all of Tuesday and through the night into Wednesday.

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[TN: Poland’s wars against Lithuania, Ukraine and the Soviet Union, which decided its borders.]
[TN: Ref. to the Silesian Uprisings, when Ethnic Polish separatists sought to have the area transferred from the Weimar Republic to the newly-founded Polish Republic.]
On the Wednesday morning, a terrifying scene of destruction was revealed to the Jewish populace. In the morgue at the Jewish Hospital lay the four dead (the fifth, Nasanowicz, was at the Św. Maria [St. Mary’s] Hospital on the Second Aleja), as a lifeless testimony of a cruelty and brutality which had very few parallels in history.

The Attack on the Shochtim [Ritual Slaughterers]

The *shochtim*, Nechemie Gotlib, Jechezkiel Bergman and Mojsze Dzialowski, were at the abattoir in the courtyard of the [Old] Synagogue. They heard the mob with the *Hallerczykes* approaching. To hide, they went inside the residence of the synagogue’s Christian *stróż* [watchman]. The mob entered the house [and] first dragged the *shochet* Gotlib out into the yard. They gave him such a long beating, with crowbars and stones, that he was left lying dead. The two others managed to escape. The *shochet* Jechezkiel Bergman was attacked on the way, and he was beaten in such a manner that it was necessary to take him to the Jewish Hospital.

From the dead *shochet* Gotlib, they stole 1,200 marks and his slaughtering knives. The victim left behind a wife and six children. From the *shochet* Mojsze Dzialowski, they took an overcoat and 500 marks.

After that, the hooligans entered the residence of the synagogue’s *shames* [custodian], Machel Rozenberg. They vigorous beat his wife Iska and his son Majlich, such that they were taken to the Jewish Hospital.

The Attack on the Synagogue

The *pogromczykes* then went over to the Synagogue, tore open the door and gate [and] flung cupboards and the Holy Ark open, searching everywhere. A Torah scroll was later found lying on the ground in the Synagogue.

On ul. Nadrzeczna

The *pogromczykes* broke open the door of ul. Nadrzeczna 34, hacked out almost all the building’s windowpanes, tore off the window frames, broke down the door to the baker Jakow Gelbard’s apartment, [and] stole all the clothes from the wardrobes and some 700 marks in cash. They severely beat up the boy Abram-Szymon Gelbard.

In house № 38, the *pogromczykes* tore open the door of Finkelsztajn’s dwelling, where only his ailing wife and a daughter were. Here, the mob overturned everything in the house [and] broke open a small strongbox. In the same building, they also broke open the doors of the Jewish tenants Icze-Mendel Dukat, Icze-Majer Tuchmajer and Icze Kantor. They were looking everywhere for weapons. From one house, they took an axe.

On ul. Mostowa

Szlojme Brokman’s shop and residence on Mostowa 11 constituted a terrible ruin. The multitude broke everything that was to be found here, without leaving a single window-pane whole. The Brokman family is the one that suffered the most. Besides killing the son, Mojsze Brokman, the hooligans also viciously beat the shopkeeper, Szlojme, who had to be taken to the hospital, wounded his two daughters and wife, and broke the leg of the second son Lajzer.

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6 [TN: The marks mentioned throughout this article are Polish marks, a currency in use between 1918-1924.]
When the hooligans broke into Rajnman’s dwelling on the same street, he took up an axe with which to defend himself. The pogromczykes fetched the police to help them unarm the Jew. The constable rescued Rajnman and gave him back the sum of money that had been robbed from him.

The Train from Kielce

A group of hooligans waited for the train arriving from Kielce and, with a shout of “Hurra na Żydów!” [Hurrah, get the Jews!], they set upon the arriving Jewish passengers and beat them murderously. The recruit Mayer Werthajm from Włoszczowa, who had come to present himself for military [service], was so badly beaten that he fell unconscious. He was saved by Miss Sziper and the student Helberg, who took him into their home. A gold watch was also stolen from him. M. Faktor from Piotrków, who also arrived on the train, was attacked by a group of Polish school students, who stole from him a [loaf of] bread and other things that he was carrying with him. The Christian proprietor of Hotel Kaliski, on ul. Dojazdowa, would not allow the Jewish [visitors], who were saved from the mob, to spend the night [there]. He told the Jews that the pogroms against them were completely justified.

It was mostly young people and school students who participated in this operation. The Jewish tenants of ul. Dojazdowa 9 saw the son of their stróż [watchman] leading a group of young hooligans, who attacked the incoming passengers with sticks and then beat them murderously.

Other Details

Mordche Epelbaum, [of] Warszawska 39, together with his wife and children, arrived from Kielce at half past nine in the evening. His eighteen-year-old son Jechiel was struck, with a fist, a mighty blow in the eye, which blinded him. Epelbaum himself was assaulted by a student from [Wincenty] Szudejko’s gymnazjum. A Jewish girl from Dojazdowa 13 shielded Epelbaum and began screaming at the hooligan to kill her instead of her father. This moved a priest and an officer to save Epelbaum and to take him over to the Hotel Angielski [English]. Mrs Tomczyk, proprietor of the hotel, helped take the Jew into her house.

Fifteen-year-old Alte-Nacha Zajdman [of] Nadrzeczna 41 was assualted in the Synagogue courtyard by the pogromczykes, who beat her badly about the head and face. The girl became bereft of reason.

Szmul Frajman, who had arrived on the Kielce train, was set upon by Hallerczykes. who beat him severely about the face and gave him [two] black eyes. At Mordche Szmayer’s [on ul.] Fabryczna, they stole all the linen, garments, shoes and other items worth several thousand marks. At Josef Broniatowski’s dwelling [on] Nadrzeczna 46, the hooligans broke down the door, smashed up the cupboards and beds, and stole a sum of 400 marks. Mojsze Grinberg [of] Garncarska 70 was badly beaten on the head and sides.

Mojsze Buchner [of] Warszawska 35 was set upon by a mob, among whom were many pupils from Koźmiński’s gymnazjum, who began beating him with crowbars\(^7\). Buchner tried to save himself [by fleeing] to house No 37 on that same street. The building’s Christian neighbours pushed him away from the door. Once again, blows began to rain down on him from all sides. He was left lying unconscious. When he got up, he dragged himself to a house which belonged to a Christian, Kapalski, but the neighbours in the building, once again, shut the door and did not let him in.

On ul. Ogrodowa, two Christians attacked Mendel Pejsak [of] Krakowska 23, a-thinking he was dead.

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\(^7\) [*TN: “Drenger” (דרענגער) in the original, which can mean either crowbars or poles/staffs, depending on the context.*]
Other victims of the pogrom were Majer Berkowicz, Senatorska 20; Burech Brylant, Wieluń; Aron Fajerman, Nadrzeczna 2; Ludwik Montag, Ostatni Grosz; Aron-Dawid Goldberg, Warszawska 28; Jakow Szpaltyn, the widow Praszkiewicz, Mojsze Dawidowicz [and] Abram-Henech Finkelsztajn – Nadrzeczna 38.

The Police

The police, in general, did not get involved, and did not take the necessary measures to stop the pogrom. The hooligans shouted the words “Żydowskie pachołki” [Jewish lackeys] at the individual policemen who made attempts to stop the raging crowd. When the commander of the police, Prożmowski, tried to chase away the pogromczykes, the mob threw him off his horse. Generally, the police remained “neutral” throughout the entire duration of these terrifying events, and did not take the appropriate measures to protect the lives, property and goods of the Jewish population.

The Funeral

Jewish Kehilla; the Jewish member of the Częstochowa City Council; a delegation of the Jewish press, among whom was the editor of the Łódźer Tageblatt [Daily], J. [Jeszaja] Uger; a delegation from the Jewish Gymnazjum, headed by the headmaster, Prof Bałaban, [and] representatives of all the Częstochowa Jewish societies and professional unions. The Sejm deputy from Łódź, Dr Rozenblat, also participated in the funeral.

In Front of the Jewish Hospital

The funeral procession stopped in front of the Jewish Hospital, from where the other four martyrs were carried out. The coffins were borne to the cemetery by the friends and comrades of the slain. One of the pall-bearers was the deputy, Dr Rozenblat.

When the four coffins with the four martyrs appeared at the gate of the Jewish Hospital, the crowd of many thousands broke out in a terrible lament. All wept bitterly, without exception. Even the policemen, who kept order, could not contain themselves and brushed away tears.

The screams and lamentations were even greater at the cemetery, when the martyrs were buried, side by side, in a large common grave. Each time the cantor recited the El Moleh Rachamim [God Full of Compassion; memorial prayer] and called out the names of the fallen victims, the cries were indescribable.
There were no eulogies. The demonstration was silent, yet the cries pierced the heavens – and none of those present will ever be able to forget it.

The Częstochowa Pogrom in the Polish Sejm

At the Polish Sejm’s session on Friday, 30th May, the Jewish Deputy, Hartglas, proposed an urgent motion regarding the pogrom in Częstochowa. Deputy [Stanisław] Osiecki replied that there were no official reports of any such pogrom. As a result, the urgency of the proposal was rejected. The antisemitic Warsaw [Gazeta Poranna] Dwa Grosze [Two Grosz Morning Newspaper] wrote, in its report on Deputy Hartglas’ proposal, that the whole story of the pogrom was a fiction.

In the Częstochowa City Council

On Wednesday, 28th May, a session of the Częstochowa City Council was held. The Chairman of the City Council was Dr Nowak, a well-known Częstochowa antisemite. The Jewish councillors entered the chamber with bowed heads and did not greet anyone. The first item on the session’s agenda was whether to send a telegram of condolence to the Polish workers in Cieszyn, who had been killed in a coalmining catastrophe (Cieszyn [then] belonged to Czechoslovakia).

The Mayor of Częstochowa, [Aleksander] Bantkie-Stężyński, read a declaration regarding the pogrom, which said the following:

At a time when we stand just twenty verst\(^4\) from the enemy’s border, and the unity of all residents is essential, there are provocateurs and Bolsheviks\(^3\) who incite one part of the population against the other and disturbances break out, which are so harmful to the Fatherland. The Mayor expresses regret for these sorrowful events and hopes that they will not be repeated.

Then, Raphael Federman of the Vereinigte fraction proposed an urgent motion, signed by all the Jewish councillors and the Polish Socialists (PPS), demanding that the City Council publicly condemn the brutal murders and assaults on the Jewish populace, to appoint a commission to investigate the causes of the previous day’s pogrom, to determine the scope of the damages to the sufferers and to take measures to put the guilty [parties] into the hands of justice.

The PPS proposed a particularly urgent motion, demanding the immediate expulsion, from Częstochowa, of the military units which had taken part in the pogrom, the formation of an investigatory commission with the participation of the Jewish Kehilla, and the allocation of state funds, by the Home Office, to maintain the families left behind by the pogrom victims.

Councillor Józef Aronowicz (Bund) declared, on behalf of all the Jewish councillors, that no motives needed to be given for the urgency of this motion. The City Council only acknowledged the urgency of the motion, yet did not allow the proposal itself to be discussed and be put to the vote. Instead, it was referred municipal authorities. Councillor Federman and other Jewish councillors protested against this and left the chamber.

At the City Council’s second session on 5th June, Councillor Aleksander Bem (Poalei Zion) inquired of the City Council as to why there had been no response yet to the question regarding the pogrom, which had been referred to the municipal authorities the previous week.

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1. [TN: A verst is an obsolete Russian unit of measurement, equal to 1.0668 kilometres or 0.6629 miles.]
2. Compare with the agitation of the Kurier against the “hidden Bolsheviks” — the Editors.
The Mayor declares that he has relayed all the material pertaining to the issue to the Home Office. Councillors Sztyller, Zandsztajn (Zionist) and Helman speak against the Mayor. Then, a motion to adjourn the discussion is forcefully interjected. Councillor Federman protests against this sharply and says, “At the last session, our mouths were shut by a manoeuvre - and they wish to once more seal our tongues. The City Council sends commiserative telegrams to the Polish workers in foreign countries, but refuses to condemn the brutal murder of innocent people, which is taking place before their very own eyes. We cannot remain calm, while seeing how the murderers who perpetrated these horrific killings go about freely in the streets”. But the antisemitic majority on the City Council decided to bring this discussion to an end.

Investigations

On 1\textsuperscript{st} June, a joint commission, made up of two Americans, two Englishmen and two Frenchmen, came to Częstochowa to investigate the pogrom. This commission conferred with representatives of the Jewish Kehilla – Rabbi Nachum Asz, Szmul Goldsztajn, the lawyer Glikson, Leon Wajnberg, Dr Kohn and Dr Wolberg. The Jewish representatives informed the mission of the entire course of the events and the reasons leading up to the pogrom.

Vice-Minister\textsuperscript{9} [Józef] Beck also came to Częstochowa to investigate the pogrom and, as a result of his conference with the editors of the two Polish newspapers in Częstochowa, the Goniec and the Kurier – whom the Jewish populace blamed as being the main inciters and most responsible for the pogrom - he demanded of the editors not to print anything against Jews for ten days.

A Reward of One Thousand Marks

In connection with the pogrom, the police issued an announcement offering a reward of one thousand marks to anyone who could discover who had wounded the Hallerczyk on whose account the pogrom had broken out. A delegation of Jewish recruits presented itself before the police commander and inquired of him why no prize had been announced for those who uncovered the five Jewish victims’ murderers, who were going about the streets of Częstochowa untroubled.

An Accusing Document

A delegation from the Częstochowa Workers' Council of Delegates presented the Home Office in Warsaw with the following memorandum:

\begin{quote}
Częstochowa, 27\textsuperscript{th} May 1919,
To the Home Office,

On 17\textsuperscript{th} May of this year, the Executive Committee of the Częstochowa Workers’ Council of Delegates sent the following telegram:

‘We have been informed that the People’s Militia\textsuperscript{10} is leaving Częstochowa. Due to the agitated mood and the possibility of anti-Jewish disturbances, we ask that the departure of the militia, in which the populace has trust, be postponed.’
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{9} [TN: Beck served as Vice-Prime Minister and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in Piłsudski’s government during 1930–1932; in 1919, he was a military commander and a close aide of Piłsudski, but not yet Vice-Minister.]

\textsuperscript{10} [TN: “Milicja Ludowa” – the paramilitary forces of the PPS.]
The Ministry has underestimated our warning. Today, a pogrom has taken place in Częstochowa, in which ‘Hallerczykes’ and ‘Poznańczykes’, street-youths and dark forces participated.

The [high] commands of the police [and] the municipality and the military leadership were shown to be powerless and helpless in the face of the mob. The blood of the three\(^\text{11}\) victims clearly falls upon those who could have prevented these events by retaining the militia in Częstochowa and did not find it fitting to meet our request.

The Częstochowa Workers’ Council of Delegates
Chairman, Józef Dziuba

Those Murdered:

**Mojsze Nasanowicz** – a barber-surgeon, Second Aleja 20; killed by the mob while on his way to bandage a wounded person, accompanied by two constables.

**Herszl Dzialoszyński** – aged 54, a real estate agent; beaten by the hooligans, in the Old Market Square, with crowbars and axes for so long, that he fell to the ground senseless and his brains came out of his head. He was taken dying to the hospital, where he died shortly thereafter.

**Nechemie Gotlib** – First Aleja 2, a shochet, aged 45; killed by the hooligans in the Synagogue courtyard. He was brought dying to the hospital, where he died shortly.

**Mojsze Brokman** – ul. Mostowa 11, aged 26; attacked by the murderers as he attempted to enter the building’s gate. He was brought in a moribund state to the hospital, where he died shortly.

**Anszel Cymerman** – aged 20, a bakery worker, ul. Garncarska 14; attacked by the murderers as he attempted to enter the building’s gate. He was brought in a moribund state to the hospital, where he suffered in horrible pain all through the night, and died on Wednesday morning.

Seriously Injured:

**Binem Wajnryt** – aged 37, ul. Targowa 5; his face and hands were terribly mutilated. He was standing in the marketplace with merchandise when the murderers set upon him, threw him into the gutter, and stabbed him until he was left unconscious.

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\(^{11}\) [TN: As the document dates from 27th May, the day of the pogrom itself, it was most likely sent before all five victims had died.]
Mordche Trzeszniewski – aged 63, a Jewish watchman at the Talmud Torah; [as] he tried to bar the gate to protect the children, the murderers attacked him and beat him grievously.

Other Seriously Wounded Who Were at Home or in Hotels:

- Majer-Kalman Kamiński, ul. Fabryczna 7 (money, linen, etc. stolen);
- Gedalia Prelman (his wife and daughter were stabbed);
- Elia Biber, aged 57, ul. Koszarowa 28;
- Szyja Himelman, aged 24, ul. Garnsızarska 66;
- Herszl Pacanowski, ul. Zielona 7;
- Abram Glik and Mojsze-Lajb Glik, ul. Krótka 21 (many goods were stolen from them also).

Lightly Wounded:


Hela Birenbaum, aged 56, ul. Garnясьarska 65, broke a leg [or foot?] when the hooligans were chasing and beating her. Dawid Poslaniec, ul. Nadrzeczna 88, a barber aged 17; the hooligans robbed him of two hair clippers, a scissors, a razor and 250 marks in cash, and maimed him murderously. Icek Szpizman, aged 16, ul. Targowa 16, fell unconscious from the beating he received. Mendel Majtlis, aged 19, ul. Krakowska 31; Szmul Englander, aged 65, ul. Ogrodowa 27. Josef Zalcberg, aged 56, had come from Zawiercie to present his son to the Polish military, [and] the hooligans assaulted him and beat him grievously.