

Seven-eighths of the factories were idle. As for the rich grain lands of the Ukraine, about three-quarters of their produce went to Austria and Germany, this being the price paid by Skoropadsky's government for the policing of the Ukrainian Republic.

The colossal price of things was due as much to Jewish speculation as to scarcity. Everything for sale passed through the hands of a succession of middlemen before it reached the public. A consignment from Austria or Germany, or the produce of a local factory, would be bought by one speculator, sold to another, re-sold to a third, and perhaps to a fourth and a fifth. Each of the middlemen would allot himself a profit of from twenty to two hundred per cent. The same process was applied to the boots, foodstuffs, and equipment which Austrian officers and soldiers stole from their military stores and sold to the speculators.

All day long Franconi's and Robinart's, the two principal cafés of Odessa, were infested by swarms of swarthy Jews, who wandered from table to table, selling and re-selling, and piling up enormous fortunes in paper roubles. And elsewhere in the city hundreds of thousands of Russians were in little more than rags, many thousands of them half dead from want of nourishment.

As they passed the cafés where the Jews sat and haggled and made it ever more difficult for the half-starved masses to keep alive, the poorer Russians talked of pogroms. The talk culminated later, when the Germans and Austrians had withdrawn from Odessa, in massacres of the less prosperous Jews, while the richer ones, who were the real promoters of discord, were warned in time and stole away with their wealth; as