

The Tragedy of Polish Jewry



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Joint Committee for the Aid of the Jews of Poland
Jerusalem

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INTRODUCTION

The reports now published in this pamphlet were originally given at meetings held in Jerusalem on February 15 and March 17, 1940. Some of the speakers were living in Warsaw at the time of the siege and witnessed the German barbarities for three months after the fall of the city. The others had personal experience of the milder Bolshevist regime in the Russian-occupied section of Poland, and then fled for their lives to neighboring countries where they remained for some months as refugees.

All these reports are faithful and reliable accounts of the events in question by men who are in no way prone to exaggeration or overstatement.

If, nevertheless, minor errors, ambiguities, or inconsistencies may be noted, this is due to the fact that it was naturally impossible for the narrators to have been on the spot when all the incidents occurred. In some cases they have based their reports on the testimony of other reliable persons, or on facts too widely known to require verification by eye-witnesses. No one individual could have seen all that happened even in a single city, and certainly not in a great city like Warsaw, especially at a time when the Jews kept indoors as much as possible for fear of being kidnapped by Germans for forced labor, and when transport had broken down owing to the trenches, barricades, and heaps of ruins that blocked the streets. To obtain and verify first-hand reports of what happened in other localities was even more difficult, since for some months after the German conquest communications between Warsaw and the provincial towns were almost completely cut off. Then, too, the reports of both the narrators and their informants were made from memory. Nevertheless, these reports coincide in the main, and correspond very closely to the facts, so that an accurate picture of the situation emerges before the mind of the reader.

That situation is dismal and disheartening in the extreme: the existence of the whole of Polish Jewry hangs in the balance. Against a background of systematic destruction of both the temporarily defeated Polish State and the Polish people, the Germans are proceeding to exterminate the Jewish population with unspeakable cruelty. In the German-occupied areas of Poland, the Jews are subjected to monstrous physical and psychological terrorism. The methods employed include mass-butchery, starvation, and vile sanitary conditions that give rise to epidemics; ruthless crushing of the will to live and to carry on the struggle of existence; arrests; tortures that humble the human dignity of the victims to the dust; confiscation of workshops and other property; barring of any and all opportunities to earn a livelihood. The Polish Jews are also being deprived of their intellectual classes. Their schools are closed, all forms of Jewish cultural activity are prohibited. In the Russian-occupied territory, similar "achievements" have been attained by a rapid and drastic change in the economic order which, except in a few cases, has had the effect of thrusting all Jews unfitted for manual labor outside the pale of normal existence. Every form of Jewish cultural life is banned as counter-revolutionary.

And so, by the one process or the other, the 3,500,000 Polish Jews are being crushed to earth in both areas of the conquered territories. Unless the war ends soon, or some miracle comes to pass, no trace will be left of the Jewish community except a vast cemetery on Polish soil. A large and important section of the Jewish people — that section which is most strongly imbued with the national spirit, which has the greatest capacity for creative effort, which has a long history of noble achievement — now lies on the brink of annihilation, agonizing in the throes of a lingering death. What effect the impending fate of Polish Jewry will have upon the future of the Jewish people as a whole and upon the up-building of the National Home in Palestine, can readily be imagined.

We are living in the most tragic era of Jewish history since the darkest days of the Middle Ages and the Crusades. The prim-

itive savagery that we had believed to belong to the remote past, without possibility of recrudescence, has now flared up again before our eyes. The "civilization" of Attila and Ghenghiz Khan is winning new victories. The effects of those victories will be described and appraisals of the present situation made in the following pages. Perhaps these records will yield significant historical material to future students of the Jewish martyrology and of the decline of civilization as a whole. Or perhaps they are destined to serve as evidence when the hour arrives for setting up new political conditions after the downfall of the barbarians who now do everything in their power to plunge the whole world into a sea of blood and tears.

A. HARTGLAS.

THE TRAGEDY OF POLISH JEWRY

I.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE JEWS OF POLAND, AND OF THE JEWS OF WARSAW IN PARTICULAR, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

(September—December, 1939)

A. Report of A. HARTGLAS,
*President of the Zionist Organization of Poland and former
member of the Polish Sejm.*

Before the Germans took Warsaw, the Jews and the Poles suffered equally: there were killed and wounded among both peoples. On the day the war broke out hundreds of thousands of people fled from their homes. All the highways and byways were crowded with refugees — men and women, old and young. Most went on foot, no wagons or motor vehicles being obtainable. All the conveyances had been commandeered by the military authorities, and there was no petrol in any case. In the confusion wives were separated from their husbands, and children from their parents. All the while German aeroplanes droned overhead, mowing down the refugees whichever way they turned. Tens of thousands were killed on the roads. Most of the victims were Jews, because the majority of the refugees were townspeople. The villagers remained at home.

The siege of Warsaw continued from the 8th to the 29th of September. Throughout the siege the city was continuously bombed by aeroplanes and shelled by artillery. About 35% of the houses were completely demolished, and most of the others so badly damaged as to be uninhabitable. September 25 was the hardest day of the siege. About 250 German aeroplanes raided the city from nine o'clock in the morning till six in the afternoon. At first the anti-air craft batteries replied, but their fire was soon silenced; their crews lay dead beside them. Though the weather was fair, the air was so full of smoke and dust that the city was dark as night. Fires broke out in every quarter of the city,

but it was not possible to bring them under control because there had been a water shortage for several days. The Jewish quarter was bombed on the eve of Rosh Hashana and again on Yom Kippur. Nevertheless, the pious Jews went to synagogue as usual.

The Germans entered Warsaw on September 29, and immediately began to distribute bread to the population, which had had none for three weeks. Certain incidents occurred in the Jewish quarters because the people there were also in want of bread. The next day the mayor announced that the German authorities would permit no discrimination against the Jewish inhabitants. The authorities did not keep their word.

During the early days of the German occupation, bread and soup were distributed to the Jews as to the others. But it was not long before the Jews were forced out of the queues and deprived of their share.

At the outset the Jews of the German-occupied territory assumed that they would be accorded the same treatment as the Jews of Germany, but they were soon obliged to abandon that hope. Looting began immediately. German soldiers and officers entered the shops, took whatever they wanted, and walked out without paying. After the looting had gone on for two days, the German commandant issued an order prohibiting the soldiers from entering shops without special permission, and the shopkeepers from selling to the soldiers. The Jews were relieved, but only for the moment. The plundering continued. At first Jewish homes were spared, but presently the looting was extended to them as well, and went on at all hours of the day and night. Those who ventured to complain to the authorities were either turned away with a rude answer, or vanished and were never heard of again.

On October 4, 1939, the Gestapo dissolved the Jewish Community Council of Warsaw and set up a "Council of Elders" in its place. This new Council is composed of twenty-four members under the chairmanship of Mr. Tcharniakoff, an engineer. The function of this new Council is not to administer Jewish affairs, but — as defined in the letters of appointment to its members — to carry out the orders of the Gestapo. This supreme body does

not represent the organized community, and has no means of providing for the communal needs. The Jewish schools are closed. The Council cannot undertake social service activities for lack of means. In any event, it is given no opportunity to function properly. Whenever it is on the point of doing something worth while, the Gestapo intervenes. No sooner was this Council set up than it was ordered to take a census of the Jewish population, a task which absorbed the energies of all its members. At the end of October the census was complete, and the Council was making plans for useful work when the Nazi scheme for a Ghetto for the Jews of Warsaw was thrust upon its attention. When the Ghetto matter was disposed of (this was on November 10), it was succeeded in turn by the problem of the levies, the problem of the Jewish hospital, and the problem of the epidemics. Other Jewish communities had similar experiences.

A Council of Elders was also set up in Lodz. A few days later all the members but one were arrested and sent off to no one knows where. Only Mr. Ramkovsky, an elderly man, was allowed to remain in Lodz, though even he did not get off without a beating. Now he must carry on all the work of the Council single-handed.

The Germans obviously do not intend to allow the Jews to reorganize their life. They are aiming unswervingly at a single goal: the utter physical and economic destruction of the Jews. All their acts are designed to starve the Jews to death, or to degrade them into a mob of hunted and tormented creatures that will be grateful to anyone who will relieve them of their miserable lives. Such has been the German policy from the outset. One of the most harassing forms of economic oppression is the practice of seizing Jews in the streets or their homes for forced labor. Normal business activity becomes impossible if neither employers nor employees can be certain of reaching their destination when they start out in the morning. Even employees of the Council of Elders have been seized on their way to work.

A currency regulation issued in Lodz on September 19 and in Warsaw on October 13, 1939, prohibits individual Jews from having more than 2,000 zlotys in their possession at any one time. The surplus must be deposited in a restricted bank account (Sperrkonto). Banks may not pay out more than 250 zlotys a week to their Jewish depositors. Some Jews hit upon the device of depositing their funds in several banks or opening several accounts in one bank. When the Germans got wind of this, an order was issued providing that each individual's surplus funds must be deposited in a single account in one bank. Larger sums than the weekly allotment may be drawn for business purposes, but a special permit is required for each withdrawal, and the privilege exists only on paper. Even the weekly ration of 250 zlotys cannot be drawn without difficulty. While as a rule the banks are allowed to pay out this sum, the depositors must present special permits for each withdrawal, and the currency bureau is in no hurry to issue such permits. The privilege of retaining 2,000 zlotys in cash is only a snare, since German soldiers, officers, and Gestapo officials search Jewish homes day and night for arms and foreign currency. Whatever cash is found during such searches is confiscated at once. Even sums of 40 zlotys have been pilfered. If the German agent happens to be a "kindly" individual, he may leave the owner a few zlotys while he pockets a considerable sum. When hidden money is found, the entire sum is confiscated and the owner arrested.

Furthermore, the Germans have stolen or confiscated — I do not know which term applies — all the leather goods and textiles. The shops in Franziskani Street (the centre of Warsaw's leather trade) were pillaged continuously for several weeks. Lorries came day after day, and were loaded from morning to night. The work of loading was done perforce by the shopkeepers themselves and by laborers furnished by the Council of Elders. It is estimated that the goods thus seized were worth millions of zlotys.

The Jews of Lodz are permitted neither to buy nor to sell textiles and leather goods. A Jewish cobbler is unable to mend a pair of shoes for lack of leather. In theory he has the right to

apply to the head of the police department for a permit to buy the leather he needs, but this right, too, exists only on paper.

Jews are forbidden to sell or lease their business establishments without special permits from the German authorities. The idea is to prevent the transfer of Jewish firms to non-Jewish names. This was the first application of the "Aryan clause" in Poland. Converted Jews are not exempt.

All Jews are required to wear a distinguishing badge. Every Jewish business firm, and every doctor's and lawyer's office must display a large Shield of David. Christians were thus to be discouraged from having any dealings with Jews, but the results have not justified the Nazi hopes. Still, this is one more method of giving effect to the "Aryan clause."

On December 18, 1939 an order was issued requiring the Jews to register all their possessions, including household effects and clothing, valued at more than 2,000 zlotys.

The obvious purpose of the Ghetto scheme is to impoverish the Jews. The Germans knew very well that the 150,000 or 160,000 Jews living outside the area designated for the Ghetto would not be able to move their families and belongings within three days. The streets were still blocked with debris and barricades, so that vehicles could not pass, assuming any had been obtainable. Above all, the quarter designated for the Ghetto was already appallingly congested. The idea was to force the Jews to leave all their possessions behind them, so that the Germans would be able to ransack their homes at leisure.

The anti-Jewish measures in the economic sphere included dismissal of Jewish doctors from the panels of the Sick Funds, and from municipal and other institutions. A Polish lawyer was appointed as a special commissar for the council of Warsaw lawyers. This man was a Gestapo official. As soon as he took up his appointment, he announced that he would compile a new register of lawyers, which would be limited to 300 old residents of Warsaw and 300 refugees from the provinces. The names of Jewish lawyers would be strictly excluded from the new register.

Economic pressure is also the purpose of the so-called "con-

tributions." In Warsaw the financial burden of these levies was not intolerable, as 300,000 zlotys for a Jewish community of that size is not excessive. The Lodz community also paid relatively inconsiderable sums. But the levies imposed upon the smaller communities were cruelly oppressive. Pretexts for extortions were never lacking. In Warsaw, the excuse was the murder of a Polish constable; in Siedlce, funds were ostensibly collected for the destitute refugees who poured into the town. When the German consul of Cracow and his woman secretary disappeared in the vicinity of Otwock and Falenica, small towns near Warsaw, a reward of 2,000 zlotys was offered for information of their whereabouts. Their bodies were finally found in a forest near Falenica, and that was deemed a sufficient reason for imposing a fine of 150,000 zlotys upon the two towns.

Though no stock remains in the Jewish shops, their doors must be kept open. Otherwise the idle shopkeepers are liable to charges of "sabotage," the penalties for which include the death



ON THE EVE OF EXECUTION: JEWS ARRESTED WHILE AT PRAYER.

sentence. All business is paralyzed. The Jews have no alternative but to starve to death.

The physical destruction of the Jews is proceeding systematically. Jews are brutally assaulted at every turn. Many of the victims take to their beds and never rise again. The Germans enter Jewish homes at all hours of the day and night, on the pretext of making searches, and assault the occupants. The torments are beyond human endurance. Suicides during such visitations are not infrequent. When the Gestapo sent for a certain Jewish merchant of Warsaw who lived in Ogrodowa Street, he jumped out of the window of his home and was killed. He knew that he was to be questioned about his business, and preferred self-inflicted death to such questioning. A Jewish lady named Mme. Sussman also jumped out of a window in order to free herself from the extortions of the Gestapo.

The Jews of Warsaw never have more than two or three hours of uneasy sleep during the night. Their nerves have been strained to such an extent that they are all but out of their minds. Murders of Jews are of daily occurrence. Often they are massacred by scores or hundreds . . . There was the case of Stephan Luxembourg, a Jewish goldsmith of Warsaw. When German soldiers attempted to loot his place of business, he shouted for help. The soldiers left, but others soon came who searched the premises and "found" German rifle bullets which, of course, they had brought themselves. Luxembourg was then taken out and shot. Mr. Hochman, the proprietor of the Cafe Esplanade and a well-known citizen of Warsaw, was executed on a charge of "sabotage," which consisted in leaving his job when set at forced labor.

When the German troops quartered at Laskarew, a small town near Warsaw, were withdrawn, the population rejoiced. But not for long. Several days later, a squad of fourteen or fifteen German soldiers came to the town and seized 37 Jews, all of whom were led out of the town and shot. All the Jewish men were deported from Ostrow Mazowiecki or Wysoki Mazowiecki. After that, when a fire broke out in the town, the Jews were blamed,

and all who remained — 530 women and children — were taken to the outskirts and murdered. Such mass-butcheries have been carried out time and again. Eight hundred Jews of Przemysl are said to have been led across the bridge to the Russian-occupied part of the town, where most of them were put to death.

Torture and abuse of Jews go on continually. In Lodz Jewish women were ordered to scrub floors. The work in itself was not unduly hard, but they were given no cloths, and had to take off their underwear — under orders — and use it for wiping the floors. A story is current (which cannot be verified) that one day fifty Jewish girls were seized in Warsaw, taken to an apartment formerly occupied by a wealthy Jewish family and now taken over by German officers, and there raped. One night a party of Germans entered a Jewish home in Warsaw, locked the husband and wife in the bathroom, and compelled their young daughter to disrobe. Then she was ordered to sit down. The girl seated herself on a chair. No, she must sit on the floor! She sat down on a rug. No, on the bare floor! The home of a Jewish woman lawyer was entered one evening while she was entertaining some women friends and a young couple. All the women were forced to strip and dance on the table, and the young couple to cohabit in the presence of all the others. Every apartment in Warsaw is now occupied by several families of relatives or friends. When houses are searched, all the inmates are assembled and compelled to undress completely, so as to make certain they are not concealing anything.

To sum up, the Jews are not given a moment's respite by day or by night. Every Jew is liable to lose his life or his property at any moment. In Warsaw most of the victims are Jews, but in the areas annexed to the Reich (extending to Kutno and Nowy-Dwor), the Poles fare no better than the Jews.

All Jews must wear the badge. In this way they can be immediately identified when wanted for forced labor. Besides, the sight of the badge arouses the passions of the Polish mob. Wearers of the Jewish badge have no rights whatsoever, and may be assaulted without any fear of punishment. For example, when

several Jewish youths seized a Jew-baiting young Pole and turned him over to a Polish policeman, they were severely beaten by Germans for their "presumption."

The Germans are determined to destroy the Jewish intelligentsia and to wipe out all trace of culture among the Jews. The same policy is directed against the Poles. Polish as well as Jewish intellectuals have been arrested. In the Warsaw district most of the arrests were made among the Jews. The day after the Germans entered Warsaw, they arrested Dr. Zamenhoff, a nephew of the inventor of Esperanto, and his family. Dr. Zamenhoff is said to have frozen to death in prison. On December 10, 1939 mass arrests of Jewish intelligentsia were made. Almost all have since been released except the physicians and the lawyers, whom the Germans regard as particularly influential. A lawyer named Germanikoff died in prison. During the latter part of December over 150 Jewish intellectuals were arrested in Warsaw. The pretext was an attempted assault upon a Polish constable who discovered a secret Polish broadcasting station. The would-be assailant was a converted Jew by the name of Kut, who is a member of the Polish Socialist Party. The Council of Elders was ordered to deliver this man up to the authorities; otherwise 500 of the Jewish intelligentsia would be arrested.

The Jewish schools remain closed. The Polish schools were allowed to re-open, and then ordered to close again. A few days after the occupation, a number of private Jewish schools (not included in the communal system) were given permission to open, but the permission was quickly withdrawn. Now the Jewish children have no schooling facilities whatever. The University of Warsaw is still closed, by the way. Reason: There are no textbooks fit for use under a Nazi regime.

All the Jews have been expelled from Pomerania and Gdynia. The Poles too have been expelled from those localities and various others. In Wartaga and the new East Prussia (which includes the western and northwestern provinces of Poland) the Jews are being forced out of the cities. Most of the Jews of Sierpc were deported in a single day. There were similar

deportations from Sieradz and from Zdunska-Wola. The exiles were forced to cover great distances on foot. Even at that, however, they were better off than those transported by train. For example, 4,000 Jews from the Kalish district were sent in sealed railway carriages to Lukov, a small town which had been practically wiped out during the bombardments. When the carriages were opened in the presence of representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee, scores of dead, wounded, and sick were taken out. The congestion in the train was frightful, and the people had been kept without food or drink for several days. Permission to provide them with food at stations en route was unobtainable. Seven thousand Jews from Sieradz arrived in Warsaw in one day.

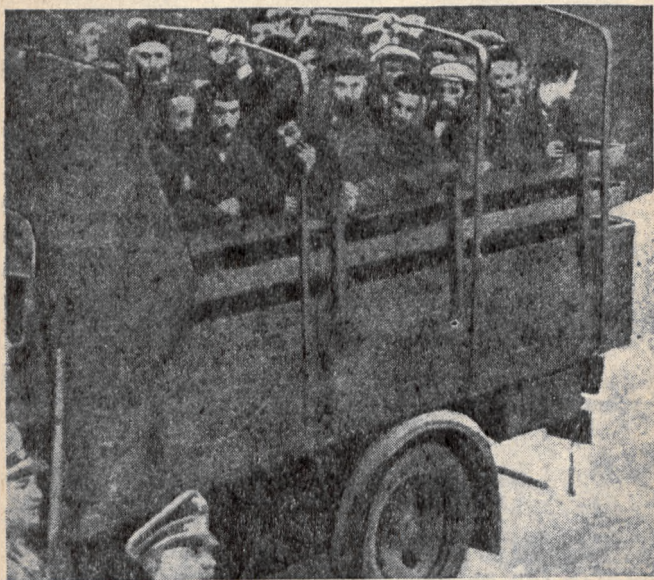
So far the plan of solving the Jewish problem by setting up a Pale of Settlement at Lublin is little more than talk. Nothing has been done beyond building some huts. The Jewish Community Council of Lublin was ordered to build these huts at its own expense. Where it would get the funds the German authorities did not care. Though about 7,000 Jews were actually sent from Czechoslovakia and Austria to Lublin, it is said that 6,000 escaped to Russia.

Both Jewish and Polish intellectuals were deported from Lodz. They were hustled into railway carriages, and locked in without even being told their destination. Some of the carriages were routed to Cracow and others to Kielce, where the exiles were released and told they were free to go anywhere they pleased, but must on no account return to Lodz. Then the Jewish Community Council of Lodz was given orders to send no less than 1,500 Jews out of the city every day. This went on until December 10, when the order was suspended — for how long no one knows. Some people are under the impression that it will be renewed in March 1940. (The fact that the order was suspended on December 10 did not prevent the expulsion of Jews from Lodz between December 16 and 20).

Epidemics are an inevitable concomitant of such conditions. The first disease to spread was typhoid. It was followed by an

epidemic of typhus. No sanitary measures can avail while people are forced to live in appallingly congested quarters, without facilities for bathing, without proper nourishment, and without funds. The refugees, who wander from city to city and sleep in the synagogues, also spread disease. All this is only one more means of destroying the Polish Jews.

Several weeks ago an order was issued that all Jews between the ages of 14 and 60, both men and women, must register for forced labor. The order was followed by an announcement that for the time being the women were exempt, and by another that the date of registration was postponed to March 2, 1940. Then — so the Jews were informed — all the men would be set at forced labor (which is equivalent to sending them to a concentration camp). As for the Poles, only the unemployed were required to register, and these were told that while they would not be paid at first, they would receive wages later on. The Jews are allowed no such concessions. All of them — and not only the unemploy-



JEWIS SEIZED BY THE NAZIS FOR FORCED LABOR.

ed — are subject to forced labor without compensation. This is one more method of exterminating the Jews.

The Ghetto plan has not been abandoned, but only postponed. The Germans say that it will certainly be put into effect. The latest word is that all the Jews of Warsaw will be compelled to move into the Praga quarter of that city in March 1940. Praga was originally outside the confines of the proposed Ghetto, but now it seems that all the Jews will be herded into that quarter, which was almost completely destroyed during the siege.

Great numbers of Jews fled to the area occupied by the Russians. This was not a very difficult matter during the early weeks of the occupation. The Germans stripped the refugees of all their belongings, but let them proceed, and the Bolsheviki did not stop them from entering the territory under their control. Since the latter part of November, however, Jews have been denied admission to the Russian-occupied territory, though Poles are allowed to enter freely. The Jews have often been told by Red soldiers: "We do not need any more Jews!" The guards are more lenient with the women, but most of the men are turned back. Now it is reported that conditions are so trying in the Russian-occupied territory that many refugees are leaving. All the banks and factories were nationalized by the Russians within a week after the occupation. The shopkeepers were not molested at first, but when their stocks were sold out they were not permitted to replenish them. All private trading is said to be prohibited since January 1, 1940. Now no alternative remains but illegal trading, which is very severely punished.

Bibl. Jrg.

It is reported that houses are searched in the Russian-occupied territory as well. Since life is so hard there, many refugees wish to return to their homes, but the Germans refuse them re-entry. The German frontier guards have well-trained dogs, and they shoot at all who are detected when trying to slip across the border. Hundreds of people are said to have been shot or to have frozen to death in the attempt.

Numerous synagogues have been burned to the ground. Many rabbis, including Rabbi Kahana of Warsaw, had their

beards plucked out when Germans searched their homes. Jews are often assaulted on their way to houses of worship. On several occasions Germans entered synagogues during services and beat the congregation.

Concerning the present attitude of the Poles toward the Jews, I would say the following: The relations are good in the areas annexed to the Reich. The same kind of treatment is meted out to both peoples. In Posen the Poles have at times even betrayed a certain jealousy of the Jews because they themselves fare worse at the hands of the Germans. In the Warsaw district the relations have improved. With few exceptions, the Polish intellectuals are friendly toward the Jews and help them when they can. The same is true of the organized workingmen and other thinking people. But the attitude of the Polish masses remains unchanged. It is such people who point out Jewish houses to the Germans and help them plunder the Jews. Occasionally they attack Jewish passersby, but such attacks are not common. There is also another side to the picture. Poles often rise and offer their seats when women wearing the Jewish badge enter trams. Once a German soldier came into a tram shouting "Juden 'raus!" Thereupon a dignified elderly Pole rose and said, "If the Jews go, we go too!" He left the tram and was followed by all the other Poles present. It is true, however, that there have been instances of elderly Jews being forced off trams by Polish youths. But all in all, the Polish attitude toward the Jews is far more favorable than previously. The Polish anti-Semites have not joined forces with the Germans. Many of the anti-Semitic leaders sum up their attitude in some such way as this: "We shall settle our account with the Jews some day, but not at the behest of the Germans. If the Germans insist, we shall have no alternative but to obey; but we shall not act voluntarily at this time." Only one of the anti-Semitic groups, the "Phalanga," made overtures to the Germans, suggesting that it be co-opted in governing the Jews, since its programme was akin to that of the Nazis. The Germans brushed this proposal aside. Two Nazi dailies are published in Warsaw, the Polish "Novy Kurier Warshavsky," and the German "War-

schauer Zeitung." The German paper aims its shafts not at the Jews, but at the Poles. The Polish paper is concerned mainly with the Jews. The Poles are incited against the Jews, the Germans against the Poles.

Many formerly patriotic Poles have suddenly proclaimed themselves as "Volksdeutsche." Among these is the brother of a Polish ex-Cabinet Minister named Ulrich, who lives in Kalish. There are two categories of "Volksdeutsche." One includes the German residents of Lodz, who are organized in a civic guard. Most of the assailants of Jews belong to this group. A German militia is also being organized in Warsaw. The second group of "Volksdeutsche" are people who declared themselves such in order to play safe. These pseudo-"Volksdeutsche" occasionally hold out a helping hand to the Jews. Some of the former German residents of Poland fled after the occupation to the Russian-occupied territory, believing that when the German troops leave Poland there will be a wholesale massacre of Germans.

We have our Schutzjuden, — agents of the Gestapo. When a Jewish passerby sees German police or soldiers, who are likely to seize him for forced labor, he gives them the slip by turning down another street. But when he sees a Jew standing at the lower end of the street he feels safe — and walks into the trap.

If the war lasts much longer, the Jewish community of Poland will be utterly destroyed. So will the entire Polish intelligentsia. The Joint Distribution Committee is active, but ill-supplied with funds. To send money to Warsaw is impracticable because the official exchange rate for the dollar is only 3-5 zlotys, though the real value of the dollar is from 60 to 100 zlotys and even more. Then again, anyone who receives money from abroad is compelled to turn it over to the Germans the very same day. Funds sent to the Joint Distribution Committee would share the same fate. It is therefore better to send foodstuffs and clothing, though there can be no certainty that even these would reach the Jews. Medical supplies sent to the Jewish Community Coun-

cil of Warsaw after a representative of the International Red Cross at Geneva had conferred with the Council, were appropriated by the Germans. Still, it seems likely that shipments of food and clothing would not be confiscated.

B. THE SITUATION IN WARSAW

Report of M. KERNER,

Member of the Municipal Council of Warsaw and former member of the Polish Senate.

Immediately upon the outbreak of war, a Jewish committee was formed to aid in the defense of the State. This committee was elected by representatives of forty-eight Jewish institutions who were convened by the Jewish Community Council of Warsaw. By September 4, 1939, the committee had already disintegrated because many of its members had fled from the city. The Jewish community of Warsaw was thus left without any official body authorized to speak in its behalf. A few days later a Jewish committee for civilian affairs was formed, with myself as chairman. The functions of this committee were to relieve distress, provide legal aid, and represent the Jewish population of Warsaw vis-à-vis the Polish authorities. A co-ordinating committee of representatives of the Jewish social and philanthropic institutions of Warsaw was organized at the same time, which distributed food and clothing and provided medical treatment for the wounded. The Jewish civilian committee became the supreme representative body of the Jews of Warsaw, and was recognized as such even by the members of the Jewish Community Council who still remained in the city.

A Polish civilian committee had been formed on which the Jews were not represented. The Jewish civilian committee requested the authorities to arrange for its representation on the Polish civilian committee, but this was refused. When a citizens' militia was organized, many Jews enlisted. The Jewish civilian committee then asked the military governor of Warsaw to include Jews in the command of the citizens' militia. The reply was favorable, but nothing was done.

Owing to the continuous air raids over Warsaw, it was almost impossible to hold meetings of the committee. Often the building in which it met on one day was destroyed by the next. The committee naturally had very great difficulty in functioning under the circumstances. Its legal aid department, which was headed by

Mr. Hartglas, had already begun its work when it was forced to stop by the destruction of its offices.

Such was the situation in Warsaw during the siege. After the Germans entered the city, everything stopped. All public activities, whether Jewish or Polish, were paralyzed.

On October 4, while the Jewish civilian committee was in session in the Community Building, Gestapo agents forced the locked door of the meeting-room. Brandishing their whips, they ordered the members out of the building, and proceeded to make a thorough search of every room. The sum of 97,000 zlotys was abstracted from the Community's safe by Gestapo officers. Mr. Tcharniakoff, the Chairman of the Community Council, was summoned to the Gestapo headquarters and instructed to appoint a council of twenty-four members to administer the Jewish communal affairs. Among those appointed were representatives of the Jewish parties and institutions.

The first task imposed upon the newly constituted Council was to take a census of the Jewish population of Warsaw. The order was accompanied by a threat that the lives of all the members of the Council would be forfeit in the event of non-compliance. A time-limit of ten days was fixed. The work was planned and carried out very efficiently, as even the Nazi authorities admitted. Hundreds of young people acted as enumerators. The census showed that the Jewish community of Warsaw at that time counted 364,000 souls.

Next the Council was required to take a special census of Jews in the professions, — lawyers, engineers, physicians, journalists, etc. Apart from these censuses, the Council was forbidden to engage in any activity whatever. Immediately after the occupation, all the departments of the Jewish Community Organization, with the exception of that in charge of burials, were closed by order of the German authorities. After much petitioning, the secretariat was allowed to resume its work. Still more petitioning was required before the social service department was given permission to function. When Community representatives asked the authorities how the social services could be financed, seeing



AT FORCED LABOR.

that they were not permitted to collect the communal taxes, the reply was that they did have one source of income : the cemetery !

As soon as the Germans entered Warsaw they began to seize Jews in the streets and in their homes for forced labor. Old and young, sick and well, were abducted indiscriminately. Jews dared not venture out of doors for fear of the forced labor, which was accompanied by insults, blows, and danger to life itself. The Council offered to provide a certain number of Jewish laborers daily if only the indiscriminate abductions were stopped. The proposal was accepted. The Council paid the volunteers a daily wage which was more or less in keeping with the prices of essential commodities. But the authorities ordered this wage to be reduced to three and then to two and a half zlotys a day. On some days over two thousand Jewish laborers were provided by the Council. The kidnappings went on, nevertheless. Some of those abducted for forced labor were beaten, and a number were shot.

The Council's third task was connected with the Ghetto edict. Up to the day when this edict was issued, the appointment of the

twenty-four members of the Council had not been ratified by the authorities ; but on that day the Council was ordered to convene all its members and their deputies. Only ten of the twenty-four deputies attended the meeting, which was held in the Community Building. An officer and several sergeants of the Gestapo lined up all present in two rows — the members on the right and the deputies on the left. When fourteen deputies were found to be absent, the Council was ordered to produce fourteen other deputies in the meeting-room within twenty minutes, and informed that the least delay would involve the death penalty. Since the time-limit was so short and communication with other parts of the city still difficult, it was decided to appoint all who happened to be in the building at the time and a few passersby. The fourteen men were, in fact, assembled within a few minutes. A quarter of an hour after issuing his ultimatum, the officer re-entered the room, holding his watch in his hand, and reminded the assembly that only five more minutes remained at their disposal. When the time-limit had expired, he read off the names in the list to make certain that all the designated persons were present.

Having settled the matter of the deputies to his satisfaction, the officer took a map of Warsaw out of his pocket and informed the Council that, by order of the authorities, all Jews living outside the area designated for a Jewish pale of settlement would have to leave their present quarters. To ensure compliance with the edict, the twenty-four deputies would be detained as hostages. The words were no sooner uttered than soldiers entered the room, led out the twenty-four deputies, and carted them off to prison, beating them mercilessly on the way.

The Council then examined the map of the proposed Ghetto and found the plan to be wholly impracticable. One hundred and sixty thousand additional Jewish families and their household effects could not possibly be crowded into an already congested district. Moreover, a typhoid epidemic was raging in the city at the time. Many of the Jewish institutions (hospital, cemetery, etc.) were situated in districts to which the Jews were denied access under the Ghetto plan. When these difficulties were point-

ed out to the Gestapo officer, he replied that he had merely carried out his orders, and advised them to apply to the commandant. The Council thereupon appealed to the German general-in-chief, the chief medical officer of the German forces, the Polish civilian committee, and the mayor. The chief medical officer declared that the order had been given as a means of checking the epidemic: the Jews were so dirty that they had to be isolated. The Polish mayor, however, was sympathetic and helpful. Thanks to all these efforts, no steps were taken to enforce the Ghetto edict, and the hostages were released after four days in prison. Whether the Ghetto plan has been abandoned or merely left in abeyance, it is impossible to say. Some people think it will be given effect in the spring.

On the heels of the Ghetto affair came a horrible tragedy. One day when two Polish constables came to search the premises of a young Jewish dealer in stolen goods (a notorious criminal), he drew his revolver and fired, killing one of the men and wounding the other. Two days later Gestapo men surrounded the building where this had occurred (9 Nalevki Street, Warsaw), and arrested not only all the Jewish men who lived in the house, but all other Jews who happened to be there at the time. On the morning of the third day all the prisoners, fifty-three in number, were shot. Just before the execution, the men were divided into three groups, and each group was obliged to dig a grave for its predecessors and to bury them. (The third group was buried by the Germans). The story of what had happened was not disclosed immediately. When the Chairman of the Council went to the Gestapo to ask permission to supply the prisoners with food, he was told that their whereabouts could be revealed only two days later, though the men were then dead and buried. The truth came out only a week after the massacre.

A collective fine of 300,000 zlotys was imposed upon the Jewish community of Warsaw because a Jew had killed a Polish constable. To raise so large a sum in Warsaw at such a time within the allotted two-day limit appeared impossible. When all efforts to secure a reduction of the fine had failed, the Council decided

to pay part of the 300,000 zlotys in cash and the remainder in checks drawn against Jewish funds deposited in the banks. The authorities at first agreed, but changed their minds at the last moment and demanded payment of the whole sum in cash. The demand was reinforced with a threat that otherwise five rabbis and five members of the Council would be detained as hostages. The money was found somehow, and the danger averted.

Now a fresh blow fell. The municipal authorities of Warsaw received orders to discontinue their grants to the Jewish institutions. The whole responsibility for the maintenance of the Jewish hospitals and other institutions was forced upon the Jewish Community Organization at a time when its resources fell far short of the 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 zlotys required for their combined annual budgets. The Jewish hospital was in difficulties even before the subsidy was withdrawn. The sums received from the municipality were so meagre that the hospital was short of foodstuffs and medical supplies. Salaries were in arrears, and only twenty of the staff of a hundred and forty remained at their posts. At the moment the order was given, there were 1,900 patients in the hospital, of whom 1,200 were typhoid cases. Those for whom no beds were available lay on the floor or wherever room could be found for them. Many of the physicians had been drafted for army service, and the few who remained were on the point of collapse from overwork. After much urging, the German authorities agreed to postpone the transfer of the hospital until the end of December. Two days later the decision was reversed. Conditions in the hospital were appalling. There were no provisions or medical supplies on hand, and it was not even possible to make the necessary tests for the typhoid cases. The Germans had cleared all the supplies, including tinned milk, out of the hospital store-rooms. The Council was summoned to the hospital so that the transfer might be made. The medical superintendent was arrested, and the other physicians were detained in the hospital and forbidden to communicate with their families. A committee was appointed to deal with the problem. No words can describe the gravity of the situation. A sum of 2,000 zlotys was needed for

elementary necessities. The Council secured this sum and sent it to the hospital. Thereupon Gestapo agents came and confiscated the money.

The Jewish Community Building escaped all damage during the siege. Several bombs fell upon the Great Synagogue, destroying the roof and part of the interior. The two largest rooms of the Library of Judaica were wrecked. All the books were removed from this Library by the Germans and shipped out of the city. The offices of the Keren Hayesod, Keren Kayemeth, and the Palestine Bureau were destroyed by fire. A part of the Jewish hospital was demolished.

Ritual slaughter of cattle has been prohibited. Carcasses of horses killed during the bombardment were cut up and eaten by famished people. Jews are not permitted to travel in fast trains. The largest synagogue in the Praga quarter of Warsaw was invaded during services by Germans, who ordered Rabbi Silberstein and the whole congregation to go out in to the street and dance in their prayer shawls if they did not want to be shot.

In order to illustrate the attitude of the Polish intelligentsia toward the Jews, I shall relate several incidents. When I met a Polish gentleman, an ex-mayor of Warsaw, in the street one day he assured me of his profound sympathy with the Jews in their trials. He is seventy-seven years of age, and himself lives in fear of the Germans. Count Liubomirsky, the only Pole for whom the Germans have any respect, displayed a great deal of interest in the Ghetto problem when I called on him.

With a single exception the professors of the University of Warsaw agreed to give certificates to their Jewish students, so that the young people need not lose credit for time already spent on their studies. The one who refused was the dean of the medical faculty, who had declared himself a "Volksdeutscher." One professor came to see me the day before I left Warsaw, and asked how he could get into touch with Jewish circles.

When Dr. Franck was appointed Governor-General of the occupied territory, he issued a proclamation containing all sorts of

contemptuous references to the Poles. Copies of this proclamation, which were posted in the streets, were presently plastered with mimeographed slips of paper containing an equally contemptuous retort. When Polish ladies began to appear in public in the company of German officers, new mimeographed slips of paper were posted up in which these ladies were assured that there was still room for them in the brothels.

Reports are current that there are some Jews in the service of the Gestapo. Often two Jews walking together in the streets are stopped by a German and questioned separately as to the topic of their conversation. If the replies do not coincide, both are arrested.



JEWISH MERCHANTS HANGED ON CHARGES OF "PROFITEERING."

II. EASTERN GALICIA.

THE SITUATION OF THE JEWS IN GENERAL AND OF THE HALUTZ MOVEMENT IN PARTICULAR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION IN SEPTEMBER 1939.

Report of Mr. HELLMANN,
Representative of Hehalutz

The entry of the Russian troops into Eastern Galicia was welcomed by both the Poles and the Jews for the obvious reason that as between a Bolshevik and a Nazi invasion, the former was much to be preferred. The Jews, in particular, had reason to feel relieved at having escaped the horrors of a Nazi regime.

No attempt was made to set up a representative Jewish body in the Russian zone of occupation. All the Jewish organizations, including the community councils, have ceased to function. The leaders do not act as spokesmen even in their personal capacity. When some members of Hehalutz were arrested, not a single lawyer would undertake to conduct their defense. (People are as terrified as all that!).

There has been no ban on the Zionist movement or on any other Jewish organization. Nevertheless, it was deemed imperative to disband all the Zionist organizations (officially, at least) immediately after the entry of the Red troops.

The Hebrew schools of the Tarbut system were ordered by the authorities to substitute Yiddish for Hebrew as their medium of instruction. The schools were opened, and all the teachers and headmasters were retained at their posts, but only because Yiddish was adopted. Some schools made the change without even waiting for the order.

When the Halutz leaders re-assembled in the Russian zone of occupation, it was decided to send as many members as possible to Vilna and to the seaports with a view to expediting their transfer to Palestine. Zionist leaders from all parts of Poland made their way to Vilna as soon as it was known that the city was to be restored to Lithuania. This was not, however, a mass movement. A fortnight elapsed between the announcement of

the transfer of Vilna and the occupation of the city by Lithuanian troops, but people were afraid to go there because of the mass arrests then being made. (Members of the Bund were the chief victims). After the boundary lines were fixed, the frontier was closed again, so that the refugees were excluded.

The concentration of Halutzim in Vilna is still continuing, but under increasingly difficult circumstances. Many Halutzim who came to Galicia from the German-occupied territory were sent on to Vilna. In the transfer of Halutzim to seaports, there is not much progress to report. The work is very complicated and dangerous, and involves the risk of arrest. Many Halutzim have tried to get into Rumania, but only a few have succeeded. Some are missing. They may be in prison or they may not; no one knows. When passing through Rumania on my way to Palestine, I made inquiries, but could find no trace of them. It is reported from several sources that an order was given to seize all refugees and to hand them over to the frontier guards. I was told that those arrested at the Rumanian frontier were kept in prison for about a month, and that their release was then secured with legal aid.

Though illegal, the Halutz movement still continues in Galicia. Hanoar Hazioni and Hashomer Hatzair are the most active groups. The work is done in very harassing circumstances. We had only a small number of young people to begin with, but more and more are joining. The Halutz organizations even managed to hold a general conference, which was attended by delegates from all the districts. One of the major resolutions called for the transfer of Halutzim to Palestine under any and all conditions. The Hachsharah (training) groups were not ordered to disband, but we voluntarily closed the camps, knowing that the work was allowed to go on only so that the authorities might use it as a source of information about developments in the Halutz ranks and in Zionism generally.

The masses in Eastern Galicia are very Zionist, and eagerly follow developments in Palestine. While I was there, it was rumored that a Jewish State had been established on both sides of the Jordan, and I myself was almost inclined to believe it. Two

Jewish refugees testified that they themselves had heard the news in a radio broadcast. Soon, however, reliable reports from Palestine reached us via Vilna. Circulars were printed at once and distributed in all the smaller communities. From that day the rumors ceased.

There were no mass arrests of Zionists in Lvov. Prof. Schorr and Dr. Sommerstein were arrested there, but not in connection with their Zionist activities. Prof. Schorr was arrested for having been a member of the Polish Senate, and Dr. Sommerstein for having been a member of the Polish Sejm. Many Zionists were, however, arrested in the provincial towns for reasons that varied in every locality. Some of the arrests were made to satisfy the personal grudges of the constables. Members of the Bund and of the Polish Socialist Party were also arrested. The Hebrew language is banned.

The economic situation in the Russian-occupied territory is very serious. Private trading has been prohibited. Some government co-operatives have been opened, but not enough for the needs of the population. It is believed that, in the circumstances, some Jews will return to the German-occupied zone; but so far multitudes have streamed to the Russian-occupied territory. During the early weeks of the occupation, all who wished were allowed to cross from the German into the Russian zone, but now the frontier is closed. Nevertheless, Jewish refugees continue to come. It is estimated that there are about 2,000,000 refugees, of whom 600,000 are Jews. But I cannot vouch for these figures.

The Soviet authorities are ready to provide work for the refugees, and even force them to work, but only on condition that they do not remain in the occupied territory and go to Russia. By saying that the refugees are forced to work, I mean that all sorts of difficulties are made for those who remain in the occupied territory after they have registered for employment, as all are required to do. At first many refugees did go to Russia. I met some who had already returned from the Don Basin.

Apartments are scarce, and living quarters are allotted by the authorities. Furnished apartments are confiscated and used to

house homeless people. Every family is compelled to take in several lodgers. Accommodations were also provided for Russian officials who came to Galicia with their families.

All the factories are in operation. The pre-war employees have been kept at work and a certain number of new hands have been taken on. Wages have not been adjusted to the cost of living, which has risen by several hundred per cent.

In order to buy provisions one must stand in a long queue, since too few co-operative shops were opened to replace the private ones. The Ukrainian co-operatives have been allowed to go on with their work. The peasants bring their produce to these co-operatives, from which it is distributed to the government shops. The Jewish co-operative shops have also been taken over by the government.

There is no overt anti-Semitism. Ukrainian officials are now found in all the government departments, but many Jews have also been appointed. All economic enterprises are administered by Soviet officials. The minor post-office and municipal officials have been retained, but work under Russian superiors. In White Russia a considerable number of Jews are employed in the government services. The Poles are very hostile toward the Jews, and do not fail to give vent to their feelings when certain that the matter will not come to the notice of the authorities. Some Jews have been assaulted. When the word "Zhid" (a term of opprobrium for the Jews) is used in the hearing of anyone in authority, the speaker is promptly reminded that he is liable to three months' imprisonment. The excuse that "Zhid" is a common Polish word is not accepted. The Ukrainians and the White Russians are not openly anti-Semitic. That is not to say that they cherish no such sentiments; but they do refrain from showing them. The peasants are satisfied with the new regime, which has divided up the large estates and allotted the land to them. The Ukrainians were very hostile toward the Poles during the early stages of the occupation, and perpetrated various acts of revenge.

When I am asked whether it is still possible to carry on Zionist work in Eastern Galicia, I answer with a decided affirmative.

The results of twenty years of Zionist educational propaganda and of Hebrew school instruction cannot be destroyed at one stroke. I have been told of Hebrew school pupils who cried when they had to take down Bialik's picture. On Hanukkah children distributed circulars containing a reminder of the festival and an appeal: "Remember Your Own People!" In some localities Zionist gatherings were arranged by pupils of the Tarbut schools. These are our Zionist reserves.

III. JEWISH REFUGEES FROM POLAND IN RUMANIA.

Report of A. REISS,
Chairman of Central Palestine Bureau of Warsaw.

The Polish Jews who fled to Rumania are better off, in the material sense especially, than those who remained in the occupied territories. An immense concourse of refugees who streamed from Poland toward Rumania reached the frontier between September 12 and 15, only to find the way barred. To make matters worse, the Polish authorities, who were still functioning at this time, denied Jewish refugees access to the Polish frontier towns of Zaleszczyki and Kutu. When masses of fleeing Polish troops reached the Rumanian frontier between September 17 and 20, however, the frontier had to be re-opened, and about 1,200 or 1,300 Jews entered Rumania in the company of Polish officials and other Polish civilians. (Just then it was learned that the Russians had occupied Galicia, and many Galician Jews went back to their homes). There were about 10,000 or 12,000 Jewish physicians, officers, and privates among the Polish troops. The number of Polish troops in Rumania is about 40,000. During the first few weeks of the flight from Poland Jewish refugees crossed the border daily, but since the latter part of October no more are permitted to enter. Those who get in illegally pay 20,000 lei and even more. A great deal could have been accomplished at the beginning had there been someone to organize the work on the Rumanian side of the frontier. In recent weeks a change for the worse is evident in the attitude of the Rumanian officials, which is no doubt due to German propaganda.

The Polish refugees are very hostile toward their Jewish companions in misery, showing such virulent anti-Semitism as prevailed in Poland only during the months of severe tension. One incident will suffice to illustrate this attitude. When a group of hungry and wet Polish refugees reached Czernowitz, they were offered bread and milk or coffee by Jews. The refugees inquired whether this was Jewish food. When given an affirmative reply, they refused to eat, saying, "We shall take nothing from Jews!"

This is the general attitude. A Polish justice of the high court asserted in my hearing that the Russians had entered Poland on the invitation of the Jews. When I protested to those in charge of the Polish migration, they said, "You needn't wonder. We have our own arguments. The conduct of the Galician Jews still remains to be discussed." I argued the matter with them at length. I shall not go into details, but this is a situation that should be kept in mind.

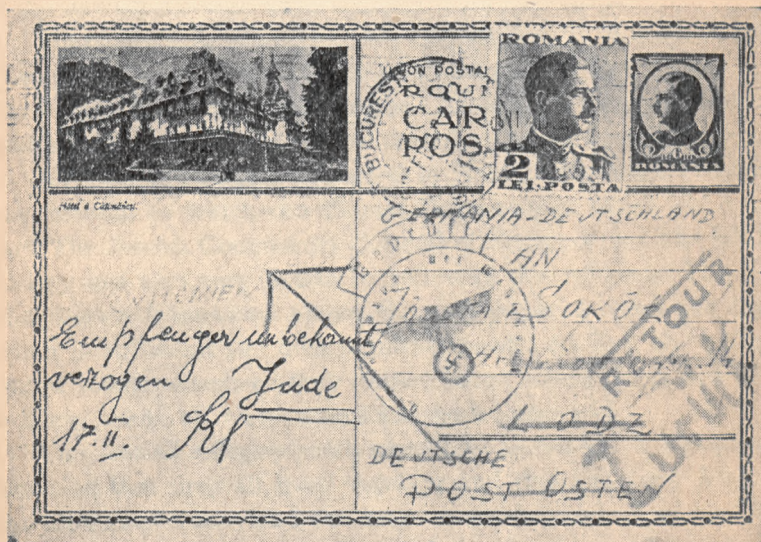
During the latter part of December some thirty or forty Jews straggled in daily from Poland. Some came in organized groups. At times there were conflicts between the Russian frontier guards and refugees who tried to smuggle themselves into Rumania. The young people made desperate efforts to cross the frontier, and several groups of them are said to be missing. Many people were killed at the frontier. The Russians shot even at women and children. After the frontier was closed, the Rumanians arrested only Halutzim. About forty Halutzim and Halutzoth were in prison at the time I left Rumania.

The attitude of the Rumanians toward the Jews has stiffened under German pressure. One of the effects is increased difficulty in getting permission to leave Rumania. No refugee is allowed to leave without undergoing the scrutiny of a military committee which decides whether he is fit for military service.

Reports which have reached me from Eastern Galicia indicate that when the Russians came in, they tried to win the good will of the whole population (Ukrainians, Jews, and Poles). This effort led some well-known Polish writers to favor the Soviet regime. Here we also have the reason why the Russian authorities did not immediately lay hands on the economic structure of the country apart from nationalizing the land (which was carried out promptly). Their first proclamation assured the peoples of Eastern Galicia that all would be allowed to go on with their work. In some factories the proprietors were retained as managers. When manufacturers were arrested, it was only because of controversies with their workingmen. The same leniency was shown in regard to commerce.¹ Trade was never so flourishing as

in the early weeks of the Russian occupation. All the streets were crowded with counters and hampers. But this kind of trading did not go on for long, since it was only a device adopted by the authorities to clear the shops of their merchandise. Since shopkeepers were not permitted to replenish their stocks, they soon had to close their doors. Private trading was replaced by co-operative shops, the Ukrainian consumers' co-operatives serving as the nucleus of the system. The co-operative shops preempted the best locations in Lvov. Nationalization of the factories followed.

There are many Jews in the government service, and particularly in the militia. This is only natural, since the Jews form the majority of the population in quite a few cities and towns. The Poles are not trusted, and the proportion of Ukrainians in the population does not exceed 20% or 25%. In the circumstances it was practically inevitable that the Jews should constitute about 70% of the militia. The widespread unemployment,



In returning this card to Rumania because the present whereabouts of the addressee are unknown, a Nazi postoffice in Poland spitefully notes that he is a "Jude" (Jew).

which was most marked among the Jews, was also a contributing factor. Jews hold only minor posts in the civil administration. The higher posts go to the Ukrainians. Whether this is done by agreement between the parties is not clear ; but the fact is that when the Poles became reconciled to the Soviet regime, their leaders went into the service of the government. In Przemysl and Lvov they did so in order to prevent the Jews from becoming too influential in the Soviet administration. There are very few Jewish mayors in Eastern Galicia. Even in a city like Kolomea, where the population is 70% Jewish, the mayor is an Ukrainian. The Jews of Lvov now have relatively fewer representatives than under the Polish regime. I understand that there are only two Jewish members in the national council of Soviets which was elected in Eastern Galicia. Though the Soviet elections were widely advertised, not many people took part in them. (Government officials were obliged to).

IV. THE JEWISH REFUGEES FROM POLAND IN HUNGARY AND SLOVAKIA.

A. Report of S. LIPSKY,
Representative of Hehalutz in Hungary.

I returned to Hungary immediately after the Zionist Congress. A few days later Jewish refugees were massed on the Hungarian frontier, but were not permitted to cross. When, however, 50,000 or 60,000 armed Polish troops were admitted to Hungary, several thousand Jews came in with them.

The Polish troops are interned in ninety camps, to which all access is denied. It is therefore not possible to ascertain how many Jewish soldiers are in the camps. The Jewish soldiers are said to be very harshly treated by their Polish comrades, and to be assigned to the hardest tasks. Many Jews consequently enrolled as non-Jews (which makes it even more difficult to find out how many there are among the interned Polish troops). Some of the Jewish soldiers have escaped from the camps.

There are now about 500 Jewish refugees in Budapest. Many Jews fled from Eastern Galicia to Carpatho-Russia, and from there made their way to Budapest. There are many Zionists and members of the various Halutz organizations among the refugees.

As soon as refugees appeared in Hungary, a relief committee was formed, in which the Zionist Organization takes the leading part. The Jewish Community Council of Budapest and the HICEM Society are also very active in relieving the refugees. The Joint Distribution Committee allows them 20 pengő a week per capita, which is sufficient for their minimal needs. At first the refugees rented rooms wherever they chose. Later, when the police began to harry them, all were assembled under one roof.

The Jewish refugees were permitted to remain in Hungary on condition that they all lived together and that the Joint Distribution Committee provided for their maintenance. Now the Hungarian government proposes to send them back to their countries of origin. There are about 2,000 registered refugees and many non-registered. The number of Jews among the interned Polish

troops is unknown (as already mentioned). About 3,000 German Jews have also taken refuge in Hungary. The number of Jewish refugees in Hungary is about 15,000, all of whom are liable to deportation. The Jewish Community Council of Budapest has succeeded in securing annulments of many orders for deportations and arrests. The Community Council has also opened a home for sixty refugee children whose parents cannot be traced.

Refugees from the Russian-occupied part of Poland report that conditions there are appalling. The shops have closed down. The cold is intense, and no fuel is to be had. Food and clothing are extremely scarce. The authorities can do nothing to help. Whatever the ultimate solution of the problem, the fact is that at present the economic position of the Jews has been undermined, and that no way of earning a living remains open to them. Hehalutz members who have recently come from Eastern Galicia say that instead of bread the people are fed with meetings where they listen to banal speeches and cheers for "Stalin the deliverer!"

I have come to Palestine in behalf of various Jewish organizations of Hungary. A certain number of refugees must be taken out of that country, so that others may be allowed to come in, and so that their lives may not become insupportable.

There are about 1,000 Jewish refugees in Slovakia. The position is somewhat better there because the young people can be placed in the Hachsharah camps. The number of these young refugees is about 350, and employment has been found for those who are able to work. Over 1,000 Halutzim are being trained in Slovakia. The Slovakian authorities make no difficulties for the Jewish refugees from Poland.

Hungry and ragged Polish Jews often come to the Slovakian border towns, receive food and clothing from the local Jews, and then go back to Poland. Since this imposes too heavy a burden upon the Jewish communities of the border zone, the Joint Distribution Committee has undertaken to relieve them of a part of it. But the Committee is unable to send funds into Slovakia, because it is considered an enemy country. The whole Jewish population of Slovakia is impoverished, having been deprived of all

means of livelihood. The Jewish welfare institutions are therefore without funds, and can do little to relieve the refugees from Poland.

A fortnight before I left for Palestine, a Jewish delegation from Sosnowitz came to Budapest and reported that 300 Jewish refugees were about to be sent to Dachau. A respite of several weeks has been secured. The Sosnowitz delegation are now in Bratislava, where the authorities have granted them permission to set up a camp on condition that the Joint Distribution Committee will be responsible for the maintenance of the refugees and that a number of refugees already in Bratislava will be taken out of the city.

Effective work can still be done in Hungary in behalf of refugees, and funds raised there for their relief. But the war is likely to spread, and then Hungary will be closed to us. Everything should therefore be done to take advantage of the opportunity as long as it is available. Otherwise the position of the refugees will become intolerable.

B. Report of Dr. L. FUCHS,
Chairman of the Zionist Committee of Wloclawek.

I saw Soviet troops in Tarnopol on September 17, 1939. The company to which my hospital unit was attached hurriedly retreated into Hungary. I kept in constant touch with Lvov and other localities in Eastern Galicia. Daily reports reached us from Lvov that many people had crossed the border.

Many of the rumors then circulated were untrue. For six days — from September 13 to 19 — before going to Hungary, I was in Eastern Galicia, and can testify that all the Jews there, without exception, showed a devotion to the Polish troops that was really touching. Nor did their attitude change when the Soviet troops occupied Eastern Galicia. In Hungary it was rumored that Jews had sniped at Polish troops on their way through Stanislaw on September 18. As it happened, I was in Stanislaw that day. I stood in the marketplace between five and six o'clock in the afternoon, and no one there heard a single shot fired. Both the Poles and the Jews of Eastern Galicia were very friendly toward the Polish forces. The Ukrainians were not. They sniped at us on the roads and in the villages. Shots were fired at the troops not by Jews, but by Ukrainians.

While in Budapest I had many contacts with Poles. In the hotel where I was staying, for example, most of the guests were Polish civilian refugees. I never heard any of them allege that the Jews oppressed the Poles in Eastern Galicia or in any other part of the Russian-occupied territory, but they often referred to the sufferings of both the Jews and the Poles.

Relations between the Jews and the Poles in the camps in Hungary were good. Most of the members of my unit came from Pomerania. Of the fifty physicians, three were Jews. There were also eighty nurses with us and two hundred privates, of whom eight or ten were Jews. There, too, friendly feelings prevailed. The following incident will illustrate the attitude of the Poles in our camp. When our supplies gave out on the sixth day of the war, we sent a messenger to Warsaw for more. On his return he

reported that everything in Warsaw was at a standstill. The government had left. There was no one to turn to. He had seen only one interesting incident in Warsaw. A great crowd of Jews had assembled in the Theatre Square and demanded arms with which to defend Warsaw. This story was repeatedly told in public by Polish officers.

In the camp where I was interned there were many Polish physicians and officers. The relations there were cordial. Jews and Poles helped one another. We often discussed Jewish affairs, including Zionism, with the Poles.

While I was in Budapest there were rumors that the Polish soldiers were blaming the Jews for the defeat of their army. As I was helping to care for the refugees, I was able to make many inquiries concerning the truth of these rumors. Such remarks, I then found, had been made, but on very few occasions. The Polish consul in Hungary who was appointed by the new Polish Government treated the Jews as fairly as the Poles. Jews who applied for the papers necessary to enable them to go on to France were at first turned away, but then there was a change at the consulate, and after that no distinction was made between Jews and Poles.

At the pension where I was staying I met a Christian manufacturer from Lodz, who told me a great deal about Palestine. We discussed Jewish affairs in general as well. One day he said to me: "Nevertheless, I must say that the Jews are responsible for our misfortunes. It was they who forced us to take a firm stand about Danzig. Had we acted otherwise then, things would have turned out very differently for us!"

There are about 2,500 or 3,000 Jewish soldiers in the camps where the Polish troops are interned in Hungary. The Hungarians singled out the Jews — even the Jewish officers — for discriminatory treatment. In the camps they immediately inquired who was a Jew and who was not. The Jews were so badly treated in the camps that about 300 of them escaped within a short time.

When the refugees arrived at the border, they were met by Zionist committees who assured them that all arrangements had been made for their reception. The Zionist Organization assumed responsibility for the care of the refugees with the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee and, to some extent, of the Jewish Community Council. The Community Council assumed a very unpleasant attitude toward us, demanding that we should return to the camps, and even tried to force us to do so. We were told that it was utterly impossible for us to obtain permission to remain in Hungary, and that without such permission we could not stay. Nevertheless, the Zionist Organization secured the necessary permits for us, and also arranged for us to go on to Palestine in spite of all sorts of difficulties. The Zionist Organization was deeply concerned for the refugees. The Joint Distribution Committee's help was adequate. Some assistance also came from the London committee for the aid of the refugees from Poland.

Many of the young refugees in Budapest were Zionists who had given faithful service to the cause for some years. Their one desire was to get to Palestine as soon as possible.

The Hungarian authorities looked upon the Jewish refugees with great disfavor. When a Jew went to the police to ask for a permit to remain in the country, he was promptly arrested. The Zionist Organization was always able, however, to secure the release of such prisoners. The police and the other authorities continually harassed the refugees, so that it became necessary to set up two camps where all the Jewish refugees in Budapest were assembled.

The Jews of the provincial towns of Hungary were most kind to the refugees. Some of the Zionists were arrested because they had helped us. In Budapest, many people held aloof for fear of getting into trouble with the authorities.

V. THE JEWISH REFUGEES IN THE RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED TERRITORY OF POLAND AND IN LITHUANIA.

A. Report of Dr. M. KLEINBAUM,
*Chairman of the Central Committee of the Zionist Organization
of Poland and member of the editorial staff of the Warsaw
"Hajnt."*

My report will be devoted to the position of the Jews in the Russian zone of occupation and of the Jewish refugees in Lithuania.

There were 3,500,000 Jews in Poland before the war. Now they are distributed in the German, Russian, and Lithuanian zones. Many Jews fled from the German to the Russian zone, and some from the Russian zone to Lithuania. My computations show the present distribution to be about as follows: 1,800,000 in the German zone; 1,600,000 in the Russian zone; and about 100,000 in Vilna and the neighboring towns. About 8,000 or 10,000 refugees from the Russian and German zones are now in Lithuania.

I spent six weeks in the Russian zone, beginning with the day when the Soviet troops entered Poland (September 18, 1939). I was then in Luck. Many of the Poles now in exile are spreading a story that the Jews received the Russian troops with open arms. This story is not true, and was invented only in order to pave the way for intensified anti-Semitism in Poland after independence is regained.

On September 17 the Polish government was still unaware of the impending Russian invasion, and learned of it only from Molotov's speech. Large forces had been ordered to concentrate by September 20 in the Lvov district, where a great defensive was being prepared on the Rumanian border. At that time German tanks had already appeared in the outskirts of Lvov. At Kowel, where my regiment was stationed, the order was received on September 16. The Polish government had established itself at Krzemieniec, where it evidently proposed to remain for an indefinite period. Cabinet ministers and government officials rented

apartments, sent to Warsaw for their furniture, and made various other preparations for settling down. No one dreamed that the Russians were about to invade Eastern Galicia. When the Russian troops did enter, some Polish officers actually welcomed them in the mistaken belief that they had come to the aid of their own forces. They were utterly taken aback by the anti-Polish circulars and posters published by the Russian command, and by the contents of Molotov's speech, which was widely circulated in several languages. Only then did the terrible truth dawn upon them.

When the Russian troops entered Luck, great crowds assembled in the streets. Thousands of Ukrainian peasants (the majority of whom were Communists) came into the town and held demonstrations in favor of the Russians. There were doubtless some Jewish Communists among the demonstrators, but not many. The attitude of the Jewish population was epitomized in a satirical saying current at the time: "Our death sentence has been commuted to imprisonment for life!" Nazi rule was envisaged as a death sentence, Soviet rule as imprisonment for life. While the Jews realized very well that Russian rule meant impoverishment and a ban on emigration, they could feel only relief at their escape from torture and massacre at the hands of the Nazis.

In Volhynia the Polish authorities were very aggressive, while the Ukrainians were extremely nationalistic and bitterly opposed to the Polish regime. There were only a few Polish officers, government officials, and landowners in the province, all of whom left when war broke out. Their families remained behind. When the Soviet troops came, the streets were thronged with the Jews, who had remained in their towns, and with Ukrainian peasants who flocked in from the villages. The streets had been dark and gloomy at night for many weeks. With the coming of the Russians the streets were lighted again, and the people breathed a sigh of relief that the bombardment was over. Where only a few days previously Nazi aeroplanes had showered bombs upon the population, Soviet aircraft now dropped leaflets in various languages.

The rejoicing soon gave way to profound disappointment. The economic situation was far worse than before. To make the misery of the people still more acute, the organization of the food supply had been disrupted by the military operations. Grocers' and bakers' shops were open for only a few hours a day, though besieged by thousands of customers. The streets were filled with long queues of people waiting their turn to buy a loaf of bread, a salt herring, and the like. All thoughts were centered on just one problem, and that was how to obtain bread. People rose before daylight in order to make certain of a place in the queues. They devised all sorts of ingenious time-schedules so as to be able to stand in several queues in the course of the day. The superiority of one queue over another was debated for hours. No one referred to the topics of the day or cared to know what was happening in the outside world. Everything was subordinated to the single problem of the bread supply. In Lvov it was still possible to obtain bread, though at exorbitant prices. But in Vilna the bread situation was critical when the Russians withdrew from the city.

The regime set up by the Russians in Poland is intolerable. The most painful thing of all is that the intellectual standards have been reduced to a level below that of the most backward European countries. One example will suffice. Physicians, lawyers, and other professional people were invited to attend a lecture by the Commissar of Volhynia on the functions of the intelligentsia in Soviet Russia. We came expecting to hear Communist propaganda of a superior kind, but the man spoke as if he were addressing a class in an elementary school. His lecture was planned for an audience of illiterates. One hears that there are no illiterates in Russia nowadays. If so, their knowledge does not extend beyond the alphabet.

On October 22, 1939, elections were announced for a legislative council. All the newspapers published lists of slogans approved by the Communist Party. Only these and no other slogans were permissible in the election campaign. The chief slogan

was "Long live Stalin!" Even people who had previously lived under a Communist regime were disheartened.

The one ray of light in the situation is that the Russian soldiers are of a much better type than those we knew prior to 1914. These men do not drink immoderately, swear, or steal. They inspire no fear, as Russian soldiers did in the Tsarist days. Friendly relations have therefore developed between the population and the Red troops. On nearer acquaintance it appears that all their theories have been instilled into their minds by the politruk (political mentor) of their regiment. It is he, too, who tells them just what to say to sceptics.

The Red soldiers bought up whatever they found in the shops. One day an officer of high rank entered a shop while I was there and bought many dozens of needles. The shopkeeper asked what he would do with so many needles. "Send them home as a present," was the answer. The soldiers bought enormous numbers of watches, paying whatever price was asked. When questioned as to why they bought so many watches, they always said that such things could be bought only in Moscow, and as their families lived a long way from the capital, they were taking advantage of the opportunity and sending the watches home. This explanation was given so uniformly that the men were obviously repeating what they had been told to say. These Russians are very good-natured, and have absorbed some elementary education. Of higher education there is, however, little trace.

Concerning the attitude of the Russians toward Jewish organizations and institutions, I would say the following: One method was adopted in dealing with the Bund, another in dealing with the Zionists. The Soviet authorities seem to have worked on the assumption that the rank and file of the Bund would give no trouble if their leaders were put out of the way, and that the whole Bund organization would then prove a pliant instrument. They did not err in their calculations. When the Russians found a Bund trade-union in a town, they immediately arrested the secretary. A meeting was then called at which a Soviet representative read the text of a resolution which had been prepared in

advance. The resolution was duly adopted and new officers were elected. The trade-union remained intact, with the same membership as before. In many places not even the pictures on the walls of the meeting-rooms were changed. The only difference was that the secretary (and in some cases other leading members) had been arrested and heard of no more. In handling the Bund violent measures had to be taken against the leaders only; all the others went over to the Soviets bag and baggage, or, as one of the Soviet commissars put it, "with all their equipment and livestock." The Yiddishist schools, also, made the transition quite painlessly. The language of instruction remained the same, most of the teachers were retained, and "only" some of the textbooks had to be changed.

The attitude of the Soviet authorities toward the Zionists of all parties was different. They knew very well that it would be no simple task to eradicate Zionism from the hearts of its adherents. The Bundists had put up no psychological resistance. There was, so to speak, only a partition between their philosophy and that of the Soviets. Where the Zionists were concerned, however, the case was very different. For a time it seemed as though a liberal policy would be followed in regard to the Zionists. Some of the Hebrew schools of Vilna were permitted to remain open for a while during the Russian occupation, and the Tarbut teachers' college was not closed down at all. Later it appeared that the Zionists had been allowed to go on with their work so that the Soviet authorities could identify the leaders, the "most obstreperous." Then the leaders were arrested. Resolutions were introduced at parents' meetings by Soviet representatives calling upon the school authorities to adopt Yiddish as the language of instruction. In some places the parents objected, but in most they kept silent. They did not, indeed, vote for the resolution; but neither did they vote against it. In Pinsk the children themselves revolted when their school was turned into a Yiddishist institution. In the Rovno school Yiddish was adopted, but without any change in the scheme of instruction. When this was observed, the headmaster was arrested. The Hebrew schools of

Slonim adopted Yiddish, but continued to work under the supervision of the local Tarbut Committee. Dr. Ephrath, head of the Zionist society of Slonim, was then arrested. Such were the tactics employed in every locality.

Soviet representatives visited Halutz training centers in the hope of persuading them to abandon their Zionist allegiance. Knowing that their purpose would not be achieved by the arrest of one or two leaders in a camp, they tried to win over the groups as a whole. I myself was not present at any of these discussions, but have it on reliable authority that the arguments ran about as follows: "We understand the Zionist point of view. Zionism was a necessity when you lived under the corrupt Polish regime. You wanted to be free men, but were deprived of all opportunity. You therefore decided to leave Poland and go to Palestine. You wanted to be workers, but were denied the right to work. But now everything is changed. Among us all have equal rights. You will not be persecuted because you are Jews. We therefore urge you to give up your Zionism!" There is no need to quote the counter-arguments put up by the Halutzim. I cannot, of course, vouch for every individual, but the Halutz movement as a whole withstood the onslaught. Then the persecutions began. The sufferings of those who would not yield may be imagined. Many of the Halutzim fled (in organized groups or singly) to the Lithuanian zone. Of the 2,000 Halutzim now in Vilna, about 45% or 50% are members of Hashomer Hatzair. Bitter disappointment prevails in the ranks of Hashomer Hatzair. Among the Halutzim who fled from the Russian-occupied territory there are more members of Hashomer Hatzair than of any other organization.

Another example of Soviet tactics is the case of a leading Zionist of Bialystock who was summoned to the NHUD,*) and ordered to tell everything he knew about the Zionist political activities. (This is the same procedure that was followed by the Gestapo in German-occupied Poland). He was required to pre-

*) People's Commissariat for Home Affairs, successor of the GPU, which was dissolved several years ago.

pare a written statement then and there. When he demurred, he was told that unless he complied he would not leave the room alive. On the other hand, if he were complaisant, he might name his own terms. As the statement had to be signed with a pseudonym, he chose the word "Anuss" (Hebrew for "under duress") which the official, who was a Russian, did not understand. This Zionist was instructed to retain his membership in the Zionist Organization and to become even more active than before so as to be able to keep the Soviet authorities informed about everyone and everything in the Zionist camp. Finally, he was told that he would be expected to send in a new statement by the end of the week. Everything about this interview was so staged as to inspire terror in the heart of the victim. It took place very late at night. A curfew regulation was then in force, and he was provided with a special pass. When he reached the offices of the NHUD, he was led through a series of dark corridors to a dimly lighted room. His chair was so placed that the light of the one small lamp fell directly upon his face, while the face and figure of his interlocutor were almost entirely concealed by shadows. He escaped from Bialystock before daybreak, and the next morning found him in Vilna. When he told me his story he cried like a child, but I assured him that no possible harm could result from his signing a fictitious statement.

Such incidents are not rare, and there is reason for fear that large-scale persecutions of Zionists are in the offing. Yet Zionism is firmly entrenched in the Soviet zone of Poland, and would penetrate into Russia itself if the frontier were not so closely guarded. (I might mention, in passing, that the control on the Russian frontier is much stricter than on the Rumanian or Hungarian frontiers of Poland). Permission to enter Russia is denied even to people who have next of kin there. I know of a woman in Soviet Russia who was refused permission to send for her eighty-year-old father.

On the eve of Simhath Torah we met some Russian-Jewish soldiers in the synagogue. (As these men were in their early thirties, they must have been very young at the time of the Com-

munist Revolution in 1917). One of them told me that he still remembered the Sabbath and the "cholent" (Sabbath roast), and other Jewish customs. Too much importance cannot be attached to such dim memories, but they do indicate that some spark of Jewish feeling still survives. The men were able to read the Hebrew prayers, and certain rudimentary but fairly strong religious leanings were evident from their behavior.

The Ukrainians have on several occasions protested against the grant of equal rights to the Jews. The guards on the Russo-German border have recently shown certain disquieting signs of anti-Semitism. The Russian guards incline to fraternize with the German guards, who poison their minds against the Jews.

Latterly there has been something of an exodus from the Russian to the German-occupied territory. This exodus is due to economic factors. The Soviet authorities confiscated all the zlotys they found in public institutions, and used the money to buy goods from the local merchants. The exchange value of the zloty in relation to the ruble was then arbitrarily fixed. Refugees from the German zone, whose funds were all in zlotys, suddenly found themselves penniless among strangers and with no means whatever of earning a living. Such people feel that they can do better for themselves by going back to their former homes.

The opposition of the Ukrainians to the Soviet authorities is much stronger in Eastern Galicia than in Poland. There have been some instances of armed resistance to Russian rule by the Ukrainian peasants.

When the Russians announced a plebiscite in Lvov, the Jewish leaders met in secret to decide whether or not the Jewish population should take part in it. While in conference, they sent a representative to the Polish leaders to ask what they intended to do. The Poles stared at him in astonishment. "An order has been given," they said, "and we must obey. There is no choice!" While the Jews hesitated to comply with the order for fear the Poles would regard their action as disloyal, the Poles themselves did not for a moment consider the possibility of disobedience or opposition.

Let us now consider the position in Vilna. The transfer of the city from Russian to Lithuanian rule was signalized by a pogrom which, as I shall explain, was due to the muddling of the Lithuanian authorities.

When evacuating Vilna, the Russians helped themselves liberally to whatever they wanted. Radiators were removed from homes, beds and mattresses from hospitals. If they were interested in a factory, they not only carted off all the machinery, but forced the whole staff, from the manager to the office boy, to go to Russia with them. Dr. Jacobowitzky, a well-known gynecologist, was arrested at the time. When his wife appealed for his release, she was informed that he had not been imprisoned, but that they had need of his skilled services in Russia. All who were ordered to go to Russia were told to bring their household effects and other portable belongings; but when they reached the Russian frontier, everything was taken away from them.

On taking over Vilna, the Lithuanians fixed the exchange rate of the lit at two zlotys, but soon altered it to five zlotys. The prices of all commodities, and of bread in particular, rose higher and higher. The bread problem grew very acute. The authorities wavered and vacillated. Long queues were formed outside the grocers' shops. Agitators in the queues reminded the people that while the zloty had previously been worth a ruble, its value had now been depressed to one-fifth of a lit, and urged them to hold a demonstration in front of the town hall. The demonstrators demanded that the price of bread should be reduced. Some shouted, "Let us call back the Russians!" When the police began to disperse the crowd, someone tore down a Lithuanian flag. Not knowing what else to do, the police laid about them right and left. In the hurly-burly young hooligans began to beat Jews, telling the police that these were Jewish Communists. Thereupon the police joined in beating the Jews. From my window I saw three Polish youths pursue a young Jew until he took refuge in a house. Police followed him into the house and arrested him. Appeals were made in his behalf, but the authorities turned a cold shoulder to the delegations. The pogrom, which was of a

combined Russian-Polish character, continued for a whole day. Pillows and featherbeds were ripped up and their contents strewn in the streets. People were hurled down from balconies on to the pavements. The Jews did not defend themselves during the pogrom, and indeed had no means of doing so. The next day the Jews asked the authorities to recruit Jewish police constables, but their request was refused. The pogrom did not reflect the official Lithuanian policy, and was not indicative of the attitude of the Lithuanian regime toward the Jews. The Jews hoped to secure a very favorable status in Vilna, since the Christian population of the city is very small, but appear to have erred in their calculations. Though there is no official anti-Semitism in Lithuania, some newspapers do not hesitate to call for legislation prohibiting Jews from employing Christian housemaids.

As for the refugees, the policy of the Lithuanian government is liberal on the whole. About 3,000 refugees were permitted to enter the country at one point. The right of domicile has been granted to the refugees, so that the fear of expulsion does not hang over their heads. Some of the refugees may be transferred from the cities to the towns, and perhaps also to the villages. But they are forbidden to engage in any occupation whatsoever. Refugee journalists are not permitted to write for the papers, nor even to have typewriters in their possession.

Great credit is due the Joint Distribution Committee for having organized refugee relief very promptly. Meat and soup are served at midday in the refugee kitchens, and all are given provisions for supper and breakfast, which are prepared in their lodgings. The rent allowance of 15 lit is inadequate. In general the assistance rendered by the Joint Distribution Committee is insufficient, and should be supplemented, especially for the organized refugee groups, such as those of the Zionists and the Halutzim, who opened clubs which are primarily feeding centres. All the parties have opened one or more such feeding centres.

Opinions vary with regard to the next Russian move in the Baltic countries. Some people think that since Russia already dominates the Baltic countries, she has no need to subjugate them

by force. Others, again, are convinced that she will take the first opportunity to complete her conquests. During the Russo-Finnish war, the governments of Latvia and Lithuania were asked by the Russian ministers to those countries why their newspapers sided with Finland and not with Russia. When reminded that the press was free, they still insisted that it be "instructed" to take a pro-Russian attitude. When Russia made war on Finland, she demanded that the governments of Esthonia and Latvia enable her to enlarge her military bases in those countries. The demand was based on a secret clause in the Russian treaties with Latvia and Esthonia which provided for such expansion in the event of a Baltic war. Latvia and Esthonia refused on the ground that the war in Finland was a Scandinavian and not a Baltic war. Relations between Russia and Latvia became very tense, and it was then that Ulmanis delivered the trenchant speech in which he told his countrymen to prepare to don military uniforms. All this explains the prevailing opinion that the Baltic states are not destined to enjoy their sovereignty much longer. When we receive letters from Vilna which are filled with gloomy forebodings, we must not dismiss such forebodings as inspired by imaginary fears. Lithuania is in fact in a worse position than the other two Baltic countries because it has a common frontier with Germany. All but sixteen per cent. of the Germans in Latvia have been repatriated, while the rest have adopted Latvian nationality. But, for some unknown reason, all the Germans have remained in Lithuania. The official Lithuanian statement that their repatriation has been postponed to the spring has been received with incredulity. It is feared that after the destinies of Latvia and Esthonia have been decided, Lithuania will again become the subject of bargaining between Russia and Germany. Lithuania is thus in a much more precarious situation than the other Baltic countries. Some Lithuanians say that a complete new Lithuanian government is waiting on the other side of the border, and that they even have a list of its members. "How then," they ask, "can we be assured of stability? Lithuania is a small and weak nation, and has no choice but to accede to the demands of other nations.

When the Poles made demands upon us, we had to yield. Then came the Germans, and we gave in to them. Now the Russians are upon us, and we must yield again. Our only hope is that both will be defeated. And then we shall find ourselves 'protected' by a third power!"

My purpose in outlining the political situation of Lithuania is to make it clear that the position of the refugees in Lithuania is untenable and that they must emigrate. They cannot wait for the storm to blow over. The Poles in the Russian-occupied zone of Lithuania regard the Jews as dominant and domineering. Just after the Russian occupation of Lvov, there seemed to be some feeling of Jewish-Polish solidarity. In Vilna the Jewish refugees are criticized for spreading the Polish language. In the streets of Kovno one hears more Polish than Lithuanian. The Lithuanians complain to their Jewish fellow-citizens that the Jewish refugees speak Polish and so help to "Polonize" their country. On the other hand, the Poles of Vilna assert that the Jewish leaders were much too hasty in going over to the side of the Lithuanians.

B. Report of Dr. K. SCHWARTZ

Former member of the Polish Sejm and chairman of the United Poale Zion-Hitachduth Party in Eastern Galicia.

In the early weeks of the Russian occupation chaos prevailed. Conditions varied from city to city, from district to district. One of the first acts of the new regime in Eastern Galicia was to arrest Zionists. About thirty were imprisoned in Kolomea alone. The first arrests were made among the Left Poale Zion. In Strj and other towns the members of the United Poale Zion-Hitachduth Party were arrested. The motive was, of course, to fight Zionism by all available means.

For a while Hebrew was permitted to retain its rank as the dominant language of the Jewish schools. The officials entrusted with the affairs of the Hebrew schools were non-Jews. Then Yiddish was introduced as the language of instruction in all the schools, but Hebrew was still taught — until a Jewish official

took charge. This man told representatives of the Tarbut Organization that he could not countenance the "torture of children with two languages."

Though religious freedom is guaranteed by the Stalin Constitution, the only lawful propaganda is that directed against religion. The sale of articles used in religious services, including even prayer books, is illegal, because these are means of spreading "religious propaganda." The shops which formerly sold religious books were forced to close.

Much publicity has been given to the fact that 96% of the voters favored the annexation of Eastern Galicia and all other Russian-occupied territory to Soviet Ukraine and White Russia. This figure is absolutely accurate, but — the voters were not free agents. The elections were very carefully organized. All voters were rounded up. Each house was visited five or six times in the course of the day, and every voter was led to the polling station. If a voter was ill in bed, a ballot slip was brought to him. The law provides for a secret ballot. But there was no choice of candidates, since only one candidate was nominated for each district. The local council of trades-unions nominated the candidate whose name was proposed by the factory committees. No one ventured to protest against this procedure. The only choice lay between voting for the single candidate or crossing out his name. In districts where most of the ballots were found cancelled, the candidate was deemed to have been defeated, and new elections were held. Partitions were set up in the polling-places to give the illusion of privacy to the voters. But as soon as an envelope was handed in, the workingmen-propagandists in charge opened it to see whether the voter had actually cast a ballot for the candidate or not. If he had been bold enough to cross out the name, nothing was said to him at the moment, but he was placed under arrest as soon as he stepped out into the street.

The Bolshevik propaganda was dinned into one's ears by loudspeakers at every street corner and in all other public places. The stream of talk, invariably identical in content, terminology,

and tone, flowed on all day long until late in the evening. Stalin was praised in terms usually reserved for Deity alone.

The Jews received the Red troops without enthusiasm, but were greatly relieved by their entry. Lvov had been bombed for three weeks, there had been casualties, and it had been feared that German occupation was imminent. When the Russians came instead, a feeling of easement prevailed.

When the Soviet regime was instituted, Jewish Communists were appointed to important administrative posts. The authorities had little choice. The Ukrainian intellectuals were aggressively nationalistic, and counted few Communists in their ranks. There were no Poles who had all the necessary qualifications. Hence the Russians had to avail themselves of the services of the young Jewish Communists. As, however, these were suspected of Trotskyist leanings, most of the appointees were simple workmen who could be trusted absolutely and who were not capable of distinguishing between one system and another. The highest posts were reserved for officials from Kiev. In later months all the administrative posts were filled by such men.

The feeling of relief with which the Jews greeted the entry of the Red troops soon gave way to disappointment, even on the part of the Jewish proletariat. It had been taken for granted that under a Soviet regime work would be provided for all, without distinction of race or social status, within two or three weeks at the latest. These expectations proved to be illusory. Several thousand young Jews were sent to the Don Basin, but many ran away and many others were sent back because the work was much too hard for them.

Scores of thousands of Jews have been left without any means of livelihood, the tradespeople being the hardest hit of all. Street trading was permitted for a time, and was carried on as long as stocks could be replenished. When, however, all the merchandise was confiscated and no more could be obtained, the shopkeepers were left high and dry. An employment exchange was set up, but many applicants waited in vain for weeks. Theoretically, there are no unemployed under the Russian regime. Under a new

classification, the population is divided into "workers" and "destitute." The latter are considered "unemployable," and the employment exchange therefore shakes off all responsibility for them. Even those who did get work have fared very badly. The wages were fixed at the pre-war level of four or five zlotys a day, while the cost of living has increased four and five-fold.

The Soviet authorities regard philanthropic activities with disfavor. Eastern Galicia is full of refugees. Lvov's pre-war population of 300,000 has been augmented to about 1,000,000. Soup kitchens were opened for needy refugees and the local poor. When the available funds gave out, the Soviet authorities were appealed to, but replied that they "had no charitable institutions" and advised the refugees to go back to their homes. The distress of the refugees is so acute that many (even some of the Jews) are thinking of returning to the territory now under German rule.

Soon after the Russians occupied Eastern Galicia, the Joint Distribution Committee sent 150,000 zlotys for relief purposes. It was felt unwise to continue the work of the soup kitchens without official sanction, and the Soviet authorities were asked for permission. Such permission was withheld. Since relief work cannot be conducted in secret, the kitchens had to be closed.

The teachers who consented to use Yiddish instead of Hebrew as the language of instruction were all retained at their posts. But even the Hebrew teachers are expected, like the others, to inculcate Communist doctrines. All the teachers will no doubt be dismissed when others are brought from Russia. Quite a number of the Russian army officers speak Yiddish, but the civilian officials do not. I had occasion one day to transact some business in a government office, and addressed the officials in Yiddish. At first they refused to reply in the same language, saying that they "had no need of Yiddish." Finally one did reply in very bad Yiddish. All the ordinances are published in Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish, but not a single one has appeared in Yiddish.

Two newspapers — one in Ukrainian and the other in Polish—were founded in Lvov. When some Yiddish journalists applied for a permit to publish a Yiddish paper, they were told that it was

unnecessary, since a Yiddish newspaper, "Der Shtern," was already appearing in Kharkov. The permit was finally issued, but only two and a half months later. The contents of the Galician papers are, of course, mere translations from the press of Soviet Russia. All the articles have the same trend.

Sommerstein and Schorr are still in prison. The procedure in making arrests is as follows: The victim is summoned to the office of the public prosecutor for an interview. In the course of the interview the prosecutor rises and leaves the room. The next moment two guards enter and make the arrest. The prisoner is not allowed to communicate with his family, and they may send him only designated amounts of foodstuffs and clean linens. He is never brought to trial, and no one knows his whereabouts. The "reason" for the arrest is that something in the man's record prior to the occupation is not to the liking of the new Soviet regime. So far as I know, not a single political prisoner has been released. On the other hand, all who were arrested for trading in foodstuffs have been set at liberty.

C. Report of S. ZEIDMAN,

*Chairman of the Central Committee of the Jewish National Fund
(Keren Kayemeth Leisrael) in Poland and member of the last
Polish Sejm.*

When I reached Rovno, I decided to go on to the little town of Koretz, sixty kilometres away on the Russian frontier. My fellow-refugees and I travelled eastward in the hope of getting into Russia, but were stopped by the frontier guards.

The Russian forces entered Poland on September 17 and 18. The troops were preceded by political officers who assured the Poles that the Russians were coming to help them fight the Germans. The very next day their tune changed.

On September 16 great numbers of Ukrainian peasants from the neighboring villages drove into Koretz in their farm wagons, bringing a plentiful supply of sacks in which to carry off loot from Jewish homes and shops, which they meant to plunder as soon as

the Polish troops withdrew from the town. (The Petlurian tradition still prevails in those parts). When the Russians entered Koretz, the peasants were waiting in the marketplace for an opportunity to carry out their design. That same afternoon Soviet representatives told them firmly that a pogrom would not be countenanced. The peasants then went back empty-handed to their villages.

Of the 5,000 inhabitants of Koretz 99% are Jewish. About 5,000 refugees streamed into the town. Some Jewish Communists took part in the demonstration of welcome to the Soviet troops, but I saw not a single mature individual among them. In general, no Jew over thirty years of age had any share in welcoming the Bolsheviki. The people breathed more freely because German bombers no longer flew overhead, but that was all.

The Poles of the Russian-occupied areas and Lithuania believe so firmly that the Jews brought about the Russian invasion of Poland that nothing can shake their conviction. Even leaders of the Polish left-wing parties believe this myth, though they admitted to me that they themselves had not seen the Jews welcome the Bolsheviki. They warned me that when the Poles got control of their own country again, the Jews would most certainly be butchered en masse, "as in the days of Petlura."

The Vilna pogrom was not confined to the city, but embraced the whole district. It was an organized affair. The Poles were the organizers, as they themselves admit. When the Lithuanians entered Vilna, a civil constabulary was organized. In its ranks there were newly released jailbirds and members of the anti-Semitic N. D. Party. It was these gentry who started the pogrom. In order to recognize one another, they arranged to wear white socks. When the Lithuanian police intervened, the "white socks" told them that they were "looking for the fellows who had held the pro-Bolshevist demonstration." (On October 21 some fifteen or twenty youths had tried to arrange a Communist demonstration, but there was no connection between that abortive attempt and the pogrom). The police completely lost their heads. Twenty-three Jews were seriously injured, and two received mortal in-

juries. (One of the latter was thrown from a balcony, and the other was stabbed with a bayonet).

Just before the war, there was a widespread anti-Semitic campaign in Poland. For example, a Warsaw military journal of high standing published an article on August 28 declaring that to defeat Hitler was not enough: The Poles were ready to fight Germany, but the Jews wanted to fight only Hitler, because they had many business connections in Germany. On August 29 a Posen weekly carried a cartoon on its front page showing Jews embracing Poles and at the same time stabbing them in the back. Articles inciting the masses to pogroms appeared in many other anti-Semitic journals at the time. I was reliably informed that anti-Semitic propaganda was being spread in the ranks of the regular army and among the new recruits. The situation was so tense that we decided to appeal to the central government. Sommerstein and I called on the head of the council of ministers. As he was out of town, we were received by his deputy. Was it not very strange, we asked him, that anti-Semitic propaganda should be spread in the army of the very eve of war? The deputy-minister replied that he himself had been amazed in reading the articles referred to. "It is hardly patriotic," I pointed out, "to incite the masses against the Jews at the very moment when a mobilization has been ordered!" (This was just after the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed).

The situation of Lithuania is very precarious. The Lithuanians fear a German attack from without, and a Polish revolt from within. Many Poles have been arrested in Vilna. For the moment all is quiet in Lithuania, but the outlook is not reassuring.

APPENDIX A.

THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN LITHUANIA.

a) *Number, Locality of Origin, and Whereabouts of Jewish Refugees in Lithuania.*

There are about 11,500 Jewish refugees in Lithuania, of whom 2,500 are in the Suwalki district (near the Lithuanian-German border) and 9,000 in the Vilna district. The status and prospects of the smaller group are by far the more favorable.

The refugees of the smaller group come from Suwalki and the neighboring towns, which were annexed to the German Reich during the invasion of Poland. Some fled voluntarily, others were expelled by the Germans. The majority underwent terrible sufferings in the no man's land of the border zone. Having entered Lithuania without permission, they had the greatest difficulty in securing the right of domicile. Once that obstacle was overcome, it was comparatively easy for them to make a fresh start because they had always lived near the Lithuanian border and had many relatives just beyond the border.

The antecedents, status, and prospects of the Vilna group are entirely different from those of the Suwalki group.

Most of the refugees in the Vilna district came there for certain definite reasons. During the mass flight from Poland, which began several days after the outbreak of war, only a small number of Jews sought refuge in Vilna, where they had relatives. The majority fled to the eastern provinces of Poland to wait until, as they hoped, the Polish army would repel the German invaders with the aid of British and French forces. Some of the young people went to the towns close to the eastern frontier, intending somehow to get into Soviet Russia in the event of a German victory. Zionists and Halutz youth streamed to the cities near the Rumanian frontier, with the idea of making their way to Palestine via Rumania.

When Poland had been subjugated, tens of thousands of Jewish refugees found themselves under a Soviet regime, and faced with the crucial problem of how and where to start life

over again. As it was rumored that the Vilna district was about to be transferred by Soviet Russia to Lithuania, many Jews flocked to Vilna for one or another of the following reasons: 1) Having an opportunity to emigrate, they wished to get into a neutral country from which they could take passage; 2) they had no prospects whatever of a livelihood in the Russian zone of occupation; 3) they had reason to fear arrest in either zone of occupation on personal grounds.

Most of the Vilna refugees come under one of the following categories: 1) Zionists of long standing; 2) Halutzim and Youth Aliyah; 3) rabbis; 4) Yeshiva students; 5) individuals with capital in Palestine or some other country; 6) individuals with relatives in Palestine or some other country; and 7) individuals having the right of entry into Palestine or some other country (holders of visas, returning residents, etc.). About 25% of the Vilna refugees belong in the first and second categories, 25% in the third and fourth, and 25% in the fifth, sixth, and seventh. The majority are neither able nor willing to remain in Lithuania, and regard it merely as a half-way station. The greater number entered Lithuania legally before Vilna was transferred (during the interval between the signing of the Russian-Lithuanian treaty and the Lithuanian occupation of the Vilna district).

b) *Legal Status of the Refugees.*

The legal status of the majority of the refugees is far from satisfactory. The smaller (Suwalki) group entered illegally, but most have been granted the right of domicile. They settled in small towns immediately, and are well on the way to self-support with the help of their Lithuanian relatives. But the larger (Vilna) group of refugees, most of whom are concentrated in the city of Vilna, is less happily placed. In petitioning the Lithuanian government, the Jewish spokesmen point out that since the refugees were already domiciled in the Vilna district at the time of the transfer, they are entitled under international law to the same rights as the rest of the population. The Lithuanian policy is, however, dictated by various fears and apprehensions. The

presence of many thousands of refugees from Poland is deemed a menace to the national culture of Lithuania, which is less advanced than that of Poland. So, too, it is feared that the Polish language will gain predominance, since many Lithuanians formerly spoke Polish and acquired their own national tongue only in recent years. The Lithuanian authorities are apprehensive that some of the Polish refugees may foment political disturbances. Finally, it is assumed that a liberal policy toward refugees would attract a renewed and continuous influx from both the German and the Russian areas of occupation. All these considerations impelled the Lithuanian government to issue a new edict granting the right of domicile only to those refugees who were already in the country prior to the transfer of Vilna. All others thus became subject to deportation. A government bureau, with a commissioner in charge, was opened for the specific purpose of dealing with the refugee problem.

The commissioner immediately proceeded to arrange for the the repatriation of refugees to the Russian and German-occupied territories. An agreement was made with the Soviet government whereby refugees from the Russian zone in Poland might return to their homes by December 1939. A similar agreement was to be made with Germany, with the important proviso that all who refused to return to the German-occupied area would be required to give an adequate reason. In Lithuanian official circles it is said, however, that in the case of Jewish refugees German anti-Semitism will be accepted as a valid reason for refusal.

The commissioner for refugee affairs has two major functions : a) to pass on applications for permission to remain in the country, and to indicate the locality of domicile when giving an affirmative decision ; and b) to pass on applications for permission to engage in some business or vocation.

The refugees are required by law to register with the police, and the latter indicate to each refugee where he may reside. The purpose of this law is to disperse the refugees in the small towns and villages. The commissioner for refugee affairs insists that the presence in Vilna of many thousands of refugees (both Jewish

and non-Jewish) from Poland retards the "Lithuanization" of the capital. The law does not affect the Suwalki refugees who, as already mentioned, settled in small towns immediately. But the Vilna refugees are placed in an untenable position. If they are obliged to pull up stakes again, all the adjustments they have made in recent months will have been in vain. Practically all are city-bred people with the social and cultural interests of their type. Residence in a large city is also essential for them so that they may keep up their connections with their former homes, or make their arrangements for emigration. The welfare organizations are opposed to the dispersal of the refugees because they can be more effectively assisted when concentrated in a single locality. Only two groups of refugees — those of the Yeshivoth and the Halutz organizations — agreed to remove some of their people from Vilna. The heads of the Yeshivoth had decided even before the edict was published that it would be best to re-establish their institutions in several localities, and had already made representations to the authorities. For example, the Yeshiva of Mir has been removed to Kaidan, and that of Radun to Ejszyszki. The Halutz organizations, also, preferred not to have all their members in one locality. In connection with the edict they therefore applied for permission to send some of their groups out of Vilna provided that the others were allowed to remain. The authorities consented to this proposal, and the commissioner for refugee affairs instructed the co-ordinating committee of the Halutz organizations to draw up a plan of transfer for some of the groups to several localities in consultation with the Vilna police. This plan is now being implemented by the co-ordinating committee. The removal of Yeshivoth and Halutz groups from Vilna has eased the tension for the other refugees, and it is likely that applications of individuals will now be more favorably considered.

When the refugees presented themselves for registration, the police questioned the right of many to live anywhere at all in Lithuania. The registration lists kept in all the houses are frequently scrutinized by the police. When the names of recent arrivals are found, these are known to have entered the country

illegally, and are therefore liable to expulsion. There have not been many expulsions to the Russian or German zones, but many Jews who tried to enter Lithuania illegally were turned back at the frontier. When "illegals" are caught, they are punished as rigorously as the law allows.

A delegation of Jewish leaders, composed of Rabbi I. Rubinstein, Dr. I. Robinson, and Dr. Bludz, tried to convince the commissioner for refugee affairs that most of the Jews who come from either the German or the Russian zone of occupation are political refugees, and therefore entitled to the right of asylum. The delegation even went so far as to suggest that each case be reviewed separately to determine whether or not the refugee had fled from political persecution. The commissioner insisted, however, that it was his duty to check the ever-increasing influx of refugees.

The policy of the Lithuanian government in regard to the employment — or, rather, the right to work — of the refugees is very uncompromising. All efforts to obtain permission to work have failed, except in the single instance of the refugee Halutzim, who are allowed to work on the land. A recent order forbids refugees to work without special police permits. Refugee writers and journalists are not allowed to write for Lithuanian or even for foreign papers, and may not have typewriters in their possession. Refugees are also prohibited from taking part in the work of any organization. They are thus rigidly excluded from the economic and social life of the country. Since, owing to war conditions, their departure cannot be hastened, they are isolated, and allowed to do nothing except wait for an opportunity to emigrate.

Internment camps for refugees are under consideration, and it appears that at least one such camp will be established for Polish refugees who, in the opinion of the Lithuanian police, are a menace to the public security when at large. Some Jews will also probably be sent to the camp. It is possible that a labor camp may be established as well, since the authorities wish to utilize the services of some of the dependent refugees. Though

these plans are not likely to be implemented in the near future, they are sufficiently definite to cause anxiety.

c) *Aid for the Jewish Refugees.*

Practically all the Jewish refugees are destitute, as very few were able to bring away any valuables. The refugees of the Suwalki district are aided by local committees in the small towns where they have settled, but the Ezra committee of Kovno provides most of the funds. About 80% of these relief funds are derived from Lithuanian sources, and only about 20% from abroad (chiefly from the Joint Distribution Committee). The relief activities in the Vilna district are conducted by a sub-committee of the Jewish Community Council of Vilna. All the funds come from abroad (chiefly from the Joint Distribution Committee).

The Suwalki refugees receive rent, clothing, and a daily cash allowance (at the rate of 1½ lit for individuals, 2 lit and 25 cents for families of two, 3 lit for families of three, etc.).

The Vilna refugees receive rent, clothing, and meals (the latter at the public kitchens opened by the Poale Zion, Mizrachi, General Zionists, Agudath Israel, Bund, and other organizations). The rent allowance is in some cases distributed directly to families and individuals, and in others used for dormitories for groups of refugees.

The refugee Halutzim are assisted collectively by the coordinating committee of their organizations. The daily per capita food allowance is 0.90 lit. The Palestine Committee for the Aid of Refugees from Poland in Lithuania assists Zionists of long standing and Halutzim with grants toward travelling expenses, and communal leaders with maintenance allowances. This Committee also helps to finance the Halutz training camps and the Youth Aliyah.

The burning question at the moment is not, however, the form or manner of dispensing relief to refugees (though complaints and criticisms are not lacking), but the legal status of the relief work itself. For some time past the Lithuanian government has favored amalgamation of all the relief activities on the ground

that separate provision for Jewish and Polish refugees tends to arouse the resentment of the latter. The Jews have had much experience in organizing relief activities, the Poles very little. There is no adequately organized provision for the aid of the Polish refugees, so that they not seldom go cold and hungry and shelterless. The sight of the well cared-for Jewish refugees makes them very bitter. The Lithuanian authorities therefore propose to establish a single standard of refugee relief by uniting all the activities. A recent ordinance provides that all relief work for refugees is to be centralized under the auspices of the Lithuanian Red Cross Society. All relief funds received from abroad are to be administered by a central committee of seven appointed by the Red Cross and composed of representatives from all foreign organizations which send funds for refugees. In this central committee the Jews have only one seat, that allotted to the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee. All funds received from abroad are to be converted into Lithuanian currency at the official rate of exchange, and supplemented to the extent of 50% from the Lithuanian Treasury.

The Jewish relief work is seriously threatened by the proposed amalgamation. The relief funds for the Polish refugees are dwindling, and if the funds are merged, the non-Jewish relief committees abroad will probably cast their burden upon the Jews (in other words, upon the Joint Distribution Committee) and cease their fund-raising efforts. Under the new law the term "refugee" has been stretched to include the non-naturalized residents of the Vilna district who have lost their means of support owing to the war. The numerous Polish officials who were not residents of the Vilna district in 1920 (such residence having been essential for naturalization) and who have been dismissed from their posts as a result of the Lithuanian occupation, will thus be included in the category of refugees, and, as such, entitled to assistance from the relief funds. In this way the number of Polish refugees will be largely augmented, and all will receive allowances from the amalgamated funds. The Lithuanian government thereby burdens contributors abroad (and Jewish contributors in parti-

cular) with the responsibility of maintaining thousands of individuals who lost their means of support when the Vilna district was restored to Lithuania, and who are not refugees at all in the accepted sense of the term. The merging of relief funds and the adoption of a share-and-share-alike system for all refugees regardless of the source of the funds, will tend to undermine the whole Jewish undertaking, which by this time is fairly well organized. For the reasons just mentioned, the Joint Distribution Committee and the local committees are opposed to the plan. They are negotiating with the Lithuanian government and the Red Cross Society, and it is hoped that an agreement satisfactory to all the parties concerned will be arrived at.

d) *Prospects of Solving the Refugee Problem.*

As mentioned at the beginning of this Appendix, it appears that the Jewish refugee problem in Lithuania will be solved chiefly by means of emigration. The Suwalki refugees will (it is assumed) be able to strike root in the small towns. The majority of the Vilna refugees, on the other hand, have pinned all their hopes on emigration. Fortunately, the prospects of emigration are not all too limited. About 300 refugees already have visas for Palestine, and a considerable number have visas for other countries. Hundreds of veteran Zionists, almost 2,000 Halutzim, over 2,000 Yeshiva students, and scores of rabbis hope to receive certificates for Palestine when the next immigration schedule is approved. A large number of refugees will obtain visas for countries other than Palestine. Unfortunately, few are able to leave Lithuania owing to the difficulty of obtaining transit visas and to the high costs of transportation. The Palestine Committee for the Aid of Refugees from Poland in Lithuania, which was organized by Zionist refugees with the approval of the Zionist Executive, is doing much to facilitate emigration to Palestine and other countries. In view of the unsatisfactory legal and economic status of the Vilna refugees, everything possible should be done to expedite their departure from Lithuania, and to assist them to reach their respective destinations. The great majority hope to be able to go to Palestine.

APPENDIX B.

THE SITUATION OF THE JEWS OF EASTERN GALICIA.

(As Reported by an Eye-Witness).

The following account of conditions in Eastern Galicia, now officially designated as Western Ukraine, refers to the period between September 17, 1939 when the territory was occupied by the Russians, and December 31 of that year.

1. *The Jewish Attitude Toward the Russian Occupation*

When Soviet troops unexpectedly crossed the Polish border, the event was favorably regarded by the Jews because thereby they escaped the greater evil of Nazi rule.

The Polish anti-Semites go about saying that the Jews are pleased with the Russian occupation. The fact is, however, that the Jews regarded an invasion, whether Russian or German, as disastrous to their own interests; but, as between the one and the other, they were bound to prefer occupation by the Russians, knowing that a Soviet regime would not murder or torture them for the "crime" of their Jewish birth.

Not only the Jews, but all responsible Poles preferred Soviet to Nazi rule. When Russian troops appeared in the gates of Lvov after the city had been besieged by the Germans for ten days and further resistance was seen to be hopeless, the Poles, under the leadership of General Langer, decided to submit to the Russians rather than hand the city over to the Germans.

That the Jews of Eastern Galicia had reason to be apprehensive about Nazi rule was soon obvious from reports received from the western provinces of Poland. The section of Eastern Galicia which includes the important cities of Przemysl, Sambor, Drohobyslaw, and Strj, was under German rule for several weeks. When I visited those cities immediately after their transfer to the Russians under the demarcation agreement, I was informed that the Jews had been maltreated everywhere. The Jewish shops had been looted by the German military who, while ostensibly making purchases, either paid some ridiculous sum or nothing

at all. Just prior to the entry of the Russians, the Nazis pillaged many Jewish homes, and carted away immense quantities of household stuff to the German-occupied territory. The Jews were tormented in the classic Nazi fashion. Prominent Jews were compelled to clean w. c.'s, sweep the pavements, and dance (as in Strj) in the main squares. Venerable Jews were forced to run in street races. The Austrian soldiers, while friendly and humane, confided to the Jews that they had to be very careful in the presence of their German comrades, and more especially in the presence of the German youth and Gestapo agents. The Jewish community of Przemysl, where the Gestapo was active for several days, had a peculiarly terrible experience. Over 600 Jews were seized as hostages in that city and murdered to the last man. Their corpses were flung into a pit used as an air raid shelter. It is hardly strange, then, that the Jews preferred the Russian occupation as the lesser evil.

Nevertheless, the fact is that the Jews did not receive the Red troops with any degree of enthusiasm. The Jewish Communists, of course, were pleased; but so were the Ukrainian and the Polish Communists. In view of the allegations of the Polish anti-Semites that the Jews rejoiced at the Russian invasion of Eastern Galicia, the following facts should be borne in mind :

First and foremost, the Jewish people is always held responsible by the anti-Semites for the acts of a few individuals; and, second, the Jews form almost 80% of the population in some of the provincial towns. When Communist demonstrations were held in such towns, Jews naturally predominated, though Ukrainians and Poles also took part. It is on such isolated instances that the charges are based, while no account is taken of facts such as that thousands of Ukrainians who until recently were ardent nationalists, have now placed themselves at the service of the Russians, and that numerous Ukrainians are holding important posts in the Soviet regime. But when a few Jews are found serving in the militia, or an occasional Jew holds a government post to which he could not have aspired under the former regime, wholly inaccurate conclusions are drawn about the stand of the

Jewish population. If there are few Polish Communists in Eastern Galicia, this is only natural because, except in a few of the provincial towns, there are no Polish workingmen.

I have discussed this matter at some length because the charge that the Jews of Eastern Galicia are pro-Soviet will doubtless be heard again and again.

The Poles are as hostile as ever to the Jews. Threats are often heard that they will settle accounts with the Jews at the first opportunity. But, of course, there are many sensible Poles who realize that the majority of the Jews regard the Russian occupation as disastrous, and who do not blame the whole Jewish population for the behavior of a few Jewish Communists or "Lumpenproletariat."

2. *Is There a Jewish Question in the Russian-Occupied Territory?*

I have been repeatedly asked whether there is a Jewish Question in the Russian-occupied territory, and whether any Jews have been appointed to important government positions. I always reply that there is no Jewish question in Eastern Galicia, because the Soviet regime actually does not discriminate between Jews and non-Jews; but that, on the other hand, Jews are not appointed to responsible posts. Jews are, indeed, enrolled in the militia organized in all parts of the occupied territory under the supervision of the Polish police, but not in unlimited numbers. Minor appointments in public institutions and schools, from which Jews were previously excluded, are now open to them. Jewish engineers also are employed. So, too, Jewish students are admitted to educational institutions where there was formerly a numerus clausus. The fact remains, nevertheless, that the Jews — and this also applies to the Jewish Communists — have no opportunity to influence political developments.

Not a single important government function has been entrusted to a Jew. The responsible tasks are allotted to Russian officials. In districts where local men are employed for such purposes, the posts go only to Ukrainians.

Concerning the rumors about numerous appointments of Jews as mayors in Galician cities, I would say that not even one such appointment was made.

The following instances are typical. At the conference of the National Soviet which was convened in Lvov in October 1939 and passed a resolution favoring the annexation of "Western Ukraine" to the Soviet Union, there were fewer than 20 Jews among the 1,700 delegates. Two instances are known to me of workingmen who wished to nominate Jewish comrades or well-known Jewish Communists as their delegates to that conference, but were instructed to nominate Ukrainians instead. In Lvov, where the Jews form almost 30% of the population, only 2 delegates were elected out of a total of 160.

Why are not the Jews permitted to exercise any influence on political developments in Eastern Galicia? Because the Russians wish to play up to the Ukrainians, who were previously excluded from the political life of the country. Their policy is summed up in the formula that "Western Ukraine" must be nationalist in form and socialist in content. The practice in this respect is not wholly consistent with the theory. The Ukrainians are still excluded from the key posts, to all of which Russians are appointed. But in order to win the good will of the Ukrainians, which involves taking account of their nationalist and anti-Semitic sentiments, the Russians carefully avoid giving any impression that the Jews now enjoy fuller rights or exert greater political influence than under the Polish regime.

I might mention, in passing, that Jewish officers and soldiers from the Soviet Union told us that the Jews of Russia hold no important posts in the civil administration, but that there are Jews in the very highest ranks of the Red army. In their candid moments, these men told us that while anti-Semitism is suppressed in Russia and all offenses are rigorously punished, many Russians (and Ukrainians in particular) have remained anti-Semitic at heart.

To sum up. No important political functions are entrusted to Jews in the Russian zone of occupation. This applies as well to Jewish Communists. Jews are appointed only to minor posts.

No great confidence is reposed in them, as they are suspected of Trotskyism.

3. *The Effects of the Soviet Regime upon the Economic Status of the Jews of Eastern Galicia*

In reviewing the situation in Eastern Galicia, the conclusion is inescapable that the great majority of the Jews have been deprived of all means of earning a living. The occupations in which most Galician Jews were engaged — petty trade, brokerage, industry, and the like — are banned in a Socialist or Communist State. The relatively small numbers of Jews who owned estates or apartment houses, or lived on their income, are in the same desperate position as the others.

Under a Socialist regime there is room only for workingmen, farmers, and professional workers. There is a Jewish proletariat, in the true sense of the word, only in a few of the largest cities. (The distinction between a real proletariat and a "Lumpenproletariat" should be kept clearly in mind, as the number of Jews among the latter is not small). The Jewish "Lumpenproletariat," who always had a hard struggle for existence and expected better conditions under Soviet rule, have been sorely disappointed. Jobs are no more plentiful than before, and the cost of living has increased, as there is an acute shortage of essential foodstuffs and of fuel. The only alternative is to migrate to Central Russia, where workingmen find jobs in the mines of the Don Basin.

There are very few Jewish farmers in Eastern Galicia, so that the privileges accorded to that class have no alleviatory effect for the Jewish population in general.

The Jewish professional class consists of lawyers, officials, physicians, pharmacists, teachers, and engineers.

The lawyers lost their means of livelihood at the outbreak of the war, when all the courts were closed. As the courts have not yet been re-opened, their situation is serious. The lawyers have fewer prospects than any other class of professional workers because the Russian judicial system is so organized that only a

few of the many can hope to be appointed. And, at that, only those will be chosen who are not politically suspect.

There were only a few Jewish officials in the government service under the Polish regime. Such officials are certain of their posts if only their departments have not been abolished.

The physicians are permitted to continue in private practice until January 1, 1940. They are then to pass into the service of the government, and will have to settle in whatever locality is indicated to them. This is the place to mention that licenses have been granted to hundreds of Jewish physicians who held diplomas from non-Polish universities but were unable to practice because licenses were issued only after special examinations had been passed, and then very rarely.

The right to work has also been granted to pharmacists with foreign diplomas. All pharmacies were nationalized in December 1939. Some of the proprietors were taken into the service of the government, but the wealthy ones are told that they will be permitted to work when they have become as poor as their former employees.

The engineers and teachers were permitted to go on with their work, and the unemployed now have prospects of posts.

During the first weeks of the Russian occupation, the majority of the Galician Jews, who are not artisans, farmers, or professional workers, were not badly off. Social and economic reforms were not immediately instituted because, with the elections to the National Soviet pending, the Russians wished to keep the middle-class under the illusion that changes in the existing order would come about only gradually. There were naive persons who actually believed that there was room in the Soviet Union for two utterly disparate social orders.

Landowners were the first to suffer, as their property was confiscated immediately after the entry of the Russians. Even tiny farms were nationalized if the owners were found working their land with the help of hired laborers. The decisions were left to village committees, which were composed of peasants with anti-Semitic leanings. Where the ability of a farmer to work his

land himself was doubtful, the decision was usually favorable in the case of an Ukrainian and the reverse in the case of a Jew.

Commerce and industry were not immediately subjected to reforms and restrictions. The National Soviet of "Western Ukraine" resolved in favor of nationalizing the banks and the large factories. A number of Jewish manufacturers were affected by this measure, but they were retained as managers of their plants at salaries fixed by the committees of employees.

The National Soviet adopted no measures against private trade because in any event the shops were bound to close when their stocks were exhausted and no new merchandise could be obtained by the shopkeepers. But it was not anticipated that extreme measures would be taken, because care had been exercised not to do anything that might shake the commercial structure. When prices went up, the shopkeepers were allowed to charge as much as they pleased for their goods. Then suddenly, in December 1939, steps were taken to adjust the economic order of Eastern Galicia to that of the Soviet Union. The manufacturers who had been retained as managers were suddenly dismissed. The shops were closed, and their stocks confiscated. Thousands of shop assistants were thrown out of work. Only co-operative shops are now functioning, but there are so few of these that only a small number of the unemployed assistants can hope to find work in them. Besides, most of the co-operatives were organized by Ukrainians under the Polish regime, and these will employ no Jews.

Apartment houses have not been confiscated. As many of the houses in Eastern Galicia belong to Jews, this would have been a favoring circumstance except that the landlords can collect no rents, either because the tenants really cannot pay or because they know that no court will issue an order requiring them to vacate the premises. In any case, it is thought likely that the houses will soon be confiscated.

Since the new policy was inaugurated, wealthy Jewish manufacturers and merchants have been harassed in a variety of ways.

Many have been deprived of their last penny on the pretext that they did not pay taxes to the Polish government.

A staggering blow was dealt to the whole population on December 31, 1939, when the zloty was entirely devaluated. After the occupation the zloty had been placed on a par with the ruble (though the banks never exchanged zlotys for rubles). When the zloty suddenly lost its value, millions of people were rendered destitute. Merchants who had sold goods to Russians for many thousands of zlotys but neglected to convert the money into rubles or dollars, found that they had parted with their stock for nothing. At first the Russians paid for everything in rubles. Then, after the middle of October, they paid only in zlotys. The inference is therefore that even at that early date the devaluation of the zloty, and the consequent liquidation of commerce and capital, had already been decided upon. People who lived on their capital or savings were beggared.

Gold, jewelry, and articles of common use are rarely confiscated, except in the provincial towns, and then are taken mostly from the rich. The procedure is more rigorous, as a rule, in the provinces than in the large cities. In some towns the authorities ordered the whole population to turn over money, jewels, and clothing valued in excess of a certain figure. In Przemysl, for example, a "Poverty Week" was proclaimed when everything exceeding a designated value had to be turned over to the authorities. Such measures affect the Jews in the main, since they form the majority of the population in the small towns. In many cities apartments have been confiscated for the benefit of Russian officers and officials. The original tenants are considered fortunate if they are left with a single room for their families. This policy, also, affects Jews more than others because they are so largely an urban population.

From what has been said here, it will be obvious that the economic foundations of a large section of Galician Jewry have been destroyed.

4. *Jewish Culture and the Non-Political Organizations.*

As I have already stated, there is no such thing as a Jewish Question in the territory under Soviet rule. But, unless conditions change, the Jews, as Jews, will soon disappear like the Jewish Question.

In principle, the Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish languages are equal in the eyes of the law. The practice does not, however, conform to the principle. Though all official proclamations should be issued in the three languages, only Ukrainian and Polish were employed in the large cities in the beginning of the Russian occupation. When the authorities in Lvov were reminded that this constituted discrimination against the Yiddish language, they admitted the justice of the charge. Since then, the proclamations are printed in only one language — Ukrainian or Polish!

Hebrew is dubbed a "reactionary" language and its use is banned. All the Hebrew schools must now employ Yiddish as their language of instruction. So, also, must the Jewish schools whose medium of instruction was formerly Polish. The sudden change has given rise to many difficulties, because many teachers and pupils do not know Yiddish well enough for the purpose. To complicate matters, a system of phonetic spelling has been decreed which disguises the Hebrew origin of many common Yiddish words. The use of Hebrew idioms in Yiddish is avoided as much as possible.

Like the other papers of Eastern Galicia, the two Jewish dailies ("Chwila" in Polish and "Der Morgen" in Yiddish) did not appear during the German siege. They have not resumed publication, as none but Communist papers are now permitted. The building, printing shop, and other property of "Chwila" were confiscated and handed over to an Ukrainian daily, the "Wilna Ukraina." No provision has been made for the staff of "Chwila" on the ground that they "served the editors." Of the few employees of the printing shop whose services have been retained, only one is a Jew.

Immediately after their entry into Lvov, the Russians gave permission for the establishment of Ukrainian and Polish dailies,

but "saw no reason" for allowing a Yiddish successor to "Der Morgen." Only three months later, in December 1939, did a Yiddish daily begin to appear.

The Jewish religion is regarded as a personal matter, and its practice is not interfered with so long as it does not go beyond personal bounds, even though there is much propaganda against religion in general. But the religious life of Galician Jewry is bound to decline in any event because no funds will be available for synagogues owing to the dissolution of the community councils and the impoverishment of the Jewish population. The Russians have not imposed a ban on religion because they assume that it will eventually disappear of itself.

Jewish organizations of a non-political character have not been disbanded, but all the Jewish trade-unions have been merged with the Polish and Ukrainian trade-unions. The executive committees of the amalgamated unions are composed mostly of Ukrainians. There are very few Jewish members on these committees, because the class affiliation of the candidates was an important factor in determining who should and who should not be nominated. Since most of the Jews come from the commercial and other "non-productive" classes, and the Ukrainians are chiefly of peasant stock, the latter were of course preferred. In the amalgamated co-operatives, also, the Ukrainians have the upper hand. When the co-operatives were re-organized after the amalgamation, some of the Jewish employees were dismissed.

The Jewish community councils ceased to function as soon as the Russians appeared. In the provincial towns, the property of the community councils was confiscated and their offices closed. The large property holdings of the Jewish Community Council of Lvov are in process of liquidation. In the meantime, a committee of its employees is in charge of the hospital, orphanage, cemetery, etc. When the affairs of the Council are wound up, its property will be taken over by the government or the municipality, which will then assume responsibility for the maintenance of its institutions. That these institutions will no longer bear a specifically Jewish character is certain.

5. *Political Organizations.*

The Jewish parties discontinued their political activities on the very first day of the Russian occupation. Though they received no orders from the new authorities, it seemed the part of wisdom to do so. The Ukrainian and Polish parties also disbanded voluntarily.

The Zionists and Bundists are equally persecuted,—the former because they are nationalistic and the latter because they are regarded as the “minions of the capitalists.” It seems to be the policy of the authorities to harry Socialists in general. On the other hand, very little notice is taken of the Agudath Israel, which is regarded as in no way dangerous to the new order.

The arrests of Jews have so far been confined to Zionists and Bundists. Two Zionist leaders—Dr. Sommerstein, a member of the Polish Sejm, and Prof. Schorr, a Warsaw rabbi and member of the Polish Senate—have been arrested. Other prominent Zionists taken into custody include Dr. Wandell of Strj, Dr. Adelsberg of Drohobycz, Dr. Arnold of Stanislaw, and Mr. Schutzmann of Boryslaw. In Przemysl, the head of the local Revisionist organization was arrested. Among the Bundists arrested in Lvov was Dr. Einaugler. Victor Chayes, vice-chairman of the municipal council of Lvov and former chairman of the Jewish Community Council of that city, was arrested in common with the other members of the municipal council. No one knows what charges were preferred against these men by the GPU. The terrorist methods of the GPU are such that it is not possible to make representations in favor of the prisoners or even to learn what sentences have been imposed on them.

In December 1939, the officers of the Polish reserves (some of whom are Jews) were arrested. They had been ordered to register at the offices of the GPU a few days after the entry of the Red troops.

It is likely that repressive measures will be taken against the Zionists of the rank and file because they are next on the list after the Ukrainian and the Polish nationalists. All Zionist activities, such as Keren Hayesod, Keren Kayemeth, and the Palestine

Immigration Office, have of course had to be discontinued. The Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth funds, which could not be withdrawn from the banks before the outbreak of war because six months' notice had to be given, must be regarded as lost. Even if the money has not been confiscated, it is worthless since the devaluation of the zloty.

6. *Social Welfare Institutions*

Not only the political parties, but the social welfare institutions have been liquidated. Their activities have been taken over, in so far as works of philanthropy are tolerated at all, by the central government in some cases and by the municipalities in others.

Since there are now no facilities for emigration, and emigration is illegal in any event under the Russian regime, the offices of the HIAS and the HICEM in Lvov have been closed.

The free loan societies (which granted short-term loans without interest) have been liquidated.

Thousands of Galician Jews who were in comfortable circumstances a few months ago are now on the verge of starvation. When they have sold all their possessions and can no longer look to their relatives for help, they will have no alternative but to emigrate to Central Russia. Even this alternative, however, is open only to the young and the robust.

The plight of the many thousands of refugees from the German-occupied territory is, if anything, even more desperate. Very few have funds or sufficient clothing. Those who did not exchange their zlotys for foreign currency before December 31 are penniless. They cannot expect help from any quarter, since the Galician Jews themselves are practically destitute. The authorities urge the Jewish refugees to go to Eastern Russia, which for many is the only alternative to starvation.

The stream of refugees to Eastern Galicia was augmented from day to day, because Jews fled not only from the German-occupied part of Poland, but also from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. Some refugees were forced by the Germans to

cross the frontier near Przemysl, though it is officially closed by the Russians. In October 1939 all the Jews with the exception of a few artisans were expelled from the towns near Przemysl (e.g., Przeworsk, Lancut, and Radymno) and driven across the border.

The large number of Jews who seek refuge in the Russian zone of occupation flee from the Nazi terror, naturally preferring Eastern Galicia to the Jewish "reservation" at Lublin. The Germans make no difficulty about their going. When the refugees reach the frontier, the Germans take away all they have, and let them proceed. The difficulties are made only by the Russian frontier guards.

Jews from the Lublin and Bielce districts have also taken refuge in the Russian-occupied zone. That part of Poland was taken by the Germans during the early phase of the invasion. Under the first Russian-German agreement, the Lublin and Bielce districts were occupied by the Russians; but under the second and final agreement, they were handed back to the Germans.

Many Jews wish to emigrate from Eastern Galicia, but emigration is illegal. Only a few succeed in escaping to Rumania or Lithuania. Many Jews in Eastern Galicia could solve their problem by emigration, if only it were permitted, as they have capital invested abroad.

Things have reached such a pass that the remark is often heard that the Jews in the German-occupied territory are no worse off than those in the Russian zone, since they are at least allowed to emigrate. Many people feel that there is little to choose between racial and economic persecution; the effect is much the same in either case. The other nationalities also suffer, but that does not ease the distress of the Jews.

The hopelessness of the situation in Eastern Galicia may well be illustrated by the attitude of families whose heads have somehow succeeded in getting into Rumania. As recently as December 1939 these men were getting telegrams from home urging them to return. (The Russian consul in Bucharest had filed all applications for visas to Eastern Galicia, and promised to furnish

such visas at an early date). Now, however, the families are wiring the refugees in Rumania to stay where they are and appealing to them in veiled or surreptitious messages to make arrangements for their own illegal entry into Rumania. Very few have succeeded in doing so. This radical change in the situation in Eastern Galicia occurred in the course of a few weeks.

The Jews of Eastern Galicia are in an absolutely untenable position. They began to realize how matters stood only when the economic order of Eastern Galicia was converted into a counterpart of that of Soviet Russia. The illusions about Russian policy in Eastern Galicia were dissipated within a few weeks after the entry of the Soviet troops. Unless some radical change soon takes place in the political situation, the Jews of Eastern Galicia are doomed to go under.

