

JEWISH WAR RELIEF WORK

At the outbreak of the present international struggle, more than nine and a half million of the 13,000,000 Jews in the world, or 73 per cent, inhabited the belligerent countries, over three and one-half million residing in the territory of the three Polands, the scene of the most sanguinary fighting. When the war opened, there were a million and a half Jews in Russian Poland and two million in Galicia, while Servia had more than 30,000. As to Turkey in general and Palestine in particular, though they were not scenes of military operations during the first months of the war, it is important to note that there were 250,000 Jews in the Ottoman Empire of whom 78,000 lived in the Holy Land. With each nation involved in the struggle straining its every effort and applying its entire resources toward military success, there was thus only one source to which the non-combatant Jewish populations could look for the amelioration of their unfortunate lot and the alleviation of their suffering, namely, the great, prosperous community in America; and the Jews of the United States learned quickly that their coreligionists overseas were instinctively turning their beseeching eyes to peaceful America.

Due to a number of factors now familiar to all, the Jews of the British Empire not only needed no assistance, but were able to aid the Jews of the United States in relieving sufferers in Asia and on the continent, especially in Russia. The Jews in France, comparatively a handful, were not faced, thanks to the freedom they enjoyed, with any special economic prob-

lem, and the same may be said of the 600,000 Jews in the German Empire.

When we come to the other belligerent countries, however, we find a totally different state of affairs. The rapid march of the Russian armies into East Prussia and Galicia and of the Austrian troops into Servia was followed by counter-attacks and counter-invasions, and all involved confiscation, expulsion, destruction, and devastation on a stupendous scale, to say nothing of the complete stoppage of productive industry. Thus there were caused indescribable confusion and distress, multitudes being rendered homeless and penniless, while the financial and industrial dislocation in the centers of population remote from the battlefields was immensely aggravated when these communities were suddenly called upon to care for a legion of fugitives. Naturally in war-torn lands the lot of the civilian is deplorable; but the penury which had prevailed among the Jews in Galicia and the misery brought about by the invading forces rendered the lot of the Austrian and Polish Jews, especially those within the Pale of Settlement, even more abject than that of their Christian compatriots.

Although Turkey did not become one of the belligerents until a number of months had passed, the situation of the Jews in Palestine became precarious almost immediately upon the outbreak of the war. A small group of intrepid idealists who had been struggling for a quarter of a century to make the ancient home of the Jewish people once again a "land flowing with milk and honey" had become in a measure self-supporting, but the large majority of the Jewish population were still dependent upon their coreligionists in Europe and America. Even the colonists were obliged to rely upon the markets of

Europe for the sale of their produce. The situation, then, may readily be pictured, when, upon the outbreak of the war, Palestine found itself abruptly cut off from Europe, with the result that the aged pensioners, the schools, orphan asylums, hospitals, and other institutions suddenly ceased to receive the funds which had hitherto sustained them.

Thus the Jewish community in America found itself confronted with the gigantic task of providing the elementary necessities of life for millions of their coreligionists.

The first call for help came from Palestine. In cablegrams addressed to Messrs. Louis Marshall and Jacob H. Schiff, the Hon. Henry Morgenthau, then ambassador to Turkey, stated that thousands of indigent Jews, heretofore dependent for their subsistence on contributions from Jews in countries that had entered the war, were in great distress, the sum of \$50,000 being immediately necessary to save them from actual starvation. Accordingly, at its meeting on August 31, 1914, the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee took the first step for the relief of Jews in warring countries by voting an appropriation of \$25,000, upon the offer of Mr. Schiff to contribute \$12,500 and the assurance that the balance of the \$50,000 would be contributed by the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs. The money was sent by cable to Mr. Morgenthau, who appointed a committee in Palestine to administer it.

The call from Palestine was followed by appeals from responsible organizations in every one of the belligerent countries. During the invasion of Belgium, the Jewish community of Antwerp, overwhelmed by the requests for assistance from Jewish fugitives from other cities, sent an appeal

to the American Jewish Committee, which at once remitted \$5000 for the relief of the Belgian Jews. The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Anglo-Jewish Association likewise turned to the American Jewish Committee asking its assistance in caring for the thousands of immigrants, who, at the outbreak of the war, were on their way to America, but were unable to continue their journey across the Atlantic. The Israelitische Allianz of Vienna called attention to the wretched situation of the thousands of Jews, who, having fled from Galicia upon the approach of Russian troops, were congesting the cities of Vienna, Prague, and Budapest. The chief rabbi of Salonica, Greece, which was not then a belligerent country, informed the American Jewish Committee that the situation of the Jewish community of that city, which had not yet recovered from the effects of the Balkan Wars, had on account of the outbreak of the European conflagration become increasingly critical.

In the meantime a number of individuals and organizations had begun to make appeals for funds. At the end of September, for instance, the Independent Order B'nai B'rith issued an appeal to its membership for funds to assist its lodges in Austria, Germany, and the Orient. About the same time, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations made a similar appeal through its constituent congregations.

The collection of funds was undertaken also by several minor organizations of Jewish immigrants coming from various towns or villages in the Old World, especially in the case of Galicians and Poles. These funds were intended for the relief of Jews in the several places indicated.

The feeling soon became widespread among American Jews interested in the fate of European Jewries that united action on the part of all the Jews of this continent was demanded by the stupendous emergency. The first attempt to organize a general committee was made at the instance of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations. On October 4, 1914, as a result of a meeting held under the presidency of Mr. Leon Kamaiky, publisher of the *Jewish Daily News*, New York City, and attended in the main by representatives of orthodox congregations, the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War was organized. Its chairman is Leon Kamaiky, Harry Fischel is the treasurer, and Albert Lucas and Morris Engelman are the executive and the financial secretaries, respectively. Up to July 15, 1917, this committee collected and turned into the treasury of the Joint Distribution Committee almost one and a half million dollars.

A few days after the meeting of the Central Committee, the American Jewish Committee issued an invitation to all national Jewish organizations in the United States, including the Central Committee, just organized, to send delegates to a conference to be held in New York City, for the purpose of effectively organizing the collection and distribution of funds under the control of a joint committee which should be representative of all organizations. In the call to this conference the problem confronting the Jews of America was graphically described as follows:

“The stupendous conflict which is now raging on the European continent is a calamity, the extent of which transcends imagination. While all mankind is directly or indirectly involved in the consequences, the burden of suffering and of destitution rests with especial weight upon our brethren in

Eastern Europe. The embattled armies are spreading havoc and desolation within the Jewish Pale of Settlement in Russia, and the Jews of Galicia and East Prussia dwell in the very heart of the war zone. Hundreds of thousands of Jews are in the contending armies. Fully one-half of all the Jews of the world live in the regions where active hostilities are in progress. The Jews of Palestine, who have largely depended on Europe for assistance, have been literally cut off from their sources of supply; while the Jews of Germany, Belgium, France, and England are struggling with burdens of their own. In this exigency, it is evident that the Jews of America must again come to the rescue. They must assume the duty of giving relief commensurate with the existing needs. They must be prepared to make sacrifices, and to proceed systematically in collecting and distributing a fund which will, so far as possible, alleviate this extraordinary distress. There is probably no parallel in history to the present status of the Jews. Unity of action is essential to accomplish the best results. There should be no division in counsel or in sentiment. All differences should be laid aside and forgotten. Nothing counts now but harmonious and effective action."

At the ensuing conference which was held on October 25, 1914, forty organizations were represented. Under the presidency of Mr. Louis Marshall, the meeting authorized the appointment of a committee of five, which was to select a committee of one hundred upon which every Jewish organization, invited to the conference, was to be represented by at least one member of its own choosing. This general committee was then to elect from its members an executive committee of twenty-five. The committee of five consisted of Messrs. Oscar S. Straus, Julian W. Mack, Louis D. Brandeis,

Harry Fischel, and Meyer London. In this way the American Jewish Relief Committee was organized with Mr. Louis Marshall as president, Cyrus L. Sulzberger as secretary, and Felix M. Warburg as treasurer.

Pending the organization of the American Jewish Relief Committee, the Central Committee had been engaged in collecting funds, and had already remitted \$5000 to the Israelitische Allianz in Vienna, and \$5000 for distribution through suitable agencies in Palestine. The Central Committee, however, in the belief that it could be of greater assistance as a separate organization, owing to the fact that its administrators had established close affiliations with the orthodox element, declined to become absorbed in the American Jewish Relief Committee, but manifested its willingness to co-operate in the raising of funds.

On November 22, 1914, at the meeting of the Committee of One Hundred of the American Jewish Relief Committee, it was announced that the American Jewish Committee had voted to transfer to the Relief Committee the sum of \$100,000 from its Emergency Trust Fund, and a great many of the persons present pledged additional amounts. It was decided to organize local committees in every city having a considerable Jewish population, and to stimulate the contribution of funds by means of personal appeals, mass meetings, and the like. Since its inception and up to July 15, 1917, the American Jewish Relief Committee has collected and turned into the treasury of the Joint Distribution Committee nearly six million dollars.

In August, 1915, another organization, the People's Relief Committee, came into being. Its chairman is Meyer London; vice-chairmen, Sholom Asch, E. Elsbarg, Jacob Panken; treas-

urer, Isaac Goldberg; secretary, B. Fingerhood. Its object is to reach persons who could afford to give only very small amounts, and who, it was claimed, were not responsive to the appeals of the existing relief committees. Since its organization and up to July 15, 1917, this committee has raised, mainly in very small sums, and has turned into the treasury of the Joint Distribution Committee, more than eight hundred thousand dollars.

In order to avoid duplication in the distribution of the relief funds collected in America, the two relief committees, namely, the American Jewish Relief Committee and the Central Relief Committee, organized, on November 24, 1914, a Joint Distribution Committee consisting of representatives of both organizations; and in November, 1915, the People's Relief Committee, which had been organized several months before, also sent representatives to the Joint Distribution Committee. This body, as its name implies, makes appropriations out of the funds received for the relief of Jews in the various countries. A special Sub-committee of Eight consisting of Paul Baerwald, Harry Fischel, Alexander Kahn, Arthur Lehman, Albert Lucas, J. L. Magnes, Morris Rothenberg, and Felix M. Warburg, assisted by Miss Harriet B. Lowenstein, receives and digests all reports concerning conditions abroad, and, on the basis of these reports, makes recommendations to the full committee which decides the amounts that shall be allotted accordingly.

The three relief committees work through local committees in every part of the country, and are now in touch with Jews in fifteen hundred places, and in every state in the Union, as well as in Cuba, Canada, Newfoundland, South America, Central America, Hawaii, and the West Indies. During the first year of their existence, or up to December, 1915, the

three committees succeeded in raising one and a half million dollars. Then came reports from abroad indicating that the distress among the Jews was unparalleled in history, and that unprecedented efforts and greater sacrifices would have to be made, if the Jewish communities in the war-zones were to be saved from extinction. It was consequently felt necessary to present much more sharply and personally to the Jews of America the dimensions of the stupendous catastrophe which threatened the ruin of more than half of the house of Israel. With this end in view, the American Jewish Relief Committee planned a series of mass meetings, and decided to set out to gather during 1916, with the assistance of the other committees, the sum of five million dollars. The first mass meeting was held in New York City on the evening of December 21, 1915; that night over \$400,000 in cash was collected, and in addition pledges amounting to over half a million dollars were received. Similar meetings were convened in other cities with similar results. In Baltimore, \$64,000 was contributed; in Washington, D. C., \$10,000; in Cincinnati, \$60,000; in Philadelphia, \$200,000; in Chicago, \$350,000; in Buffalo, \$50,000. Other cities were quick to follow these examples, considerable impetus being given to the movement by the designation by President Wilson, following the passage of a resolution, introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Martine, of New Jersey, of January 27, 1917, as a special day for contributions to the Jewish relief funds. By the close of the year 1916 more than four and three-quarter million dollars was actually raised.

While nearly all the relief funds have been distributed through the agency of the Joint Distribution Committee, a considerable amount of money has been remitted indepen-

dently of that organization. For example, the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War has collected \$2,047,122, of which it has turned over to the Joint Distribution Committee \$1,401,230. There have also been made direct remittances totaling \$49,947.23 for the relief of rabbis, teachers, and children in the Yeshibahs and Talmud Torahs abroad, while for general relief in Palestine, the Committee has sent \$13,659, and to institutions in the Holy Land have gone \$8315, besides \$11,000 to the Palestine Fund. The Central Committee has in addition remitted \$181,000 to institutions in Palestine designated specifically by contributors, and has sent to designated individuals over \$147,000. Furthermore, \$5307 was used for general Jewish relief in Austria-Hungary prior to the entrance of the United States into the war.

During the summer of 1916, the Joint Distribution Committee planned to send a commission to Europe, to investigate the workings of the committees through whose agency the American funds were being distributed, but because of various diplomatic difficulties, only one member of the commission, Dr. Judah L. Magnes, was allowed to go, and even he was not permitted to enter Russia. Upon his return to the United States, in the autumn, Dr. Magnes stated emphatically that, although the utmost efficiency and sagacity were being employed in the work of relieving distress among the Jews of the war-zones, even the large funds thus far raised in Europe and in America were utterly inadequate; and he suggested that, if the work thus far done was not to be in vain, the goal for the year 1917 ought to be ten million dollars.

The various committees at once set out to raise this sum during 1917. On December 21, 1916, the anniversary of

the first mass meeting, another was held in New York City under the auspices of the American Jewish Relief Committee, and it was followed by meetings in Philadelphia, Allentown, Charleston, S. C., Syracuse, Baltimore, Youngstown, Milwaukee, Dayton, Louisville, Columbus, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and other places. Great impetus was given to the movement by the offer of Mr. Julius Rosenwald, of Chicago, to give 10 per cent of the total amount raised by November 1, provided this did not exceed ten million dollars. Mr. Rosenwald's example was followed in many communities, a number of persons offering to give 10 per cent of the amounts raised in various cities or states. In one case the offer was 10 per cent of the amount raised in several states together.

The two other committees are energetically co-operating in the effort to raise that sum. The People's Relief Committee held a mass meeting in New York City in March, 1917, and the Central Committee organized a series of thirty concerts of traditional synagogogue music in various cities, the first of which was given in New York City in May, 1917.

The agent of the Joint Distribution Committee in Russia is the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), which turns over the funds received to the Central Jewish Committee for the Relief of Sufferers in the War, with headquarters at Petrograd and local committees in almost one hundred and fifty centers of population. The Russian Relief Committee is mainly engaged in helping the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were scattered throughout Russia in the summer of 1915, when the military authorities cleared the entire region of war operations connected with the invasion of German troops into Poland, which invasion resulted in the temporary occupation by Germany of the Pale of Settlement. Hundreds of thou-

sands of Jews were almost at a moment's notice transported into the interior provinces of Russia thousands of miles away, where they naturally found it extremely difficult to earn a livelihood. The Russian Committee, through its branch agencies, came to the assistance of the refugees, secured means of transportation for them, met them at way-stations with food and other necessaries, and did everything possible to help them to become self-supporting in their new environments. Up to July 15, 1917, the Russian Committee has received \$2,532,300 from America.

The German troops advanced so rapidly into Poland, however, that there was not sufficient time for the evacuation of the country by all the civil population; consequently a great number of the Jews remained in the occupied territories. Their plight was as wretched as that of those who had been expelled, because they were victimized by both the retreating Russian troops and the invaders, while they suffered enormous losses through the destruction of property incidental to the intense artillery actions characteristic of modern warfare.

According to the latest available reports, there are in the Russian territory occupied by Germany about 1,760,000 Jews, of whom about three-quarters of a million, absolutely without means of self-support, are entirely dependent upon relief agencies. In this territory, until the United States became involved in the war, American funds were administered by the *Jüdisches Hilfskomité für Polen* (Jewish Relief Committee for Poland), which was formed shortly after the German occupation. This committee relied upon the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* for the transmission of funds to the various localities. Since the severance of relations between the United States and Germany the American State Depart-

ment has arranged for the transmission of the funds collected by the American Jewish Relief Committee, the Central Committee, and the People's Committee and paid into the Joint Distribution Committee, through the Dutch ambassador at Washington, to her Majesty, the queen of the Netherlands. The Dutch Government, on receipt of the funds, will in turn transmit them as apportioned to its diplomatic representatives in the different countries, who will turn the money over to the local committees of the Joint Distribution Committee, in each country, in the amounts for each city and town as fixed by the Committee of Dutch Jews that has been created for that purpose. Mr. Frederick Solomon Van Nierop, president of the Amsterdamsche Bank, is chairman of the committee. Up to July 15, 1917, the Joint Distribution Committee has sent \$2,522,434 for the relief of Jews in this territory.

The situation of the Russian Jews was duplicated in the case of the Jews of Galicia. This province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was invaded by Russia at the very beginning of the war, and was for some time in the hands of the Russian forces. Hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Galicia, most of them Jews, fled from their homes into Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria. The Austrian Government made efforts to care for these fugitives, placing them in concentration camps and appropriating money for their maintenance; but the greater mass of the Jews were unable to leave their homes. These had to be relieved by private agencies, and the work was undertaken by the Israelitische Allianz of Vienna, which organized committees in all large centers, that organization being selected by the Joint Distribution Committee as its agent for Austria-Hungary and Russian territory under Austria-Hungary's control.

Up to July 15, 1917, \$1,583,700 has been sent by the Joint Distribution Committee to the Israelitische Allianz.

In Turkey, in Palestine, in Salonica, and in Alexandria, where a large number of refugees from Palestine are gathered, the American funds, which are sent periodically, are administered by local committees accredited by United States diplomatic officials.

Besides appropriations which are made from time to time for Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece, the Joint Distribution Committee has rendered special aid also to Russian students at Swiss universities, Jewish prisoners of war, writers, rabbis, Turkish refugees in Spain, destitute families of Russian Jews in France, and has also made appropriations for Serbia, Roumania, Bulgaria, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco.

In almost every instance, the Joint Distribution Committee extended the aid of American Jewry by the transmission of money, which was used according to the discretion of its agents abroad. There were, however, several departures from this practice. Thus, in March, 1915, nine hundred tons of provisions were purchased, and, through the courtesy of the Navy Department, were sent on the U. S. Collier *Vulcan* to Palestine. In February, 1916, a consignment of drugs and other medical supplies, purchased at a cost of \$15,944.37, was sent to Palestine on the U. S. Collier *Sterling*.

About a month after the outbreak of the war and pending the organization of the American Jewish Relief Committee, there was organized by Miss Harriet B. Lowenstein a temporary bureau for the receipt of sums which individuals might desire to remit to relatives in the belligerent countries. This work was taken over by the Joint Distribution Committee

upon its organization. Through the transmission bureau a great many persons who are willing to send funds to designated persons in the belligerent countries are thus enabled to do so without charge. This bureau has already forwarded such remittances to the amount of \$500,000.

The magnitude of the task undertaken by the Jews of America, together with the many shades of opinion among them, made it not unnatural that there should early have arisen differences of viewpoint as to the instrumentalities through which relief to the stricken in Europe was distributed as well as the methods by which it should hereafter be administered. As early as May, 1916, the sending abroad of a commission was taken under consideration, and at a meeting held on June 20, the commission referred to above was created for the purpose not only of making an investigation into what had been done, but also of formulating a system for the conduct of relief administration in the future. It was intended that the commission should be sent to Russia, Germany, and Austria, in order to obtain an accounting, at first hand, of the very large sums that had been sent by the Jews of America for the relief of the suffering Jews in the war-zones. Reports had been received showing that the funds had been efficiently distributed, but nevertheless it was felt that a personal inspection should be made, in view of the large responsibilities resting upon the relief committees in America who were soliciting such great sums from the public. It was also thought that a personal visit to the war-zones would bring home to the public in America a more vivid realization of the duties of the Jews in America toward their suffering coreligionists in Russia and Austria. The Joint Distribution Committee was likewise desirous of having the relief funds coming from America dis-

tributed under the supervision of its own representatives abroad. The commission was also instructed to look into the differences of opinion that had arisen in so extended a work in so many different places, undertaken by so many different kinds of people, particularly as to those parts of Poland and Lithuania under German occupation.

It had been alleged that the German *Jüdisches Hilfskomité für Polen*, which was in charge of the distribution in Poland and other parts occupied by Germany, was not sufficiently in sympathy with the Jews to whom it was administering help. As evidence of this lack of sympathy, it was alleged that some of the leaders of the *Komité* were advocating a so-called "Grenzsperre"—or the restriction of the immigration of Polish Jews into German territory. The fear was also expressed that, in the event of the Russian Government's regaining possession of the conquered Polish territory, Jews who had accepted aid from "the enemy" would be in great danger because this acceptance might be construed as being in the nature of a reward for past treasons.

In view of these and other considerations, the Joint Distribution Committee, in the summer of 1916, decided "to send to Europe a Commission of American citizens at the earliest possible moment for the purpose of making arrangements for the distribution of American relief funds in the occupied districts, through American agencies." Two classes of members of the Commission were appointed—"Observing Members," selected from each of the constituent committees, and "Executive Members," the latter being expected to stay in Europe for an indefinite period for the purpose of supervising the work of the local distribution committees. The "Observing Members" of the Commission were Dr. J. L. Magnes, chairman,

Samson Abel, Rabbi Bernard Abramowitz, Jacob Panken, and Alexander Dushkin, secretary. Dr. Boris Bogen and Mr. Jacob Billikopf were the "Executive Members." The German Government declined, however, to permit most of the members of the Commission to enter Germany, so that finally Dr. Magnes, chairman, and Mr. Dushkin, secretary, were admitted, none of the others leaving this country.

The task outlined by the Joint Distribution Committee for the Commission was, in the language of the Committee's authorizing resolution:

1. To arrange to have all American Jewish relief moneys distributed under the general supervision of the executive members of the Relief Commission.

2. To arrange to have all American Jewish relief moneys distributed only through committees in the occupied districts, to be known distinctly as Committees of the American Jewish Relief Funds, such committees to make their reports to the Executive Members of the Commission, who shall, in turn, transmit these reports through the American Embassies to America.

3. The consent and co-operation of the military authorities of occupied districts being essential in carrying out such a plan, the Commission is to endeavor to secure such consent and co-operation through officials of the American Government.

4. In case the advice and co-operation of the Jewish citizens of the respective countries are essential in securing the carrying out of the purposes as above outlined, the commissioners shall be free to secure such advice and co-operation.

5. Furthermore, in the formation of Committees for the distribution of American Jewish Relief Funds, representatives

of all elements of the Jewish population of the various localities shall be included.

6. The local relief work shall be under the auspices of the local committees, in accordance with plans which are to be worked out by the local committees, but under the general supervision of the executive members.

7. The Commission is instructed that the committees in the larger localities shall be consulted as to the personnel of the committees in the smaller localities, and they shall be guided by their advice.

Dr. Magnes and Mr. Dushkin left the United States on July 26, 1916, and after short stays at Stockholm and Copenhagen, during which an ineffectual attempt was made to secure permission to enter Russia proper, they proceeded to Germany and visited Warsaw, Radzimin, Vilna, Kovno, Lodz, Lublin, Lemberg, and Vienna. Dr. Magnes investigated the charge against the leaders of the *Hilfskomité für Polen*, as to their having advocated a "Grenzsperre," and found it baseless. So also was found to be the fear that Russian Jews, now under German rule, would be in danger of being punished for receiving aid at the hands of German subjects. Further investigations led Dr. Magnes to conclude that, "if the work of Jewish relief was to be continued in Poland and Lithuania, it was possible only if there were a strong Jewish committee in Berlin as intermediary." He moreover reported that he found the existing *Hilfskomité* had been efficient and had consistently refrained from unduly dictating to local relief committees.

The territory under German occupation has been divided into two administrative districts: (1) "General Gouvernement Warschau," comprising the provinces formerly constituting the grand duchy of Poland, viz.: Grodno, Warsaw, Kalisch, Plotzk,

Minsk, Lomza, Lukov, Siedlec, Petrikov; and (2) the "Ober-Ost," comprising the conquered parts of Courland, Vilna, Suwalki, Grodno, and Bialistok. In the Ober-Ost, the Government had forbidden sectarian relief activity. Relief funds there were to pass through the hands of the civil administrator and be distributed through his subordinates. In practice it would seem that, owing to the representations of the *Hilfskomité*, hardly any of the American Jewish money appropriated to this country has been diverted to the relief of non-Jews.

The situation was different in Russian Poland. During the periods of invasion, while actual war was being waged in Poland, the Jewish population there was of course exposed to the same devastating calamities as were the non-Jews, and the destruction of Jewish life and property was by no means disproportionately small. With German occupation of the territory, the sufferings of the Jews in Poland have become mainly economic in character, their distress being mainly due to the scarcity of food, clothing, and raw materials prevailing throughout the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. As a result, especially of the lack of capital and raw materials, large masses of the population are unable to secure employment, and are consequently unable to earn money wherewith to buy what little food and clothing is available.

The resulting situation was concretely set forth by Mr. Dushkin, the secretary, in a separate report, based on information received from two hundred and thirty-four Jewish communities. Briefly summarized, his *résumé* of March, 1917, showed the following state of affairs:

(1) *Jewish population of territory*.—There are over 235,000 Jews in Ober-Ost and about 930,000 in General Gouvernement

Warschau, making a total of 1,165,000. Of the two hundred and thirty-four communities investigated, one hundred and sixty-five, or over 70 per cent, have a Jewish population of less than 3000, and one hundred and ninety-four, or more than 87 per cent, have a Jewish population of 5000, or less. The significance of these figures lies in the fact that the problem of relief in small towns is much more acute than it is in larger cities or in rural communities.

(2) *Number of dependents.*—In the majority of the communities from 33 per cent to 90 per cent of the Jews are dependent upon relief agencies. In fifty-three of the centers, from 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the Jews are not self-supporting, and are in need of relief. The average for the larger cities is about 36 per cent who must be aided. In the entire territory about one-half million Jews depend for the daily necessities of life upon the funds from America.

(3) *Amounts distributed.*—According to a report from the *Hilfskomité*, the total sum distributed in Poland up to April, 1916, was 2,500,000 marks for the two hundred and thirty-four communities reporting. The per capita amount is about one and one-third marks monthly. In other words, the relatively large sums contributed by American Jewry have sufficed to give less than one cent a day to each needy Jew in Poland.

(4) *Purposes for which funds are spent.*—An idea of the diversity of the means adopted to give relief may be obtained from the following figures: Sixty-two communities have established so-called *Volksküche*; sixty-one have institutions of one kind or another for distribution of relief or for the care of the poor, such as poor-houses, loan-funds, provision-stores, where food is sold at a fraction of its cost, rent-aid, and gratuitous distributions of food, clothing, fuel, and money;

forty-eight communities have agencies which care for the sick; forty-three have eleemosynary institutions for children, such as schools (in which the children are also fed), orphan asylums, infant asylums, etc.; twenty-nine report having shelters for refugees; fifteen have asylums for the aged and the invalids. There are also various miscellaneous forms of relief, such as tea-houses, legal-aid association, societies for taking care of the wives of absent soldiers, etc.

(5) *Refugees*.—There is also a special class of Jews whose condition is even more wretched than that of the rest of the population, namely, the men, women, and children who have been driven from their homes because of evacuation orders, or who have voluntarily fled before the invader. It is estimated that there are in occupied Poland over 55,000 of this class, of whom more than 38,000 are women and children. These victims of the war are constantly moving from place to place, which makes it more than ordinarily difficult to relieve them.

(6) *Other forms of relief*.—Besides extending relief as outlined above, the *Hilfskomité* engaged in a number of auxiliary activities, the chief of which were the securing of information as to the whereabouts of friends and relatives in Poland, in reply to inquiries from persons in America, the transmission of appeals for help from the people in Poland to their relatives in this country, the locating of Russian-Jewish prisoners of war, and the general exchange of letters between individuals in America and others in Poland.

At the date when this article is written (July 15), conditions have not improved. All persons under German rule have been compelled to bear their common share in the general hardships. Besides this, the Jews have had to bear certain privations which are practically limited to them alone. The

situation obtaining among the Polish Jews to-day, it is believed, is worse than it has ever been.

Measured by the number of persons in need of assistance, unconquered Russia proved almost as important as did occupied Poland. The situation in the former, however, has several elements of hope lacking in the picture of "dead, dull, and voiceless misery" to be found in the latter. The main problem in Russia is the relief of the million Jews who were expelled or who fled from their homes in Poland, many of them being set down in interior provinces, which had hitherto contained very few if any Jews. It was the task of the Central Jewish Relief Committee in Petrograd to come to the rescue of these unfortunates from the time they left their homes until they were able to maintain themselves independently. For them it was necessary to provide clothing, food, transportation, work, tools, and shelter. In other words, here were hundreds of thousands of emigrants, absolutely without means, who had to be assisted to build up an entirely new existence in strange surroundings, often among people whose language they could neither speak nor understand. It is variously estimated that in all between 750,000 and 1,250,000 Jewish refugees were spread over Russia and Southern Siberia.

The work of aiding the sufferers is done by the Jewish Committee for the Relief of Sufferers from the War, with headquarters in Petrograd. The activity of this organization was at first centered on succoring the Jews in Poland, but with the conquest of that region by Germany, the Committee was obliged to leave the Polish situation in the care of the *Hilfskomité*, and to devote its attention to the many thousands of refugees who had gone into the interior provinces. The Petrograd Committee is helped in its work by a number of

territorial committees in the larger cities, such as Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev, and Odessa. This Committee and the territorial committees act through local bodies, the organization and supervision of which are undertaken by experts employed by the Central and territorial committees. Assistance is rendered to the relief committees by several large Jewish organizations which existed before the war, and which, upon its outbreak, devoted themselves with increasing vigor to the pursuit of their benevolent aims. The most important of these organizations are: (1) The Society for Preserving the Health of the Jewish Population, which has a chain of subsidiaries in the provinces, and which extends medical and sanitary service and provides homes for the children of refugees; (2) the Society for Agricultural and Industrial Work among Jews, which has established numerous branches and is helping refugees to find employment and also teaching them trades; (3) the Society for Spreading Education among the Jews, which is looking after their educational and cultural needs.

During the first year of the war, through the united efforts of all these agencies the following work was accomplished: (a) Relief was extended to the Jewish population in the Kingdom of Poland, mainly in the government of Warsaw; (b) aid was given in the distribution of refugees who had been forcibly expelled from the governments of Suvalki, Courland, and Kovno; (c) assistance was afforded to Jews, when the civil population was forced to evacuate points in the governments of Grodno, Vilna, Dvinsk, Plotzk, and Minsk, just prior to their capture by the enemy; (d) help was extended to refugees in their new settlements; (e) relief was extended to the Jews of Galicia after its conquest by Russia; (f) assistance was given to about 12,000 Jews who, fleeing from Syria and

Palestine, had taken refuge in Alexandria, Egypt; (g) money was distributed through the American consul at Moscow to Jewish war prisoners in the Kazan district. It must be remembered that there are two kinds of prisoners in Russia: (1) military prisoners confined within prison walls and captured soldiers, and (2) civilians who are not confined in prison, but are limited to circumscribed areas meanwhile being compelled to earn their own living.

Relief to the refugees was extended as follows:

(1) *Grants of money.*—In many cases where food and other necessaries were available, money was given to the refugees in amounts ranging from ten to twenty kopeks a day per person.

(2) *Food supply.*—To enable those who were receiving these small subsidies to get the best values for their money, and to supply others with food, the Committee established supply warehouses where food was sold at cost to those who had funds, or was supplied free of charge to those who had no money at all.

(3) *Clothing and footwear.*—The sums applied to the purchase of clothing, shoes, etc. for the refugees up to January, 1916, was 1,314,647 roubles, 100,000 of which were for the Jews of Galicia.

(4) *Shelter and fuel.*—Spread over such an enormous territory, abandoned in waste places, as the exiles were, the new housing of all these refugees presented an almost insoluble problem. Wherever possible, the public buildings available, such as synagogues and schools, were used as shelters, while thousands were for the time being placed in private houses. But hundreds of temporary quarters had to be hastily erected, and hundreds of thousands of homeless refugees are at this moment inhabiting these flimsy buildings under unspeakably

unsanitary conditions. Every one of the buildings entailed an immense expense for heating alone, owing to the high price of fuel, since all of them had to be warmed during the greater portion of the year.

(5) *Employment.*—The Society for Industrial and Agricultural Labor among the Jews has endeavored since the beginning of the war to grapple with the problem of finding work and devising trade and industrial occupations for the refugees. This society has created and maintains an employment agency which serves to connect employers in want of help with refugees who are capable of performing the work called for. It has initiated shops in which shoes, linen and cloth goods and knitted articles are manufactured, the net cost of maintaining these shops being small because of the returns from the proceeds of the sale of articles made; it has organized manual training classes for boys and adults who, though able to work, had not been accustomed to physical labor, and has also instituted shelters for young boys, who are too old to be sent to elementary schools, and have been apprenticed at various kinds of trades, besides providing tools, instruments, and materials requisite for persons who desire to establish themselves independently in their new settlements.

(6) *Sanitary and medical service.*—The problem of sanitary service to children is being solved by the Society for Preserving the Health of the Jewish Population, which has extended its activities throughout the governments affected by the distribution of Jewish refugees. It has organized a number of units consisting of physicians and nurses, and during the transportation of the refugees, it had travelling medical units which followed the refugees and gave them sanitary attention and food. The society has paid special attention to preserving

the health of the children, opening shelters for more than 8000. In a number of places it has subsidized local organizations which are caring for those orphaned by the war.

(7) *Information bureau.*—This department is engaged in collecting information, inquiries coming from all parts of Russia, as well as from other countries, including America, as to the whereabouts of refugees, friends, and relatives.

(8) *Individual help.*—Among the refugees there were certain classes, such as rabbis and other persons of the learned profession, who merited particular attention and confidence, and to whom it appeared essential that special consideration should be granted.

On October 21, 1914, a report as to the plan of distribution of the \$50,000 fund for Palestine relief referred to above was presented by Mr. Maurice Wertheim. This report is contained in the American Jewish Year Book of 1915-1916 (5676). Meanwhile the economic crisis caused by the outbreak of hostilities was intensified when Turkey entered the war, 18,000 Jews being thereupon compelled to leave the Holy Land. At first it was thought that the trouble would not last more than a few months, and local relief committees were accordingly organized. But it soon appeared that the *Vaads* could not cope with the situation. Bread, flour, and other food were distributed to the needy, public kitchens were established, tea-rooms opened, and loans granted to certain institutions and also to private individuals who were deprived of the money that had flowed to the Holy Land prior to the conflict. But early in the war a bread famine was threatened, mainly on account of the heavy military requisitions. A few well-to-do men organized the *Vaad Hakemach* (Flour Committee), and buying up flour throughout the country, had it milled and

placed on sale at fifty or sixty cents per bag below the market price. Later, with the aid of American relief funds, several shops were opened in Jaffa for the sale of food and petroleum at cost. But all the shops suffered from the heavy military requisitions, so that by May, 1915, their supplies were exhausted.

Otis A. Glazebrook, United States consul, in a report received June 28, 1917, although dated Jerusalem, July 21, 1916, says that the actual Jewish population of Palestine, at that time, was about 82,000. Of this number only 18,000 were able to maintain themselves without applying to the committees in charge of the distribution of the money from America. Attached to Mr. Glazebrook's report is that of the Jerusalem branch of the Jewish American Joint Distribution Committee, which goes very fully into the causes of the distress prevailing in the Holy Land. "Jerusalem has always been, even in normal times," reads the report, "rich in its poor population, living upon the charity of our brethren abroad. How much is this the case now, when all sources of income, which used to flow from all ends of the world to the Holy City, to each of her communities, of her institutions, and her *kolels*, are stopped and replaced by the only possible remittances which are the remittances from the Joint Distribution Committee. No wonder then that the disinherited ones have been looking to the American Relief as their only bright star."

The report also deals very fully with the method of relieving the suffering of the people by weekly doles of money, occasional grants, assistance to the sick, loans granted to employers in order that wages might continue to be paid to the working class, while a large amount of the funds was used for the purchase of food which was distributed either free or at re-

duced prices, and also given to various institutions. Regarding the latter the report says: "Besides the institutions, whose precarious financial condition was known to us, there have been assisted by us, chiefly with flour, a number of other institutions. In this latter category we reckon the Insane Asylum, 40 patients; the girls' Orphan Asylum, 80 pupils; the Ashkenazi Aged Asylum, about 200 old people; the Sefardi Aged Asylum, 15 people, and the Sefardi Soup Kitchen for Sabbath days, granting meals to about 1000 people. This latter institution was closed lately for lack of means of subsistence."

No part of Palestine, including the colonies, was omitted from the general distribution of relief by the various committees in charge of this work, all of which was excellently supervised by Mr. Glazebrook, consul at Jerusalem, and Mr. H. Stanley Hollis, consul at Beyrouth. The declaration of war prevented the bringing out from Palestine of the wives and children of a large number of United States citizens, who had requested the Joint Distribution Committee to make the necessary arrangements. The Naval and State Departments had given every possible assistance, but the use of the United States ships having become impossible, the matter is being considered by the Spanish Government, and hopes are still entertained that these men, women, and children, variously estimated at more than one thousand, will eventually be able to leave Palestine and Syria. For the continuance of relief in Palestine, arrangements similar to those planned for Poland are to be made, except that the Dutch Government is to appoint Mr. S. Hoofien, the director of the Anglo-Palestinian Bank, as its special representative, for the purpose of replacing in Palestine the United States consuls in the

handling of the Jewish relief funds sent from America. Mr. Hoofien will have the identical powers hitherto exercised by such consuls, who were to handle the money according to the following schedule agreed upon for the various communities:

Fifty per cent for distribution in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Moza; twenty-five per cent to Jaffa and the Judean colonies, including Zichron Jacob and Hederah; thirty per cent to Safed, Einstitum, and Pekin; five per cent to Tiberias; four per cent to the colonies of Galilee, and three per cent to Haifa. The distribution of the money itself in Palestine, as in the case of every other community to which the Joint Distribution Committee sent money, is left to the local committee of Jews, in which all sections of the community are represented. In all nearly a million dollars has been sent for relief purposes to Palestine.

While the Hon. Henry Morgenthau was ambassador at Constantinople, many appeals for assistance were addressed to him by Jews from all over Turkey. The number of Jews in Turkey outside of Palestine is about 200,000, one-third of whom are in Constantinople. The military and naval operations in the Dardanelles, at Gallipoli, etc., in which many Jews were residents, and from which they either were driven out or fled, brought about a condition of abject poverty among these unfortunates, which resulted in the Joint Distribution Committee's sending large amounts, from time to time, to the United States ambassador to be distributed under his direction. In Constantinople itself, Ambassador Morgenthau and his successor, the Hon. Abram I. Elkus, reported that not less than 60,000 Jews were absolutely without means of self-support. For their relief soup kitchens were established, and other

assistance was given through the aid of local committees of Jews.

On December 18, 1914, seven hundred Russian Jews were expelled from Palestine. They arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, on the next day, having been transported by the United States Cruiser *Tennessee*, and other ships of the United States Navy, whose commanders allowed their vessels to be used for this benevolent purpose. Since that time about 12,000 refugees from Palestine have landed in the Egyptian city, many having left of their own accord with means of their own, or with the assistance of relatives in America and elsewhere. About twelve hundred are still left in the care of the Jewish Community at Alexandria. This community, while willing to make every sacrifice for its coreligionists, is unable to defray the entire expense of feeding, clothing, housing them, providing schools for their children, etc. The Joint Distribution Committee has, therefore, contributed about one-third of the total cost of maintenance of these twelve hundred people, most of the balance being donated by the Jews of England. The outlay on this account by the Joint Distribution Committee has been close to \$40,000.

When the war broke out, many Russian Jews took refuge in Bulgaria to which they were admitted on the promise of their coreligionists that they should not become public charges. The burden of carrying out this obligation has been almost too heavy for the native Bulgarian Jews to bear, and as the number of refugees has increased, it has become necessary to grant a proportion of the relief funds also to Bulgaria, amounting thus far to \$18,500.

Even before Roumania joined the *entente*, many of the Jews in that country had suffered by reason of the war. For

instance, in July, 1915, the Ministry of Interior issued a general order expelling all Jews living near the Austrian frontier, and before this rescript was revoked, many had been summarily removed from towns in which their ancestors had dwelt for generations. With the entrance of Roumania into the struggle, however, all past troubles became as nothing compared with those which ensued. The country was quickly overrun with fire and sword, and all classes suffered from the overwhelming national calamity which resulted. On September 17, 1916, there was held a conference of the Federation of Roumanian Jews of America, at which delegates from thirty-eight organizations representing the Roumanian Jews in this country were present. At this conference a committee was appointed to confer with the Joint Distribution Committee, and as a result \$80,000 has been forwarded for the relief of the Roumanian Jews.

The usual poverty in Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco has been accentuated by the fact that all business dependent upon visitors, tourists, etc. has come to an end. Hence the Jews in these countries have also received a small amount of relief which up to date has totaled less than \$10,000.

The Russian students and writers, who were in Switzerland seeking secular education in the various universities in that country, found themselves, soon after the outbreak of the war, entirely cut off from their usual sources of income. Their appeal to the Joint Distribution Committee has been responded to by small appropriations (\$6000), which were expended through Mr. H. Conheim, an American gentleman, who was in Switzerland at that time, and who generously gave his assistance in the administration of this relief work.

If the reports of the ruin caused by the bombardment of Belgrade are true, half of the Jews of Servia have been exterminated, so that out of the 35,000 formerly dwelling in the kingdom, there are now probably hardly 20,000 left. As to the situation of those, Dr. J. Alcalay, Royal Servian chief rabbi, wrote last January as follows: "Shuddering in the dark shadows spread by the overwhelming needs of the great hordes in Poland, Palestine, Turkey, etc., are the Servian Jews—a small group of our faith. Divine Providence has ordained that they shall pass through a most trying ordeal. For the past five years this little land has been in the midst of devastating warfare, with the result that the favorable economic situation it previously enjoyed has been destroyed. Now barely one-fourth of the Jewish inhabitants can support themselves. A new terrible catastrophe began about fifteen months ago. Enemies are in possession of the land, destroying by cannon and fire all stock, furniture, and foodstuffs throughout the country, and requisitioning what they can lay their hands on. Just now we are suffering such famine that many fathers have gone absolutely insane, agonized by their inability to find food for their families."

The following cable was received from Grand Rabbi Meir, of Salonica, in January, 1917: "We confirm our letter of November 30th. Economic condition of the community which was already critical, has been aggravated enormously in consequence of the continual arrival of Jewish refugees from Monastir. We beseech immediate help." \$55,000 has been sent for the relief of the needy Jews of Servia and Greece.

A final chapter in the record of American Jewry's participation in this work of world-wide charity was brought into being by the receipt, in November, 1916, of a cable from Prof. A. S.

Yahuda and Dr. Max Nordau, to the effect that over one thousand Jewish refugees from Turkey were starving at Barcelona, Spain, and that money for their relief was urgently needed. The Spanish Government gave immediate assistance, and \$4000 was cabled by the Joint Distribution Committee to Señor Angel Puldio in aid of the stranded unfortunates. A further sum of \$4000 has since been forwarded for the same purposes. Prof. Yahuda and Dr. Nordau write that the refugees have been heartily welcomed in Spain, and the latest tidings from the committee in charge of the distribution of relief in that country contain the information that arrangements have practically been perfected whereby the refugees will be distributed throughout the various Spanish commercial centers and so will become the nucleus of Jewish communities all over the land.

NOTE.—The officers and members of the Joint Distribution Committee are: Felix M. Warburg, chairman; Arthur Lehman, treasurer; Paul Baerwald, associate treasurer; Albert Lucas, secretary; Cyrus Adler; Sholem Asch; Meyer Berlin; Stanley Bero; Jacob Billikopf; David Bressler; David A. Brown; Fulton Brylawski; Harry Cutler; Samuel Dorf; Morris Engelman; Boris Fingerhood; Harry Fischel; Lee K. Frankel; J. Walter Freiberg; Harry Friedenwald; Meyer Gillis; Moses J. Gries; Janet Simmons Harris; Isadore Hershfield; Emil G. Hirsch; J. G. Joseph; Alexander Kahn; Leon Kamaiky; Louis E. Kirstein; N. Krass; Albert D. Lasker; Herbert H. Lehman; E. W. Lewin Epstein; Meyer London; Harriet B. Lowenstein; Julian W. Mack; Judah L. Magnes; M. S. Margolies; Louis Marshall; Joseph Michaels; Henry Morgenthau; Samuel Philipson; Otto A. Rosalsky; Julius Rosenwald; Morris Rothenberg; Leon Sanders; Jacob H. Schiff; Moses Schoenberg; Abram Simon; Nathan Straus; Oscar S. Straus; Cyrus Sulzberger; Mayer Sulzberger; Aaron Teitelbaum; Isaac M. Ullman; A. Leo Weil; Jacob Wertheim; Harris Weinstock; Peter Wiernik; S. S. Wise; Baruch Zuckerman.