

December, 1911

From the report of OZE.

The beginning of the war was marked by a series of expulsions ~~to~~ of Jews from little towns in Poland. In November 1914 there were concentrated in Warsaw 20,000 Jews from Zhirardoff, Piasetchno. Grodisk, Prushkow and other towns. In addition to that 800 refugees came from Kielts and 1500 from Radom. From three to forty eight hours was the time granted to them for leaving their homes. They escaped half naked and hungry, with their children freezing and cold on the journey. All of them filled the court of the office building of the Jewish community in Warsaw, were sleeping on the ground with a little straw as bedding.

This was only the introduction to the great expulsions which began in 1915. In April of the same year, when the Russian front was broken for ~~many~~ hundreds of miles, a migration began from the entire of ~~of~~ Lithuania and from the south-west regions, ~~thp/vtp~~ which was soon joined by the streams of those who were expelled according to the orders issued by the government. The entire Jewish population from the Kovno, Kurland and Grodno gubernias began to move. In hordes they were driven by the nagikas of the Cossacs or pressed into closed railway cars, ^{being} they were driven into the interior of Russia. In those cities where they arrived their places of refuge were the night lodgings, the synagogues and the open streets. The terrible and unsanitary conditions which were caused by their coming, soon brought about the breaking out of epidemics of scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, typhus, dysentery, and in some places, even cholera. The epidemics among children killed hundreds of ~~childish~~ lives. In some places, like Cheliabinsk, for instance, the mortality among children amounted to the entire annihilation of the entire young generation. In ~~pensa~~ it was a common thing to see the wagon go around in the morning among the places where refugees were concentrated and load up with the dead bodies of children, who died the previous night from cold and hunger.

The work of Jewish self-help began. Among other social forces which organized themselves for this purpose was also the OZE. The society was organized in 1912, and the war found the organization in the midst of its preparations for an extensive