

FIVE MILLION FACE FAMINE IN POLAND

**American Jewish Relief and Red
Cross Societies Fighting Dis-
ease and Hunger.**

MANY CHILDREN STUNTED

**A New Malady Spreading Blindness
Among War Refugees—Typhus
Toll Is Heavy.**

Five million people east of the River Bug in the new Poland are at the point of starvation, according to a statement made public yesterday by the American Jewish Relief Committee as a result of investigation by the American Red Cross and American Jewish Relief agents. The vast region, from which there has been practically no news in five years, has just been penetrated by the American Red Cross and the American Jewish Relief Committee's representatives.

"The war has left 5,000,000 destitute and stricken Jews in Eastern Europe," the statement says, "a number as great as the entire population of New York City, utterly helpless, in many cases sick, in every case hungry and dependent.

"East of the River Bug these people are living in devastated houses, in stalls of old stables, on roofless platforms built for refugee families, one family to a platform, in old freight cars, in holes in the ground, or under the open sky. They are weak from many months of semi-starvation, for they have gone for five years without one square meal. They are still terror-stricken from the war. Their number is being reduced every day by a series of the most terrible epidemics that ever swept any section of the world.

"Typhus, cholera and smallpox are all raging in the territory east of the River Bug. No estimate of the actual number of those smitten with typhus in Poland has yet been compiled, but it probably is greater than in Siberia, where the American Red Cross found 100,000 cases. Dirt and malnutrition are the two great causes of the epidemic of disease.

"All through Poland may be found children of eight or ten years old no larger than youngsters half their age ordinarily are. Two out of three infants do not survive their first year of life. The average child in the territory east of the Bug River has never tasted milk, even mother's milk. American Red Cross investigators say that an abnormal number of children are born blind, because of the malnutrition of their mothers. American Jewish relief investigators discovered a new eye-disease that had attacked thousands of children, beginning with constant blinking and ending in total blindness, resulting when long-continued starvation had affected the muscles of the eyes.

In the battle against disease and starvation which is going on in the territory east of the Bug River the American Red Cross is fighting the former with medicines and doctors and nurses and attempts toward cleanliness, while the American Jewish relief workers have entered the lists against hunger, with soup kitchens and milk stations, and Children's Relief Bureaus, established here and there, all through the vast stretch of territory.

"If all the people in the territory east of the Bug River could be fed properly at once, disease would soon disappear, doctors in this afflicted region say. If they could replace the rags which they have worn since the beginning of the war with fresh clothing, the epidemics would cease to spread. If their living places could be made habitable and clean, it would no longer be as it is today the most desolate expanse of land in the world. It is toward this end that the two great organizations, one of Gentiles and the other of Jews, are working hand-in-hand, differences of creed forgotten, in the great practical need that they face."

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