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EXTRACT FROM
MEMORANDUM FROM MR. MOSES W. BECKELMAN
RE EXPULSIONS OVER THE LITHUANIAN GERMAN BORDER
Dated - November 8th, 1939

Jens & Emory

Poland

How Relief

Progeny

When we went to visit the frontier itself on Sunday morning, we learned that during the night the Germans had withdrawn all the groups except one, which they had told the Lithuanian commander of the frontier post they would withdraw that afternoon. Various speculations were offered to account for this which I have already described but no authoritative information was available. A Lieutenant who accompanied us to the frontier told me he would rather resign his commission than take such an assignment again. He told me that three days ago when the Germans made their first attempt to push this group over and had been blocked by the Lithuanian soldiers, the latter had been forced to fire in the air to drive the refugees back. The Germans had called to them to shoot straight and not into the air. The Germans had told the neighboring peasants that anyone who offered shelter to a refugee would have his home burned. We found two children of about twelve years of age, fourteen women and fifteen men. There was no German patrol in sight so we crossed the line and talked with them.

This was the third day they had been on the frontier, in subfreezing weather. Most of them were unable to talk coherently but kept screaming to us and crying to be taken away. I learned that each day they had been visited by German guards and searched to the skin again and again to make sure they had not succeeded in hiding some money or valuables. One man with a bandaged leg had had the wound opened because the Germans had ripped off the bandage to see whether he was hiding any money. With the aid of some of the peasants, some of whom I saw standing about crying while we talked with the refugees, they had built crude unroofed thatch huts which offered some protection against wind but none against rain. One young woman had died during the night and her body lay on the field to one

side covered with a burlap bag. We distributed the food and cigarettes with which we had filled our pockets before starting and left because the lieutenant was getting nervous lest a German patrol pop out and find us.