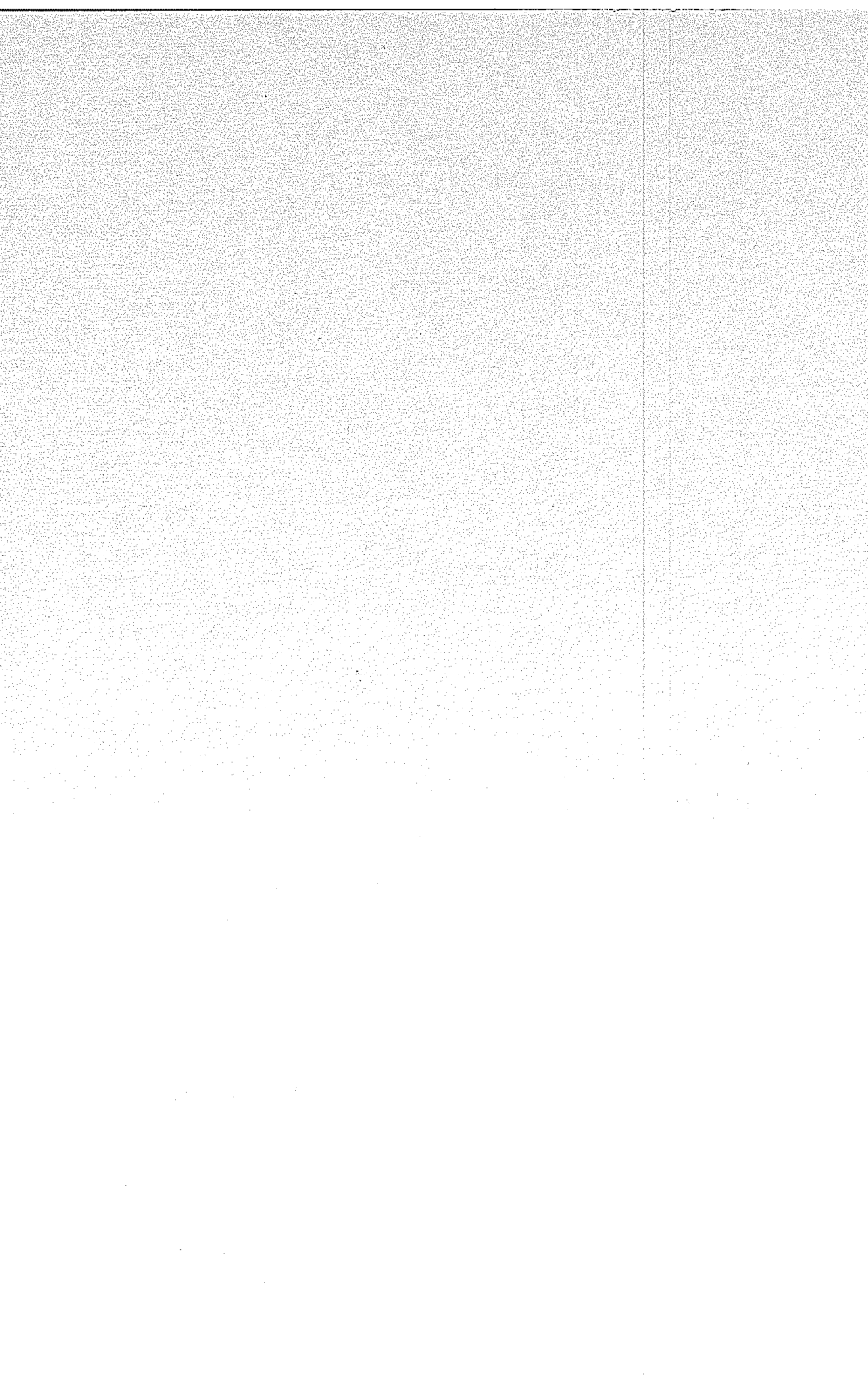


The Problem of

12 MILLION GERMAN REFUGEES

In Today's Germany





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COVER PHOTO:

Andy Robinson, son of a "stateless German," now lives in the ruins of Cologne. His family was expelled from Czechoslovakia. Here he makes his way "home," a Quaker relief box of food and clothing beneath his arm.

Contents

SECTION I	5
WHO ARE THE GERMAN REFUGEES?	
I. The Post-war <i>Volksdeutsche</i> Refugees. II. The Post-war <i>Reichsdeutsche</i> Refugees. III. Earlier <i>Volksdeutsche</i> Population Transfers. IV. Miscellaneous Groups of Refugees.	
SECTION II	13
WHERE ARE THE GERMAN REFUGEES NOW?	
The Potsdam Conference: Its Role. The Number of Refugees in All Zones. The Distribution of Refugees.	
SECTION III	20
WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF THE INDIVIDUAL REFUGEE?	
A Hypothetical Case.	
Location of Families. Location of Housing. Location of Employment. The Special Problems of Children and Youth.	
SECTION IV	30
WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR THE GERMAN REFUGEES?	
A Law or "Bill of Rights" for Refugees. The Significance of the Law.	
SECTION V	35
WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE GERMAN REFUGEES?	
Emigration. Assimilation. Community Responsibility. Governmental Responsibility. Allied Occupation Authorities: Their Responsibility. Needed: International Action. The Role of Foreign Voluntary Agencies.	

Foreword

Here is the story of 12 million refugees. Most Americans never heard of this mass human movement. They are people of German descent who have been forced out of surrounding countries into defeated Germany. This document tells why they left their homes, how they came into Germany; and it depicts their tragic struggle to exist there. It does not try to place blame for their evacuation, but it does point up the international responsibility for their care.

If left to be a prolonged irritant they can be a threat to peace. If the heart and head of humanity can be stirred to help, they can be an asset. This paper, written out of first-hand contact, is presented by the American Friends Service Committee with the hope that government and private agencies working together may find the creative answer.

CLARENCE E. PICKETT

Executive Secretary

American Friends Service Committee

May, 1949

SECTION I

WHO ARE THE GERMAN REFUGEES?

The German refugees are individuals, alone or in family groups, forcibly expelled from the pockets of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. They are also ex-prisoners of war wandering aimlessly because their homeland has been given away. They are other uprooted millions from those sliced-off territories milling about uncertainly. In aggregate, these human beings are a disinherited horde seeking continuance of life in conquered Germany. For these refugees homes and hope must be found within Germany.

These are not the one and a half million Displaced Persons under IRO (International Refugee Organization) care. These millions, loosely termed refugees, are Germans, or persons whose ancestors were German, who have fled or been physically forced into Germany since the end of World War II.

In contrast, the future of the Displaced Persons lies outside Germany. The Displaced Persons are non-German in origin. They are primarily the victims of persecution under the Nazi regime, who were in Germany or other Axis nations in June, 1945. Because the DP's are, generally speaking, of United Nations background, the UN has created the International Refugee Organization to maintain them until they have been repatriated or have found new homes in welcoming lands.

The Constitution of the International Refugee Organization specifically prohibits it from assisting "persons of German ethnic origin, whether German nationals or members of German minorities in other countries"—in other words, the German refugees.

To understand the complex problem of the German refugees is difficult, partly because of the variety of geographical areas from which they come. For the purpose of this study they will be divided into four main groups: *post-war Volksdeutsche* refugees; *post-war Reichsdeutsche* refugees; *earlier Volksdeutsche* population transfers; and a final *miscellaneous group* whose nationality or German citizenship status has not yet been finally determined.

I. The Post-War Volksdeutsche Refugees

As part of the Greater Reich program Hitler offered German citizenship to all members of the German minority groups in the countries outside the 1936 borders. These persons were labelled *Volksdeutsche*, and a determining characteristic in their identification is the fact that they had citizenship in the countries of their residence. Actually, the only claim Germany had on these people was through their ancestors who had migrated into the border countries. A parallel can be drawn by visualizing the Pennsylvania Dutch or the Minnesota Swedes and Norwegians,

who are ethnically German or Scandinavian, but for generations have been full-fledged Americans.

Some individuals from these minorities did participate in Fifth Column activity and were disloyal to their countries. Instead of seeking out the guilty individuals and prosecuting them as war criminals, the re-established governments heeded popular demand and ordered the eviction of the entire *Volksdeutsche* populations. There was nowhere to go but Germany. Some fled with what they could carry. Others were loaded into cattle cars and railroaded across the borders.

This expulsion of *Volksdeutsche* accounts for the 3 million Sudetenland Germans from Czechoslovakia, the 500,000 Swabians of south German ancestry from Hungary, the 5 million refugees from Poland proper, and the unknown number of *Volksdeutsche* from Yugoslavia. It is not possible to give an exact estimate of the size of any of these groups. The figures as to those from Yugoslavia are particularly uncertain. The Yugoslavian government *per se* did not order the expulsion of the *Volksdeutsche*, but many local communities took matters into their own hands. It has been established that over 100,000 *Volksdeutsche* fled with the retreating German armies through fear of Russian and Partisan retribution. Another estimated 200,000, prodded by their neighbors, have fled across the Italian and Austrian borders since the war's end. Most of these have made their way illegally into Germany, but 100,000 are being held in Austrian camps. The Allied Authorities of Germany have refused admission of the Yugoslavian *Volksdeutsche* from Austria because of the crowded living conditions and the food shortages in Germany. Austria, actually, is anxious to have many of these *Volksdeutsche* settle there, because of a labor shortage.

An understanding of the ramifications of the concept "ethnic Germans" is increased by a glimpse at the background of the *Volksdeutsche* in Yugoslavia. Professor M. W. Royse, in a report prepared in January, 1948, for the Preparatory Commission of the International Relief Organization, wrote:

"The Yugoslav *Volksdeutsche* are mainly from the Voivodina, Bosnia, and Slavonia, and are chiefly peasants. . . . The Voivodina, composed of the Batchka, Banat, and Baranya provinces, is well known as one of the sites of the vast colonization program carried out by Marie Theresa and her son Joseph II in the latter part of the 18th century, in line with their Germanization policy. Tens of thousands of Germans from the Rhineland, Bavaria, Saxony, Prussia and Austria proper were settled in the most fertile parts of the Voivodina and other regions."

This group, whose first settlers arrived in 1718, had grown to 300,000 by 1934. The report continued:

"Prior to the war, the group was highly organized as a German minority. . . . During the war the Banat was under the German administration, having a special status in which the *Volksdeutsche* population had full privileges and duties of German nationals, and regarded themselves as such."

II. The Post-War *Reichsdeutsche* Refugees

The second main group includes the German nationals who were resident outside the newly-defined borders of Germany in the fall of 1945. They are termed *Reichsdeutsche*, and they have always been of German citizenship.

The main body of the *Reichsdeutsche* are solid German citizens whose families have lived for generations in Germany, but east of the Oder-Neisse line. Through high-level negotiations such as heads of governments sometimes undertake in time of war, certain eastern territory was allocated to the USSR, *ipso facto* to its conquest in 1939. In compensation Poland was given the administration of equivalent land taken from eastern Germany.

These annexed lands were defined as the territory east of a line formed by the Oder and Neisse rivers. They consist of the provinces of Pomerania (8,802 square miles with a 1946 population of 1,463,135) and Silesia, about equal in size.

East Prussia, a former German province with a population of 2,186,000 in 1939, has been split for administrative purposes between Russia and Poland. Königsberg, the former capital of East Prussia, with a 1939 population of 372,000, is now the Soviet city of Kaliningrad. It provides Russia with an all-weather seaport on the Baltic.

The former Free City of Danzig was a part of Germany from 1939 to 1945. It is now incorporated into Poland. In 1945 its German population was estimated at 306,000.

The Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare in 1945 reported a total of 5 million German nationals in these Eastern Provinces. These figures tally approximately with adjusted 1939 census figures. By adding 500,000 *Reichsdeutsche* from the Soviet section of East Prussia one has a total of 5,500,000 people subject to expulsion from the Eastern Provinces. At least 3 million of these people are known to have been expelled across the borders into the present reduced boundaries of Germany.

In concluding the discussion of the sources of post-war refugees now in Germany, it should be pointed out that many *Reichsdeutsche* still remain in the Eastern Provinces. The number probably runs to 50 per cent or at least 4 million. Likewise, but to a lesser degree, many *Volksdeutsche* have been allowed to remain in the countries of their birth. Economic and labor considerations as well as a more humane outlook,

after the first heat of war hatred had cooled, warranted such a revision of policy.

Movement continues from these groups into Germany. Families and individuals are coming to join relatives, to seek greater economic security, and, in some instances, to avoid labor conscriptions and political or religious persecution.

III. Earlier Volksdeutsche Population Transfers

In addition to the *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* enumerated above whose movement into present Germany has occurred since the end of World War II, there are some half-million *Volksdeutsche* who were transferred into the Greater Reich under German auspices during the course of the war. Although a few of these people have had an opportunity to become assimilated, most of them, ironically, have received pillar-to-post treatment.

Prior to World War II there were German settlements in the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. They were tightly organized German minorities which kept close commercial and cultural ties with the motherland. In October, 1939, Germany completed agreements with Estonia and Latvia for the voluntary transfer of these people into the Third Reich. Sixty-four thousand accepted the opportunity and moved.

Later, in January, 1941, after Russia had absorbed the Baltic States, a second agreement was made for the transfer of the *Volksdeutsche*. This time the treaty was between the USSR and Germany. By this agreement an additional 66,000 German-Balts were brought into Greater Germany.

Russian armies overran eastern Poland in 1939. There were many thousands of scattered *Volksdeutsche* families in these areas. A USSR-German agreement in November, 1939, resulted in the transfer of these people into Germany or German-controlled territory.

Roumania suffered some drastic boundary shifts in the course of the war. The German policy of transfer by agreement of ethnic German minorities was carried out here also. Two hundred ten thousand *Volksdeutsche* were moved from the former Roumanian provinces of Bukovia, Bessarabia, and Dubrudja into the Greater Reich by agreements in 1940 among Germany, the USSR, and Roumania.

To a large degree the half-million *Volksdeutsche* who were shifted from pre-war Latvia, Poland, Roumania, and Estonia between 1939 and 1942 were settled into territories then occupied by Germany. These included the Polish-Corridor, Danzig, and the Eastern Provinces. Therefore, they have been uprooted again, since June, 1945, and crowded into the present four zones of Germany. On the first move some free choice was involved; they were allowed to sell their possessions or take them along. The second move was by force. Most were permitted to take little more than the clothes on their backs.

When people are spoken of in terms of thousands, hundreds of thousands and millions, their identity as individuals tends to become lost in the anonymity of statistics. But if one allows one's imagination to picture the boy Karl who is now 16, that can be avoided. Born in Riga, Latvia, Karl had his first school days there. In 1940 the family hurriedly packed up and travelled by ship and rail to Katowice, Poland. By the time Karl had learned the language of his playmates and begun really to feel at home, his father went off to war. The telegram announcing his death came in 1944. A year later, in August, 1945, a notice in Polish and German was posted on the street bulletin boards. Karl and some of his Polish schoolmates saw it at noon. At first he tried to join in their laughter, but then he quickly found an opportunity to leave them and run home.

"Mother, does it mean us? Do we have to leave Katowice, and Poland, immediately, and go to Germany? It doesn't mean us, does it?"

His mother tearfully replied, "Yes son, it does mean us. You need not go back to school this afternoon."

IV. Miscellaneous Groups of Refugees

To make the picture complete it is necessary to refer to other scattered groups of *Volksdeutsche* who are found among today's refugees within Germany.

THE MENNONITES

The 8- to 10-thousand Mennonite returnees from the USSR are interesting historically, and have been cause for much current international scrutiny regarding their ethnic origin.

The story of the Mennonites can be quickly reviewed.¹ A denomination of the Mennonite religious faith originated in the Netherlands and other Low Countries during the 16th century. To avoid religious persecution by the Spaniards they migrated into Prussia where they remained for over a hundred and fifty years. Their habits of simple living and sound agriculture resulted in prosperous farm communities. The Lutherans feared the threat of the numerical growth and economic importance of this religious sect. They influenced the Prussian government to legislate discriminately against the Mennonites, who were forbidden to increase their land holdings without special permission. Inter-marriage was prohibited with the Lutherans, unless a promise was given that the offspring would be raised in the Lutheran faith. The Mennonites, as pacifists, were heavily taxed as an alternative to compulsory military service.

Catherine II of Russia wanted agricultural colonists. She invited the Mennonites from Prussia to settle in southwestern Russia. Delegates

¹ J. C. Wenger. "Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine." 1946.
Mennonite Central Comm. "Mennonite Origins in Europe." 1942.

were sent to look over the situation and they came back with an offer of free transportation, 175 acres of free land per family to be untaxed for 10 years, and guarantees for complete military exemption and complete religious and educational freedom "forever."

This offer, made in 1786, resulted in the migration of approximately 1,100 Mennonite families into southwestern Russia between 1789 and 1820. The two principal colonies grew rapidly and prospered. Under the terroristic reign of Tsar Alexander II many of the "guaranteed privileges" were threatened or withdrawn. This was particularly true of the one relating to freedom from military service. To avoid such service, one-third of the group emigrated to the United States in 1874. This unexpected exodus gave rise to a governmental change of heart. Provisions for an acceptable form of alternative service were made.

Famine and persecution following the revolution in 1918 was the basis for a second emigration to North America—this time to Canada. Conditions for the remaining Mennonites did not improve, so that a large number attempted to emigrate in 1929-1930. The government of the USSR strongly opposed such emigration. Representatives of the Socialist Republic of Germany interceded for the Mennonites. With German help 4,000 left Russia for Paraguay and Brazil. An additional 1,000 went to Canada. The descendants of the remaining Mennonites were still 100,000 strong in Russia in 1934.

Many hardships continued for the Mennonites remaining, including the exile of some to Siberia. In World War II the German *Wehrmacht* occupied the section of southwestern Russia in which the Mennonites lived. They allowed freedom of religion again, and in many ways made life easier. When the German armies withdrew in retreat, 10,000 Mennonites fled into Germany with them. They are in camps there now.

The question is: Are these Mennonites from the USSR *Volksdeutsche* because of descent from ancestors who lived for six generations in Prussia? Or does their "ethnic origin" go back behind the German period to their 16th-century Dutch ancestry? If ethnically Dutch, they have a claim for care and resettlement assistance from IRO. If *Volksdeutsche*, they must share the lot of other refugees within Germany. Basing their argument on the more current picture, the USSR claims them as Russian nationals and urges their repatriation.

Professor Royse, studying the matter for IRO, wrote in a report earlier referred to:

"These people are *Volksdeutsche*—in all ethnic aspects and mentality, regardless of what historical claims they may have to an obscure remote ancestry."

On the other hand, IRO records show that two groups totalling nearly 1,000 individuals from these Mennonites were shipped under IRO auspices for resettlement in Paraguay during 1948.

REICHSDEUTSCHE FROM DENMARK

A second group of refugees who do not fit into the accepted pattern are the Germans now being returned from Denmark. They are *Reichsdeutsche*. They were evacuees from German industrial areas during the war bombings. A total of more than 4 million persons, mostly women and children, were evacuated for personal safety from large cities and strategic areas. The majority remained within the present boundaries of Germany. They, therefore, do not belong within the scope of this study, although they still compete considerably with the other refugees for housing and facilities. Just under 100,000 such evacuees were sent into Denmark during the war for sanctuary. They have been maintained in camps there at the expense of the Danish government.

In the summer of 1948 Denmark wanted to free itself of this human and financial liability. It reached an agreement with the Allied Occupation authorities for the return of these persons to Germany in an orderly manner. Because they come from outside Germany's borders they are included as among the over-all refugee population.

INFILTREES, OR ILLEGAL BORDER-CROSSERS

Another classification which is involved in any consideration of the refugees is that of the Infiltrates. In U. S. military government parlance these are IBC's, or Illegal Border-Crossers. This describes the Infiltrates if it is understood that the borders referred to are internal zonal boundary lines. The 1945 division of Germany into four zones for military occupation might just as well have been the creation of four new countries as far as movements were concerned. Anyone wishing to go from one zone to another, even on a temporary visit, had to have permission to leave the zone of residence from that Allied military government, and permission to enter the adjoining zone from the controlling military there. The red tape and delay in getting such permits were great, so most Germans crossed illegally. In 1947 freedom of movement between the British and American Zones was re-established and the French lifted their border blocks in August of 1948. The controls between the Soviet Zone of Occupation and the western zones still remain, and have, in fact, become more stringent since June, 1948.

Inter-zonal infiltration has been a problem in all four zones since the end of the war. The Russian Military Government complained of heavy infiltration from the western zones during the summers of '45, '46 and '47 because of the better food position in the eastern zone. As a result of the good harvest in 1948, the currency reform in June of that year, and Marshall Plan imports in the western zones, the economic picture has vastly improved. Reports indicate that conditions in the Russian Zone have worsened considerably. These economic shifts have resulted in a

tremendous upsurge in the movement of persons from the east zone into the western zones. Of the Infiltrates officially registered in October, 1948, at a reception camp in the British Zone, 5 per cent gave as the reason for their flight fear of forced labor drafts and political persecution. Almost 80 per cent claimed they made the crossing in search of greater economic security, and the balance were wanting to join relatives. The total of this influx is unknown, but it has been estimated to average 60,000 per month after July 1, 1948.

Almost 80 per cent of these Infiltrates are expellees from the areas east of the Oder-Neisse line. Their assimilation and resettlement in the eastern zone has obviously failed. The other 25 per cent have made themselves refugees by this move.

THE HEIMKEHRER OR RETURNING P.O.W.'s

World War II veterans who have been held as Prisoner-of-War laborers in Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Russia are now being released. They contribute some of their numbers and their own individual pathos to the refugee problem. They are known as the *Heimkehrer*. One and a half million were returned to Germany during 1948. Those whose pre-war residences were within the present four zones can be re-absorbed into the same setting. It is those who, prior to military enlistment, were members of a family or community in the Eastern Provinces, or of one of the *Volksdeutsche* groups, who are the unfortunate figures. After five years in army combat and three as prisoners of war in a strange land, frequently in poor health, they are sent home; but they have no home. Too often they do not know where to begin to look for their families.

CONCLUSION:

The German refugee may come from one of a dozen countries. He may not even be German except in ancestry. He may be in Germany now because he himself made the decision to go there. On the other hand, he may have been forcibly expelled from his father's homeland and sent away as though he were a criminal. He may be a peasant or the former director of an insurance company. He may be good or bad, old or young. He is a refugee by token of the fact that his home was outside the borders of present-day Germany.

SECTION II

WHERE ARE THE GERMAN REFUGEES NOW?

Delineation of the history and background of the refugee groups is of value only as an aid to understanding. Once an individual or group crosses the borders into Germany such identification is lost and plays no part in the planned or haphazard dispersion which follows.

It must be underlined that these refugees are all over Germany. They are not just in the American Zone, or merely in the three western zones. The location of the borders they crossed has influenced, but only partially determined, the zone of temporary haven. To the extent that the refugees themselves had an element of self-determination, they tried to move toward relatives, possible housing, and employment in that order.

The Allied military authorities parcelled out the incomers in a patent effort to equalize the numerical numbers within zones. Disorganized German officialdom, working under the direction of their conquerors, sub-divided the refugees between the *Laender* (states) in each zone, but heavily overloaded the rural areas because of the theoretical availability of unbombed housing.

There was chaos in Germany in the summer of 1945. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were pouring over the borders in unending lines. They were frightened and pursued by fear. At the same time the German economy was completely demoralized because of the military collapse. Few trains were running. Stores were closed. Doors were locked against neighbors and the unknown. The collapse was *complete*.

To add to the confusion, 5 million Displaced Persons had suddenly found themselves liberated from labor and concentration camps. Allied prisoners of war had been turned loose and were trying to get home, and to find something to eat enroute.

The industrial cities throughout Germany had been bombed to a stand-still. Hundreds of thousands of women and children who had been evacuated from the paths of the Allied armies were on the roads, dragging back to see what of their homes remained, and only hoping to find their men-folk.

The suddenness of victory caught the invaders off guard. The military commanders—British, Russian, and American—were attempting to police the Germans, to establish some kind of combined operations, to get the basic distribution channels running again, and to control their own troops from undue looting. The mass influx of several million frightened refugees over all borders was almost more than they could handle. Frantic telephone calls and teletypes were sent off requesting a “stop-order” on the refugees.

The Potsdam Conference: Its Role

It was against this background that President Truman, Prime Minister Churchill (later, Attlee) and Marshall Stalin took up the question of the German refugees at the Potsdam Conference in August, 1945. Other matters on the agenda included: a blue-print for peace-time co-operation in Europe; the decision to include France in territorial occupation; the allocation of the Eastern Provinces to Poland; and the establishment of final zone boundaries in Germany and Austria.

The concept of the transfer of population minorities did not originate at the Potsdam Conference. As has been shown, it was an accepted National Socialist practice. That it has boomeranged upon the Germans is the natural aftermath of the practical every-day application of Nazi political and nationalistic tenets during their decade of power.

Article XIII of the Potsdam Agreement was in reality action taken after the fact. The conferees attempted to contribute toward the orderly transfer and assimilation of the human beings involved. Had they wished to, even they would have found themselves powerless to reverse the decision for expulsion. Nationalism begets nationalism.

The frequently alluded-to Article XIII reads as follows:

"The three governments (USA, USSR, UK) recognize that the transfer to Germany of German populations or *elements thereof remaining* in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary will have to be undertaken. They agree that any transfers that take place *should be effected in an orderly and humane manner.*

"Since the influx of a large number of Germans into Germany would increase the burden already resting on the occupation authorities, they consider that the Control Council in Germany should in the first instance examine the problem with special regard to the question of *the equitable distribution* of these Germans among the several zones of occupation. They are accordingly instructing their respective representatives on the Control Council to report to their governments as soon as possible *the extent to which such persons have already entered Germany* from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary and to submit an estimate of the time and rate at which *further transfers could be carried out, having regard to the present situation in Germany.*

"The Czechoslovak Government, the Polish Provisional Government, and the Control Council in Hungary are at the same time *being informed* of the above and are *being requested* meanwhile to *suspend further expulsions pending* the examination by the government concerned of the report from the representatives on the Control Council."¹

¹ Jane Perry Clark Carey, "The Role of Uprooted People in European Recovery," pp. 14-15. National Planning Association, Oct. 1948. Italics supplied in this quotation.

The Potsdam Conference, therefore, delegated to the respective commanding generals of the three powers (plus France) who were to form the Control Council for Germany (the machinery for which was finalized at Potsdam), the responsibility for developing a plan for the distribution of refugees within Germany.

The urgency of the refugee situation is obvious to those who know something of military government operation, because tentative figures were developed and a plan was agreed upon by the end of October, 1945.

Fallacies in the operation of the plan and underestimates of the number of refugees involved occurred because of the limitations of the terms of reference in Article XIII. It specifically named refugees from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. The Netherlands, Roumania, Yugoslavia, and other countries also contributed. The expulsion of the inhabitants of the Eastern Provinces was not visualized at Potsdam. Poland interpreted the combination of Article IX, providing for Polish administration of the former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line, and also Article XIII, as a green light for such expulsion.

Furthermore, France had not participated in the Potsdam Conference. She therefore contended that Article XIII was not binding upon her in the administration of the French Zone of Germany. It is estimated that prior to the opening of the French Zone interzonal borders in August, 1948, approximately 100,000 refugees had moved into the French Zone. They did so either by illegal infiltration or with permission on grounds that they had families and relatives residing permanently within the zone.

These factors caused distortion of the equalization plan on a zonal basis. The plan as such became effective in November, 1945. It called for distribution among zones as follows:

Russian Zone: 2,750,000 refugees—from Poland and Czechoslovakia.

U. S. Zone: 2,250,000 refugees—from Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

British Zone: 1,500,000 refugees—from Poland.

French Zone: 150,000 refugees—from Austria.

These 6,650,000 transfers were to be spaced between December, 1945, and July, 1946, to allow for their "orderly and humane movement."

The Potsdam Conference request to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary for a breathing spell in the expulsion of German minorities was not heeded. Nor was the later monthly allocation quota with a fixed total, as forwarded to these countries by the Control Council officials. A grass fire had been started. The newly-organized "fire companies" were incapable of arresting it even temporarily. Also, they had a personal interest in collecting on the "insurance." The provisional governments in Czechoslovakia, and Poland, were mindful of the wishes of their constituencies.

The Number of Refugees in All Zones

The actual number of refugees in the zones by the end of November, 1948, seems to be approximately as follows:¹

Russian Zone: 4,060,000 or 200% of quota.

U. S. Zone: 3,370,000 or 150% of quota.

British Zone: 3,950,000 or 260% of quota.

French Zone: 100,000 or 66% of quota.

In discussing these population increases, Mrs. Carey stated:

“In spite of the loss of its territories east of the Oder-Neisse since the end of World War II and the deaths of four million soldiers and civilians during the war, Germany’s population has shown an increase (by 1946) of 10.2% since 1939. As the period of relatively strong German population growth is ended the arrival of refugees and expellees from the east has caused much of the increase.”²

This has resulted in the following increase in *density per square kilometer*:³

Zone	Persons per square kilometer	
	1939	1946
Russian	141	161
American	133	160
British	203	228
French	145	139
Average	168	185

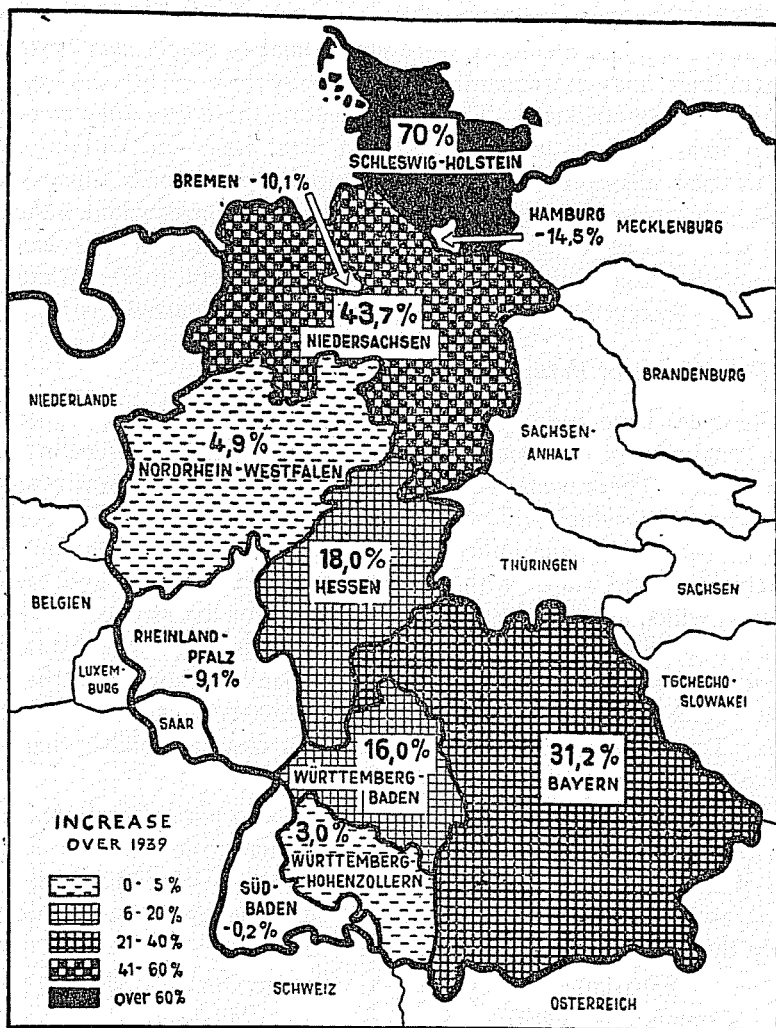
Current information is not available on the more localized breakdown of this increase in the Russian Zone. A news article in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna, Austria, dated January 30, 1949, analyzed the population change in the 11 western zone states as follows:

Zone	Land	Percentage population change between 1939-1948
British—	North Rhine-Westphalia	plus 4.9%
	Niedersachsen	plus 43.7%
	Schleswig-Holstein	plus 70.0%
	Stadt Hamburg	minus 14.0%
American—	Bavaria	plus 31.2%
	Hesse	plus 18.0%
	Wurtemberg-Baden	plus 16.0%
French—	Stadt Bremen	minus 10.1%
	Wurtemberg-Hollenzollern	plus 3.0%
	Sud-Baden	minus 0.2%
	Rheinland-Pfalz	minus 9.1%

¹ Report of Social Ministry: Land Northland Westphalia, Nov., 1948, p. 1.

² Jane Perry Clark Carey, “The Role of Uprooted People in European Recovery,” pp. 34-35.

³ Carey, pp. 34-35.



Arbeiter Zeitung, Vienna, Jan. 30, 1949

The map shows the unequal distribution of refugees in the various Lands and Zones of West Germany. The percentage figures show the population increase over 1939, augmented by the influx of refugees.

To avoid misinterpretation of the above figures it should be pointed out that Bremen and Hamburg were approximately 80 per cent destroyed by bombings and consequently had a heavy loss of life and exodus among its native citizenry. The census reports these two units as metropolitan areas, without including outlying rural areas and without reference to their absorption of evacuated population. North Rhine-Westphalia, containing the Ruhr, likewise represents concentrated industrial areas with extensive destruction of living units through war damage. Schleswig-Holstein and Bavaria are almost entirely rural agricultural provinces. Except for the city of Hannover, Neidersachsen is also.

The Distribution of Refugees

Refugees have ended up in the more agricultural areas. This was the original plan of the Occupation and German authorities dealing with the problem. There were many more in-comers than there was available housing, a factor which will be discussed in a later section. The point to be made here is that the influx of humanity has become a charge upon municipalities and states with the lowest annual incomes and taxable property, which are therefore least able to care for the refugees. That is borne out by the recent report that Schleswig-Holstein, with by far the highest number of refugees proportionately, has by a good deal the lowest per capita income among the 11 *Laender* (states) in the three western zones. To add to the burden, its occupation costs are higher than any other province on a per capita basis.

The dispersion of the incoming refugees into agricultural areas and away from urban areas is illustrated by the situation in Bavaria. Evacuation of city populations because of war damage to dwellings is also involved, as these figures represent an over-all population change and not merely the distribution of incoming refugees.

Bavarian Communities with:	Change During Period 1939-1946	
more than 100,000 inhabitants:	minus 12%	minus 180,815 people
20,000 to 100,000	plus 30%	plus 223,274
5,000 to 20,000	plus 75%	plus 532,240
2,000 to 5,000	plus 80%	plus 578,623
less than 2,000	plus 23%	plus 775,456

The population of large cities decreased by 12 per cent during this period but the housing space was diminished by 40 per cent. Of the total population of Bavaria, in communities under 4,000, 24 per cent are refugees. Put in a different way, of the total number of refugees in Bavaria (1,775,000) 74 per cent, or 1,200,000 are currently residing in such communities with a population of less than 4,000 inhabitants.¹

¹ Dr. Martin Kornrunpf, "Fluchtlingsproblem in Bayern," Munich, May, 1947.

The presence of these expellees in the farm villages of Bavaria represents a huge problem. They are mostly poorly housed with the peasants in the country. The same problem exists in Schleswig-Holstein and in the more rural areas of Niedersachsen.

It must be remembered that the 12 million refugees represent, in their backgrounds, an entire cross-section of economic and social society. Some were college professors; others were bank clerks. Many were farmers and large landowners, while others were agricultural workers and peasants. In Czechoslovakia the prisons were opened and Sudeten criminals were released to accompany the expelled groups. Mothers, babies and grandparents, as well as school-teachers, shop owners and plumbers, are included in this disinherited population.

The widely-repeated assumption that the refugee groups coming into Germany have a disproportionate number of women, children and aged persons by comparison with the German population appears erroneous. Available statistics indicate approximately the same age-sex distribution as that of the indigenous population.

The United States Military Government report of February, 1947, indicated that 29 per cent of the refugees are males between 14 and 65 years as against 28 per cent for the normal population in the American Zone.

SECTION III

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF THE INDIVIDUAL REFUGEE?

A Hypothetical Case

In an attempt to answer this complex question let us take as an example an individual who has come as a stranger into an overpopulated community. How can he find a place for himself? What can he do? Before he joined the army, this young man had four long years of exacting training as an apprentice to a goldsmith, let us say. But now goldsmiths are a drug on the employment market.

How can he settle down without knowing where his mother and younger brothers are? "Gott sei dank," God be thanked, he knows they are alive, but since they left Silesia and he was released with Muensterlager there has been no way of keeping in touch with them. His aunt in Essen would know, but where is she since her home was destroyed? There really is not much use tramping from city to city any more to look for his people. Four months of tramping have convinced him, and his broken shoes show it. If he can find an apartment or small house in the suburb of the town where he finds himself, then at least somebody in the family would have a base, he figures. With a garden maybe. Tomatoes, radishes, fruit, chairs under the trees. Inside in winter there might be a tile stove, a diningroom with furniture, a bedroom for each of them—how long is it since he has had a room of his own? he asks himself—a bed of his own with warm covers?

"Foolish, isn't it," he muses, "to start furnishing a house one hasn't found?"

Actually, he knows there are no houses, no apartments. Clearly, the thing this man must do is look for a room. If he can only find a room with a family who perhaps have relatives in Silesia, he thinks he may not feel such a stranger. They might then understand his loneliness. But then another thought occurs to him and his heart sinks. For if they have relatives in Silesia those relatives are almost certainly with them now. So there is no prospect of a room with this family that he has not even found.

Maybe, he speculates next, he should look for a room with some of the richer people. They have larger houses and, many of these being in the suburbs, their homes were not so badly bombed. They are likely to have more comfortable furniture, too, and probably heat in cold weather. Yes, he decides, that is what he must do. After finding the house he will read the card on the door to see how many people are living there. If the number seems below the three-to-a-two-room average, he thinks that the local room-assignment office may give him a paper ordering the family to let him move in. As a war veteran, as a refugee whose home in the

east was taken away, he will square his shoulders and face them. He will be an equal demanding and accepting his rights. He will not be obsequious or beg for kindness from them. He will use a share-the-wealth and share-the-results-of-defeat approach.

The young man wants to put his new optimism to the test. But he fears he may find the suburban family the sanctimonious "we-were-not-members-of-the-Nazi-party" type. How he loathes their kind! They always anger him as he looks at their tailored suits and well-soled shoes, and at the houses where they have lived straight through it all and only lost a few nights of sleep. Now, at 22, he feels that because of the intensity and concentration of his experience he is more mature than his father was at 45. He is still not apologetic for having joined the Hitler Youth. Yes, to be sure, he will admit, the youth were sold down the river, but he still stresses that at 14 there was meaning in all that idealism that he and his companions had talked and believed in.

Be that as it may, he knows he cannot lose his temper while searching for a room. Not all the suburban families were such hypocrites or anything like it, he reasons. A couple of those young officers with whom he had sat out the last days and ghastly nights in the cellar at Stalingrad, for instance: they were from such homes. They had shared their bread and tobacco. He wonders what has become of them. He is lucky; he has come home. *Home*. . . . But then he remembers—he has no home—no place to turn.

That lonely empty feeling returns to him. It is not as sharp an ache as it used to be, and maybe most of it will go away entirely, he tells himself, if only he can get settled, find a place to live, and find his family. That's the thing to do. But where are they? What is his mother using for money since the currency reform? He fears their savings and his father's insurance were probably all used before the currency reform, anyway. Imagine—his thrifty, practical family without money! House, garden, savings account, all the things that he used to take for granted, before, meant security; but now none of these really matter, if he can just find his mother and his two brothers.

Is his mother having to work? She had never worked except in their own home. What kind of work is there for a woman of almost 50? She can sew, but so can every woman in Germany. Nobody wants seamstresses, now, anyway, because there are practically no textiles. A small quantity in the stores at very high prices and a little on the black market. No, she hasn't a job sewing, he feels certain. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have her make him a new shirt? He would certainly throw his old army rag away in a hurry, with its threadbare cuffs. It had been worn out when he got it, and it never did fit him in the first place. It wasn't worth the last pair of extra socks he had traded for it. How he needed those socks now! If his mother were suddenly to walk down the street

and see him, wouldn't she receive a shock? It occurs to him that maybe she is right in this city, and the boys, too.

"The boys" are Karl, 14, and Hugo, 16, who are at least getting the extra meal at school that needy German youth receive. But where? Are they located somewhere so they can go to school? Maybe the boys are off somewhere on their own, wandering about the countryside like himself, perhaps stealing from the farmers, black-marketing, sleeping in the railroad stations like so many others.

Well, if he is going to find that room he had better get started, he decides. He will never get it just sitting there dreaming.

One hesitates to predict what assorted ill-luck this young man's search may bring him. He is a hypothetical case, a composite picture of refugees attempting to face their problems in Germany today, problems which in their stark realism are grim.

Location of Families

The closeness and unity of the family is greater and more important in Germany than in America. We are more mobile. We have better communications systems. Our recreation emphases are by age groups rather than by family units. A distinct American characteristic is the recognition of each person as an individual first, and as a member of his family group second. The order of importance is reversed in Germany.

In the light of this sociological concept of the strength of family ties, the anxiety to know where other members of the family are, if alive, and the drive to locate them, can be understood as a compelling force in the search.

Machinery to assist reunion of families has been established by the German Red Cross. A nation-wide Search Bureau has its headquarters in Hamburg. Despite extremely heavy registrations and completely inadequate financial backing to carry the tremendous clerical job, its record of successful locations compares favorably with that of the International Red Cross Locator Service in Geneva.

The German Search Bureau operates through a network of volunteers through all four zones. But human nature being what it is, the Search Bureau can be only a supplementary tool to the individual search for the individual, from town to town, city to city, zone to zone.

The Location of Housing

In an article "Civil Liberty in Germany" published in *Survey Magazine*, January, 1949, Arthur Garfield Hays wrote:

"The chief practical problem concerns housing. The big cities are largely destroyed. . . . There is a greatly increased population. Not only is housing needed for the military, but there are hundreds of thousands of Displaced Persons. There are over twelve million refu-

gees. . . . Five miles out of big cities into the country and all on the surface looks peaceful and serene. You visit an eight-room dwelling and there you find probably five families living under the one roof, with one bathroom (no hot water) and one kitchen. People get on each others' nerves. When you talk about civil liberties, the Germans interpret it not in terms of freedom, but in terms of housing, food, transportation, and life."

The housing shortage is the result of several factors rather than any one. War action seriously damaged or destroyed 40 per cent of the 1939 available dwelling units throughout the industrial areas of Germany. The extent of this destruction can be realized by studying reports of mayors, architects, and building contractors, who estimate that the removal of the rubble from such cities as Frankfurt and Essen will take 65 years. These calculations are based on the use of modern equipment for the removal of so many tons per working day every year.

There has been practically no new building of living accommodations for the past eight years. From 1941 until the spring of 1945 German building industries were concentrated on the war effort. A large number of temporary barracks were constructed during this period for military and industrial laborers. Much of this accommodation is still in use, but it never met any kind of minimum standards for housing.

From the summer of 1945 until the currency reform in June, 1948, there were few materials for new housing and no monetary incentive for the builders. Since the currency reform, building costs have risen to 250 per cent of the 1939 price levels.

With 8 million refugees and a total population of 47 million, which represents a 20 per cent population increase over 1939, the three western zones obviously have a drastic housing shortage.

It is logical that the newcomers to any community (in this instance the refugees) have less opportunity to acquire such housing as may be available in competition with the local citizens. There are two reasons for this: they arrived after everything was filled up; they are the outsiders—the strangers—the unwanted. The last point is aggravated by the fact that they are usually without money or furniture.

Laws have been placed on the *Laender* (states) books to permit the requisition by local housing authorities of under-occupied space for the accommodation of refugees. This is usually interpreted to mean less than 1.5 persons per room. The implementation of such laws rests upon local authorities, who frequently share the community's antipathy or apathy toward the needs of the refugees. But even if all such space were requisitioned, it would not be nearly sufficient to accommodate the bulk of the people now living under indecent conditions. The problem can be ultimately solved only by the large-scale construction of new houses and settlements.

In the meantime the *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* refugees are living in three main types of housing: (a) large temporary receiving camps; (b) "permanent camps" consisting of dance halls, school buildings, isolated labor barracks, or sometimes even a resort hotel brought into such out-of-season use; and (c) with rural families upon whom they have been billeted.

The temporary receiving camp, Schalding, in Bavaria, is described by an American Friends Service Committee team worker who visited it in February, 1949:

"Camp Schalding bei Passau is one of the five transient refugee border camps under the direct supervision of the Bavarian State Refugee Commission. The camp, which is about six kilometers west of Passau, lies between the Danube River and a main railroad line.

"The wooden barracks were built in the early years of the war for the storage of valuable tools. From the end of the war until April, 1946, the buildings were used as a transient registration camp for expellee transports from Czechoslovakia. Then for two years it was a transient camp under the administration of Caritas (German Catholic welfare agency).

"Since March, 1949, the camp has been directly administered by the Refugee Commissioner's Office in Munich. Although it is a so-called 'transient' camp with a capacity for 1,500 it has about 250 permanent residents.

"The buildings are separated into two parts by a pile of machines, destined for a sugar and soap factory, which were held up at the end of the war while enroute to Persia.

"The camp has the two-fold directorship provided by the Bavarian Refugee Commission. First, the Border Commissioner has the chief function of government and planning for the refugees. He personally interviews each Illegal Border-Crosser who comes to the camp. Liaison with the Labor Board for planning for permanent settlement for the refugees is also his responsibility.

"Second, the Director of the camp is responsible for the entire administration of this transient refugee community of more than 1,500 people. His functions cover the supervision of supplies, feeding, housing and medical care. He works with a representative camp refugee committee which not only expresses the concerns of the refugees, but which, if he fails to act, has the authority to go to the Border Commissioner. This pattern of the two-fold directorship and committee is followed in each of the border camps.

"Of the 67 employees of the camp about 75 per cent are refugees.

"Camp Schalding operates on a monthly budget of 65,000,—DM, but the Border Commissioner said that they were always exceeding this. From this budget each head of a family receives a monthly allowance of

10,—DM, and the others have smaller allowances depending upon their ages. In addition, 1,—DM is allocated to each person for shoe and clothing repair.

"There is a small 'L'-shaped wooden barrack which serves as the camp hospital with a ward for men and another for women. Serious cases and operations are taken to the near-by Passau hospital. The patients have a miscellaneous variety of diseases—malnutrition; respiratory and nervous.

"The physician in charge is a refugee. He is assisted by a nurse from the Bavarian Red Cross and another provided by the State. The consulting room and supply closets were pretty bare. They are in need of extra bed linen, gauze and medicines.

"The meals at the camp are prepared in a central kitchen where there are six very large kettle-stoves for quantity cooking. People line up with their pails to receive the hot meal rations, while the hard rations are distributed from an orderly commissary counter. The refugees receive 2,100 calories per day. The daily cost is 1,—DM per person.

"The noon meal on the day of our visit consisted of:

- 1/2 liter soup
- 1/2 liter liquid blood sausage
- 3/10 liter gravy
- 300 grams potatoes
- a small portion of sauerkraut

"A second smaller kitchen prepares food for the children up to six years of age, for invalids and for hospitalized people.

"The clothing situation is very bad. The refugees badly need wearing apparel and shoes. So the Bavarian Minister of Economics has not allocated any utility goods to the refugee camps.

"For the fifty-one children between the ages of four and six there is one school room furnished with benches and desks. Two tiny pictures adorn the wall, but there was no visible play equipment. In an adjacent building, about the same number of grade and high school students shared a room. They were busy at various class activities directed by an energetic one-armed schoolmaster. His greatest difficulty is the constant arrival and departure of his students, and the wide variation in educational backgrounds.

"The third room contained children doing handwork. Small scraps of cloth, no larger than your palm, were being sewn for doll's clothes.

"Such a compulsory school program in a transient camp is of itself commendable. There is no library or teaching program for adults.

"One room adjacent to a small store is decorated in bar style and is used for Saturday night dances, accommodating about one hundred-fifty people.

"At the north side of the camp there is a large light room large

enough for about three hundred people in church services. A regular Mass is held each Sunday morning. Once a month a Protestant service is held there.

"Refugees coming to Camp Schalding first have to go through a medical examination by the camp doctor. With their medical certificate they then go to the Border Police office at the camp, where each person is screened very carefully.

"Although Schalding is supposed to be a transient camp it has a static population of some two hundred-fifty people. These have found work nearby and have been unable to get other accommodation. Most of these have been here two or three years.

"The most obvious problem of the camp is that of overcrowding. Constantly there is the dilemma of no place to send the refugees, coupled with the arrival of new refugees for whom there is no room. The camp of 1,500 is always populated far beyond its capacity."

The principal transient receiving camps in the western zones are Uelsen in Niedersachsen, Wipperfuert in North Rhine-Westphalia, Schalding and Furth im Wald in Bavaria.

Charles A. Guy, editor of the Lubbock (Texas) *Avalanche Journal*, while visiting Germany as guest of the American Military Government, wrote in 1947:

"I only visited one of the German DP (refugee) camps. Their camps are the coldest, the barest, and the most overcrowded. Their administration is the poorest. Their rations are the lowest and their sanitation facilities are the worst."

A typical description of the "permanent or static camps" is given by a British Welfare Officer. She writes, regarding conditions in *Land Kreis Osnabrueck* in February, 1949:

"Out of a total of 38,458 refugees (in this jurisdiction) dwelling accomodation in houses has been provided for 38,179 and the balance of 279 persons are accommodated in 'camps.' These camps are large rooms in hotels or guest houses. I visited one of the camps situated a few kilometers from Osnabrueck. It is a large room or hall adjoining a beer house. There are 44 refugees accommodated here, consisting of 17 men, 16 women—of whom 7 are widows—and 11 children, all of whom are under 11 years of age.

"The dimensions of the room are about 60 by 36 feet. There are 34 single beds placed against the walls. The whole structure is wooden with a large coal fire in army-type stoves at each end of the room. The room is not partitioned. There is no privacy for dressing or undressing.

"All meals are cooked in a small kitchen near the premises and served on a lot of small tables which run in two rows from one end

of the hall to the other. There are one or two wardrobes, but most of the personal belongings are retained in suit-cases and wooden boxes owned by the occupants.

"There are 6 of these so-called 'camps' within the *Kreis*, each containing a similar number of refugees."

In the Ruhr, 23,000 refugees are living in 300 such "camps." Five hundred similarly unsatisfactory units house 110,000 refugees in Bavaria. The position is duplicated in every *Land* in Bizonia.

In the British Zone as a whole, as of July 1, 1948, 4½ per cent of all refugees, or 171,737 men, women, and children, were reported to be accommodated in such "camps." By *Land* breakdown, this was:¹

Schleswig-Holstein	89,904
North Rhine-Westphalia	20,980
Niedersachsen	56,253
Hamburg	4,600

Conditions for the third group—persons billeted upon private families—show a much wider range in living standards. Many thousands of Germans have voluntarily taken in refugee families. In that way they have been able to be selective as to their "guests." Some effort is made by most householders who have received refugees by official assignment to be gracious in sharing the crowded facilities of the home. But with several families trying to cook in the same kitchen, take turns in the same bathroom, and raise children of assorted age and social backgrounds under the same roof, irritations and aggravating incidents are bound to occur. It is not pleasant for anyone. It is particularly difficult for the refugee who recognizes himself as an unwanted intruder.

Location of Employment

Although work for employable persons is the most natural and socially effective means of assimilating newcomers into a community and into the national economy, the lack of design in the distribution of the refugee population has mitigated against it. Practically the only unemployment among able-bodied male workers in western Germany, other than that of the white-collar group, is among the refugees. This is because the distribution of refugees was based on housing potentialities rather than on employment possibilities and the labor market. A heavy percentage of the industrially-skilled refugees are located in isolated agricultural and lumbering communities.

The Social Ministry of Land North Rhine-Westphalia, the highly industrialized Ruhr, analyzed its refugee load by background training and current occupation in May, 1947. It was found that 9.8 per cent of the refugees were trained for agriculture but only 6.6 per cent of the em-

¹ Report of the Subcommittee on Manpower of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE): first meeting, Rome, Jan.-Feb., 1948.

ployed persons from this group were in agriculture. Fifteen per cent were trained for industry exclusive of mining, but only 10 per cent were working in this classification; 6.7 per cent were trained for business employment, but only 1.9 per cent had business jobs at the time of the census. In contrast, 0.7 per cent had been apprenticed in mining but 1.9 per cent were working in the Ruhr coal-pits.

Mine workers, with or without experience, are being recruited throughout the western zones. Prior to money reform, incentives were offered in the form of CARE parcels and extra food and clothing coupons. For many months housing for miners has had high priority on all building, and that in itself is an incentive.

In October, 1948, a joint British-German committee was formed in North Rhine-Westphalia with officials representing the state departments of Labor, Housing and Refugees. The British chairman, representing CCG Manpower, charged the committee with responsibility for action in the employment of refugees. Because there exists a shortage of skilled laborers in the Ruhr, a clearance was established by means of which local areas would be provided with a weekly percentage of workers to fill such requisitioned needs. However, in order to secure these desired workers the local municipalities must guarantee adequate temporary living arrangements for the worker, with the further guarantee of housing for his family within six weeks of the date of employment. Workers with the requisite skills are provided from among the newcomers at the transient receiving camps, as the result of employment interviews at the time of registration.

This Working Committee which meets every Friday morning also provides an inter-departmental and British-German common ground for the elimination of red tape and bureaucratic delays. It is an action group which is getting results. Unfortunately, it is one of the first state-wide efforts to channel skilled refugees into the employment market on a planned basis.

In discussing this problem, the Refugee Commissioners of one of the American Zone *Laender* said:

“Without regional planning, we will not be able to offer suitable employment to our refugees. That will lead to emigration of first-class experts, which is a great danger for Germany.”

Actually, when all the unfavorable circumstances are taken into consideration, the employment picture for able-bodied male refugees is extremely good. The statistics for Bavaria, with the second heaviest refugee load in proportion to native population, can be considered as representative.

As of October, 1948—three months after the currency reform—there were 658,964 refugees registered as employable in Bavaria. Of these, 564,400 were at work, and 94,564 were unemployed and actively

seeking work. In other words, 83 per cent of the employable males were working.¹

Comparable statistics for Bavaria in March, 1947, or 18 months earlier, show only 76 per cent of the same group at work. However, in June, 1948, just prior to currency reform, 92 per cent of the Bavarian refugee employables were at work. Apparently 28,000 lost work when marginal laborers were dropped from payrolls as the tightness of money followed the monetary reform. The outsider is always at a disadvantage in competition with the in-group under such circumstances.

The above figures certainly must not be interpreted to indicate that there is no problem of unemployment among the refugees. They show on the other hand that in a country with "full employment," as is the situation in Germany today, 17 per cent of the ablest of the refugees in need of employment cannot find work. In addition to these, there are the hundreds of thousands of marginal laborers. Included in such a group are the partially-trained apprentices who went to war or were expelled before completing training. These represent a more important factor in Germany than in the USA because of the importance of craft unions there. Also to be considered are the tremendous numbers of not fully employable males because of poor health and war injuries. The problem of women who must work because there is no employable man in the family is not included at all in the above optimistic picture.

The Special Problems of Children and Youth

The children in the refugee group certainly have no responsibility for the position in which they find themselves. While the situation of the adults is unfortunate, it is the moral responsibility of society to give special protection to the children. They should be guaranteed minimum essential food, clothing, heat, education, and decent standards of privacy in living accommodations. They do not have such protection. Every fourth refugee is a child under 14 years of age.

The adolescent refugees, both boys and girls, in the 14 to 18 or 20-year groups are particularly pathetic. One social worker spoke of them as "retarded but over-developed," the victims of a lost childhood. They contribute heavily to the "wandering youth" who are a post-war problem in Germany as in Italy and France. Many studies and quite a bit of documentation are available covering this group as a whole. The same problems, the same needs, run through all "wandering youth" and juvenile delinquent groups. They are intensified among refugee youth because the latter are more foot-loose. Therefore, a larger percentage of the age-group is involved than from among the normal population. By the same token, there are fewer opportunities for social stabilization. It is a group which is peculiarly sensitive to community ostracism.

¹ Report of the Bavarian Social Ministry to the U. S. Military Government, Oct. 31, 1948.

SECTION IV

WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR THE GERMAN REFUGEES?

From the first post-war days of the occupation of Germany, the Allied Military Authorities have insisted that the responsibility for the care, maintenance, and administration of the *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* refugees must rest with the German people, and with the local German governing bodies. With no national government and but little co-ordination permitted or possible between the decentralized state governments, it could only be expected that there would be a wide range of variation in the efficiency and consideration with which refugees were to be handled in the various states.

A "Bill of Rights" for Refugees

In the spring of 1948 an effort was made to unify practices in the administration of refugee matters. A pattern law was drawn up and has been adopted with local variations by most, if not all, of the 11 western *Laender*, or states. It constitutes a kind of "Bill of Rights" for the refugees.

This law is of such basic importance in any consideration of the German refugees that it is here presented in its entirety. This text (translated) was enacted by the *Landtag* of North Rhine-Westphalia on June 2, 1948:

Introduction:

The war let loose by National Socialism has by its effect plunged the German people into misery. The *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* who were obliged to flee from their homes have particularly suffered. Their distress can only finally be overcome by permitting them to return to the German Eastern Territories, the restitution of which must, therefore, for the sake of the peace of Europe and of the world be sought by peaceful means and sympathetic cooperation between the peoples.

Irrespective of this question, which still remains to be decided, it is the first and foremost duty of every German to help the refugees to the best of his ability; to accept them in his community; and to give them a new home.

The basis of all measures must be the realization that the consequences of the war must be borne by the German community as a whole and that the refugees have already contributed more than their full share towards reparation.

The *Landtag* has passed this bill, conscious of the fact that the same rights for the refugees, as for the indigenous population, offer the only means by which effective help in the question of the refugees and prosperity under common living conditions can be achieved.

1. Scope of Application:

The regulations of this "Bill," so far as refugees are concerned, apply to the following persons:

- A. 1. All persons of German nationality or race who before expulsion or flight had their last permanent domicile outside the frontiers of the German Reich, according to the boundaries of the latter on January 1, 1938, and had fled or were expelled from such domicile.

2. All persons of German nationality or race who before expulsion or flight had their permanent domicile in the German Eastern Territories east of the Oder-Görlitzer Neisse (territory boundaries as of September, 1939) and had fled or were expelled from such domicile.
 3. Released prisoners of war of German nationality or race who were resident in the areas mentioned in 1 and 2 and who cannot return there now.
 4. Children born after the flight, expulsion or repatriation of their parents shall be considered as refugees as long as their parents have refugee status.
- B. Persons not belonging to the aforementioned groups but to whom the law is partially or wholly applicable at the discretion of the *Land* Government.
- C. Persons who have already acquired a domicile in another zone or in another *Land* of the British Zone may only receive benefit within the meaning of this Law if they have been obliged to relinquish such domicile for good and sufficient reasons.
- D. (Certain other kinds of exclusions are omitted here.)

2. *Documentation and Identification:*

1. Persons coming under this Law shall be documented. They shall be obliged to furnish the necessary particulars in connection with the documentation. An identity card or pass (*Ausweis*) shall be issued showing the status as refugee.
2. Assistance to the refugee shall cease as soon as he has been found permanent accommodation, an occupation suitable to his capacities and physical standards, or is otherwise assisted and cared for and has reached a standard of living comparable with that of the indigenous population. Cessation of assistance shall depend upon the decision of the *Kreis* Refugee Office in conjunction with the *Kreis* Refugee Committee. A clearly visible entry shall be made on the identity card in respect of cessation of assistance.

3. *Naturalization:*

Persons mentioned under Par. I who are not already in possession of German nationality shall be entitled to the same rights and have the same obligations as German nationals, until such time as their nationality has been finally established by law.

4. *Reception:*

1. Refugees arriving in *Land* North Rhine-Westphalia shall in the first place be sent to a transit camp, where they shall be cared for, medically examined, documented, registered and distributed.
2. The *Gemeinden* (county) undertaking reception shall immediately find suitable accommodation for the refugees.
3. When as a first measure the accommodation consists of emergency or collective quarters, the period of stay shall not exceed two months at the outside. If immediate and final accommodation is not possible for the refugees, they shall be accommodated temporarily in suitable and habitable dwellings; they shall not, however, live in mass quarters. Families shall be accommodated separately.
4. Requisitioning, furnishing and the supplying of accommodation shall be a public task of the first priority.

5. *Accommodation:*

1. The necessary accommodation shall be acquired in accordance with the provisions laid down by the authorities in charge of allocation of dwellings (*Wohnraumbewirtschaftung*).
2. The refugees shall be represented according to the ratio of their number to the local population or, at least, by one member on the Dwellings Committee. These representatives shall be selected by the communal Representation Association from such persons as have been recommended by the Refugee Representatives on the Refugee Committees.

3. Refugees shall benefit to the same extent as urgent cases of indigenous persons from alterations to dwellings, construction of homes for the people, provision of homesteads and small allotments which are promoted from the public funds. Efforts shall be made to provide separate dwellings for refugee families.

6. *Clothing and Equipment:*

1. Refugees shall have equal rights with urgent cases of indigenous Germans in respect to welfare in the form of clothing, household commodities, and utensils. Distribution shall be controlled by the local Refugees' Offices.

2. The refugees shall be represented on the Consumer Committees of the Economic Offices in accordance with the ratio of their numbers to the local population figure, or, at least, by one member. These representatives shall be selected . . . (as above stated).

7. *Welfare Contributions:*

1. In cases of indigence, contributions from public funds in accordance with the provisions which are generally applicable shall be granted. Welfare assistance contributions for refugees are not liable for refund until the settlement of the property adjustment.

2. The realizable property of a refugee is not chargeable even if public assistance is claimed provided that it does not exceed the following amounts:

For single persons: 3000.—DM

For married couples: 5000.—DM

For each child under age or being educated: 1000.—DM

For each further member of the family who is over 21 years of age, but not in a position to earn his own living and who is provided with subsistence by the head of the family: 1000.—DM

3. Besides the assistance mentioned under sub-Par. 1, special contributions shall be granted in exceptional cases of need, for the supply of clothing, linen, furniture, and household goods, and also for the provision of very urgent necessities of life.

The assistance of able-bodied refugees may be met by the allocation of work of a nature beneficial to the community or may be made dependent upon the execution of such work. The type of work should be adapted as far as possible to the capability and physical standard of the individual concerned.

The refugees shall be represented in the Welfare Committees in accordance with the ratio of their number to the local population figure, or at least, by one member. These representatives shall be selected . . . (as above stated).

8. *Absorption:*

1. All participating authorities shall take the necessary measures for the physical absorption of the refugees into the indigenous population.

2. Regulations with respect to compensation of refugees shall be put into operation within the framework of future property adjustment.

9. *Direction of Labor and Vocation:*

1. With regard to the direction of labor and vocation of the refugees, the same principles shall apply as are applicable to the indigenous population.

2. The previous occupation and vocational or professional training of the refugees must be taken into consideration with respect to direction of labor and vocation or profession. Refugees are to be considered in particular according to the ratio of their own number to the number of local inhabitants (at least), in cases of appointment to teaching posts; the engagement of workers, clerical staff and officials; the granting of permits to carry on commerce or trade; the allotment of quotas; or permission to practice one of the free professions. Refugees in accordance with the ratio of their number to the number of local inhabitants shall be engaged as soon

as possible in all types of work, as workers, clerical staff and officials, as individuals permitted to engage in commerce or trade, as holders of quotas and as individuals permitted to practice one of the free professions.

The formation of producer co-operative societies is to be encouraged to the utmost extent.

In connection with Agrarian Reform, in all cases of measures regarding small holdings, or where land is released by the public, or in cases of land taken over owing to mismanagement, all applicants for this land coming under this Law shall have the same rights and shall come under the same conditions as applicants from the indigenous population.

3. Particular attention shall be devoted to refugee youth with regard to questions of advice with respect to professions or vocations and general guidance. Refugee students shall be admitted to all Universities under the same conditions as apply to indigenous youth. Gifted refugee children are to be assisted and enabled to enter higher schools, technical schools, and universities.

10. *Assistance by Loans:*

1. For loans granted to refugees for the purpose of starting a new existence and by which assistance from the public funds will probably not be necessary, the *Land* may accept responsibility for a first mortgage bond.

2. The maximum of the self-imposed guarantee for loans . . . (this clause omitted here).

3. The Minister of Finance shall be responsible that no guarantee shall be accepted without the prescribed sanction of the Military Government.

11. *Organs and Functions:*

1. The tasks of Refugees are functional affairs of the *Gemeinden*.

2. Within the framework of the laws, the *Land* Government shall adopt measures which are necessary for the solution of the Refugee question.

3. The Minister for Social Affairs in conjunction with the Refugee Committee of the *Landtag* may appoint nominees for the local implementation of this Law.

12. 1. *Offices for affairs connected with refugees*—Refugee Offices—shall be established in the *Regierungsbezirke*, in the towns not under the control of *Kreise*, and in *Landkreise*.

2. The head of the Refugee Office shall be both an official and a refugee, and at least half the staff of the office shall consist of refugees.

13. 1. *The following Committees shall be formed* for the purpose of instructing and advising the officials responsible for the welfare of the refugees:

a. In the case of the Ministry for Social Affairs the *Land* Refugee Committee.

b. The *Bezirk* Refugee Committee.

c. The *Stadt* or *Kreis* Refugee Committee.

d. The *Gemeinden* and *Ami* Refugee Committees.

2. At least half the members of the Refugee Committees must be refugees.

14. *Aid by the Authorities and Co-operation by Voluntary Welfare Organizations:*

1. All authorities shall afford every possible help and assistance in the implementation of this Law.

2. The public offices of the refugee organization shall assist the activities of the voluntary welfare organizations without, however, violating their independence or their statutory character. They shall also encourage and obtain the co-operation of the said voluntary welfare organizations.

Certain individual tasks may be transferred to the voluntary welfare organizations with their consent.

15. *Arbitration Procedure* . . . (established) (omitted here).

16. *Rules and Regulations regarding Penalties:*

1. Any person who does not fulfill the legal obligations incumbent upon him in connection with the reception, accommodation and welfare of the refugees, and who does not carry out a corresponding written instruction from the Refugee Office or the Accommodation Office, shall be liable to a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment and a fine up to 1,000.—DM.
2. Any person who does not register in accordance with Par. 2:1 of this Law shall be liable to a fine up to 15.—DM or to imprisonment up to six weeks.

17. *Final Provisions:*

1. The preferential treatment laid down in Zonal Directive (British) H.Q. 2900/20 for refugees who have been persecuted for political, racial, and religious reasons is not affected by this Law.
2. The Minister for Social Affairs in agreement with the competent Functional Ministers shall decree the carrying-out instructions of this Law after he has heard the Refugee Committee of the *Landtag*. He shall also decree in agreement with the Functional Ministers the legal and administrative regulations which are necessary with regard to the entire question of refugees.
3. The law shall become effective immediately.

Duesseldorf, June 2, 1948.

The Significance of the Law

To have this law or "Bill of Rights" is a large step forward. It gives a framework within which refugees, and all persons or organizations concerned with them, can operate.

Besides that, the law gives in black and white, without any possibility for misunderstanding, this clear-cut statement: "The refugees are equal in every respect to the local indigenous Germans, and shall be given equal rights. They shall have representation as a category wherever their interests as refugees are involved."

To appreciate the importance of this law, which is a proclamation of equal rights and privileges for the refugees with the local citizens, let us glance at recent American history. When catastrophe struck the United States in the form of the economic depression of the 1930's, some million Americans were "away from home," away from their places of legal residence. It was ruled that they were *not* the responsibility of the local governments and relief organizations in the places where they happened to be living. A special organization, the FERA Transient program, had to be established to provide for the American "refugees."

However much of a step in the right direction this law may be, something more is needed. The presence of a law on the books does not of itself create houses where there are not houses, shoes where there are not shoes, or a sense of neighborliness where there is hatred.

SECTION V

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE GERMAN REFUGEES?

The physical, economic, social and political difficulties of these 12 million refugees are too complicated for simple solution.

Keenly aware of the "cold war" between East and West, many of the refugees imagine that a *real* war might bring about their return to their former homes in the east. Local Germans, oppressed by the overcrowding caused by the superimposed population, also speak of this as a way out. This negative approach reflects the despair of the people who have been presented with no more constructive alternatives.

Emigration

Emigration from Germany is widely discussed—by the refugees, by indigenous Germans, and by many groups who wish to help. At best it can be the solution for only a few hundred thousand able-bodied persons. The IRO experience with Displaced Persons has shown the complications and limitations of large-scale resettlement plans.

The USSR has proposed one type of emigration by asking Czechoslovakia to accept the return of 300,000 Sudetens from the Russian Zone. Such a move would relieve over-population pressures in the Zone and would provide Czech industries with urgently needed manpower. Eventually quite a number of the refugees may be invited to return to their former communities. This is particularly true for those from the Eastern Provinces, even if the final boundary determinations favor Poland. The total number involved, however, would not be sufficient to alter the over-all problem.

Assimilation

Under present circumstances the only practical solution of the problem of German refugees appears to be their absorption by the German population. In western Germany the legislative groundwork is laid for this eventuality. From an economic standpoint it is possible, if increased industrial production is permitted. Germany can produce 60 per cent of the food necessary for its present population. Forty per cent must be imported. The exporting of industrial products could make this trade exchange possible.

Given such foreign trade, Germany can absorb the refugee workers, even the marginal ones, into her labor market. The primary requisite for such employment stabilization is the redistribution of refugee labor. To match the available skills of the refugees with job openings a national employment service is needed.

Social absorption can be expected to follow individual economic security. The attitude of ostracism and bitterness in some communities has been largely due to the competition of these strangers with the "old-timers" for food, shoes, textiles and housing. There has been far too little of any commodity to go around. Following the currency reform, there has been an upswing in the availability of consumer goods but the quantities on hand are still far below the demand. Housing is the most serious shortage. Time and materials and a large-scale building program will be necessary to alleviate this basic human need. Given these, it is still estimated that it will be two generations before the average individual can have a room of his own. This factor will delay the completion of social absorption for many years.

Community Responsibility

Given assimilation by Germany as the practical solution for the problem of these refugees, changes in static conditions of the present must be introduced on many levels. On the local or community level there must be a change of attitude toward the newcomers. To accomplish this an educational program is necessary to provide an understanding of the background of the refugees and of the problems which they face. Individuals and groups in each community must take the initiative for the development of such activities as will further the integration of the refugees. Women's clubs, schools, churches and social agencies must lead the way. The attitude of neighborliness in all its aspects must supplant that of suspicion.

Among the vast number of unassimilated refugees themselves there must be a reorientation of thought. The lethargy and hopelessness into which so many have fallen must be supplanted with a new outlook. They must be helped to relinquish dreams of a return to the past. Only by facing the realities of their present situation, as they must begin to realize, can they contribute toward a better future for themselves and their families. There must be a rebirth of individual initiative and a willingness to participate as members of a community. Leadership for such reorientation should come primarily from the refugees themselves, but it can be stimulated and assisted by local community groups and by national and foreign agencies.

Governmental Responsibility

German governmental authorities deserve great credit for the responsibility which they have assumed in the administration of refugee matters since the end of the war. Their task has been surrounded by insurmountable difficulties. But a growing recognition of the extent of the problem and a gradual increase in the availability of consumer goods will make their task an easier one. In the immediate future the municipal authorities must carry out the practical application of the Refugee "Bill

of Rights" in every community. Governmental means must be developed for the co-ordination of activities regarding employment, housing and educational facilities for refugees, both on an inter-community basis within the *Land* and on an inter-state one among the various *Laender*.

Allied Occupation Authorities: Their Responsibility

The Allied Occupation authorities have stated repeatedly that the *Volksdeutsche* and *Reichsdeutsche* refugees are a German problem. By occupational policy they have made it impossible for the German authorities to administer this in a practical manner beyond the local communities. The valueless Reichsmark was also a German problem, but the occupation authorities instigated and gave financial backing to currency reform. The same acceptance of responsibility is necessary with regard to the refugees, a problem frequently cited as the most pressing in Germany today. It would appear that the Allied Military Governments must come to recognize that money reform, educational reform and political reform can be no more than partly effective while the unmet problem of 12 million refugees burdens Germany.

Unfortunately, the Four-Power Allied Control Council in Berlin is not currently capable of approaching the refugee problem on an all-Germany basis. Until East-West relationships have been clarified, this problem as well as others affecting all Germany must be handled on the basis of a divided Germany. Eight of the 12 million refugees are now in western Germany. The western occupation authorities have made a beginning in unified action with the establishment early in 1948 of a Tripartite Commission on refugee problems. The Commission recommended that 300,000 refugees be moved from Schleswig-Holstein (British Zone) and Bavaria (U. S. Zone) into the French Zone. French Zone authorities stressed that only those refugees assured of employment should be authorized for removal *ipso facto*. They also urged that there be an employment drive with the aim of finding work contracts for as many refugees as possible.

It is hoped that further steps can be taken to level off the uneven distribution. A centralized labor index, large-scale housing projects and a work program for the employment of refugees in rural areas are additional programs which could be initiated under Tripartite Commission auspices. ECA counterpart funds might be drawn upon to finance such programs.

The military governments of western Germany are the agencies for carrying out the policies of their respective governments. Their major policies are determined in Paris, London and Washington. The funds to implement these policies are appropriated in Paris, London and Washington. Therefore, occupational policy as to German refugees in Trizonia is the responsibility of the citizens of the democracies of France, Great Britain and the United States.

Needed: International Action

Responsibility toward constructive solutions for the refugees in Germany is broader than the local community, the German *Laender*, and the occupation powers. It is an international problem. As has been pointed out, the governments of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Roumania, Austria, the USSR, Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain and the United States have all been involved in the development of the problem. These nations, plus all nations which have agreed to the principles of the Declaration of Human Rights, have an obligation toward the German refugees. The problem therefore becomes one for the United Nations, the organization which these nations have established for action on international problems.

The United Nations has established the precedent for its responsibility for refugees by creating the International Refugee Organization for the care of Displaced Persons. More recently, it has set up the United Nations Program for Palestine Refugees. Numerically, the problem of German refugees far exceeds either of these groups. Historically, it is as international in causation. It may be hoped that the United Nations will develop an organization within its framework to deal with the problem of the German refugee.

The Role of Foreign Voluntary Agencies

There is a large place for the foreign voluntary agencies in connection with the problem of the German refugees. Such welfare agencies are needed to supplement the efforts of the private and governmental German agencies, and to work with a United Nations organization, if one should be created. To be most effective, the work of foreign organizations in Germany must be co-ordinated in an interagency body; and the foreign personnel must work in close co-operation, at all levels, with the German private agencies and the German administration.

The need for material supplies—for soap, textiles, food and shoes—is still great, particularly in the static camps. To a large extent, such supplies should be given on a self-help basis. Specifically, textiles can be given to refugee camp sewing rooms. Seeds can be given for garden projects. Leather and shoe-repair equipment can be provided instead of the finished pair of shoes. In addition to extending the agency's resources, this method has the concrete value of helping the recipients to improve their condition by the work of their own hands. It leads to the organization of group efforts and to an opportunity for community participation in constructive projects.

Carefully selected foreign agency personnel has a great opportunity to offer services of a recreational, educational and cultural nature to refugee communities. Play centers, youth groups, hobby clubs, libraries, forums and concerts are needed to give color to a life which has become

pathetically drab. Once again, the function of the agency is to stimulate such group activity and to make possible the opportunity for self-expression.

The function which the foreign voluntary agency can perform better than any other body is the important one of spreading interpretation and an awareness among individuals, groups, and private and governmental agencies of the problem of refugees.

Finally, it is through such foreign voluntary agencies that individuals in Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Holland, Norway, Denmark and America can express their personal concern for the individual misery, the poverty, and the family disruption which has overtaken 12 million human beings—men, women, and children.