REFUGEE FACTS

AMERICAN
FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
20 SOUTH TWELFTH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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A Study of the German Refugee in America

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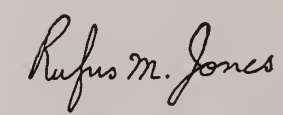
Foreword

"GERMAN CHILDREN" has a familiar sound in the annals of the American Friends Service Committee. For four years following the World War, supported by American generosity, this Committee fed a maximum of 1,200,000 children a day in Germany. The activities of the organization reached to every corner of the Reich. The values of that experience are deeply engraved in the lives of many American Quakers and we believe also of many Germans.

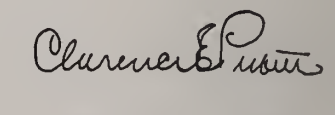
Now a minority group in Germany is unwanted by the majority. The American Friends Service Committee again responds to the cry of human suffering as it did following the war. Today we listen again to the appeal of suffering humanity for fellowship, for succor, and for a home. The Service Committee is not only assisting with relief, where necessary, but is attempting to aid those who must leave Germany and go to other parts of the world. It is also one of the agencies that offers a service of hospitality and placement for some of the refugees who can enter this country under our immigration

law. These services are rendered with the conviction that if wise and careful placement can be assured in this country, these immigrants, unwanted in Germany, may prove to be a valuable asset to our American life. We have encountered grave misunderstanding of the problem of the refugee as it exists today. After careful research we are publishing these facts, with the hope that they may contribute to the realization that the acceptance of refugees presents an opportunity for enriching American life both commercially and culturally.

On behalf of the American Friends Service Committee.



RUFUS M. JONES,
Chairman



CLARENCE E. PICKETT,
Executive Secretary

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MUCH of the recent news from the newly framed German Empire and from Italy has dealt with the harsh treatment accorded to various classes of citizens who are deemed undesirable by their governments. These stories have been paralleled by others describing the efforts being made to find lands in which those unfortunates may find refuge, and by discussions as to how far the United States should go in providing asylum for refugees. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to supplement these discussions with a number of little known but nevertheless important facts which have direct bearing upon the refugee problem and which in some degree run counter to rather widely held impressions. First, facts are presented, derived from U. S. Government records, having to do with the amount of recent immigration. This is followed by a discussion of the salient characteristics of immigrants who are now being received in the United States from Central Europe, which line of thought leads quite naturally into a brief appraisal of what we will be called upon to do for them and what they may do for us if given the chance.

How Many Refugees Are We Taking?

As is well known, immigration to the United States has been restricted by quota regulations since 1921. We are now operating under the National Origins law enacted in 1924 and amended in 1929. Under this law, only 153,774 immigrants are allowed to come to this country annually and, of this number, 83,574 are assigned to Great Britain and Ireland, countries which last year (ending June 30, 1938) used only 4,551 of their total. With this small number from those two countries, immigration in effect is limited to approximately 75,000 annually.

For the six year period, July 1, 1932, through June 30, 1938, a total of 241,962 immigrants were admitted into the United States for permanent residence. During the same six year period, 246,449 immigrants previously admitted to this country for permanent residence moved away. Thus during the six year period that roughly approximates the years of the Nazi regime in Germany, 4,487 more aliens departed than were admitted to the United States.

It is interesting to note that whereas only 241,962 immigrants were admitted for permanent residence, during this same six year period the quota laws per-

mitted a total legal immigration of 922,644. Thus, only about 26 per cent of the quota allowance actually entered. It also should be noted that over 50 per cent of those admitted during this six year period were children under eighteen, persons past forty-five, and married women.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1938, the year of the largest refugee immigration, there was a net immigration into this country for permanent residence of only 42,685. A comparison of this figure with the figure for 1929, the last year before the depression, and with the figures for 1924, the high point of post war immigration, is illuminating. In 1929 there was a net immigration increase for permanent residence of 210,475; in 1924, the net increase was 630,107. In other words, the net 1938 immigration was only one-fifth that of 1929 and one-fifteenth that of 1924.

For the six months of the current year, July 1, 1938 to December 31, 1938, there was a net immigration into this country for permanent residence of 31,648.

Based upon a population of 130,000,000, the 1938 net immigration to this country represented less than 4/100 of one per cent of our population.

Number of German Refugees in the United States

From July 1, 1932 to June 30, 1933—Total immigration from Germany	1,919
From July 1, 1933 to June 30, 1934—Total immigration from Germany	4,392
From July 1, 1934 to June 30, 1935—Total immigration from Germany	5,201
From July 1, 1935 to June 30, 1936—Total immigration from Germany	6,346
From July 1, 1936 to June 30, 1937—Total immigration from Germany	10,895
From July 1, 1937 to June 30, 1938—Total immigration from Germany including Austria	17,199
Total immigration from Greater Germany, July 1, 1932 to June 30, 1938	45,952

To this six year total of 45,952 may be added 19,452 immigrants from Greater Germany who have come to this country from July 1, 1938 through De-



cember 30, 1938. There are thus only 65,404 German immigrants (in all) who have come to this country in the six and a half years from July 1, 1932 through December 30, 1938, the period since the advent of the present government in Germany. During this same six and a half year period, 22,362 aliens here for presumably permanent residence left this country for Germany. Thus the net increase in our population due to movement from and to Germany in the last six and a half years is only 43,042 an average per annum of 6,622.

The Nature of Present Day Immigration

There is little that is new in the story of the refugees who are striving to enter our country from Central Europe at the present time. All the great literatures from the Old Testament down through Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea" and Longfellow's "Evangeline" contain descriptions of the fate of groups of people who have been forced to leave their homeland. No century of Western civilization has been free from accounts of barbarism and cruelty of man to man, and of other men who have extended help to the oppressed and have revived faith in human nature.

The history of Europe shows a continuous stream of refugees moving out to the Americas from various countries. Let us recall the Flemings and Walloons fleeing before the cruelty of the Duke of Alba, the Huguenots from France, the Protestant minorities from England, Holland and Germany, the Irish driven out by the famine, the Germans (Carl Schurz) escaping from the tyranny of Prussianism in 1848, the Armenian victims of Turkish oppression, Russian Jews fleeing pogroms, White Russians homeless after the Bolshevik revolution. No doubt, the more or less remote forbears of many who read this pamphlet were

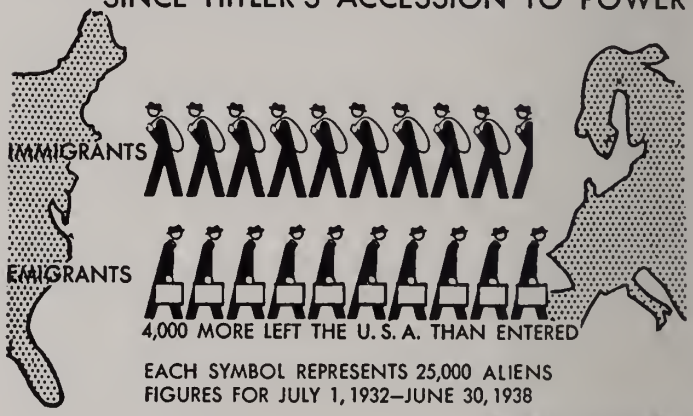
members of one or more of these masses of humanity who found a welcome in this land of ours during the last three hundred years.

In our day we are receiving a small but complex group of refugees from Germany, about whom we need to be better informed. First, there is a large group of Germans, who had been conspicuous as champions of liberalism and democracy and international cooperation. James G. MacDonald, former High Commissioner for German Refugees under the League of Nations, has aptly described the exiles as being among:

> "the political and intellectual leaders under the German Republic—Democrats, moderate Socialists, pacifists, liberal professors, journalists, Catholic Priests, and Protestant pastors . . . The necessities of these men and women, among whom are some of the finest intellectual representatives of democratic Germany . . . stir the sympathy and enlist the generosity of liberal and democratic people, irrespective of creed."

There is a larger group, however, of those who are the victims of the new National Socialist racial laws. These laws have been enacted to purge Germany of all Jewish blood. Under them anyone is a "Jew" who has even as little as 25% of Jewish blood in his veins,

no matter what his religious affiliation is. He or she may come from a family which has been Christian for generations. No matter. One Jewish grandparent



makes a person a "Jew" and that, by Nazi standards, settles the matter once and for all.

Furthermore, some of those called "Jews" by the present German government have no Jewish blood at all. How is that possible? It is possible because a Gentile married to a person called a "Jew" by the present laws must get a divorce or be officially registered as a "Jew." It is to their credit that the vast majority of persons in this situation choose to leave

their relatives in Germany and emigrate penniless with their lifemate, after having forfeited all their wealth to the German government.

Because the Jews had lived in Germany for many centuries they had been assimilated into German life and culture, had won renown in every field of endeavor, and had intermarried with the Gentile Germans extensively. They had enjoyed all the rights of citizenship for over a century, had performed every duty to the State and made every sacrifice for it which any other citizen had made. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, the treatment meted out to them in Germany in the last six years cannot be justified on the basis of science, of logic, or of common sense. It is explained only on the basis of expediency, as is frankly admitted by those responsible.

It is necessary to stress once more a fact which the American public has even yet not understood sufficiently, namely, that these refugees from Germany are not all Jews by religion—far from it. In 1938, about one-third (31%) of all refugees from Germany were Christians. In the years before that, the proportion was higher. And the proportion of Christians among those who are still in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, but would like to leave, is still higher. According to the best estimates available there are about 400,000 Jews by religion still in Germany and

about 300,000 non-Aryan Christians, that is, Christians with some percentage of Jewish blood.

Up to the present, those arriving in our country have been divided in the proportion of approximately five Jews by religion to two Christians, but this proportion is explained by the fact that the Jewish committees were the first in the field and as a result have had more time to secure affidavits and financial support for their co-religionists. If the Christians of the United States increase their assistance to their co-religionists the proportion of Christian refugees will increase.

What Will Be The Effect Upon Our Country?

There is a fear in the minds of many Americans that the refugees have displaced American workers or will do so in the future; and with many million unemployed in our country already, it is natural that many people who are uninformed should be easy prey for anyone who wishes to increase anti-alienism or anti-Semitism in our land. Every American is now aware that there are many such organizations in our country which are exerting themselves, mostly in furtive ways, to increase racial feeling among us. The truth and intelligent assistance to the newcomers together will dispel these fears. The need for intelligent assistance

arises from the fact that, through no character faults of their own, they arrive with extremely meager financial resources and need assistance while establishing themselves. Some are fitted only for trades or profession which, along the Eastern seaboard, are already overcrowded, and these need shifting to other less crowded areas, or they should be given re-training for some other occupation. This help they ask of us, but on the other hand they can and will add to America's assets. Consider the following summary.

Every human being is a consumer. He eats; he wears clothes; he requires a place to live.

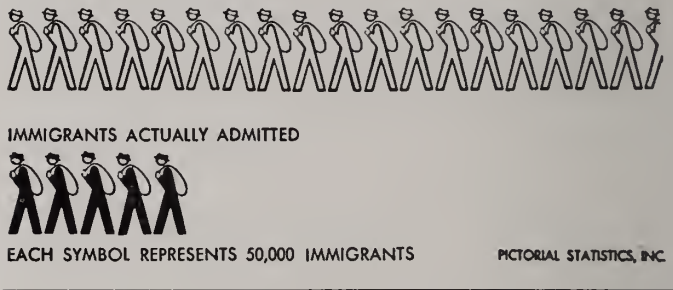
Every immigrant who comes to America is as much a consumer as anyone else, and his wants have to be supplied by American businesses and factories.

In this sense the refugees are actually providing work for American labor.

This is especially true of the women and children among the refugees. Perhaps about a third of them will become wage earners. This number must be reduced still further, however. Many of the refugees are intellectuals—writers, scientists, scholars, etc. They will help to make our country the cultural center of the modern world by their presence here.

The larger proportion of them are of course workmen, business men and manufacturers. Of these indi-

viduals there will be quite a few who will bring to our country new businesses and skills which we have lacked. The German is on the average a highly trained



individual, and these newcomers are above the average in training and education. Many of the things we used to import from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia can be made here by Americans working with some of the trained immigrants who are here, and we shall have the trained executives among them to ensure a successful outcome.

Some of these business men have had export businesses in the old countries; they can continue to fill their orders overseas by setting up a business here and employing American workers instead of German. Thus, whole industries can be moved to our country.

England's Experience With Refugees

English experience is of interest. The British Home Office has reported to the Parliament that the eleven thousand German immigrants which have entered Great Britain have provided work for fifteen thousand workers.

Some detail of this process is given by the London Spectator of January 20, 1939:

> "In some cases whole industries, or sections of industries, have been transferred completely to this country. The whole of the valuable fur trade of Leipzig, for instance, has been transferred to this country. The greater part of the present leather bag industry now established in England has since 1931 been built up by German Jews, the majority of whom, of course, took residence here and increased their businesses after 1933.
>
> "In Lancashire there is one leather-bag business which employs over 750 British subjects. The factory of another one established on the St. Helen's Estate at Bishop Auckland, which was burned down some time ago, was employing at the time 250 British subjects, and the program which is to be carried out this year will employ

up to 600 people. In all these cases work is being done here by British workmen that was formerly done in Germany by Germans . . .

"A German-Jewish refugee and his family are establishing a fine furnishing-materials factory employing forty British subjects, and an Italian Jew, along with the same Germans, is starting a mass-production furnishing-fabrics factory which, beginning with 175 British employees, is expected ultimately to employ about 2,000. Other firms are manufacturing soups, delicatessen, furnishings, lamp shades, electrical equipment, work boxes, and furniture, and a cement hardening process is being started . . .

"A silk printing factory now employs forty and will soon employ seventy British workpeople; a leather glove factory employs fifty; a new factory for the manufacture of patent fasteners will employ fifty; confectionery and cakes will employ twenty; wrist-watch straps already employ twenty-two; chrome leather eighty-four; silk printing forty-four; bottle caps and gelatine products twenty-six; surgical adhesives forty; leather belting eight; plain kid and fancy leather gloves eleven.

"One effect of the transfer of industries has been that firms in this country who previously bought goods abroad find that they can still purchase from the same firm, but that it has now been established in this country. It is estimated that the ladies' clothing trade alone is responsible for the employment of about 1,000 additional British subjects. Two allied businesses introduce another important aspect of the whole subject of refugee industries. A successful wholesale millinery business which was established only nine months ago is already employing forty girls. The interesting feature of the work in this case is that it is actually exported from England to Continental countries. Exports have also been expanded by the introduction of an entirely new business to this coutry—the manufacture of novelty woolens through the instrumentality of a group of refugees who do not themselves actually manufacture but are dealers and prepare designs for novelty woolens for export abroad. The designs are manufactured for them by British firms, and the distributing side of this business alone employs fifty British subjects. The indirect employment must obviously be very considerable."

Refugee Industrial Contribution In U. S.

No one can guarantee of course that more work will be created in our country by the coming of these immigrants than they need to maintain themselves, as seems to be the case in Great Britain, but there is certain to be considerable work of this kind created. A few examples must suffice.

One German textile man used to own a shirt factory in Germany, and sold his wares to South America. Having to leave his homeland, he has transferred his factory to our country and is employing American labor to supply his customers as before.

Harmonicas and accordians used to be imported from Germany. Now a refugee has set up a shop for the making of these instruments and American workers are making them.

A German firm exported until recently certain types of wool hosiery to the United States. Now the three refugees who had owned this firm have re-established it in Massachusetts and are employing 38 American workers in the manufacture of goods which had been imported previously from abroad.

Another refugee has brought over from Germany a patented process used in the manufacture of gloves.

The firm he established to utilize this patent now does an annual business of $100,000.

Common Sense Is Urgently Needed

Our Committee realizes that common sense and decency demand that not a single American workman who needs the work and is satisfactory should lose his employment in order that a refugee may have it. Although there have been small and irresponsible employers who have acted otherwise, we find that all of the committees and large employers facing this problem are clear in their thinking about this situation and realize the dangers of having recourse to any method of employment for the refugees which would displace American labor. Other occupations where there will be no displacement of present workers must be found. If each American community will contribute just a little energy, ingenuity, good will toward men and helpfulness in the ways which the concerned committes can explain to them, the solution will not be difficult and our refugee problem will be solved to the benefit of all concerned.

Whatever contribution any individual or group may make through whatever channels they wish to make it, the American Friends Service Committee and all others who have the best good of their country at

heart will rejoice in the consciousness of wider co-operation among the American people in the solution of a problem that they are peculiarly fitted to understand and to solve.

The American Friends Service Committee
20 South Twelfth Street
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sponsoring Committees

The following national organizations, affiliated with the National Coordinating Committee, 165 West 46th Street, New York, are cooperating in the refugee aid program.

American Committee for Christian-German Refugees—287 - 4th Ave., N. Y. C.

American Friends Service Committee—20 So. 12th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

American Jewish Committee—386 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

American Jewish Congress—221 West 57th St., N. Y. C.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee—100 E. 42nd St.

B'nai B'rith—1003 K St., N. W., Wash., D. C.

Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany—123 Second St., N. Y. C.

Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds—165 W. 46th St., N. Y. C.

Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Medical Scientists—59 East 75th St., N. Y. C.

Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars—2 W. 45th St., N. Y. C.

Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America—297 - 4th Ave., N. Y. C.

German-Jewish Children's Aid, Inc.—165 W. 46th St., N. Y. C.

Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (Hias)—425 Lafayette St., N. Y. C.

Hospites—122 E. 22nd St., N. Y. C.

Inter-Collegiate Committee for Student Refugees—100 E. 42nd St., N. Y. C.

International Migration Service—122 E. 22nd St., N. Y. C.

International Student Service—8 W. 40th St., N. Y. C.

Jewish Agricultural Society of America—314 E. 14th St., N. Y. C.

Musicians Emergency Fund, Inc.—113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

National Board, Young Women's Christian Ass'n—600 Lexington Ave., N. Y. C.

National Council of Jewish Women—1819 Broadway, N. Y. C.

Zionist Organization of America—111 - 5th Ave., N. Y. C.

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