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THE REFUGEES ARE NOW AMERICANS

By Maurice R. Davie and Samuel Koenig

COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY OF RECENT IMMIGRATION FROM EUROPE



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The Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe was organized in 1944 by five leading national refugee service organizations, viz., the American Christian Committee for Refugees, the American Friends Service Committee, the Catholic Committee for Refugees, the National Refugee Service, and the United States Committee for the Care of European Children. Officers of the Committee are Alvin Johnson, Director, New School for Social Research, chairman; and Henry Bruère, President, the Bowery Savings Bank, New York, treasurer. The National Sponsors' Committee consists of 164 members, of which C.A. Dykstra, Provost, University of California at Los Angeles, is chairman, and George N. Shuster, President, Hunter College, and William Rosenwald, businessman, are vice-chairmen.

The Committee had as its aim the making of an impartial, objective study of the adjustment of refugees and their effect on American society. The Study has been directed by Maurice R. Davie, chairman of the Department of Sociology, Yale University, on leave of absence for this purpose. Assisting him has been a research staff experienced in the field of immigration.

The Committee has had the cooperation of over 200 agencies and committees concerned with immigrant welfare, as well as of refugee organizations, throughout the country. The original data collected include questionnaire returns from over 11,000 individuals in 638 communities in 44 states and the District of Columbia, which have been found to be a representative sample of the refugee population; 1,600 replies to a special questionnaire for physicians and dentists, covering about 30 per cent of these groups; over 200 life stories, either autobiographical or biographical; reports on community backgrounds and attitudes from over 50 communities; several hundred questionnaire returns on business enterprises established by refugees; some 65 schedules giving information on refugee organizations; and data obtained from interviews with representative refugees and Americans in various fields of activity and other informants. In addition to consulting the available literature on the subject, immigration statistics, and government documents, thousands of case records of agencies and committees serving refugees in general or special groups of refugees such as children, scholars, lawyers, physicians, musicians, and writers, were analyzed.

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By MAURICE R. DAVIE and SAMUEL KOENIG

THE story of Mr. S——— is typical of that of thousands of the refugees from Nazi tyranny who came to the United States in the years immediately before the war.

Mr. S——— was an exporter in Germany. He lived in comfortable circumstances, but he was not rich. He was one of the heroes of the first World War and enjoyed considerable prestige. When the Nazis first came to power, he felt quite safe. But though he was transacting his business strictly according to the letter of the law, he was arrested in 1934 on a trumped-up charge of illegal trading with the government of Czechoslovakia. The trial was a farce, and he was dismissed. A second arrest in 1937 on the same charge was only slightly more serious. A third trial

This pamphlet is based on a comprehensive, nation-wide study conducted by the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe. The full report will be published in the spring of 1946 by Harper & Brothers under the tentative title of *The Refugee Immigrant in the United States: A Study of His Adjustment and Effect on American Society*. Maurice R. Davie is Professor of Sociology in Yale University. Samuel Koenig is Instructor in Sociology at Brooklyn College. Other members of the research staff assisting in the preparation of this pamphlet were Mrs. Sarah W. Cohn, Miss Betty Drury, Mrs. Dorothy Foote Tate, and Dr. Carolyn Zeleny.

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a few months later, before a hostile judge and prosecuting attorney and a jury wearing swastika bands, led to a sentence of ten months' imprisonment.

In the few days allowed by the court and the Gestapo to put his business affairs in order, he managed to escape to Czechoslovakia. After months of wandering, he and his wife finally reached a French port from which they sailed for America.

His joy and relief at reaching this country were immediately overcast by a feeling of despair at being in a new and completely foreign country where he had to make a new start. The English that he had learned so correctly at school was of no help. The porter at the dock and the cab driver could not understand him.

He decided that the thing to do first was to learn English and the way to do it was to mingle with people. He began by peddling, first pencils and later candy that his wife made. Then he tried jobs. The various social agencies to whom he went suggested retraining, particularly because his arm had been injured in the first World War; and he looked into this, too. His heart was not in it. He had been a businessman, and he was determined to get back to business. He talked to a great many businessmen and was impressed by their kindness, by the freedom with which they gave information, and by the amount of time they were willing to spend with him. After a year and a half, with the financial help of another German refugee, he bought a small defense plant in a New England town and employed sixteen workers in the manufacture of war goods for the government.

He lives modestly and does not have the luxurious apartment that he had abroad, but he feels that he is sharing in the abundance of America and he has a sense of well-being.

This is but one story out of thousands that could be told about the most recent of American immigrants.

Few immigrant movements to the United States have been as dramatic as that of the refugees. Although small in numbers, the refugees have aroused unusual interest because of the tragic circumstances under which they emigrated. Fleeing from the oppression of fascism, they made Americans aware of the sinister events occurring in Europe and forewarned them of the impending world catastrophe. Arriving during a period of extreme economic depression, they met with considerable opposition, particularly on the part of professional and business people who feared their competition. Moreover, since the majority of them came from Nazi Germany, there was some suspicion as to their intentions

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in this country. And since many were Jews, they increased anti-Jewish feeling among certain elements in the population. All this has led to widespread rumors and charges. What are the facts regarding these refugees? How many came? Who are they? How are they adjusting to American life? What effect are they having on American economy and culture?

BACKGROUND OF THE REFUGEE MOVEMENT

Earlier Refugee Movements

This is by no means the first time that people have come to these shores to escape persecution. Early in our history the Pilgrim Fathers sought refuge here. Later came the Huguenots, who were driven out of France because of their religious beliefs. Numerous other religious groups, such as the Protestant minorities from England, Holland and Germany, sought freedom here from persecution. Among other groups who fled from oppression were the Scotch-Irish in colonial times and the German liberals of 1848. In later periods came the Eastern European Jews, escaping from pogroms and other mistreatment. After World War I, a series of refugee movements began, during which America received several thousand Armenians, escaping from the cruelty of the Turkish regime, and "White" Russians, fleeing because of Bolshevism. With the rise and spread of Fascism and Nazism, a refugee movement of gigantic proportions was started which sent a considerable number of victims to the United States.

The Present Refugee Movement

All refugee movements have much in common. The refugees leave against their will. They are forced out by tyranny and oppression or by upheavals and wars. In some ways, however, the present-day refugee movement is in a class by itself. From a world-wide view, it is unprecedented in scope. Also unique is the fact that descent or "race" has forced people to leave their homelands. The individual is thus left with no choice, for while it is possible to change one's faith or political views, one cannot change one's ancestry.

Similarly without parallel is the doctrine of nationalism that resulted in pushing aside all conflicting loyalties, whether po-

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litical, social, or religious. This extreme nationalism has led to depriving the nonconformist of the rights of citizenship, leaving him unprotected by any government. Being a man without a country was a rare and isolated occurrence in the past but has now become common.

The recent refugee movement has also been marked by (1) the extremely cruel treatment of the victims of political, religious, and "racial" persecution; (2) by the difficulty which these victims encountered in escaping and in finding a secure refuge as Nazism spread to ever larger areas; (3) by the reluctance of the countries not immediately affected to admit them because of the deep economic depression then existing; and (4) by the breaking up of families on a scale previously unknown. Such has been the refugee movement which began with the rise of Hitler to power in 1933.

The Assault on the Jews

The first victims of the Nazi assault on civilization were the Jews in Germany, a small minority numbering 499,682 according to the German census of June 16, 1933. Although they constituted only 0.8 per cent of the total population, they were a convenient scapegoat because of their geographical and occupational concentration. About 70 per cent were living in cities of 100,000 or more population, and about four-fifths resided in Prussia. Despite this concentration in large urban centers, no German city had so large a Jewish population as such European cities as Lodz, London, Moscow, Budapest, and Warsaw, or such American cities as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Since the German Jews were concentrated in commerce and the liberal professions, their influence could easily be exaggerated. As a matter of fact, they constituted only 3.3 per cent of the Germans engaged in commerce, only 2.3 per cent of all engaged in the professions. Only in law and medicine, traditional professions among the Jews, did they constitute comparatively large proportions, 16.3 per cent and 10.9 per cent respectively. But though the Jews formed less than 1 per cent of the German population, they played an important role in scientific, political, and cultural life, far out of proportion to their numbers.

Against this helpless minority of half a million souls the force of Nazi fury was directed. Those who had sufficient foresight and the financial means migrated early with a considerable part

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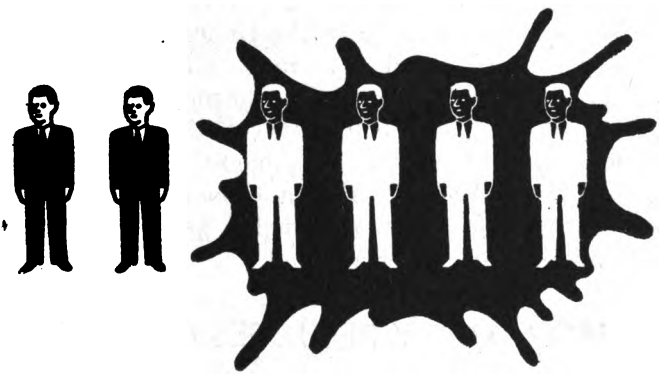
of their possessions. Those who hesitated were first deprived of the means of livelihood and of their civil rights and property. Then they were ostracized and segregated, tortured in concentration camps, driven out, or killed. By the close of the war, there were only some 20,000 Jews remaining in Germany. The Nazis went so far as to persecute not only those who were Jews by religion but also those who had even one Jewish grandparent.

PROBABLY 4 OUT OF EVERY 6 JEWS IN EUROPE* WERE KILLED DURING THE WAR



** Outside of the Soviet Union*

Refugees who succeeded in escaping from Nazi terror in Germany to other European countries soon found themselves pursued by the Nazi hordes invading one country after another, and were forced to flee again. The extension of Nazi domination also stirred up new refugee movements from the invaded countries where minorities, both Jewish and Christian, were subjected to the same kind of treatment as in Germany. What had taken the Nazis years to accomplish in Germany was brought about in Austria and Czechoslovakia in the course of a few months. Poland became the central slaughterhouse of Nazi victims. Practically no country in continental Europe escaped Nazi domination or influence.

War and fascism have uprooted and displaced many millions of people in Europe. Among them were millions seeking to escape from persecution. Only a small proportion of them succeeded

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in escaping the Nazi terror. Most were killed, either directly in extermination camps or indirectly through disease and starvation. Of the approximately 6,000,000 Jews living in Europe outside of the Soviet Union in 1933, over 4,000,000 were killed by one means or another. How many anti-Nazi Christians were killed is unknown, but the number was small compared to the Jews who were the main victims.

Of those who escaped the Nazis, many found shelter in various European and overseas countries. Some countries, such as France, offered a temporary haven, and others, especially Sweden and Switzerland, a more lasting place of refuge. Estimates of the number of refugees, Jewish and non-Jewish, admitted into countries other than the United States vary widely. The following may be taken as rough guesses of the number admitted, at one time or another, into the most important refugee-receiving areas: France (including North Africa), 800,000; Palestine, 150,000; Great Britain, 140,000; Latin America, 125,000; Italy, 116,000; East African Colonies, 90,000; Switzerland, 80,000; Sweden, 44,000; Shanghai, 30,000; Spain, 18,000; and Canada, 6,000.

HOW MANY REFUGEES CAME TO THE UNITED STATES?

THERE are no official figures on the number of refugees admitted to the United States, since refugees are not separately classified under our laws. All aliens are admitted to the United States either as immigrants for permanent residence or as non-immigrants for temporary stay. Refugees are subject to the same eligibility requirements as all other applicants for admission. Since it is the motive for immigrating that distinguishes the refugee from other immigrants, and since the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service does not record motives, it is necessary to resort to an estimate of the number of refugees.

This estimate is based on the number of arrivals in the United States since 1933 who were born in what came to be Axis-occupied or Axis-dominated countries. To this list of countries Spain has been added, since its civil war led to a fascist regime that resulted in a refugee movement from that country. Russia has been included because many individuals who had been born

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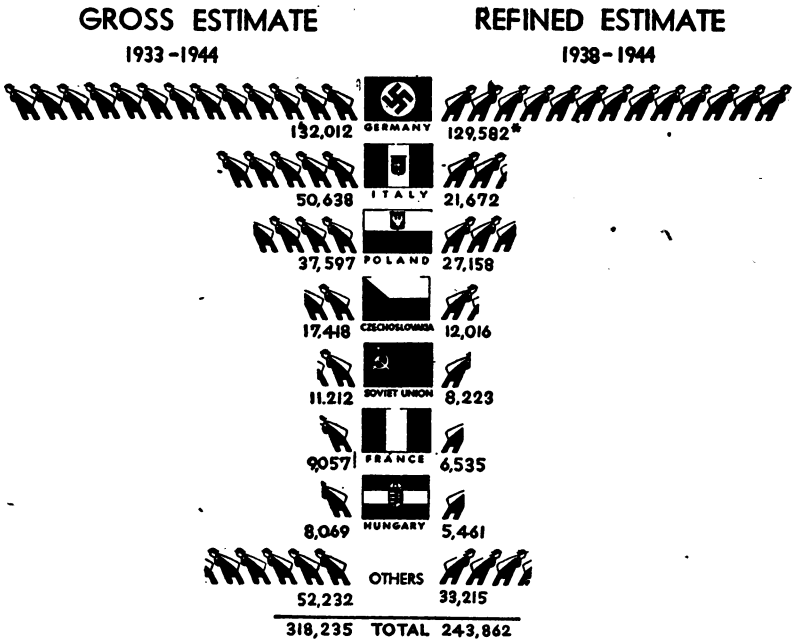
in Russia but were living as emigrees in other countries came here as refugees. The list of countries of refugee emigration thus includes all of Europe except Great Britain, Eire, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland. If all the immigrants admitted to the

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF REFUGEES TO U.S.



United States from the refugee countries between 1933 and 1944 were refugees, the maximum number of refugee immigrants, as seen in the accompanying chart, would be 318,235. Since, however, most of these countries were not Axis-occupied or -dominated as early as 1933, this estimate should be reduced by eliminating the number of immigrants arriving from European countries other than Germany prior to 1938. This year has been selected as marking the period when German aggression against other countries began and it became clear that there was no

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escape from Axis domination. Thus calculated, the total number of refugee immigrants admitted to the United States would be 243,862.

As seen in the graph on page 9, the period 1938–1941 marks the peak of refugee immigration. After the entry of the United States into the war only a few refugees were able to reach this country.

In addition to the refugees admitted on permanent visas as immigrants, some refugees arrived here as so-called "non-immigrants," or visitors, on temporary visas. The total number of visitors admitted from these same countries during the entire period of 1933–1944 was 293,976. Arrivals from Germany since 1933 and from the other countries since 1938 totalled 196,432. Even if we assume that all of them were refugees, the number of such non-immigrant refugees remaining in the United States is not large, because most of these non-immigrants left the country. Only 34,037 more visitors entered the country than left during the 1933–1944 period. Some of the visitors who left re-entered later on permanent visas, in which case they were included in the figures of immigrant aliens admitted. Although exact figures are lacking, official reports indicate that only about 15,000 refugees remain here on visitors' visas. These are mainly persons who were granted an extension of their permits because they were unable to return to their homelands.

Aside from the refugees who entered this country under our immigration laws, approximately 1,000 refugees were admitted in 1944 outside of the regular immigration procedure and placed in an emergency shelter at Fort Ontario, near Oswego, New York, under the authority of the War Refugee Board. This group was made up of persons of various nationalities who had fled from their homelands to southern Italy. They were brought here for the duration of the emergency.

Our immigration laws were not changed during the period of refugee immigration. Neither were the quota requirements altered. Indeed, owing to the economic depression and the threat of war, the enforcement of our laws became more severe. A new visa procedure was introduced to prevent the entry of aliens whose admission might endanger public safety. Visa control was centralized in the State Department, and all applications for admission were carefully examined. These new regulations were time-consuming, with the result that often individuals were un-

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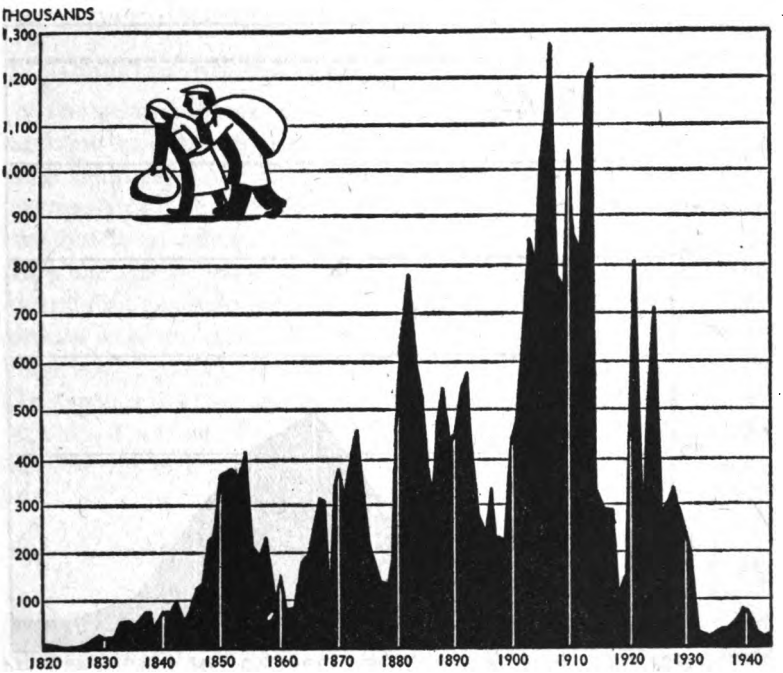
able to leave in time to save their lives. Some administrative measures, on the other hand, were adopted to make the immigration of refugees less difficult. In the case of children unaccompanied by their parents, the affidavit of designated child-

TRENDS OF IMMIGRATION



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caring agencies was accepted in place of the usual guarantee of support by individuals. About 1,000 children were brought over under this plan. In granting visas, preference was given to those who were able to escape so as to make full use of the places available under the quota. Our immigration laws were administered justly. They were not modified for the benefit of the refugees despite the tremendous urgency of the situation.

The figures given above refute the rumor that a million or more refugees have been admitted to the United States. Indeed, the total number of immigrants from all countries during

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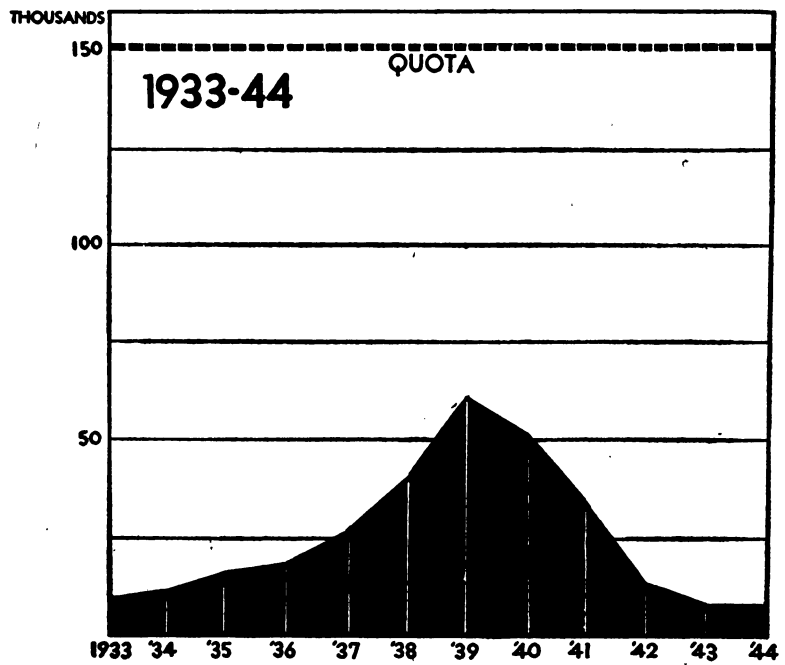
1933 to 1944 amounted to only 528,549, and that from Europe —the source of refugee movements—was only 365,955. Moreover, it is worth noting that during the period 1933–1944 only 16.8 per cent of the total number of aliens from Europe admissible under our quota law have entered the United States.

EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION QUOTA WAS NEVER FILLED



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This was due to a strict interpretation of the immigration laws because of the economic depression, and, later, because of wartime restrictions. In fact, as shown by the graph on page 9, the total number of immigrants admitted during this period was smaller than at any other period during the last century.

What Proportion of the Refugees Are Jews?

While Jews constitute a minority of all recent immigrants, they make up a majority of the refugee group. Assuming that all Jews from Europe were refugees, we find that the Jews would

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constitute 51.5 per cent of the gross estimate of the number of refugees (see chart on page 7). If, however, the refined estimate is taken, they would make up 67.6 per cent of the total, which may be considered the more accurate estimate. This percentage does not include an appreciable number of Christians who were declared Jews by Nazi decrees. Among the Christian refugees in general, there are more Protestants than Catholics, the ratio being approximately three to two.

Nationalities Represented

The relative numerical importance of the various nationalities arriving here as refugees can be seen from the chart on page 7. The findings of the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe agree in general with the estimates, which are based on official immigration statistics by country of birth. In some cases, however, these findings suggest certain modifications. For example, only a small minority of the Italian immigrants were actually refugees, not more than 4,000. The Italian refugees, therefore, should rank much lower. The Germans and Austrians rank first among the refugees, and the Poles, Czechoslovaks, Russians, French, Italians, and Hungarians should follow in this order.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFUGEES

Who Are the Refugees?

The refugees differ in a number of ways from the immigrants who came to the United States in the two or three decades immediately preceding 1933. To begin with, they include more women. A larger proportion of the refugees are forty-five years of age or over. A higher percentage are married. Although the refugee movement is fundamentally a family type, there is a large number of separated families. There is also a large number of young children, since their escape was made easier by the help extended by various social agencies.

Refugees and Earlier Immigrants Compared

One of the most striking differences between the present-day refugees and other earlier immigrants is to be found in the kind of jobs they held before coming to this country. According to

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official immigration statistics, an unusually large proportion of the refugees were engaged in professional and commercial fields and white-collar occupations. The proportion of skilled workers was less than normal, while the proportion of farmers, unskilled laborers, and servants was far below average. Of those who had engaged in business and industry before coming to this country, some 25,000 were merchants and dealers, about 5,500 agents, and 1,800 manufacturers. Physicians were the most numerous among those in the professions, numbering about 5,000. Other professional groups included approximately 3,500 college professors and school teachers, 2,500 technical engineers, 2,400 clergymen, 1,900 scientists and literary men, 1,800 lawyers, 1,200 musicians, 800 actors, and 700 artists.

In contrast to the earlier immigrants, a good many of the refugees who came here were relatively well off. This was particularly true of the refugees who arrived in the middle 1930's, when it was still possible to rescue a part of one's fortune. Educationally, too, the refugees were exceptional. By far the most of them had gone beyond the elementary school level, and nearly half had attended college or graduate school. They were primarily a city group with a cosmopolitan outlook, many of them having come from the largest cities of the Continent. A considerable number of them had traveled widely and knew languages other than their own.

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How Are the Refugees Distributed?

Although the majority of the refugees, like other immigrants, arrived at the port of New York, they are to be found in practically every state of the Union. Following the distribution pattern of our immigrant population, they are concentrated in the East, particularly New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts; in the Middle West, especially Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan; and in the Far West, especially California. They have settled mostly in the larger cities although a good many live in small towns and rural areas. New York City, the largest center of immigrant population and the main port of entry, has absorbed a larger number of refugees than any other city in the United States. The distribution of the refugees throughout the country has been determined largely by the location of their relatives and friends, job opportunities, and the resettlement program of the various refugee service agencies.

THE REFUGEES BECOME AMERICANS

Difficulties Faced by Refugees

The task of becoming adjusted to American life is difficult enough for the ordinary immigrant in normal times. He finds himself in a strange environment, with different customs, laws, language, and ways of life to which he must adjust. The difficulties faced by the refugee, however, are much greater, for he has been forcibly uprooted and often has gone through indescribably horrible experiences. He is filled with fears and anxieties about the fate of relatives and friends left behind. His adjustment is made more difficult by the spread of propaganda against him from fascist countries. Being forced, in many instances, to leave his possessions behind, he often arrives here without means and finds it necessary to accept jobs beneath his former status. Thus, many a former businessman, manufacturer, or professional person has had to take a job as a peddler, janitor, doorman, or dishwasher. Many couples who previously had servants of their own took jobs as butlers and maids. Housewives who never before had been employed accepted factory jobs and other kinds of work. Not infrequently the main support

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of the family fell upon them. Not all of the refugees accepted these hardships with good grace, but most of them accepted their difficulties with a courage that was truly admirable.

Assistance by Refugee Service Organizations

Assisting the refugees in their adjustment have been a number of agencies and organizations supported by private funds. Some of these were social service and immigrant aid societies already established. Others have been created for the refugees to meet the special problems presented by them. Some of these agencies give aid to refugees in general and render a variety of services, including temporary financial relief, loans for establishing business enterprises and professional practice, retraining for new occupations, resettlement in other communities, and aid in family and general social adjustment, in immigration problems, and in job finding. Prominent are the large national refugee service organizations with their local cooperating committees throughout the country. Also noteworthy are the self-help and other organizations created and maintained by the refugees themselves.

Other refugee service agencies assist in solving the problems of special groups. Important among this type are committees aiding in the adjustment of such groups as physicians, scholars, lawyers, musicians, clergymen, teachers, writers, and artists. Some agencies have carried on rescue and relief work overseas, either aiding all groups or concentrating on helping in the rescue of intellectuals, labor leaders, or political refugees whose lives were in special danger. Other agencies have been concerned solely with bringing children over and supervising their adjustment.

The refugees have also been helped in many ways by relatives and friends. Only in the case of the special group in the emergency shelter at Oswego have public funds been used, and even here some of the costs have been paid by private funds.

What Refugees Do

A majority of the refugees ultimately found work in business and the professions, even though many of them were forced at first to accept menial jobs. Owing to the shortage of manpower during the war period, practically all of those seeking employment eventually found work. Often they did not find it in the occupations for which they were trained abroad. Yet practically all have become self-supporting. Among the few

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still needing financial assistance are those either too old or too young to work and the physically or emotionally handicapped. Most of the refugees are wholly dependent upon their earnings. Only a small proportion have other sources of income.

Most of the refugees, according to the findings of the Study, now feel that their living conditions are as good as or better than those they enjoyed in Europe. This is particularly true of the skilled and unskilled workers, the younger persons, and those who have lived here a number of years. On the other hand, among the professional and business people, the older age groups, and those who have been here a comparatively short time, the majority report their living conditions as being the same or worse. Moreover, the great majority feel that their social position is about the same as or lower than it was in Europe. Thus, it would seem that most of the refugees feel that they have lost more in social than in economic standing.

Where They Live

The refugees, unlike other recent immigrants, do not concentrate in special neighborhoods in the towns in which they live. Except in a few very large cities like New York and Chicago, they do not form colonies, but scatter throughout the city. They do, however, show a tendency to settle in parts of the city where others of their own nationality group live, taking into account economic and social class lines.

In contrast to other immigrants of recent periods, the refugees tend to associate much more frequently with native Americans. This is unusual in view of the fact that they have been here a short time.

Integration into Community Life

The striking extent to which refugees have fitted into American community life may be explained partly by their relatively small numbers and wide distribution, partly by their superior educational and cultural background, but particularly by their desire to become assimilated. Reports from communities throughout the country reveal that refugees take part in all kinds of community activities. They readily intermarry with native Americans, especially with persons of their own religion and national background. Of those who have married since their arrival, 30 per cent of the men and 17 per cent of the women have

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married native Americans, unusually high percentages for a foreign-born group. The only age group that experiences real difficulty in adjusting to American life is, as might be expected, the older people.

Refugee women on the whole appear to adapt themselves more readily to American life than the men. The women are quicker in acquiring the language and adapting themselves to new customs. They find it easier to get jobs. They accept inferior types of work with more composure than the men, to whom this means a greater sense of loss and frustration. They encounter less prejudice in the labor and business fields because they are less likely to be considered as permanent competitors.

Although the refugees have acquired a knowledge of English with great rapidity, they frequently state that language has been one of their greatest difficulties in adjusting to American life. This is because they are not content with a superficial knowledge of the language. They are very anxious to master it and use it like an educated native American.

Refugee Children Adjust Readily

Most successful in adjusting to American life have been the young adults and the children. Reports from various communities throughout the country agree that refugee children fit into American life without difficulty and soon become practically indistinguishable from native-born children. Principals and teachers who have been interviewed say the same of the refugee children in school. They report that these children have learned English in a remarkably short period of time, that language has been, at most, only a temporary handicap, that they associate freely with other children, and present no special problem. Many of the teachers stated that the work of refugee children as a group has been above average. They feel that this is due to the superior educational background of their parents and the value the latter place upon education. They also feel that the refugee children have exercised a beneficial influence by stimulating interest in languages, art, literature, and scholarship.

Although most of the refugee children have recovered quite rapidly from the harrowing experiences abroad, some have found it difficult to overcome those experiences and have suffered from emotional upsets in various degrees. In general, however, these

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emotional disturbances have tended to disappear after a while as a sense of security is gained and unpleasant memories recede into the dim past. Refugee children, having few or no ties to the European background but merely recollections of an often unhappy childhood in Europe, do not know or long for any other life, as their parents may. They cannot, therefore, think of their future apart from America.



What America means to these children may be seen in the following story, written by a sixteen-year-old boy after nine months in this country:

November 10, 1938, was the most terrible day in my life. In the morning of that day I went as usual to school. At 10 o'clock I went home, beaten by Nazi boys. It was on this day the Nazis set fire to the Jewish synagogues throughout Germany. But this was not enough. At 11 o'clock they took my father to a concentration camp without giving any explanations. Later, six Nazis came to our door, brutally expelled us from our home, and destroyed everything in it.

My brother and I worked hard to support our mother. There were many days when we had nothing to eat. Those who have never known what famine is can't realize what a terrible thing it can be. Days, weeks, months went by, and still my father had to bear the terrible life of a concentration camp. Just at that time when we felt we could not endure the struggle any more, my dad was released from the camp. We were glad to see him, but the change in him was pathetic. His eyes were sunken. His face was drawn and haggard. His hair was gray, and he had aged twenty years and lost about 30 pounds.

After a great deal of effort my parents were able to send my sister and me to France. . . . Finally the train came. A last embrace and good-bye. One part of my heart was full of joy because of having escaped from a land of slavery, but the other part of my heart was dark, full of grief for my parents and all my folks who were left behind. . . .

We spent two years in children's homes in France. Finally, together with forty-three other children we were brought to the United States. When we arrived at the port of New York, every one of us felt overjoyed and our eyes were wet with tears, thrilled

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at the sight of this land of liberty and justice for all. My dreams were finally realized—being in America. How wonderful it was to be able to sleep at night without fear of being bombed or killed, to have enough to eat, and to be free as only in America one can be free!

[This boy and his sister are still in a foster home and have not yet heard from their parents, who fled to France and were put into a concentration camp.]

The Refugees Become Loyal Americans

The refugees, on the whole, have sought to identify themselves completely with America. About 95 per cent of them state that they have no intention of returning to their former homelands. The proportion varies with the nationality and occupation. Practically no German wants to return, and only a few Austrians, Poles, and Russians. More Czechs, Italians, Belgians, Netherlanders, and Frenchmen indicate that they want to go back. Artists, scholars, and political leaders predominate among those who wish to return. Jews are almost unanimous in their intention not to return.

Nearly all have shown great eagerness to become naturalized. Many of them took out their first papers almost immediately after their arrival. Only a few have failed to apply. Fully half of the refugees have been granted citizenship, the rest being in various stages of getting it. This is a remarkable record, considering the brief period of time they have been here. To the refugees, most of whom have been deprived of their full rights as citizens in their homelands, and many of whom had been rendered stateless, the attainment of American citizenship is a matter of great importance. The event is often marked by celebrations, the exchange of gifts, and notices in the foreign-language press. The refugees become enthusiastic citizens and show great appreciation of the democratic principles underlying our government, contrasting, from personal experience, the freedom of democracy with the tyranny of fascism.

Loyalty to the United States was also shown by the refugees who had been here too short a time to become citizens and hence were still aliens when America entered the war. Along with other aliens born in countries with which the United States was at war, they became technically "enemy aliens," with limitations on their personal freedom. Actually, however, they were "friendly

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aliens" of enemy nationality. This fact was soon recognized by the Department of Justice which, upon proof of loyalty, permitted them to become naturalized. The refugee community proved itself to be overwhelmingly on the side of democracy and aided in the war effort in every way. The Selective Training and Service Act made aliens as fully liable to service as citizens. Eligible refugees, aliens and citizens alike, therefore entered the armed forces to the same extent as native Americans. Many of them rendered special services because of their intimate knowledge of the languages, culture, psychology, and geography of enemy countries. Those who remained at home contributed generously to the various war activities on the home front. Important contributions were made by scientists and highly trained technicians, either in government services or in private industries. All regarded their contribution to the war effort as an expression of the gratitude they feel toward America.

THE BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL CLASSES

SINCE the business and professional classes constitute important elements among the refugees, their adjustment is of particular interest.

The Businessman and the Manufacturer

While most of those who had been in business abroad naturally desired to continue in it here, a number of them have been unable to do so because of lack of capital, insufficient knowledge of English, and unfamiliarity with American business methods. But many have succeeded in establishing themselves either in their former line of business or in an entirely new field. Outstanding among the fields of business which refugees have entered are: furs, leather goods, textiles, glassware, plastics, jewelry, and diamonds. It is interesting to note that the diamond industry was transferred almost completely from the Netherlands and Belgium to this country.



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Many refugees showed great ingenuity in starting new types of businesses. In numerous instances they have brought with them or developed here new processes, and started the manufacture of products hitherto either unknown here or imported, such as scientific instruments, precision tools, and synthetic industrial products. Many refugee manufacturers, like Mr. S———, produced articles that were essential to the war effort. The number of new products, services, and styles introduced is very considerable. Some are carrying on here an export-import business which they had previously developed in Europe. Thus, the refugees have made a substantial contribution to American business and industry, and their activities have been far from merely competitive. Instead of taking jobs away from Americans, they have, like Mr. S———, given employment to a considerable number of Americans, in some instances as many as 500 to 1,000.

The Physician

The physicians are the largest single group of professional people among the refugees. In their case our information is based upon a special survey made in forty-one states and covering 33 per cent of the total. All told, about five thousand refugee physicians, including medical students and nonpractitioners, came to this country from Europe between 1933 and 1944. Approximately three-fourths of them were specialists in one branch of medicine or another.



Refugee physicians may be found in practically every state of the Union. The largest group is in New York, particularly in New York City. This undoubtedly is due to the fact that New York City, aside from being the port of entry for most European immigrants, is located in one of the few states that require only first citizenship papers of applicants for the licensing examination. But a large proportion of the doctors have settled in localities with less than 2,500 population. The Study reveals that no physician has failed to apply for his first citizenship papers, and that two-thirds of them, as compared with one-half of the general refugee group, have already become citizens.

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The professions differ from most occupations in that many of them require licenses. This is especially true of medicine, where the requirements are particularly rigid with respect to both state laws and the regulations of the state medical examining boards. American physicians, more than any other professional group, have feared possible refugee competition. They have, therefore, made the existing requirements stricter for the refugees. While the restrictions have served in some instances to protect the American public against a lowering of standards, they have served primarily to safeguard the interests of the American physicians. This is evident from the kinds of bars that have been erected in many states. These include refusal to admit to a licensing examination graduates of European medical schools unless the application was signed by the dean of the particular school, requiring certification of medical diplomas by a United States consul, restricting licenses to graduates of approved American or Canadian schools, requiring that the country of the applicant must grant reciprocity to licensees of a given state, and requiring internship in an American hospital, even though the individual may have practiced for years and won distinction in his field. In addition to being handicapped by these restrictions, the refugee physician has faced special difficulties in taking an examination given in English, which is a foreign language to him, long after the completion of his schooling. This largely accounts for the fact that refugees have failed more frequently than American applicants who have just been graduated from medical school.

Owing to these difficulties—and additional ones, such as non-acceptance by county medical societies and refusal of hospital affiliation—some of the refugee physicians have been forced either to give up their profession entirely or to accept laboratory, hospital, and other similar positions. The majority, however, have succeeded in entering private practice. Most of them have become general practitioners rather than continuing as specialists.

Although the competition of refugee physicians has undoubtedly been felt occasionally, especially in some of the larger cities, it has been greatly exaggerated. Many of the refugee doctors have settled in rural areas and small towns, where American physicians have been reluctant to take up practice. Moreover, the war caused such a scarcity of physicians that there could have been little competition.

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Not only have American communities facing a shortage in physicians gained by the coming of refugee doctors, but American medicine also has benefited by the achievements of many of those refugees who were given the chance of resuming their work in medical research, clinical work, and teaching.

The dentists have had a tougher row to hoe than the physicians. European dentistry, which is simply one of the medical specialties, is technically inferior to American dentistry; consequently, the refugee dentists have had to take training in American dental schools. Indeed, practically no state has permitted foreign dentists to take a licensing examination until they have completed such a course. A minimum of two or three years' retraining has generally been required. Even after graduation, the refugee dentist is not allowed to practice in most states of the Union unless he has attained full citizenship. Those who have qualified have never been considered by the profession as outsiders or competitors, and they have generally been very successful. On the other hand, it has been hard for the older practitioners and those with little money to get the needed retraining. A large proportion of them have had to leave dentistry.

The University Professor and the Scientist

College professors have not found it hard to transfer their skills to the American scene although, as in any other group, some were forced to enter new occupations. Those who continued in their field had some difficulty in adjusting to the American academic atmosphere. As a rule, the refugee professors have done better on the lecture platform and as graduate-school professors than as teachers of undergraduates. They have found it difficult to talk clearly, precisely, and interestingly in a strange tongue, and to adapt themselves to new teaching methods and American democratic classroom procedures. In contrast to the informal teacher-student relationship in America, the European professor had often developed aloofness. He felt that the further removed he was from his students the greater his eminence.



Refugee professors have frequently encountered prejudice and

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opposition on the part of their American colleagues. This was especially true during the economic depression when job opportunities even for qualified Americans were very limited. Some college administrators and individual faculty members often expressed fears that American colleges might be flooded with foreign teachers, particularly Jews; exposed to foreign influences; and polluted with foreign ideas. On the other hand, many colleges welcomed the refugee professor because this gave them the opportunity of adding a distinguished foreign scholar to their faculty at a low cost. And many American professors, aroused at the Nazi attack on freedom of teaching and learning, did much to aid their oppressed colleagues.



The scientists among the refugees found it easier to get jobs than most university professors because they had a more "marketable product." They have accepted positions in universities, government departments, research agencies, and industry.

Among the university teachers and scientists may be found many eminent scholars of international reputation. They include eight Nobel Prize winners, and several who have taken a leading part in the development of the atomic bomb. They have contributed in many ways to the war effort and to the advancement of American science and scholarship.

The school teachers among the refugees have found it almost impossible to get jobs in the American public school system. A few have found positions in private schools and institutions; the rest have had to accept employment in other fields.

The Lawyer

Of the various professional groups, the lawyers have experienced perhaps the greatest difficulties in making use of their special skills. Laws vary greatly from country to country. Having been trained in Continental legal systems, which differ fundamentally from the American system, the refugee lawyers find it practically impossible to practice here without almost complete retraining. A few of the younger lawyers have attended American law schools and succeeded in entering the field here. Of the older group who found retraining impractical, some

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earn their livelihood by looking after the interests of European clients, by serving as consultants on European law, or by acting as intermediaries between refugee clients and American attorneys. The majority, however, have had to leave the profession. Some, after special preparation, became accountants; others took factory or business jobs. During the war many refugee lawyers, like individuals in other professions, found employment in government service, where their training proved a valuable asset.



The Artist and the Writer

The musician and artist have had less difficulty in adjusting to American conditions because they use an international medium of expression. But not all have been able to find suitable employment or even to remain in their field. The musicians, particularly, have been up against limited job opportunities. Similarly, while some of the artists have managed to exhibit and sell their works, others have been forced to commercialize their art or take other jobs. Some of these believe that there will be greater opportunities for them in their homelands when conditions become more settled, and therefore are planning to return.



Less fortunate have been the refugee writers. Depending as they do upon the intimate knowledge and precise use of language, they can hardly be expected to do as well in a new tongue. Especially is this true of poets, playwrights, and other creative writers. The only recourse of such authors is to have their works translated. On the other hand, writers on historical subjects and current events frequently adapt themselves more easily to the use of English because of the more factual nature of their material and the lesser importance of style.

Outstanding among the distinguished refugees is Thomas Mann:

> Nobel Prize laureate and world-famous author, Thomas Mann chose self-exile rather than existence in Hitler's Germany. His

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personal rejection of Nazi doctrine and distrust of it as a design for living had found public expression as early as 1930, but it was in 1933 after the Reichstag fire that Mann, vacationing in Switzerland with his wife, decided not to return to his homeland.

His anti-Nazi stand met with sharp retaliation. His property was seized, he was stripped of German nationality, and the University of Bonn revoked the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy it had conferred upon him. Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and France extended hospitality to him, but he found himself spiritually a man without a country, just as technically he was "without papers," and could not settle down in tranquility of mind to live and work.

Then came a call from an American university, and in 1938 he came to the United States. Several years of distinguished service as visiting lecturer in the humanities at Princeton University followed, during which time he took out his first citizenship papers.

His literary production has continued without interruption since his arrival in this country, and his work, which is translated from German into English, reaches an ever-widening public. In 1941, in his sixty-sixth year, he retired to California to devote himself to his writing.

Representative of the finest qualities to be found among the new arrivals, Thomas Mann has made an outstanding contribution to American life by virtue both of his unsurpassed literary gifts and his strong stand for democratic principles. He is now an American citizen. In response to an invitation from his fellow writers to return, he has stated that he will never again live in Germany. During the years of exile, Germany has become alien to him—a land of anxiety and apprehension. He has recently pointed out the obstacles to understanding between "people who have only witnessed from without the Witches' Sabbath of the Nazis, and those within who have participated in its wild dance."

In addition, strong ties hold him to America. Two of his sons have served in the armed forces, and English-speaking grandchildren are growing up around him. Leading American universities have expressed their affection and esteem by bestowing honorary degrees upon him, and he has built his permanent home along the beautiful California coast, whose protection, he says, enables him to bring to a close his life's work.

Another class of refugee artists to whom language has presented a special handicap is the actors. Many could not find work in their profession, while others who found a place in the theater frequently were restricted to dialect or accent parts,

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which are generally minor roles. In contrast to the difficulties faced by individuals in other professions, those encountered by the actors have been due more to circumstances beyond the control of the theater than to the discriminatory attitude of the profession, which has a strong tradition of broad social outlook and tolerance.

A few of the refugee actors have succeeded in gaining a reputation which has assured them top places on the legitimate stage as well as in the movies. It is in Hollywood rather than on Broadway that refugee actors have been able to make use of their talents most fully. The same is true also of producers and directors.

WHAT REFUGEES AND AMERICANS THINK OF EACH OTHER

What the Refugees Think of Americans

Interviews and questionnaires obtained by the Committee from thousands of refugees throughout the country tell an interesting story of their reaction to America. Coming from countries suffering from a depressed economy because of war conditions, they are struck by the economic abundance, greater conveniences, and luxuries in the United States. Having lived in fear of the Gestapo, they are impressed with the freedom and security found here. They are amazed to discover that government officials are public servants instead of petty tyrants to be feared and distrusted. Among the other features of American life that provoke their comments are the lack of rigid class lines, the high degree of social mobility, familiarity between employer and employee, the extensive educational and cultural opportunities, and the friendliness, cordiality, informality, and optimism of Americans. They are much impressed with American democracy and liberty, and express great appreciation of the opportunities offered by this country.

Yet they find some of our customs strange and difficult to understand; there are others which they dislike. They express disapproval of the frequent changing of jobs, the lack of thoroughness, the hustle and bustle of life, the lesser regard for orderliness, and the dominating role of money that they believe

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exist here. They are surprised at the amount of race prejudice, especially at the treatment accorded to the Negro, and appalled at the extent of anti-Semitism in this country. They are particularly disturbed over such practices as restricted neighborhoods, hotels, resorts, and schools. They find it hard to reconcile such practices and attitudes with the principles of democracy. Most of the refugees—about three-quarters—report, however, that they themselves have experienced no discrimination. Of those who did, it is interesting to note, the earlier arrivals experienced more discrimination than those who came in more recent years. This may be explained by the fact that the latter arrived here in a period of full employment.

One Woman's Appraisal

Following are some of the impressions of America expressed by a cultured German woman in an interview:

I was first of all impressed by your general fearlessness. Children are not afraid of their parents, students are not afraid of their teachers, men of their bosses. Women don't seem to be afraid of anything or anybody. Nobody closes doors here, or erects fences and walls that might serve as a hostile or discriminating gesture. Even your houses look inviting. . . . People keep their shades up for everybody to look in, and nobody seems disturbed by the fact that his privacy can be violated at any time on the slightest pretext.

The fact that everything in America is public at first impresses a European as rather indiscreet. This is especially true of your newspapers. Even your most famous, most important men must share their private lives with their fellow-Americans. They are under a magnifying glass all the time. The public knows how many socks and ties they own and how they live in general. . . .

In the United States dreams are made to come true. The gap between dream and reality is narrow, and while Europeans are often unwilling to bridge it because they feel the result might not live up to their expectations, Americans seem to know no such hesitancy. . . .

If you make a mistake in America, your life isn't ruined. You have tremendous reserves and tremendous room. Americans will greet a new idea or experiment with "why not try it" and, strange to say, it does not kill them. . . . In Europe, on the contrary, every mistake strikes back at you tomorrow. . . . If a European is forced to change his job, he is apt to call himself a failure.

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But in America most life histories of outstanding citizens show that they have had lots of different jobs in their lives, all varied. . . .

Another thing that impresses me about this country is the great influence your women wield. This doesn't mean that we don't have outstanding women abroad, but they rarely find such large audiences as, for instance, Mrs. Roosevelt, Dorothy Thompson, and others. I find American women in general far more alert and progressive than European women. . . . What really amazes the foreigner, however, is the way American men have been domesticated. Much as they compete with each other in business, at home they seem to be more or less content to leave the management of their private lives to their wives. . . .

What Americans Think of the Refugees

The general reaction of Americans toward the refugees may be summed up as one of compassion for the victims of persecution seeking a haven here. The refugees report that, on the whole, Americans have shown an attitude of friendliness and helpfulness. As the number of refugees increased, however, a certain amount of antagonism developed. Refugees began to be looked upon as serious competitors, especially by certain professional and wage-earning groups and in certain communities. These fears were allayed with the increased demand for labor brought about by the war.

Some Resent Competition

Nevertheless, a certain degree of resentment has persisted in certain quarters and against certain groups of refugees. This is not an uncommon occurrence in American history, since newcomers frequently have been regarded with enmity and accused of possessing undesirable traits and of offering serious competition. American physicians, led by American medical societies, have complained about the potential competition of refugee physicians, especially where the latter have replaced Americans who left for military service. The extent of the competition, however, could not have been great because the total number of refugee physicians, not all of whom were practitioners, was only 3 per cent of the number of physicians in America. Moreover, the nation has been experiencing a dearth rather than a surplus of doctors. It should be noted that many of the eligible refugee physicians joined the armed forces, while others took

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over the practices of Americans with the understanding that they would relinquish them upon the latter's return. Still others settled in small communities which had no doctor.

Complaints have also been heard about the alleged amassing of wealth by some refugees dealing in the stock market and real estate and engaging in other large business enterprises. The number and effect of refugees in these fields have been greatly exaggerated. Only a very small proportion of them are engaged in Wall Street operations, and a still smaller proportion are nonresident aliens who under the present law are not required to pay a capital gains tax. The large-scale real-estate operations of refugees have been confined to a very few large cities, and the amount of real estate they hold is relatively insignificant. Leading American real-estate operators state that, on the whole, refugees in this field have had quite a stimulating effect on the market.

The "Cafe Society" Group

Among other charges leveled against the refugees have been the conspicuous display of wealth by the "café society" group among them, their arrogance, air of superiority, and ungratefulness, as well as their habit of constantly contrasting unfavorably their condition here with their former social and economic status in Europe. The Committee's Study indicates that these typical complaints and charges are limited to a few communities and are greatly exaggerated. In most communities the number of refugees is so small that unless attention is drawn to them the community as a whole is hardly aware of their presence.

The refugee "café society" group comprises only a small percentage even of the wealthy, who are a very small minority. While arrogance may be found among the refugees, as in any other group, what is interpreted as arrogance may be due to sensitiveness or merely to the difference between European and American social habits. Ungratefulness is definitely the exception rather than the rule. The Study indicates that most refugees feel a profound gratitude to America. There may be some Americans who expect the refugees to show continuing humility, gratefulness, and a willingness to accept a low standard of living. This attitude dates back to dealings with immigrants of earlier periods, who were quite unlike the present-day refugees in educational and cultural background.

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CONCLUSION

Effects on American Life

In conclusion, it is evident that the refugees, making up only an insignificant percentage of the immigrant population and an utterly negligible proportion of the total population of this country, could hardly offer serious competition to Americans or endanger their way of life. On the contrary, they have had a beneficial influence upon this country out of proportion to their numbers. They have had a stimulating effect upon the economic and cultural life of the nation. In business they have started new types of enterprises, stimulated existing ones, and developed new markets. In industry they have introduced new processes and produced articles hitherto unknown or not manufactured here. Moreover, in both of these fields they have brought in capital and created job opportunities for Americans. A considerable number of refugees, being highly skilled workers, have contributed their skill toward the advancement of various American industries, notably those producing diamonds, jewelry, plastics, textiles, furs, leather goods, and food specialties. In the field of arts and letters they have introduced new forms of expression and significant works; in drama they have created many outstanding and successful plays and motion pictures; in scholarship they have extended the bounds of knowledge; and in science they have made important discoveries.

The refugees have shown unusual adaptability. In a short period of time they have gone a long way toward becoming a part of the nation, presenting little or no problem to the American community.

The Refugee a World Problem

The end of the war has not meant the end of the refugee problem. Millions, uprooted and displaced by the catastrophe through which the world has just passed, are dispersed all over the earth. Many of these cannot go back to their former homes. This is particularly true of the Jews and a good many of the Poles, Russians, Yugoslavs, and nationals of the former Baltic states. For many of these the only solution seems to be to remain in the present countries or to migrate again. In the case of the

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Jews, the problem is so great and so complex that bold, far-reaching measures are necessary to solve it. Only by the co-operative effort of all nations can the refugee problem be solved satisfactorily. A step in this direction was taken in 1938 with the creation, at the initiative of the United States, of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. Another step was taken in 1943 by the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), in which the United States again assumed a leading part. The problem in its entirety, however, has not as yet been adequately considered, and a definite program for migration and resettlement has not yet been formulated. In this program the United States, with its tradition of serving as a haven for the oppressed, must play an important role.

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