

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

FACT-FINDING SUB-COMMITTEE

INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY SIR HERBERT EMERSON, DIRECTOR
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES

I

NANSEN REFUGEES

General. The figures given must be regarded as rough approximations and treated with great caution for the following reasons:-

- (i) No reliable census by countries has been made since the years immediately preceding the war.
- (ii) Large changes have occurred during the war.
- (iii) There is little accurate information regarding the present position in Eastern and South Eastern Europe.

(a) Russian Refugees:- Before the war the Russian refugees were scattered over the various countries of Europe, the largest groups being as follows:-

Bulgaria	15,700
France	90,000
Germany	45,000
Poland	80,000
Yugoslavia	28,000
Baltic States	23,000

There was also a large group of about 90,000 in the Far East.

The major changes which have occurred during the war are the following:-

- (i) Even before the war it was an aged group with high mortality and low birth rate. This trend has been

more marked owing to war privations.

- (ii) The Jewish element amongst Russian refugees has either managed to escape West, or has been annihilated.
- (iii) Mortality has also increased owing to deportation and slave labour.
- (iv) A considerable new displacement took place immediately prior to VE day; thousands of refugees in **permanent** settlement in the Baltics, the Berlin and Dresden area, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Vienna area, Hungary, and notably Yugoslavia, infiltrated into the British, American and French Zones in Austria, the American and French Zones in Germany and in Northern Italy.

Some of these Nansen refugees have thus become displaced persons in UNRRA military camps. Others live scattered outside camps in small localities. No statistics are available, but from a preliminary survey this new displacement involves a minimum of 15,000 or a maximum of 25,000 persons.

In so far as post-war figures are available, they indicate that there are now 6,500 in Czechoslovakia, about 75,000 in France, 9,000 in Belgium, between 2,000 and 3,000 in Greece and about 3,000 in Italy. The number in the Baltic States, Poland, Roumania and Yugoslavia has substantially decreased, but no accurate figures are available.

The position of those in the various Zones of Germany and Austria and of a small group in Italy is much the same as that of other displaced persons in those Zones who cannot, or will not, return to their own countries. The problem for them includes maintenance, protection and re-settlement. For the Nansen refugees

long established in other countries, the problem is mainly one of political and legal protection, but there is a problem of relief which, at present, is being inadequately met out of funds derived from the proceeds of Nansen Stamps, and in France from the surcharge on postage stamps. There is considerable distress among the children, aged and infirm and funds for its relief from voluntary sources are not sufficient.

(b) Armenian Refugees:- A special census carried out in 1936 to 1937 gave the following figures:-

Bulgaria	14,500
France	63,000
Greece	25,000
Other European Countries	3,800

There have probably been few major changes during the war. There is no re-settlement problem except perhaps for part of the colony in Greece. Recently some of the Armenian refugees have been returning to Russia. The problem is mainly one of protection, and although there is considerable distress, the funds available from Nansen Stamps are reinforced from voluntary sources.

(c) The Assyrian Refugees are not more than 1,000 most of whom are in Greece. The problem is one of occasional relief.

(d) Saar Refugees:- This group consists of about 5,000, many of whom wish to return to the Saar. Help is being given for this object from the balance of a grant made by the League of Nations some years ago for their emigration.

II.

REFUGEES COMING FROM GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND THE SUDETENLAND.

Previous to the war, about 250,000 of this group had been previously settled. During the war perhaps 100,000 more were permanently established. In September, 1939, there was a large number in various countries of temporary asylum, and there was a considerable number still in Germany and Austria. Some were able to escape during the war, either to neutral countries or to countries which were not occupied by the Germans. Many, however, were caught in occupied countries and it is certain that a large proportion of these were exterminated. Some thousands, however, were able to conceal themselves with the assistance of friendly nationals. Members of this category who have survived but are not yet permanently settled in the sense that they have not acquired new nationality are composed of:-

(i) Two large groups,

(a) in the United Kingdom, and

(b) in Shanghai.

(ii) Smaller groups in various countries of Europe and elsewhere.

(i) (a) The group in the United Kingdom is between 45,000 and 60,000. Recently the British Government has announced its policy in regard to naturalization and it is hoped that many of them will be absorbed.

(i) (b) The latest figures regarding the group in Shanghai indicate that it numbers about 13,000.

(ii) Approximate estimates in other countries are as follows:-

Belgium	4,000
Czechoslovakia	2,000
France	20,000
Italy	3,000
Netherlands	5,000

Spain & Portugal	1,000
Sweden	5,000
Switzerland	7,000
Middle East	4,000
Other countries	5,000

The size of the residual problem including the large group in the United Kingdom may, therefore, be put at something between 114,000 and 130,000. This does not include those now in Germany and Austria, some of whom do not wish to stay there.

The total number, comparatively small though it is, tends to exaggerate the size of the remaining problem. It may, for instance, be hoped that a considerable proportion of the large group in the United Kingdom will be absorbed. The same is true for those in the Western countries of Europe and Sweden. Of the rest, several thousands of Austrian Jews wish to return to Austria and a much smaller number to Germany. Some are anxious to go to Palestine, although this country has never made a very strong appeal to German and Austrian Jews. The re-opening of immigration to the United States of America will provide an important outlet. Further, of the total number given, a very considerable proportion are self-supporting and it may be doubted whether those now in receipt of total maintenance from international, national or voluntary sources is in excess of 30,000, including the considerable group in Shanghai, children, the aged, infirm and unemployed.

On the other hand, there are difficult problems concerned with this group. The great majority of them are Jews, very many of whom lost their homes, occupation and property and so have been most adversely affected by the economic conditions which succeeded liberation. General questions affecting their legal and political protection are continually arising, and the number of individuals requiring assistance other than financial is far in excess of those in need of maintenance. The category contains a considerable nucleus

of aged, infirm and otherwise unemployable who will be difficult to settle permanently, and among the children there is a large proportion who have lost both parents. Thanks to the very high standard of organization and benevolence of the Jewish community as a whole, this category has received more assistance from private sources than any other. In this connection it has, however, to be remembered that the claims of Jewish refugees on the community are but a small part of the total claims from European Jews as a whole.

III

SPANISH REFUGEES

The great majority of Spanish refugees are in Metropolitan France, where there are approximately 200,000 located mainly in the South and South-Western Departments. There are about 10,000 in French North Africa and a few hundreds in Italy. There is a group of between 400 and 500 in Gibraltar who have to be evacuated for lack of accommodation; their relatives are scattered, some in Spain, others in North Africa, etc., the total group amounting to about 1,300. The number in Portugal is constantly changing and is difficult to estimate since some are in concealment; it probably does not exceed 1,000.

2. Most of those in Metropolitan France are self-supporting, mainly in agriculture, but there are several thousands in need of relief composed of men disabled in the Spanish War, the sick and infirm and a few persons belonging to the professional classes who have been unable to get employment. The position of those in French North Africa varies with the labour market, and there are now about 300 in need of relief.

3. The problem includes:-

(a) Protection

(b) Relief

(c) Vocational and technical training for some of the young men.

(d) Permanent re-establishment of certain groups, e.g., the few in Italy, the Gibraltar group and those in Portugal for whom facilities for emigration can be secured.

4. The present position is:

(a) Protection:- At the invitation of the French Government the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees has assumed the

the French Government having extended to them the same benefits as are accorded to Nansen refugees.

(b) Relief: The Intergovernmental Committee is giving relief to those in Metropolitan France at the rate of 4,000,000 French francs per mensem, utilizing for this purpose part of the contribution in francs made by the French Government to the operational expenditure of the Committee. Some voluntary agencies are also giving assistance out of their own funds. Until recently substantial help was given to the disabled by the Spanish Government in Mexico, but it is doubtful whether further funds will be available. Having regard to this fact, the Intergovernmental Committee is now making enquiry as to whether the relief from its sources is on an adequate scale.

A proposal is under consideration by the Intergovernmental Committee for the relief of about 300 Spanish refugees in French North Africa.

So far as maintenance is concerned, the Spanish refugees in Portugal are being assisted from private sources.

(c) Some assistance is being given by the Intergovernmental Committee towards the vocational and technical training of youths in France.

(d) The Intergovernmental Committee is financing the cost of transportation of those Spanish refugees in Portugal for whom facilities can be obtained to emigrate elsewhere. It has lately assumed responsibility for the permanent re-establishment of the Gibraltar group and their dependents.

IV.

DISSIDENT GROUPS

It is very difficult to make more than a rough estimate of the size of the problem of dissident groups. The great majority of the members of these groups are in Germany, Austria and Italy. The majority are in camps, but there is a considerable number outside camps. While accurate figures could be obtained for all displaced persons in camps by a simultaneous census, the figures available actually relate to different dates. There is continuous movement from the camps and into the camps, the former by repatriation and the latter by new entrants. Figures for those outside the camps can, at the best, be only estimates, especially as there is reason to believe that there is considerable concealment. The figures in the attached statements may be taken as roughly representing the position round about the middle of March 1946.

The estimate of the number of the total of displaced persons who should be regarded at present as probable non-repatriables is still more uncertain, since it depends on a number of inconstant factors. Statement I attached gives estimates for various countries under four groups, while Statement II gives the total for each of these groups and the grand total. The four groups taken are:-

- (a) Poles
- (b) Yugoslavs
- (c) Former residents of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.
- (d) Others.

No details are available of the composition of the last group, but it includes Nansen refugees and a number of others who have been registered as stateless (probably erroneously in many cases), a number of persons of undetermined nationality and a number of Jews. The figures for Poles do not include men in the Polish Forces, but they do include the dependents of such men in the

Middle East, East Africa and India, amounting in all to between 30,000 and 40,000. The estimate of the proportion of displaced Poles that will prove non-repatriable varies from country to country and for the total is approximately 54%. This may well prove to be an over-estimate and it is noticeable that for Germany, where there is by far the largest number, the estimate is well below 50%. Of the four groups, there would seem to be the largest element of doubt regarding the Poles whose repatriation was interrupted by the winter and has only recently re-commenced on a considerable scale.

With regard to the Yugoslavs and former residents of the Baltic countries, there is a great deal of evidence that in present circumstances a very high proportion of the total must be assumed to be non-repatriable. The same is true for the miscellaneous group.

2. The total figures for probable non-repatriables are as follows:-

(a) Poles	380,700
	or excluding dependents of those in the armed forces say,
	<u>345,000 in round figures.</u>
(b) Yugoslavs	125,500
	or say
	<u>125,000 in round figures.</u>
(c) Former residents of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia	186,700
	or say
	<u>187,000 in round figures</u>
(d) Others	155,900
	or say,
	<u>156,000 in round figures.</u>

3. This total represents the best estimate that can be made on the material now available to the Inter-governmental Committee. There is an additional element, namely, those Poles in the armed forces, with their dependents, who finally decide not to return to Poland. No estimate of this element is available.

It may be observed that while all the persons included in the total of 813,000, except war criminals, traitors and quislings, would presumably come under the International Refugee Authority for the purpose of protection and permanent re-establishment, the number that would require maintenance would be considerably less. For instance, of the total number of displaced persons in Germany, Austria and Italy it is estimated that 200,800 are outside assembly centres, of whom it may be assumed that the great majority will prove to be dissidents. Of those in other countries, excluding dependents of men in the Polish Forces, there are about 46,500 not receiving maintenance from international or Government sources. Allowing for these facts, the number of dissidents who would require maintenance may be estimated at the round figure of 600,000 plus those Poles in the armed forces and their dependents who finally decide not to return to their own country and who are not self-supporting.

STATEMENT I.

ESTIMATE BY COUNTRIES OF TOTAL NUMBER OF CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF
 DISPLACED PERSONS AND OF PROBABLE NON-REPATRIABLES

	TOTAL NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS	PROBABLE NON-REPATRIABLES
<u>IN GERMANY</u>		
Poles	590,000	280,000
Jugoslavs	38,000	36,000
Balts	175,000	170,000
Others	<u>108,000</u>	<u>103,000</u>
	911,000	589,000
<u>IN AUSTRIA</u>		
Poles	30,000	25,000
Jugoslavs	44,000	43,000
Balts	5,900	5,900
Others	<u>28,200</u>	<u>26,600</u>
	108,100	100,500
<u>IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA</u>		
Poles	15,000	12,000
Jugoslavs	4,500	4,500
Balts	8,000	8,000
Others	<u>15,000</u>	<u>15,000</u>
	42,500	39,500
<u>IN BELGIUM</u>		
Poles	9,000	5,000
Jugoslavs	200	100
Balts	200	200
Others	<u>1,100</u>	<u>1,100</u>
	10,500	6,400

	TOTAL NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS	PROBABLE NON-REPATRIABLES
B/Fwd.	1,072,100	735,400
<u>IN FRANCE</u>		
Poles)	No figures available	
Jugoslavs)		
Balts)		
Others)		
<u>IN SWITZERLAND</u>		
Poles	3,100	3,100
Jugoslavs	1,000	1,000
Balts	400	400
Others	3,200	3,200
	<u>7,700</u>	<u>7,700</u>
<u>IN ITALY</u>		
Poles	18,000	16,000
Jugoslavs	40,000	38,000
Balts	2,000	2,000
Others	6,600	3,700
	<u>66,600</u>	<u>59,700</u>
<u>IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL</u>		
Others	900	900
<u>IN MIDDLE EAST</u>		
Poles	16,800	16,000
	2,900	2,900
	<u>19,700</u>	<u>18,900</u>
<u>IN EAST AFRICA</u>		
Poles	18,000	18,000
<u>IN INDIA</u>		
Poles	5,600	5,600
<u>IN FAR EAST</u>		
Others	<u>2,400</u>	<u>2,400</u>

STATEMENT II.

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT I.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS	PROBABLE NON-REPATRIABLES
(1) Poles	705,500	380,700
(2) Yugoslavs	130,600	125,500
(3) Former residents of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia	191,500	186,500
(4) Others	165,400	155,900
	<u>1,193,000</u>	<u>848,600</u>