

## II—America Needs Them

by **FRANK RITCHIE**

**F**OR MORE THAN 140 YEARS the United States, as a part of her traditional policy, has strongly encouraged European immigration. This American policy allowed more than thirty-eight million people to debark on our shores between the years 1820 and 1938. These were the men and women who pushed the frontiers of America westward, who built our railroads, populated our farms, developed our industries, and literally manned America. Their children are the Americans of today.

At the end of the last war the world was in turmoil. It was only to be expected that many wished to leave war-torn Europe and find a more peaceful existence across the sea. And it was then that the America which for nearly three years had been fed on ultranationalistic propaganda, an America whose nationalistic fervor had reached the point of hysteria, began to view the tide of postwar immigration with disfavor.

Under pressure from various groups, the traditional American policy was changed, and the restrictive immigration-quota law of 1921 was enacted. This law, amended in 1924 and 1929, now permits the entry of only 153,774 persons a year. Great Britain and Ireland alone were allotted 83,574 quota permits, 54 per cent of the total. In as much as comparatively few English and Irish are today among the immigrants to this country, the result has been that for the six-year period from July 1, 1932, through June 30, 1938, only 241,962 men, women, and children entered the United States — of a possible total of 922,644.

And even these figures do not represent a net increase of our immigrant population, for, during the same period, 246,449 persons left the United States for permanent residence elsewhere. Thus we find that there was actually a loss of 4,487 permanent residents, as the result of immigration and emigration, over this period of time.

During this same six-year period, which embraced the first five years of the National Socialist regime in Germany, only 45,952 Germans emigrated to the United States. If we add to this total the number of Germans who

will have come to this country during the year ending June 30, 1939, we find that less than seventy-five thousand refugees from Germany (including Austria) will have found sanctuary here from Hitlerism.

Why, then, is there any refugee "problem" in the United States today, save as it exists in the minds of a few overzealous superpatriots and the people they have been able to influence? Surely seventy-five thousand German refugees do not constitute a threat to American labor, to American business or professional men, or to the American standard of living.

Rather, these men and women are a potentially great asset. The madness of Brown Bolshevism has presented us with the opportunity of admitting to our country educated, well-trained, skilled individuals who not only can fit readily into our economic and social life but also can furnish us with talents and industries we did not heretofore possess.

### II

**M**UCH HAS BEEN MADE of the alleged fact that, because of our unemployment problem, refugees are a liability. On the one hand, it is argued that refugees will take jobs from American workers and, on the other, that the newcomers will flood the relief rolls.

Both assumptions are false.

In the first place, no German immigrant can secure a visa unless an American citizen has first guaranteed that he will not become a public charge. In the second place, of the total number of German refugees admitted since Hitler came into power, only a small fraction are eligible to enter the employment market.

Immigration statistics for the year ending in June, 1938, show that at least half the German refugees are women and that an additional 16 per cent are either under or over the age limits from which our workers are normally recruited. This means that about one third of the German immigrants can enter the employment market here — and the figure is further reduced when it is considered that some immigrants bring capital with them and set up their own businesses in this country.

## THE FORUM

In Great Britain, according to figures presented to the House of Commons by Sir Samuel Hoare, British Home Secretary, eleven thousand refugees have made jobs for fifteen thousand native-born Englishmen.

In this connection it is pertinent to point out that every period in American history which saw a great influx of immigrants was followed within a comparatively short time by a rise in the prosperity of the country. At the present time it is also true that, in spite of our unemployment, there is an actual shortage of skilled labor in some fields.

The idea that we should discourage immigration because of existing unemployment is wholly erroneous. It is based on the notion that an increase in the number of residents in the country necessarily means an increase in the amount of unemployment. Following this line of reasoning, we reach the conclusion that a reduction in the number of residents would produce a reduction in the number of those out of work (which does not jibe with the widely urged belief that a declining birth rate means declining prosperity). Among the corollaries that follow this conclusion — and some of which have actually been proposed — are the elimination of women from all employment and the maintaining of all children in school until the age of twenty-five or so. Such loose thinking ignores the fact that these people are consumers, that a reduction in their number means a lower rate of production and a contraction of the standard of living. It is utterly absurd to assume that that country is most prosperous which has the smallest number of people — an assumption which follows logically from these arguments.

It has been further claimed that the admission to this country of refugees from Germany will result in the rise of prejudice and internal dissension.

To slam shut the gates of immigration for such a reason is tantamount to admitting that American democracy has failed in the past and no longer exists today.

It is true that, in years past, the presence of large numbers of immigrants has brought brief periods of such feeling. It is not true that these epidemics affected a majority of Americans or that they left a lasting mark on our society. American democracy has demonstrated its ability in the past to overcome

prejudice and has progressively strengthened its tradition of good neighborliness. There is every reason to believe that the present-day descendants of earlier Americans will continue to maintain that tradition.

While the majority of German refugees already in this country are of the Jewish faith, the statistics show that more than one third are Catholics and Protestants. George Rublee, in his report as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Commission on Refugees, further pointed out that, of those in central Europe in need of evacuation, 45 per cent are Jewish, and 55 per cent Christian, although partly of Jewish blood.

There is thus reason to believe that the future refugee immigration will show a larger proportion of non-Jews.

All humanitarian considerations aside, Americans must look on these refugees as valuable assets cast adrift by the totally illogical policies of Nazi Germany.

For instance, to maintain and educate a child up to the age of fifteen years costs, according to various estimates, from \$4,543 to \$6,277. But in each adult German refugee America receives a fully trained individual at no cost to her whatever.

America's problem is to exploit that training to its fullest potentiality and in those communities which can benefit most by it. Chambers of commerce in many of our smaller towns have frequently campaigned for new industries and for workmen to operate them. Germany's skilled mechanics and highly trained steel and optical workers, to mention only a few, can and are supplying these industries.

New avenues for foreign trade have been transferred by refugees from their native Germany to America. The cultural contribution of refugees to American life, exemplified in such men as Thomas Mann, Max Reinhardt, Albert Einstein, Heinrich Bruening, and others too numerous to mention is already widely recognized. The contribution of the average man and woman who has fled Germany, though less familiar and obvious, is in the aggregate equally important. Ignoring for the present all humanitarian considerations and considering only those which affect our economic and social life, America can look forward to profit and new achievement from the admission of German refugees.

# Impressions of America

by G. B. STERN

**I**T WAS THRILLING, on my first night in New York, to fall asleep knowing that I would wake in the morning and see again from my windows that breathtaking landscape of tall towers so felicitously grouped against the sky, strong and yet remote, the fairy-tale illustrations, come true at last, that we had loved as children.

Yet, back in England, I am conscious, too conscious, that the earth is flat, the earth is very flat. The air is flat; life is flat. This may seem an ungrateful statement, and should be punished, of course, by an immediate earthquake in Piccadilly, of which I should be sole victim.

Nevertheless, every English person who has been to America will agree with me that, symbolically speaking, England is indeed curiously flat.

You return home thinking, "Nice to be home!" and you wake up in the morning after your arrival saying "Nice! I'm at home." Your relations and friends are pleased to see you — not exuberantly pleased but nicely pleased. And everybody says, "How was America?" and listens to your enthusiastic answers for the first five minutes but then indicates, nicely enough, that six minutes is too long for a description of the last six months and you should now endeavor to transfer your interest to more local matters.

During the first few days at home you continue to wonder what is the matter with you. You think, "Am I sickening for something?" You think, "I'm out of touch; that's what it is." Finally, you surrender to the fact that you have the audacity to be homesick for an America which is not your home at all.

For at least, when you come to America, the earth does quake. In America, you are an event; in America you are spoiled; in America, your American friends and your English friends who live there permanently and have caught the

atmosphere welcome you as though they had been waiting with animation suspended, kept on a tight leash, until you arrived.

And this goes for not only your friends but strangers, people you have met once only (at a party three years ago), people who have heard about you, people who love the English, people who want to know what you think of Mr. Eden, people who want to know what you think of anybody. They stress your personality; they create charm in you by emphasizing it long before it is there; they *care*. They want to hear you; they want to see you. You are not only an event — you are temporarily their darling, the most brilliant woman in the world. It is all the difference between an ardent lover and a kind but indifferent husband. Your happiness matters to them; your preferences matter and where you are going this evening and where after that. You are the Wise Woman of the medieval village, with a panacea for all ills; you have come from enchanted countries; you are a part of old history; you're a thrill.

And this pleasant excitement, this infectious friendliness does not immediately die down, as in children whose curiosity has been satisfied. It goes on and on; it is bred of the tingle in the climate and the upward swing of the skyscrapers, the uninhibited life of America's uninhibited soul which rushes out to meet and join with the life which America presupposes is in your soul already.

You add all these exhilarating tributes, this exhilarating appreciation, to the perpetual excitement of your night view, from the twentieth floor, of Fifth Avenue galloping like a greyhound north to the horizon — its long chain of traffic lights brilliantly flashing from rubies to emeralds and back again to rubies — while, on either side of it, a million lit cubes unwinking, the towers of Manhattan stand tall and strong and grave; you add it all to the pace and flavor of the idiom, the snap and the tingle in