

OUTLOOK FOR EUROPE'S JEWS

By WILLIAM ZUKERMAN

ONE of the most curious and entirely unforeseen developments of the early postwar period in Europe is the rise and growth of what seems to be a new Jewish problem in Germany, particularly in the American zone. Of all the places in Europe, Germany was the last one where a Jewish problem was expected after the war. The Nazis had begun to "solve" the Jewish problem in Germany as far back as 1933, and at the outbreak of the war they had succeeded almost fully—Germany had no more Jews left and therefore no Jewish problem.

But facts have a way of bringing up most fantastic surprises and this time, too, they have brought a curious paradox out of the confusion and chaos of the war aftermath in Europe—a problem of displaced Jews in Germany. In many respects this is a strange problem and unlike anything that has ever been known before in Jewish problems. It does not stem from anti-Semitism, as do most Jewish problems; it has nothing to do with persecution; the people involved are not German Jews; nor is this in any real sense a problem of Germany. True, it is a legacy of Nazism, but Germany itself is only the physical stage upon which the drama, or tragedy is being enacted.

And yet, this piece of accidental trouble is being worked up now into a veritable storm of international and nationalistic politics. Passions are inflamed, ancient prejudices are aroused, deep-seated bias stirred, and a persistent effort is being made by friends and enemies alike to raise this question to the status of a real Jewish problem with all its complicated psychological and other implications. Herein is the pity, almost the tragedy of the displaced Jews, for their real problem is in no way a problem of all the Jews of Europe; it is a distinct, individual problem which is not typical of the bigger, present-day Jewish problem; it has none of their prejudices, complications and passions, and it could be easily solved if only a clear-cut separation could be made of it from the general Jewish problem in Europe.

WHEN the war was over, the victorious Allied armies which entered Germany found in German camps, under most pitiful conditions, many millions of people of all nationalities whom

the Nazis had brought to Germany for slave labor. Among these unfortunates were also approximately 200,000 Jews from all countries in Europe, but mostly from Poland. These people were the most unfortunate of all the unfortunate victims of Nazism, for whereas all the others had been brought to German camps only for slave labor, these Jews were brought here for extermination, and were used for slave labor only temporarily until they could be gassed, cremated, or otherwise killed. Thus about 4,000,000 of these Jews had been exterminated. The more than 200,000 who remained alive were the remnants of one of the greatest mass-murders in history.

With the liberation of Europe thousands of these people, particularly those hailing from the West-European countries such as France, Belgium, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Czechia, and even Austria, have returned to their homes. Even now, hundreds and thousands of displaced Jews are leaving the camps and trickling back to the countries from which they were uprooted by the Nazis and are beginning the heart-breaking task of rebuilding a new life on the ruins of the old. Approximately 100,000 displaced Jews (the exact num-

ber is not known; it is variously estimated between eighty to a hundred and twenty-five thousand), most of them Polish Jews, refuse to go back to their old home and prefer to remain in the German camps. To these must be added another 25,000 to 30,000 Jews who have escaped from Poland since the end of the war and have also been placed in the same status as the original 100,000 former slaves. These people, 150,000 at most, are the so-called "displaced Jews," and they form the problem which has attracted so much attention.

IT is well to remember that the displaced Jews are not the only displaced people in Europe, or in Germany now. The war has left millions of them of all nationalities. Even now Germany alone has more than a million displaced persons who, for political, racial, nationalistic and other reasons, refuse to return to their old homes. But whereas in the case of the displaced people of other nationalities the problem is handled as that of individuals who for some reason or another do not want to return to their old homes, the case of the displaced Jews is being made a collective problem of all the Jews in Europe.

Theories of "evacuation" and "exoduses" of all European Jews are being advanced, and a big national Jewish problem is being raised as a continuation of the pre-war Jewish problem in Europe which must be solved now once and for all according to the various party formulas and panaceas.

WITHOUT reflecting on any of these panaceas, it is necessary in the interest of truth and of the Jewish displaced persons to establish that this is not the case. Painful as the problem of the displaced Jews in Europe is, it is not the problem of all the Jews in Europe, nor a national problem of all the Jews in the world. Facts which have emerged from Eu-



Legacy

Always in the buried memory
the lean Virginian in the bitter valley
comforts his men in the frozen camp.
And whenever the blood congeals and the will retreats,
the stern Virginian cries:
Go back, the enemy is back there
Do you think my flesh was battle-proof?
My bone was as brittle, my blood flowed as easily as yours,
my hunger and cold were greater:
go back!

And we go back.

Always in the dark memory
a tall man walks in Washington.
He sees the wounded land, the long healing,
the new conspiracy forging the old chains,
the freedmen again enslaved.
And whenever the spirit sickens before vistas of corruption,
lamenting: O is there any end to it, is there always another
battle?

the quiet frontiersman says:
Do you think I thought Appomattox was the end?
Clearer to me than to the hindsight of historians
were the faces of the assassins,
the rot beneath the mansion reared on blood.
I tell you
there is no end to it,
there is always another battle,
and the only answer is to fight.

Always in the deep memory
we walk with them, we are taller for their presence,
we listen to their voices . . .
and we fight.

SEYMOUR GREGORY.

rope since the end of the war show without any doubt that the position of the Jews in Europe is better now than it was before the war. The fact is that in most countries of Europe there is now no special Jewish problem. Jews suffer, of course, with the rest of the populations of Europe, from all the terrible hardships and pain attendant upon a world ruined by one of the most terrible wars in history—from starvation, epidemics, homelessness, broken families, civil strife and other evils which are the aftermath of war. But they do so together with all other people of Europe, as an integral part of Europe. There are no special discriminations against Jews as Jews, such as abounded in Europe before the war; there are no laws against them, no political, social or religious movements against them, no violent propaganda which had poisoned the very air of Europe under fascism.

In France, Belgium, Italy and the

Scandinavian countries the treatment of the Jews by the governments and by the people is better than it has been since the First World War. The Nazi anti-Jewish laws have all been abolished; Jews are everywhere returning to their old homes and rebuilding their lives on the same terms of equality with other people. No one openly advocates raising discriminations against them because of their Jewishness; their presence is taken as a matter of course. The non-Jewish world, official and unofficial, is particularly helpful. Social, political, and religious institutions have never been more friendly.

Thousands of Jewish children are still being brought up by French, Belgian and Italian families and by church institutions as they were during the war. Seventy-five percent of the Jews of France are working at their old trades and occupations. The same process is going on in Belgium, Holland,

Italy and other countries in Western Europe. "I can state with certainty that anti-Semitism is on the decline in Western Europe," recently declared an authority on the Jews in Europe and an official of a nationalist Jewish organization after a tour of an investigation of Western Europe (Dr. Leon Kubowitzky, general secretary of the World Jewish Congress). A similar report was given by an investigator of a non-Zionist organization (Max Gottschalk of the American Jewish Committee). The many public and official thanksgivings of the Jewish communities in Europe to the various governments of Europe and to the churches for the aid and friendship given to the Jews during and after the war are a matter of record.

IN EASTERN EUROPE, in Rumania, Poland, Hungary and the Balkan States, where the bulk of the remaining million and a half Jews of Europe lives (outside Soviet Russia), the situation is incomparably better than it was before the outbreak of the war. Those countries were before the war the hotbeds of political, social and psychological anti-Semitism. They were drenched with a fierce anti-Semitic propaganda, which was the largest single factor of those countries. Jews were officially persecuted, humiliated, robbed, exiled and murdered as a matter of government policy. It would be too much to expect that an anti-Semitism so long fostered should disappear the first year after the war. But the worst aspect of that anti-Semitism—the political one—which had caused most of the suffering and deaths of the Jews during the Nazi era, has been definitely eliminated together with the fascist regimes.

In Rumania and in Poland, anti-Semitic propaganda and violence have been outlawed and made a criminal offense, as in Soviet Russia. Leading anti-Semites in these countries have been rounded up, are tried and punished as war criminals, or they are being eliminated from social, political and educational life where they did most of their mischief. The Rumanian and Polish universities, the cesspools of the most zoological type of anti-Semitism for two generations, have now been cleansed of that poison. As in the west of Europe, all the Nazi anti-Jewish laws have been abolished. For the first time in two generations, Jews in Eastern Europe are protected by the governments, instead of being persecuted by them.

It is too early to expect that the seeds of anti-Jewish bias implanted in the people for generations, should all be ex-