

CURRENT PROBLEMS OF JEWISH MIGRATION*

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IN speaking before a group of people who are so vitally interested in the question of Jewish migration, one is tempted to by-pass a discussion of the problems and race on to the more important question—"What can we do about them and how soon?" The greatest catastrophe of Jewish history did not cease with the end of the war. Its after effects continue and they arouse great concern. I am anxious to develop a little further some of the points Mrs. Stein has raised and to discuss some of the deeper implications of the problem.

We can well understand the consciousness of the Jewish survivor—the reasons for his frustration and despair and his failure to understand why democratic countries have not come forward with just recompense for his suffering. Nothing can obliterate from his mind the tragic experience that is tattooed on it. Remaining displaced, waiting for movement, all this represents the danger of recurrence, no matter what efforts are made in his behalf to make his day to day life comfortable.

The very least that these first victims of Hitlerism had hoped for after the war ended was speedy emigration from the lands which have brought them untold misery. The situation today, however, has made these hopes illusory. We know that no nation has come forward with legislation specifically in favor of

the Jewish displaced person and that such measures which have been taken to resettle displaced persons have been entirely too inadequate generally; and for the Jewish displaced persons, specifically.

A great tragedy of Jewish migration today is based on the fact that its family reunion character has been seriously disrupted. For many years before the war, a noteworthy feature of Jewish migration has been the responsibility of interested relations in the lands of haven to activate and insure movement of kin living in ravaged countries. Today, there are very few close relatives of people living in countries like America, Australia, Canada, who have survived the recent catastrophe in Europe.

This great failing would not be as serious as it is, if Governments, understanding the plight of European Jewry, attempted to ease the migration process. However, three years after liberation, we see a systematic stepping-up of restrictions, not only in countries of immigration which may be well known to you and which counter-balance whatever positive steps have been taken by such countries, but also in European countries. These barriers that are placed before the Jew in Europe who is anxious to emigrate are not too well known generally.

These barriers and restrictions have caused a crazy-quilt pattern of movements which have upset the plans agen-

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cies may make on behalf of the emigrant.

The great reservoir of Jewish survivors, as heretofore, are found in Eastern European countries. After the war, the Governments of these countries, because of sympathy for, and an understanding of the urgent emigration needs of Jews, did little to hamper their aspirations. Documents were readily obtainable for those who wished to leave legally and borders were not too closely guarded for those who were leaving without benefit of documents.

Now, borders are closely watched. The Jew who may qualify to leave legally is required to present to consular officials unobtainable documents, such as proof of birth, proof of good conduct from the same officials who were responsible for his plight during the war years. Many Jews in Europe today possess only one document, the indelibly tattooed number on their left arms. This document, however, is only proof of suffering and this proof, unfortunately, can be of little help to him today.

The Jew who survived the Nazi terror knew only too well that his most prized possession during his enslaved years was a forged document. Such documents were obtainable only at great risk. The risk was worth it because the forged document was his passport to life.

The Jewish refugee in Europe, in his desperation, reasons that forged documents today can meet his most urgent need, the need to leave the undesirable surroundings in which he finds himself. The use of these documents can place the agency helping him in an almost untenable position, for while the most significant activity of such an agency is to move Jews, these agencies cannot condone the use of falsified documents. Agencies do condemn the virulent restrictive policies that force the migrant

to work out his own destiny by using these documents.

This makes processing of eligible cases fraught with untold difficulties. The unavailability of full consular services in Eastern European countries and the mounting political tensions between East and West have added to these difficulties. Ideally, planning for the prospective emigrant should always be on the basis of permanent settlement and his processing, training and orientation, should be in that direction.

The ever-mounting blocks that are placed in the way of the aspirations of the emigrant, seriously hampers agency activities and as a result, complete planning at times is almost impossible.

Constant intervention by agency representatives in countries like Roumania and Hungary are necessary before the migrant can leave for some transit country in Europe where he must go in order to meet consular requirements because consular services are not available in his homeland. The treasured possession, the exit permit, cannot be obtained until an agency in the transit country intervenes for the migrant so that a transit visa may be forwarded to him in order to convince his Government that he may be granted permission to leave.

Poland today presents a critical picture. It is a well-known fact that the Polish Government, since the end of the war, had demonstrated a particularly sympathetic attitude toward the aspiration of the Jew who wished to leave Poland. While the Polish non-Jew was prohibited from leaving his country, the Polish Jew was permitted to leave with little restriction. As a consequence, through the intervention of our representative in Poland, the Government issued thousands of national passports to Jews, although visas were

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not readily available for these individuals. The possession of the passport, even without the prospects of a visa, has given the Jew an added sense of security. This was indeed a special privilege for him.

The Polish Government has now decreed that effective July 1, 1948, their position in this matter will be completely reversed and this special status which the Jews enjoy will come to an end.

After that date, it will be almost impossible for a young, able-bodied Jew to leave Poland legally, with one possible exception, and the Government has been a bit evasive on this point, and that is for Jews who may be able to go to Palestine as repatriates. Poland reasons that she cannot afford to lose her nationals who can make an economic contribution to her country.

At the present time, our agency is engaged in a race against time to bring out of Poland as many passport holders who can, through our intervention, qualify for exit permits. These refugees will be taken to transit countries from where plans can be made for their eventual emigration.

I have stated previously that the entire problem of Jewish migration today has played havoc with the detailed plans that an agency is required to make in order to process an emigrant family from Eastern European countries to the country of eventual destination. It must be borne in mind that the country of end destination is not always the final objective which the Jewish emigrant has in mind when he leaves his homeland. The refugee may have no intention of going to the designated country for which an end visa is obtained and on the strength of which he is able to leave his homeland. In many instances, the emigrant's first desire is to be able to leave his surroundings for a more desir-

able country from where he could then plan his eventual permanent resettlement. In other instances, from his experiences in the transit country, the emigrant may decide to alter plans which have already been established for him.

This phenomenon, which is so characteristic of Jewish migration in Europe today, nullifies many of the efforts that are made by an agency and it then becomes necessary for the agency to initiate a new plan with all of its inherent difficulties.

Moreover, this situation can jeopardize agency relationships with Governments which grant transit visas on the basis of the agency's guarantee of an end visa and of the refugee's departure after a stipulated period of time. The experience of our agency has shown that the transit migrant will develop for himself, or accept from an agency, one of the following plans:

1. He may immigrate to another country legally.
2. He may remain in the transit country.
3. He may find a way to go to Palestine.
4. He may return to his homeland.
5. He may decide to go through with the original plan.

Because of this problem, it is quite evident that only an agency with an international case work program is best equipped to service these peculiar requirements.

Within the European pattern, I suppose, I must touch upon what seems to be developing into the perennial DP problem. Some preferences have been given to the displaced persons only because their plight has been spotlighted and the conscience of nations has been touched—but touched only slightly. In this connection, let me quote one remark made by Mr. William Hallam

Tuck, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the IRO, at the opening session of the Commission's Sixth meeting in Geneva on May 4th.

"The refugee problem is not being solved. It is not being solved because we have too little of too many things—too little time—too little money—too few ships—and most important of all, too little Christian charity among nations."

There are a number of countries who feel that they may be taking their fair share of displaced persons. These countries include Australia, Canada, Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay and some European countries like England, Sweden, Belgium and Norway. Mr. Tuck claims that these and other nations are doing far too little. We can well understand how very little these countries are doing for the Jewish displaced persons when we realize that candidates for mass immigration projects are selected on the basis of such vocational qualifications as miners, farmers and loggers and that the selections are made by individuals—individuals who may possess, shall I say, human frailties.

It is rather ironic to point out that an IRO statement acknowledges the fact that Jewish organizations in the DP areas have unexcelled facilities for vocational training and re-training. It is not enough to urge more training or specific training of skills that may be required in a certain country. It is necessary for Governments to be convinced that a fair share of Jews must be included in their mass schemes.

Only Canada has come forward with a plan to accept Jews in a specific project. I refer to the admission into Canada of a number of Jewish tailors from Germany and Austria. Canada has a number of other projects for the admission

of refugees, based on skills which virtually eliminate Jews.

The tailors plan was accepted by the Canadian Government only at the behest of the tailoring industry in that country, which is almost exclusively Jewish.

Before the plan was acceptable to the Government, however, one non-Jewish tailor had to be admitted with every Jewish tailor. This project, a feeble effort in the right direction, is now complete and only a handful of Jews, perhaps 1,000, and that includes wives and children, will be admitted into that country under this scheme.

A European country, Great Britain, has admitted more displaced persons than any other country. The findings of her experiences with the numerous projects which have brought 30,000 displaced persons to her country, should be of some value to other countries. The British Government found that only a small percentage of newly arrived refugees actually engage in the trade or occupation for which they were chosen. This was, of course, to be expected, because many displaced persons were not qualified in the first place, but because of their eagerness to leave the continent, were able to convince selectors of some skill which they did not really possess. Nevertheless, these refugees were able to find work in other fields after their arrival in Great Britain and are now making an economic contribution to that country.

As a consequence, England has now been admitting groups of refugees who are able to meet the usual health requirements, regardless of skill. These refugees, after their arrival in England, simply register with the Ministry of Labor for employment which they are best equipped to accept.

However, even this plan can be of no benefit if nations were to adopt this

plan without the principle of including a proportionate number of Jews with each group.

I am sure that Mr. Tuck's reference includes our country when he speaks of nations who have done too little so far, for the displaced persons.

In analyzing the application of the Truman Directive, we see that refugees who have come here have had to qualify under our restrictive quota laws. The Directive simply makes available at least 50% of all existing quota numbers for the displaced persons and thereby penalizes those refugees who are not fortunate enough to be in Germany and Austria.

Because Jewish survivors have more American relatives than other groups of displaced persons, and because Jewish agencies were geared immediately to function on behalf of this program, particularly because of the availability of a great number of corporate affidavits; until recently, greater numbers of Jews were able to qualify for U.S. immigration than other groups.

Regardless of what may have motivated it, this situation changed abruptly on July 1, 1947. Now it is much more difficult to process a Jewish case in Germany and Austria than it was heretofore, and ships' manifests from Bremen show smaller numbers of Jews in proportion to other groups than these manifests had shown a year ago.

How can we expect a displaced person to reconcile the nature of our restrictive quota regulations with the fact that America is guided by democratic institutions? His reasoning leads him to believe that these regulations actively discriminate against him if he is not sufficiently fortunate to have been born in a country like Germany, Austria or England.

We have heard so much about pending legislation in Washington. The an-

tagonists who would limit our country's role in the solution of this problem, unfortunately have good representation on committees concerned with this legislation. As a result, we may expect, some time in the near future, the passage of a bill which will not be altogether desirable, but will have to be accepted as a compromise.

One bill, the Fellows Bill, which will be introduced in the House of Representatives, will not provide for additional quota numbers nor will it permit refugees to come here outside of existing quotas. It will allow 200,000 displaced persons to come here in two years, but in order for sufficient quota numbers to be available for the displaced persons during this period, 50% of all quota numbers will be mortgaged for years to come. Those refugees not living in Germany and Austria will have to postpone their immigration to the United States for later years, perhaps too late for their hopes to be realized at all.

Another bill will be introduced in the Senate very shortly. This bit of legislation calls for the admission of 200,000 displaced persons over a period of two years. However, based on national origin, 50% of the selectees are to be Balts, and on the basis of vocational skills, 50% of the displaced persons qualifying under this bill will have to be agriculturists. The selection of individuals based on existing groups among the DP population will be disregarded.*

* Since this paper has been presented, the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 (Public Law 774) has been enacted.

Under its terms, this legislation combines the less desirable features of the Fellows and Wiley bills.

The Act is even more unfavorable toward Jewish immigration into the United States than the writer had anticipated and has been seriously criticized as prejudicial by many groups.

We must not overlook the fact that a general shortage of shipping space continues to complicate so many problems which already exist. We take this situation more or less for granted because we all know how agencies must scurry about in order to snare whatever available space there is. However, in this connection, I would like to dwell for a moment upon the situation concerning transportation to Australia. Please bear in mind that since the end of the war Jews have entered that country not by virtue of any mass resettlement schemes, but rather as a result of the family reunion character which typifies Jewish migration generally.

Today, the great majority of Jews who have come to Australia have had valid landing permits obtained by their relatives in Australia. In 1946 and during the early part of 1947, because of the severe shortage of shipping space, our agency chartered several vessels which were used exclusively for our proteges destined to their relatives in Australia. The arrival of these vessels had caused unpleasant reactions among some of the population in that country and as a consequence, the Minister of Immigration established certain regulations to limit the number of Jews who may come into Australia on any vessel.

These regulations prohibit Jewish passengers from embarking on British vessels, from sailing on any vessel leaving a British port and limits the number of Jewish passengers on all other vessels to 25% of the total number of passengers.

Only recently, because this situation is so critical, our agency was about to charter a vessel for the purpose of accepting only 25% of the space on this vessel and turning over the rest of the space to Australia House in London. Despite the fact that shipping space is at a premium for everyone, this offer was refused.

Concerning South America, it is not my intention to survey immigration conditions that exist in each country. I would like to dwell briefly on the situation which exists in the Argentine, a country with the second largest Jewish community in America, where there are excellent economic opportunities.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that despite the official ban on Jewish immigration, even for those destined to relatives, Jewish immigrants in the bordering countries of Bolivia, Uruguay and Paraguay manage to get into the Argentine.

This restriction causes unnecessary peregrination from one South American country to another, thereby adding to the many difficulties which already exist.

Coming back to the matter of mass resettlement schemes, we must continually hope for the inclusion of a fair share of Jews to be included in these projects. From my remarks, however, we may safely conclude that Jewish migration in the future will not lose its essential pattern of the past, and that is individually planned migration based on reunion with relations.

Because of the technical skills and experience that private agencies have developed through the years, the IRO has officially recognized that individual emigration is best handled by such agencies. In recognizing this, the IRO has, in fact, turned over individual migration cases to private agencies for service.

The problems which I have outlined are indeed numerous, difficult and certainly without simple solution. It is regrettable that additional problems have been created because there are two migration agencies in the overseas field or because these agencies have not developed sufficient coordination between them. I do not wish to imply that coordination does not exist at all. There

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is a good deal of it, particularly at the field level. There is adequate clearance at this level and formulae have been developed to prevent parallel activity in cases.

Despite this, two major agencies doing a similar job cannot avoid a certain amount of confusion, which can only dissipate the best efforts that these agencies extend on behalf of the migrant Jew.

Let me give you a few examples of what I mean. We have a situation in Europe today, because of the shipping situation, whereby two agencies vie for the same space, to the only advantage of the steamship company. When cases sometimes are not adequately cleared, governmental and consular officials become confused and cannot understand why two agencies are interested in the same case.

Prior to 1946, the cooperating committees in Switzerland and Sweden maintained relationships with one American agency for migration services. Since that time, another American agency developed similar relationships for similar services.

Although a satisfactory method of coordination among both agencies and the cooperating committees has been

achieved, these committees still fail to understand why it is necessary for them to maintain two sets on case files, separate records and separate correspondence, despite the fact that the services which they are giving to migrants are the same, regardless of which agency is involved. Most seriously, however, is the effect that this situation has on the individual migrants, who would naturally seek services from both agencies and in his own guile would attempt to use one agency against the other for his own benefit.

This is neither the time nor the place to develop a satisfactory formula to resolve these problems. The American Jewish community has been beset with the problem of duplicate functions performed by national agencies and this question is not novel in American Jewish life.

Insofar as the problems which I have discussed are concerned, the major agencies in the field have been in consultation, and have carried on negotiations.

Surely the lay leadership representing these agencies understand this urgent need. It is hoped that they will work out a satisfactory solution to this problem.

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*International Conference
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IN the light of the historic atmosphere which has been recreated by the two previous speakers, we can not fail to note the passing of the third anniversary of V-E Day. You will notice that I carefully avoided using the word "celebration." In the light of developments as they have effected our people during these three years, we have very limited cause for celebration.

It is a sad commentary upon our civilization that at this late date a group of social workers gathered from the four corners of the earth meets to discuss "the problems of Jewish Migration." At the close of the war persons in the camps throughout Europe and Shanghai were looking forward to a speedy solution to this problem. The cessation of hostilities was for them a token of their own liberation, the beginning of a new life. They thought that it meant for them speedy release from the horrible conditions under which they had been living; an opportunity to resettle elsewhere than on the blood drenched soil of Europe; a chance to find themselves opportunities for beginning anew.

For some time, this has been true. Even before military groups arrived, voluntary agencies were beginning to send personnel to the Centers where their help was most urgently needed. Many of you are familiar with the stories

of voluntary agency personnel arriving in time to observe the town's people celebration of the arrival of the victorious forces of occupation. These persons were a symbol of liberation to the thousands who had been, until that moment, utterly without hope.

Unfortunately, their mere presence was not enough to begin the operation of an effective job. They had to await the establishment of operations of the occupying forces. They had to work out relationships with Governmental and Intergovernmental Organizations such as UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees before their operations could be adequately implemented. They had to begin to work in a situation where they were creating in the doing their precedents and procedures. It is a tribute to that group that during the three year period their accomplishments, limited as they may seem to us at this moment, were as great in magnitude as they are, that they were able to cut through red tape to the extent they did and achieve such an effective result.

Since V-E Day much movement from these DP Centers has occurred. With the cooperation of UNRRA, Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees and more recently, the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization and the very active participation of voluntary agencies, 7,250,000 persons were repatriated by the beginning of

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