

CURRENT PROBLEMS OF JEWISH MIGRATION

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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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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1947. Since then about 35,000 have been repatriated indicating that we are probably reaching the end of this movement.

The repatriation of Jews presented a complex picture. This movement had rather a continuous and circular character. It started with the repatriation of Polish Jews from the Soviet Union which began in February, 1946. The homebound transport of Jewish refugees proceeded at an increasing scale until August, bringing back to Poland some 140,000 repatriates. However, the Kielce Pogrom of July 4, 1946, started a new movement among the Polish Jews, forcing large groups to set forth westward toward the U. S. Zone of Occupation in Austria and Germany. It is estimated that some 90,000 Jews left Poland during the period July-December, 1946. The second sizable movement of Jewish repatriates took place in March, 1946, when some 30,000 Roumanian Jews who spent the war years in Soviet Russia were permitted to leave for Roumania.

Since there are no official records concerning the total emigration from Europe to all overseas countries except the United States, comparative analysis can be made only for the latter country. According to the Interpreter Release (issue of October 20, 1947) during the fiscal years 1945-1946 and 1946-1947, 99,800 quota immigrants were admitted to the United States. It is estimated that some 80,000 quota immigrants will be admitted for the fiscal year 1947-1948, bringing the total of 179,800. As you probably know, it is estimated that during the three year period following V-E Day, some 50,000 Jews entered the United States.

Shanghai

While this has been a remarkable achievement, to those left behind it is too slow. Let us go back for a moment

to the situation which existed at the end of the war. Perhaps a review of this will enable us to find some of the reasons.

One of the first needs of each displaced person was to find the remnants of his family group or to re-establish contact with relatives in other parts of the world, who might be helpful to him in working out migration plans. Because Jews were the foremost target of the Nazis, a much more thorough job had been done in destroying and scattering family groups than with other victims of Nazism. Persons were forced to leave their homes without any advance notice and without any of their possessions. It is not surprising therefore that their first feeble efforts to remember contacts they might have had in other parts of the world were vague, inaccurate and frequently useless. As time went on and they emerged from their dazed condition, we find that there was a marked increase in the number of locations effected on the basis of information submitted. The thrilling, dramatic and often heart-rendering stories of the locations that have been effected would fill many very interesting volumes. These stories of husbands and wives separated by thousands of miles who were reunited through efforts of location, of parents and children who found each other sometimes by accident, sometimes as a result of months and years of search, need not be retold here. Many of us, I am sure, have witnessed such happy reunions.

Many of us have likewise had the very satisfying experience of being present to witness the receipt of definite information of the survival of perhaps only one out of a large number of relatives who had not been heard from since before the war. This has not been an easy job. Nor is it one which will be

completed for years to come, but it has been one of the jobs which has had to be done in order to help some of the persons in the DP camps move on.

One of the outstanding problems resulting from the destruction of family groups as such has been that of unattached or orphan children. Frequently, in the final frantic moments before deportation parents made all kinds of desperate arrangements for their children in the hope that these would provide them with some slight chance of survival. As a result of many of these plans there are still numerous Jewish children living in non-Jewish homes and institutions throughout Europe. Because names have been changed, identification lost, because relationships between the children and their foster parents have frequently been so good, the problem of reclaiming these children as members of the Jewish Community has been one to which much thought and effort has been given, but one which we know is not yet completely solved.

These children, the most precious heritage of the Community, have been carefully guarded and well cared for. No one who has had an opportunity to visit the devastated areas of Europe has failed to comment upon the fact that in contrast to all of the deprivations under which communities are struggling, the children are comparatively well cared for. The shortage of manpower, if nothing else, would explain this. But, over and above this is the knowledge that this is the group to which we must look to rebuild the Jewish Community. No part of the displaced persons group has been so eagerly sought as the children, nor, on the other hand, has there been as much pressure exerted to keep the children where they have been found. Mrs. Schoolman will discuss the special

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projects which have been set up in an effort to remove the children as quickly as possible from the Displaced Persons Centers in Europe and will speak much more fully on the opportunities that exist for them. It is a tribute to the vitality of the surviving Jewish Community that they have been able to create for themselves the kind of existence which they now have. The fundamental and driving impulse of every single Jew is to find a refuge beyond the shores of Europe. The tragedies and outrages to which he has been a personal witness, the losses and indignities he has suffered, make it impossible for him to ever think in terms of permanent adjustment where he is. In spite of this, however, and in spite of the repeated frustrations and disappointments which he has faced in his efforts to migrate, he has been able to reconstruct a highly organized community life with schools and institutions for his children, with a certain amount of creative expression which has taken on many forms and with the intricate pattern of highly developed political activity which is so well known to Jewish Communities. He has even begun the re-creation of family life, for we are told that the marriage and birth rates, particularly in DP camps, is higher than anywhere else in the world.

In spite of this and in spite of the fact that even in some of the DP camps themselves an existence which is a close facsimile of normal community life is re-emerging the urgent need to emigrate is an ever-present factor. But, how and where?

What are the problems and difficulties which make this movement of Jews such an agonizingly slow one? The first requisite to any migration plan is the need for a place to go. It has been generally stated that there can be no

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peace in the world until we have found a solution of the displaced persons problem. Here we must look to governments to open their doors wide on a democratic nondiscriminatory basis. These people are our allies. As the first victim of fascism they deserve a chance to find a permanent haven. Mr. Eigen will discuss what possibilities some of these havens offer as well as the particular difficulties which have been raised in terms of specific immigration of Jews.

Let's assume that for a portion of this group, places of refuge have been found and that there are possibilities of securing the necessary visas. What are some of the other hurdles which must be cleared before this can be done? A visa can be granted only if the immigrant has some kind of official document on which it can be stamped. A very high percentage of persons in the displaced persons camps are now stateless. They are no longer in a position to secure the official passport which is the usually accepted document. Many others have lost all of their documents, all of the identifying data which are so necessary to secure official papers. Original records have also been destroyed. Again we must look to governments to agree on a plan which will not penalize individuals for the lack of a piece of paper in a world where so much went up in flames.

There are others who have retained their national status but who are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain from their countries of origin the right to leave. The manpower shortage which was mentioned earlier as it effects the emigration of children applies equally in many countries throughout Europe to adults. With the passing of time, we are finding in one country after another that limitation is now being set upon the application for the issuance of those

documents which are absolutely essential to legal emigration. Fortunately up to the present those wishing to go to Palestine have been exempted from this limitation. Without exception, all receiving countries have established certain minimum health standards. If, for a moment, we remember the conditions under which Jews lived, the starvation and brutality to which they were exposed, it is difficult to understand why a larger percentage of them do not have physical disabilities which make them ineligible at least temporarily. Perhaps it is because only the fittest could survive. Special facilities which are needed to rehabilitate the less fortunate among this group for emigration have been developed to meet the needs of TBs and others. In general, however, this group has demonstrated an amazing vitality.

Beyond the basic requirements, selection of immigrants to many countries throughout the world is now based on a limited number of specialized skills. The technological needs and manpower shortage of many countries call for the kind of skills which have not traditionally been developed within the Jewish Community. We have not in the past produced large numbers of lumberjacks as are needed by Canada or miners, needed by many countries throughout the world. But, there is a wide variety of skills within the group. Compared to earlier groups they displayed a high degree of literacy and intellectual power. They included highly trained professionals, skilled artisans and craftsmen, creative artists with a degree of adaptability and a burning desire to re-establish themselves, never before equalled. The accomplishments of those who have been able to reach Palestine should serve to alert other nations to the potential contributions this group could make wherever given a chance.

Historically, Jews have learned to overcome all kinds of difficulties. Therefore, we may assume that a certain percentage of the persons in whom we are concerned have been able to clear some of the hurdles they find in their path and have reached the point where they have been able to obtain the precious visa which means to them a chance to begin once again. There still remains the problem of how to reach this long anticipated end. While it is true that shipping facilities have greatly increased, there are still certain areas in which they are not adequate to meet our needs. The most flagrant example of this is in the available facilities for transportation to Australia. There we are faced with an arbitrary regulation which provides that no boat of immigrants arriving in Australia may carry more than 25% Jewish DPs. As a result of this there are thousands of persons on the European continent who have been in possession of Australian Landing Permits for several years, persons who could be reunited in many cases with close relatives and afforded an excellent opportunity to establish themselves, but who must wait for an indeterminate period because of the very limited shipping facilities available to Jews.

Where are these persons heading? In spite of their strong feeling against continuing life on the European Continent, some have gone to Western and Northern European countries as part of a movement of skilled workers. The number of Jews is small, it is true, but there have been some. Some have moved on a temporary basis, out of the DP camps to such transit countries as France, Italy, and Sweden, so that they may await the completion of their migration plans in a more congenial environment than that

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of the DP camps. Some have gone to Latin American countries and their experiences there will be more fully discussed by Mr. Eigen. Australia, we have already mentioned, and Canada is fast becoming an equal partner with the United States, once thought as an asylum for the oppressed, in the number of persons it has been admitting. But, the desired destination of most is Palestine. Unfortunately, the ever changing political situation has done more toward depressing the morale of Jewish DPs than any other factor in recent months. This from the beginning had been the hoped-for destination. The next few days will probably tell us how realistic this hope may become within the near future.

Next to Palestine is the expressed desire to immigrate to the United States and here again an uncertain legislative situation leaves us at this moment with not too bright a picture of the possibilities of immigration within the next few years.

The present tensions among the DPs are high. Basically, these can only be relieved by the development of an emigration program which will once again bring hope of early movement from the European Continent. When we evaluate the achievements of the descendants of the unselected groups of immigrants who first reached these shores and then consider the potential contribution of this group, hungering for an opportunity to start anew, it is difficult to accept the fact that all the doors are not wide open. We need the cooperation of all the nations of the world in establishing a generous nondiscriminatory immigration program. Without this we can not hope for a solution of the Jewish DP problem and unless this is found we can not hope for lasting peace.