

**Are Refugees
an Asset
?**

II

16677

4.

PEP

Pamphlets

One Shilling

MINISTERSTWO SPRAW ZAGRANICZNYCH
-BIBLIOTEKA-

No. 3580

Each of these pamphlets is based upon one of the well-known series of broadsheets prepared by P E P (Political and Economic Planning). P E P, founded in 1931, is an independent, non-party organisation consisting of a permanent research staff assisted by more than a hundred working members. These members, who are by vocation industrialists, trade unionists, distributors, officers of central and local government, university teachers, and so forth, give part of their spare time to helping P E P. Publications include both book-size Reports and a regular series of broadsheets which are not on sale, but are available to subscribers; these publications, covering a wide range of social and economic affairs, have achieved a high reputation for accuracy and objectivity. Further information about Reports and broadsheets can be obtained from The Editor, P E P, 16 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1



PUBLISHED FOR
P E P (POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PLANNING)
BY
EUROPA PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
39 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1

ARE REFUGEES AN ASSET?

The movements of population which the Nazis set in train when they first captured power have continued ever since. Starting with the exodus of Jews from Germany, the process has uprooted millions from their homes during the years of the shooting war.

It was natural that the victims of racial or political oppression should turn for assistance to Britain as a traditional sanctuary for refugees. The influx of Flemish, Dutch and Huguenot refugees in past centuries were "three great landmarks in the history of England."* New waves of refugees came from the Continent of Europe in the course of the nineteenth century. Britain benefited greatly in the past from the technical skill of these immigrants and from the fertilisation of thought which they brought about.

The future will probably show that the German and Austrian refugees from Nazi oppression have made as great a contribution to the advancement of British industry, science, the professions and the arts. During the war most of them have worked their passage and would seem to deserve well of the country of their adoption. The war has also seen the arrival on the shores of Britain of Frenchmen, Norwegians, Poles, Dutchmen, Belgians whose countries had suffered temporary defeat; most of these joined the Allied Forces. The great question for the future is: should those who so desire be allowed to remain?

Clearly most refugees will be unwilling to return without the assurance of free and full citizenship in their native country. Given these conditions it is probable that, generally speaking, the political refugees will return. The position is different with the victims of racial and religious persecution, particularly the Jews. Most of them will never go back to their countries of origin. The creed of racial hatred which resulted in the massacre of their families, in their own

*E. Lipson, 'Economic History of England.'

persecution, in the looting of their houses and in the destruction of their places of worship, must appear to many of them as too deep-rooted to disappear simultaneously with the defeat of Hitlerism. Sir Herbert Emerson, the League of Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and Director of the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees, has pointed out that compulsory repatriation of refugees from this country seems out of the question.* But are they likely to add to Britain's post-war problems or can they be considered an asset in the work of reconstruction?

It is estimated below that there will not be more than about 40,000 refugees, including 30,000 German and Austrian Jews, wishing to stay in Britain. Thus if there is a problem it is on a small scale: only prejudice can magnify it. This pamphlet suggests that those who want to stay here should be welcomed and that it would be a mistake to reject the contribution which many of the refugees could make. "There is no recorded case of a country which suffered by the assimilation of a refugee immigrant population."†

The welcome extended to them has been repaid by the services they were able to render to the country of their adoption. If we regard those who want to stay here not merely as guests to whom we offered sanctuary but as potential additions to our native stock capable of sharing the duties and the rights of British citizens, most of them should prove valuable assets. They will, for instance, be a great help in our efforts to develop new markets for our foreign trade and of new products for those markets.

Britain may be called upon to do more than assimilate the refugees in Britain at the end of the war. When the fighting stops in Europe as many as thirty million people will have to be resettled.‡ They have been torn from their homes by the Nazis. Resettlement will be a colossal task. For political and other reasons it will simply not be possible for all of them to return to their own countries. Britain and the

*Sir Herbert Emerson, 'Report to the Council and the Members of the League of Nations,' April 19th, 1943.

†Sir J. Hope Simpson, 'The Refugee Question,' p. 31.

‡E. M. Kulischer, 'Displacement of Populations in Europe,' I.L.O., 1943.

Commonwealth will have to do their fair share, along with other countries, in admitting some of these unfortunate people. The solution of the refugee problem will largely depend upon the lead given by the English-speaking nations. But a first step for Britain is to decide the future of the refugees who are already in this country.

HOW MANY WERE ADMITTED?

Immigration into Britain was practically unrestricted during the whole of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century; at that time the average level of unemployment was low. But after the last war unemployment became more pronounced: this is the fundamental fact which coloured the whole of British official policy towards aliens in the last three decades.

The result, in general, was that aliens, seen as competitors with British workmen, were no longer welcomed. The ensuing restrictive policy was greatly intensified when the Great Depression (1929-1933) produced mass unemployment on a scale hitherto unknown. The result was that the many thousands of victims of Nazi persecution who looked to Britain for refuge were confronted with barriers to immigration which only the fortunate few could scale.

The number of refugees admitted was therefore small. By December 1937 out of a total of 154,000 refugees from Nazi Germany only 5,500 had been admitted to Britain. The German occupation of Austria in March 1938, the cession of the Sudeten Areas in October 1938, the Jewish pogroms in Germany in November 1938 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 increased the number seeking refuge; and these events also led to a less restrictive policy. Even so, admissions were only granted when the authorities were satisfied that a particular refugee was of independent means, or that his support was guaranteed by private persons or charity organisations, or that a labour permit could be granted without prejudice to the employment of British labour. The main categories for admission were:

- (i) transit emigrants with definite plans for further emigration within two years and sufficient guarantee for their support during their residence in this country;
- (ii) children under sixteen, usually to be prepared for re-emigration under the care of various charitable organisations;
- (iii) persons aged 16-35, to be trained under the auspices of recognised organisations;
- (iv) persons over sixty with independent means or guarantees.

Apart from these groups only domestic servants, nurses, a number of agricultural workers, scientists and industrialists were able to gain admission by showing that they would not compete on the labour market with British subjects.

Even at the outbreak of war there were only 55,000 adult and 18,000 juvenile refugees from Germany and Austria; of these about 90 per cent. were Jews. Most of these were only temporarily admitted pending resettlement. In addition there were at the same time some 10,000 refugees from Czechoslovakia, 4,000-5,000 from Poland, and 2,000 from Spain, Italy and other countries. There could not have been more than 90,000 refugees in all when the Nazis marched into Poland.

A second consequence was that many of the refugees were either very young or old; those who were either too young or too old for work could not well compete with British workmen. It is estimated that of the 73,000 Germans and Austrians 25 per cent. were children under sixteen and about 35 per cent. over fifty years of age. Amongst the adults, the percentage of women (many were domestic servants) amounted to 57 per cent.

A third consequence was that the social and occupational composition of refugees in Britain differed in various respects from that of German refugees in general, as tabled below. Many of the refugees—many at least of the Germans and Austrians—were either wealthy or had international connec-

tions, and merchants, manufacturers, scientists and professional men were therefore strongly represented. Since labour permits for domestic service were comparatively easy to obtain, the number of refugees in this category was also high; most of these were women, but former lawyers, civil servants and doctors were also trained as men servants.

Occupations of refugees on leaving Germany (1937)

Occupation	Men %	Women %	Total %
1. Independent businessmen	37.4	1.5	21.8
2. Craftsmen	10.2	2.3	6.5
3. Clerical workers	8.6	6.2	7.5
4. Unskilled	1.3	0.3	0.8
5. Employees engaged in house- work	0.1	6.4	3.0
6. Shop assistants	0.7	—	0.4
7. Doctors	1.8	—	1.1
8. Other professions and artists	5.8	3.0	4.4
9. Farming	5.5	1.1	3.4
10. Children, school children, students	13.6	13.2	13.0
11. Married women without occu- pation	—	40.7	18.7
12. Others without occupation	6.9	19.6	12.7
13. No particulars	8.1	5.4	6.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0

The use which has been made of this potential addition to our labour supply will be examined in the second part of this pamphlet.

Changes during the war

The war brought almost to a standstill the movement of refugees from Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia. The numbers of refugees from these countries has also contracted markedly during the war for three reasons:

- (i) Natural loss. The death rate among refugees has

probably been relatively high owing to the large percentage of old persons among them and to their previous sufferings and ill-treatment. Deaths would account for an annual decrease of about 800 persons or about 3,200 during the four years of war, if the British death rate is applied to the refugee population. The loss through deaths has not been made good by gain through births, since *British* nationality is always acquired by those born in Britain whatever the nationality of their parents.

- (ii) Emigration. Between 1940 and 1943 about 11,000 refugees emigrated from this country. Most of them were holders of U.S. immigration visas, who had waited in this country until their quota numbers entitled them to enter the United States.
- (iii) Internment overseas. In June and July 1940 7,664 alien internees were transferred to Canada and Australia, the majority of them refugees. They have mostly been released by now but not all of them have returned to Britain. Three thousand five hundred are still in Canada and Australia.

In spite of these losses the war years brought a considerable increase in the number of adult refugees of all nationalities.

- (i) As mentioned before, there were, at the outbreak of war, about 18,000 child refugees under sixteen in this country. About 6,000 of them have reached the age of sixteen in the meantime and must therefore be included in the number of adult refugees.
- (ii) War-time refugee immigration to Great Britain was negligible until the invasion of Norway. But 1940 brought new waves of refugees. The Prime Minister has recently given particulars about the numbers involved. "Since the outbreak of war," he said, "there have been the following admissions of aliens who came as refugees from enemy and enemy occupied countries, namely: in 1940 about 35,000, in 1941 more than 13,000, and in 1942 over

15,000. The total number of these refugees in the three years 1940-42 thus amounted to more than 63,000. This total includes about 20,000 seamen, but it is exclusive of the very large numbers who have come as members of the Allied Forces. If all children who came with their parents were allowed for, the total of refugees who were here at the beginning of the war or who have come here since is approximately 150,000.** This estimate of 150,000 obviously does not allow for those who have left or died since the beginning of the war. Such allowance is made in our following estimate, made in the Summer of 1943.

Civilian refugees in Britain, Summer, 1943

Belgians	15,000
French	12,000
Norwegians	10,000
Czechoslovaks	10,000
Poles	8,000
Dutch	7,000
Danes	3,000
Greeks	2,000
Jugoslavs	230
Luxemburgers	200
Germans	35,000
Austrians	15,000
Allied seamen	20,000
Various	2,000

139,430

A very considerable number of these 140,000 persons, who had been admitted as civilians, joined the British or Allied Forces soon after their arrival.

More recent information was given by Mr. Morrison in the House of Commons on April 4th, 1944. About 10,000

*The Prime Minister in the House of Commons, April 7th, 1943. According to a statement in the House on December 9th, 1943, the number of alien seamen "who are largely nationals of the Allied Powers in Europe amounted to 27,000."

refugees of alien nationality (consisting mainly of volunteers for the Allied Forces) were admitted in 1943. Taking into account these additions and losses through emigration, transfer of internees to the Dominions, deaths and acquisition of British nationality by marriage, the Home Secretary arrives at the following conclusion: "The best estimate that can at present be made is that the total of civilian refugees (men, women and children) at present in this country is in the neighbourhood of 120,000 of whom some 20,000 are merchant seamen."

HOW MANY WILL BE LEFT AFTER THE WAR?

We do not, of course, know precisely how many further arrivals there will be. But the Foreign Secretary, in his Report on the 1943 Bermuda Conference on refugee questions between the British and the United States governments, stated that Great Britain was continuing to admit about 800 non-British war refugees every month. These, like most of the war refugees, will, for the most part, stay in this country only to fight. "Nearly all are admitted because they are wanted for the Armed Forces or the Merchant Service of ourselves or our Allies. Nearly all of them are people who would be repatriated after the war."*

Hardly any refugees were admitted for civilian work even when possessing rare qualifications. Many already in Spain or Portugal were rejected although their families were already in Britain and they also had jobs awaiting them.

In May, 1943, three concessions were made to meet hard cases. Subject to security precautions persons were to be considered eligible for admission if they were either:

- (i) parents of persons serving in His Majesty's or Allied Forces or in their Mercantile Marines;
- (ii) persons of other than Allied nationality, willing to join His Majesty's Forces and certified to be fit and acceptable for them;
- (iii) parents of children under sixteen who are already in Britain and who came unaccompanied.

*Miss Rathbone, M.P., House of Commons, December 14th, 1943.

"But six months later it was stated that the number of British visas authorised under these categories had been only twenty-four, eighteen and ten respectively or fifty-two in all."*

In any case new admissions are not likely to do more than replace losses through deaths and emigration. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the totals at the end of the war will certainly not be higher than 140,000. Mr. Morrison's estimate of 120,000 does, indeed, suggest that the number of refugees will be even less than this, since the total is evidently contracting.

How many of these will wish to stay? It is at once obvious that allied nationals will behave very differently from enemy aliens. It will be best to consider them separately.

Allied nationals

To take the former category first, it contains, apart from Czechs and Poles, some 70,000 persons. Most of these have arrived during the war. They only wished to find a temporary refuge or to continue the struggle for the liberation of their own countries, and fully intend to return home as soon as conditions allow. There will, of course, be some exceptions. A very few allied refugee women have, for instance, married British subjects and will probably remain. A few men have also married British women: about 1,500 Dutchmen, 1,200 Poles and 1,000 Norwegians, most of whom are in the Allied Forces, have, for example, married British women during the war. Some of them may want to stay. Then there are some young people who have built a new life in Britain which they may not want to give up. Any estimates must necessarily be vague owing to the scantiness of the evidence and to the impossibility of forecasting post-war conditions; it can be suggested, as a guess, that the number who will remain permanently will not be more than 3-6 per cent. of the total, or 2,100-4,200 persons.

*'Continuing Terror,' National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, 1944.

It is probable that a rather higher proportion of refugees from Czechoslovakia or Poland will wish to stay. Most of the 10,000 Czechoslovaks came before the war and many of them have become settled. The Sudeten Germans, of whom many were Jewish, may have other reasons for not returning. As to the Poles, there was considerable emigration from Poland, usually to France and America, in peacetime. And most of the Polish Jews suffered from persecution even before the war and may not wish to risk a repetition of the same treatment. Perhaps 10-15 per cent. of the refugees from Czechoslovakia and Poland, amounting to 2-3,000 persons in all, will hope to remain.

Germans and Austrians

About 90 per cent. of the German and Austrian refugees are Jews. The majority will probably prefer not to return to a country which has been ruled for many years by Nazis who have murdered thousands of their co-religionists and who have consistently preached racial hatred. Moreover, about 2,000 German or Austrian girls have married British nationals since 1933. More of the political refugees will probably return, as will more of the Austrians, the future independence of whose country was proclaimed at the Moscow Conference. All in all, perhaps 12-16 per cent., or 6-8,000, of these refugees (mainly Austrians) will want to go back.

Of the remaining 42-44,000, a fair proportion, estimated at 10,000-12,000, may re-emigrate after the war. These last will include refugees who (a) intend to rejoin their families in the U.S.A., in Palestine and in other countries, (b) refugees who have affidavits and definite prospects overseas, and (c) youths who have had agricultural training here with a view to farming in Palestine or the Dominions. There are thus 30,000-34,000 potentially permanent residents of German and Austrian origin in this country. To these should be added 1,200 refugees of various other nationalities.

To sum up, the number who will want to remain in Britain will, on the basis of the above estimates, be between

35,300 and 42,400, or, roughly, 40,000 persons—less than one person per 1,000 British nationals. The conclusion which stands out is that the numbers involved will be very small—equivalent to the population of Dover or Macclesfield.

It follows that it should be possible to absorb the numbers in question without difficulty.

Do we need them after the war?

Humanitarian considerations make it imperative to solve the refugee problem after victory and so to reduce the human misery created by Nazi rule in Europe.

But purely utilitarian reasons also make it desirable that the 40,000 foreigners—including 30,000 German and Austrian Jews—who have been admitted during the last decade and wish to stay here should be given an opportunity of becoming permanent residents. This policy should be pursued mainly for two reasons:

- (i) The declining British population trend would be favourably, even though slightly, affected.
- (ii) Their absorption is likely to have favourable effects on our economic, cultural and scientific life.

For the last twenty years or so our population has been failing to reproduce itself. The small increase in total numbers which occurred during this period was partly the result of an abnormal age composition—favourable to relatively high birth-rates and low death-rates—which is bound to disappear within a few years. Partly it was due to immigration. From 1932 to 1939 England and Wales had on the average a yearly net gain of 65,000 immigrants; that is to say there were every year 65,000 more immigrants than emigrants. Of course, only a small part of them were refugees. During the Depression most new arrivals were British nationals who re-emigrated from the Dominions and Colonies, but this return movement had markedly slowed down during the years of economic recovery before

the outbreak of the war. The number of British emigrants from this country simultaneously showed a rising tendency. In 1938 and 1939 immigration into this country consisted mainly of refugees from Central Europe.

What about the future? Is it likely that after the war our dwindling numbers will be reinforced through immigration from the British Commonwealth as they were in the 'thirties? In fact the opposite is very likely to occur. The Dominions have decided to encourage immigration from Great Britain after the war. Their rapid industrialisation offers powerful incentives to British workmen with initiative. Moreover, knowledge of the favourable economic conditions in the U.S. and the Dominions has been spread by the great number of U.S.A. and Dominion soldiers stationed in this country. We must therefore expect that after the war an adverse balance of migration will result in additional losses of population.

Lord Cranborne, reporting to the House of Lords (24th May, 1944) on the recent meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, pointed out that he regarded as a particularly encouraging feature of these meetings that there was abundant evidence that all Dominions would like to take British emigrants, so far as it was in any way possible. "We have," he said, "made it abundantly clear that notwithstanding the fact that our population in these islands is tending perhaps rather to decrease than to increase, yet on broad Imperial grounds, we do feel that we should encourage and assist as far as practicable inter-Imperial migration."

Population forecasts suggest that in the future the excess of deaths over births may lead to a population decrease of about 20 per cent. within one generation. British emigration to the Dominions may be desirable in the interest of the Commonwealth, but it would undoubtedly aggravate the British population problem. In order to offset this loss, the permanent settlement of refugee immigrants who wish to stay here should therefore be encouraged.

The presence of a very high percentage of aliens in any country might in certain circumstances have undesirable

effects. But in Britain the percentage is not high in comparison with other countries. We know that the total number of aliens in Britain was very much smaller than in other countries before the refugee emigration began in 1933.

Number of aliens in various European countries.

Country	Year	Total Nos.	Percentage of Aliens
Switzerland.	1930	355,522	8.7
France . . .	1931	2,891,168	6.9
Austria . . .	1930	316,982	3.9
Holland . . .	1930	175,850	2.2
Germany . . .	1933	756,760	1.2
Great Britain .	1931	183,869	0.4

We also know that by 1943 the total alien population in Great Britain (including refugees, all permanent residents of non-British nationality, allied seamen, etc.) had probably not risen to more than 290,000.*

If we allow for 100,000 refugees and for a number of other aliens who are likely to leave the country after the war, Britain will be left with an alien population not exceeding that of 1931, and less than in any other census year since 1881.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE EFFECTS?

Quite apart from the quantitative aspect, have the refugees who wish to stay here proved an asset or a liability? On the basis of the evidence which will be discussed in these pages, there is only one conclusion it is possible to draw. By and large refugees have proved a valuable element in our society: they have made contributions to our national life in industry, in the universities, in the arts and in the world of science. During the war they have acquitted themselves well.

Before the outbreak of war the majority of the refugees were not working, because they were not allowed to. They

*Two hundred and seventy-seven thousand, one hundred and sixteen persons were registered with the police on March 31st, 1943. Allowance has to be made for children not subject to registration, and for a number of persons who have died or emigrated but are still registered.

had been admitted on condition that they did not enter any kind of employment, paid or unpaid. Permits to work had only been granted to about 6,600 domestic servants (mainly women) and nurses and to a small number of professional workers, industrialists, technical experts and highly qualified skilled workers.

On the outbreak of war Germans and Austrians—about 80 per cent. of all refugees—were regarded as enemy aliens, and were consequently subject to severe restrictions. But after the investigation of every individual case before tribunals, practically all genuine refugees were recognised as refugees from Nazi oppression and exempted from internment and some other restrictions. They were, however, offered little opportunity of taking part in the war effort.

At the end of November 1939 the Government, faced with a rapidly growing demand for labour, relaxed the rules concerning the employment of aliens. They could still not be employed in various key industries directly connected with the war effort, but foreigners, including friendly “enemy” aliens who had passed the tribunals, were allowed to register for work at employment exchanges. Labour permits were issued wherever work was available and there were no suitable British workers for the job. In the prohibited employments an alien could only get work by first obtaining a permit from the Auxiliary War Services Department; relatively few such permits were issued to German and Austrian refugees. But 2,000 to 3,000 refugees found jobs every month after November 1939 and this absorption into employment continued at a growing speed until May 1940 when the situation changed once more.

The Government also decided in November 1939 to recruit refugees as volunteers into the unarmed battalions of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. This offer met with an immediate response, and refugee labour companies did useful work behind the lines of the B.E.F. until the collapse of France. At one crucial juncture their Commanding Officer, Col. Arthur Evans, M.P., decided to arm them on the spot. He told the House of Commons (July 10th, 1940) that

“they conducted themselves in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the British Army.”

This process of absorption came to a sudden end in May 1940 during the invasion of Holland and Belgium. The Government found it necessary to reverse its whole policy; every refugee was for a time regarded as a potential fifth columnist. Between May and June most of the adult male refugees between sixteen and sixty and a considerable number of men and women over sixty were interned.

Italian nationals, most of whom were not refugees but had been residents over a period of years, were also interned. Severe new restrictions were imposed on those aliens who were not interned.

After the first shock, and under the pressure of public opinion, the Government realised the injustice and the wastage of goodwill and human resources implied in the new policy. White Papers published in July and August 1940 provided for the release of a great number of refugees. By December 1940 8,165 out of 27,615 internees (not all of whom were refugees) and by December 1942, nearly 20,000 internees had been released; at present internment is confined to a few exceptional cases (200-300 in all). Release of friendly enemy aliens was accompanied by the removal of many of the obstacles to the full participation of refugees in the war effort.

Recruitment for the Alien Pioneer Companies was resumed. Much later on, all units of the British Army, with the exception of the Royal Corps of Signals and the Chemical Warfare branch, were opened to aliens under certain conditions.* In consequence a considerable number of refugees succeeded in being transferred from the unarmed Pioneers to Field Units.

The new attitude of the Government to civil employment was illustrated by the following statement of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour (November 27th, 1941):

*Statement by the Secretary of State for War on April 22nd, 1943.

“The Government recognises that in the foreign population of this country we have a valuable addition to our man and woman power of which the most effective use should be made with the same wage standards and working conditions and the same social services as those which apply to British subjects doing the same work. Certain security safeguards are indispensable, such as a special permit for some kinds of work. Moreover, as in the case of British subjects, the employment which can be offered is not always of the kind to which the individual concerned has been accustomed. No genuinely friendly foreigner is debarred from getting a permit, and since the general measure of internment affected many who are entirely friendly to the Allied cause, there is no ground for regarding a man with suspicion on account of internment from which he has been released.”

The International Labour Branch

In order to promote the employment of foreign workers the Ministry of Labour set up an International Labour Branch in the autumn of 1940. In June 1941 it was empowered to undertake a special registration of foreign men between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five and of foreign women between the ages of sixteen and fifty.

Forty thousand five hundred and fifty Allied civilians (excluding Americans, Russians and Chinese) and 42,000 former German and Austrian nationals were registered under the International Labour Force Orders. Civilians of various other nationalities, e.g., Italian, Danish, Finnish, Hungarian, Rumanian and Japanese, who became liable to registration later, have to be added to this number. At present there are approximately 120,000 persons under the care of the International Labour Branch. Among Allied nationals there are about four times more men than women registered; of all the Germans and Austrians registered about 60 per cent. are women.

Every attempt has been made to ensure, in close co-operation with the Allied Governments and the refugee

organisations, that the best use is made of the available skill and experience. The International Labour Branch appealed to employers to take on foreigners wherever possible. Special employment exchanges were established in the London area for certain Allied nationals and for Germans and Austrians; these are now the main agencies for directing aliens into suitable employment. A substantial number of aliens were transferred from less to more essential war work.

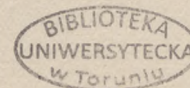
Selected aliens were eventually admitted to the Government Training Centres. By September 1943 approximately 2,600 aliens, 1,500 of them of enemy nationality, had been trained for the engineering industries. “The great majority have not only responded well during training but have subsequently proved a valuable addition to our labour force.”*

Considerable progress has been made in utilising the services of aliens with special professional, technical or academic experience. By the Medical Register (Temporary Registration) Orders of 1941 Allied doctors—about 700 in all—were admitted to registration by the General Medical Council after selection for approved employment. They serve with the British and Allied Forces, with civil defence organisations, in hospitals and in public health services, but not in private practice, except as assistants. Evidence of similar progress in the employment of German and Austrian refugee doctors will be discussed below.

Shortly after registration 82.5 per cent. of the men and 60 per cent. of the women were in employment. “Since 1941 it has been found possible to increase the opportunities open to aliens to engage in war work and the number who now remain unemployed is negligible. It included some who by reason of health, inability to speak English or inadaptability by reasons of previous occupation, are well nigh unemployable.”† The consistent efforts made by the Ministry, by the various refugee organisations and by the aliens themselves

*The Minister of Labour, House of Commons, 23rd September, 1943.

†Minister of Labour, *loc. cit.*



have led to a considerable change-over from non-essential employment to war work. This is reflected in the not yet complete results of a sample inquiry recently undertaken by the International Labour Branch. They show that of 11,432 men, 88 per cent. were in work of national importance or utility, 21 per cent. of the total had been transferred to work of greater importance, and only 12 per cent. were students or unavailable for transfer. Among 13,460 registered women whose cases had been examined 87 per cent. were doing work of national importance, and 13 per cent. were students or unavailable for transfer.

The German-Austrian labour force

Since the German and Austrian refugees form about three-quarters of those who want to stay here, their contribution to the war effort is of particular interest.

There were in 1943, 42,000 German and Austrian nationals registered with the German-Austrian Labour Exchange, about 40 per cent. of whom were men (16-65 years of age) and 60 per cent. women (16-50). There is no statistical evidence for all registrations; certain conclusions can nevertheless be drawn from a detailed scrutiny of a random sample consisting of 5,000 German and Austrian men's registration cards. "It was found that nearly 3 per cent. were under eighteen years of age, approximately 18 per cent. between eighteen and thirty-five, and the remainder between thirty-six and sixty-five."* This age structure is of course quite abnormal even if we allow for the fact that the figures do not include all those who have joined the Forces before registration date (estimated at 4,000-5,000). This abnormality must be due to the preference given by the immigration authorities to old persons and children.

All these refugees were seriously handicapped in finding jobs equal to their capabilities; they had to overcome prejudices; and they had to adapt themselves to unfamiliar environments—a process which is always difficult for elderly people. Bearing this in mind, the contribution of the

*The Minister of Labour, op. cit.

German and Austrian refugees to the war effort, as reflected in the table below, can be considered by no means unsatisfactory. Practically all members of the Forces had joined up before the date of registration and are therefore not included.

Estimate of occupations of German and Austrian civilian refugees (Spring 1943).

1. Essential work and war service	63 per cent.
2. Unessential work	23 „
3. Students	13 „
4. Unemployed	11 „

1. Ten per cent. of those engaged in essential work were employers.
2. Unessential work includes work of general utility, for example waiters, hotel cooks, skilled clerks, lawyers, journalists.
3. A great number of the students have been transferred to essential work since the spring of 1943 or are serving in the Forces.
4. Seventy-nine per cent. of the unemployed were in the age groups 46-65. The rest were mainly persons recently released from internment or suffering from ill-health.

Striking changes have taken place in the occupational structure of the pre-war refugee population. Clerks and merchants, commercial travellers and journalists, manufacturers and lawyers, are now working in the fields and factories. This shift from sedentary to manual occupation is of course most marked in the younger age groups, but it often occurred also at an advanced age.* Barely 16 per cent. of the refugees were manual workers before they entered this country; not counting those in the Forces 38 per cent. are now in *essential* manual work. And a new generation is growing up which combines good education with experience at the bench, on a tractor or in the Armed Forces.

This occupational shift is reflected in the relatively large number of Jewish refugees employed in agriculture. In 1939

*For instance 37 per cent. of the trainees in the Government training centres were over forty-five.

there were 2,561 refugees under the care of the Agricultural Committee of the Central Council of Jewish Refugees. Since then 326 have joined the forces, while 1,079 took up essential industrial work or nursing, volunteered for the mines or emigrated. The remaining 1,156 (25 per cent. women) are still engaged in agriculture. Most of them intend to emigrate to Palestine or to the Dominions as soon as circumstances permit.

For the older refugees, the transfer from intellectual to manual work may be only temporary. After the war most will not want, nor be able, to continue as manual workers. But it should be possible to make use of their former experience in suitable ways.

Generally speaking, considerable headway has been made in finding adequate employment for refugees with special qualifications. But there have been great difficulties to overcome. Until recently, for instance, the placing of German refugee doctors had proved very slow. The Nazis, over a period of years, prevented as many as 10,000 "non-Aryan" doctors from practising in Germany; the British Government recognising the high standard of the services most of them were able to render, was prepared in 1938 to allow 500 of them to practise in this country. Yet the British Medical Association succeeded in reducing the number to fifty, in spite of the inadequate number of doctors in certain parts of the country.* Dentists were in a similar position. In September 1939 there were among German and Austrian refugees, about 1,500 doctors and dentists; and in addition, there were 200 doctors from Czechoslovakia.† But in July 1940 only 460 foreign practitioners of *all nationalities* had Home Office permits to practise. The result was that a considerable number of highly qualified doctors had to leave this country in order to find work.

At present nearly all refugee doctors are for the time being allowed to do medical work in hospitals, or as assistants in private practice, and have—apart from some older doctors—

*D. F. Buxton, 'The Economics of the Refugee Problem.'

†F. Lafitte, 'The Internment of Aliens.'

found appropriate employment for the duration. There are, however, still some sixty qualified German refugee dentists who are excluded from work in their profession because the General Medical Council will not accept them for permanent registration and because there is no temporary register on which they can be included.

Such instances indicate that it may still be possible to make better use of the refugee labour force. But it can be said that in spite of inherent difficulties refugees have been successfully absorbed into war-time employment.

This economic absorption has had important social consequences. As long as, owing to the existing restrictions, most of the refugees had to lead a life of forced idleness, they mostly remained isolated from the native population and had little opportunity of becoming acquainted with the British way of life. Their actual war jobs, their membership of British Trade Unions, and their service in Civil Defence, have provided such opportunities and tended to remove mutual prejudices.

British ways of thought have in turn been influenced by the refugees. There can be no doubt that since 1933, and especially since 1939, Britain's traditional insularity has decreased. The presence of enemy guns and enemy aerodromes across the Channel have played their grim part in jolting us out of our former attitude. And, less sensationally, the refugees, first in the homes of friendly British people, and since 1940 working in the factories and Forces, have helped to teach us anew how close are our links with Europe.

Refugee Industrialists

In 1939 there were in existence more than 400 factories established by refugees*; most of them had successfully overcome initial difficulties and were expanding. Notable amongst them were the various textile and auxiliary undertakings (manufacturing ladies' dresses, mackintoshes, buttons, underclothing, Zipp fasteners), chemical and pharmaceutical works, and firms manufacturing toys and imitation jewellery. The engineering, metallurgical, electrical and

*cf. 'Refugees and Industry,' C. C. Salway.

armament industries were well represented. Some of the industrialists, especially in the earlier years after 1933, were able to bring with them substantial amounts of capital and in some cases special machines not obtainable in this country.

The bulk of their production apparently replaced goods which were formerly imported or created new export markets for British goods. At present about 80 per cent. of the refugee factories are engaged on war work, but after the war they will certainly revert to their original purpose.

The manufacture of industrial diamonds, an industry new to Britain, owes much to the initiative of Belgian and Dutch refugees. In trying to transfer to London this vital industry, indispensable to the making of modern armaments and to precision engineering in general, these refugees were faced with a serious shortage of diamond cutters and tool makers. They then trained many British workers—some of them war invalids—to cut industrial diamonds and to manufacture the special tools required to hold them.* There should be good post-war prospects for this new diamond industry.

About one-third of the factories established by refugees were in the Depressed Areas of South Wales, Tyneside and Scotland, particularly in the Treforest and Team Valley Trading Estates. These Trading Estates were established in order to attract light industries and so to provide a better balance of local employment opportunities. For these areas had depended almost entirely on coal mining, shipbuilding and other heavy industries catering for export markets which had contracted. Modern factories were built by the Government and offered for sale or rent on favourable terms; valuable privileges in respect of rates and public services were also accorded. These schemes attracted relatively few British but relatively many refugee industrialists. The personnel of these undertakings, apart from a few key men, was recruited from British workers; there were on an average 25 British workers for every single alien worker. British men and women who had been unemployed for many years were retrained for the work.

*'Diamonds Glitter in Industry.' *Imperial Review*, March 1944.

The importance of these refugee industries for the post-war development of one of the former Depressed Areas has been stressed by the Welsh Reconstruction Advisory Council. In its First Interim Report to the Minister without Portfolio (April 1944, H.M.S.O. 2s. 0d.), it was pointed out that "the commercial successes already achieved" (by the refugee firms in the Welsh Trading Estates) "despite all obstacles are remarkable. . . . A growing stream of goods of small volume and high value, particularly suitable for export, could be made available from this source in the post-war period". The Committee urges the necessity of various constructive measures if these potentialities are to be realised in the form of actual export trades. Such measures include: an early restoration of premises which have been requisitioned for war purposes, the provision of rapid training facilities for additional workers and priority in the supply of raw materials and in the execution of the building work necessary for the extension of factories.

The Report continues: "We consider that these refugee firms have a particularly useful role to play in the rehabilitation of the devastated countries of Europe. Their intimate knowledge of the tastes and needs of consumers in Central Europe should be available for use in the preparation and execution of programmes for the production, in advance, of stocks of clothing and other essentials ready for immediate despatch to re-occupied territories. *We recommend that consideration be given to this by the Board of Trade and to the possibilities of placing now contingent orders for approved lines, production to commence at the earliest moment permitted by the general war situation.* This would introduce an element of certainty into the post-war planning of these industrialists and strengthen their hands in negotiating the necessary post-war priorities."

The contribution of refugee industrialists to the development of British industry is not confined to the setting up of new industries. Relatively few refugee industrialists were able to establish new firms. Permits were mainly granted for the production either of goods which hitherto had been

imported from the Continent or of articles for export which British industry was not at the time equipped to make. Moreover in certain industries the large amounts of capital required prevented refugees from starting new enterprises. In such industries a number of refugees with special experience joined British firms as partners, technical specialists, production managers or export advisers. Their acquaintance with continental methods and their intimate knowledge of certain export markets often proved useful. Several refugee experts who had accumulated most valuable experience in the electrical and engineering industries, in the production of plastics and in the coal and fuel industries of Germany are now working with British concerns.

Merchants also succeeded in transferring to Britain export business which had formerly been centred in other countries. Britain benefited from the decline of Leipzig as an international fur market because refugees started as many as eighty new fur firms here with a capital of about £750,000 and an annual turnover of over £4 millions. In the same way some refugees brought with them a practical knowledge of foreign markets and, having moved their businesses to London, bought, according to the Home Secretary (February, 1939), "British instead of foreign goods for export to their customers."

The decline in the volume of our export trade during the inter-war period was, it is now widely agreed, partly due to a lack of flexibility in the methods of our export manufacturers and merchants. It has been said that we relied too much on Britain's deservedly high reputation for quality goods and that we did not study export markets with sufficient care: too often the customer was asked to accept what we had to sell rather than what he required. In this connection refugee exporters may in certain industries have a good deal to teach British traders.

The Home Secretary stated in the House of Commons in December, 1938, that whereas 11,000 refugees had been admitted in recent years, it was known that refugee employers had given direct employment to 15,000 British workers. This

figure may have been an under-estimate: Sir John Hope Simpson, for instance, estimated the total number of British workers employed by German refugees in the autumn of 1938 at 25,000. A further substantial increase has taken place since 1938.

Refugee Contribution to Science and Arts.

"There is no reason", said the Home Secretary in 1939, "why the world of thought should differ from the world of industry and why, as a result of wisely directed help to the refugee scholars, we should not help to make this country the intellectual centre of the world." In practice it is difficult to measure the contributions made by refugee scholars and scientists. Great efforts have been made to provide jobs for university teachers by the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning and other bodies. In addition, a number of scientists—some of them of world-wide reputation—found openings in this country without the assistance of this Society. Yet of eight refugee Nobel Prize-winners seven went to the United States.

In May, 1944, roughly 600 former university teachers who had come to Britain as refugees were registered with the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. The table below indicates that the great majority had found suitable employment. About 11 per cent. were, it is true, unemployed or could not be traced. But most of the 'unemployed' are too old for paid positions or are in serious ill-health. Of those not traced most are allied nationals of whom many are employed by their own Governments.

DISPLACED UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Displaced from:			
Austria	95	Italy	26
Belgium	3	Poland	64
Czechoslovakia	55	Portugal	1
France	15	Spain	15
Germany	308	Miscellaneous	13
Hungary	4		
			599

Placed:

Universities, Academic and Scientific Institutions, and Hospitals (Research)	244
Private Research, Private Teaching, Composition and Performance	29
Medical Practice and Health Services Practice Industry, Commerce, Private Medical and Law Practice, Journalism and Government Training Schemes	81
Schools, Evening Schools and Technical Colleges	79
Government Posts—British and Allied	17
B.B.C.	41
Army	14
Unemployed, or Not Traced	23
	71
	—
	599

It should be noted that at the present time many of those concerned are occupying temporary posts: e.g. school teachers who are temporarily replacing British teachers in the Forces; doctors who for the duration only are allowed to practice in hospitals or in partnership with a British doctor; assistant lecturers in universities; and those employed by Ministries on special war activities, or in the B.B.C. They should continue to be employed up to the limit of their capacities in peace-time.

The Prime Minister once said (August 20th, 1940) "Since the Germans drove the Jews out and lowered their technical standards, our science is definitely ahead of theirs"; he gave point to the fact that their loss was our gain. But the contribution of individual refugees before and during the war cannot yet be accurately assessed. It is known that four refugee scientists have been made Fellows of the Royal Society. It is known that many are engaged in secret government work. A good number of refugee scientists have been incorporated in special teams engaged on medical or other research; a refugee, Dr. Chain, was, for instance, engaged on penicillin research at Oxford as Professor Florey's chief

assistant. Among outstanding individual contributions by refugee scholars that of Professor José Trueta can be mentioned: applying the knowledge he gained in the Spanish civil war, he has revolutionised the treatment of fractures.

The Warburg Institute, formerly in Hamburg, found a home in London after Hitler came to power. It is mainly devoted to the promotion of research on the survival and revival of classical influence in art, life and religion. This unique institute, with its library of 90,000 volumes, has since 1934 become a centre of research into Art History and has considerable influence through its publications and exhibitions. It is now being incorporated into London University.

The long-term effect of the work of refugee artists is still more difficult to evaluate. The centuries-old tradition that England always welcomed foreign artists—Handel, Mendelssohn and Sir Charles Halle are only three examples, in the one field of music, of aliens who once enriched British life—no longer held good. Nevertheless, refugee artists were able to make a substantial contribution to the arts in Britain. The high standard of Glyndebourne Opera was, for instance, due to the presence of refugee musicians; British architecture and design benefited from the break-up of the famous Bauhaus at Dessau and the Jooss Ballet became well-known in many British cities.

REFUGEES IN POST-WAR BRITAIN

The record of the refugees in Britain before and during the war clearly suggests that they have been an asset to this country in some of the most critical years in its history. Are there any reasons why they should be less valuable and less welcome after the war?

Will they displace Englishmen from employment? On the contrary, past experience has shown that refugees actually created employment. Although fear of aggravating British unemployment was at the root of official policy before the war it is certain that refugees helped to raise the general level

of employment by transferring purchasing power to this country or by taking paid jobs which could not be filled by any British person; where they lived on charity they spent at least some money which would otherwise have been retained as savings: and as employers they created direct employment. They are likely to have the same effect after the war, especially in connection with our efforts to regain and expand our foreign trade. The pioneer work of refugee industrialists and technical experts in establishing light industries in the former Depressed Areas must be carried on after the war.

If Britain enjoys full employment after the war, and there is unanimity on this as an aim of post-war policy, there should be no refugee problem as we knew it before the war. In this case we should need all the labour that could be found.

Those of advanced age may experience difficulties in finding or keeping their jobs, unless they have special qualifications. But they will depend to a much lesser extent on charity or public assistance than before the war; there will in most cases be younger members of the family or friends able and willing to support them if this should prove necessary.

Many refugees should be highly useful in the period of post-war reconstruction. As recent Parliamentary debates have shown there will for some years be a serious shortage of doctors, dentists and teachers—a shortage which is likely to hold-up important social reforms. It would certainly be unwise to aggravate the shortage by depriving refugees in these occupations of their jobs.

The Times said (April 3, 1942):

“Spectacular services have been rendered in the past to British industry and British science by aliens who have sought a refuge and a permanent home in this country. Nothing warrants the supposition that Britain can afford to deprive herself of such services in the future.”

The quid pro quo.

But it would not be fair to retain any number of refugees in this country unless they are given the opportunity of

becoming British subjects. It would not be just to leave these people without full civic rights. After their past experience it is unlikely that in these circumstances the most valuable members of our alien population would be prepared to stay. They can only be expected to identify themselves with Britain if they have a fair chance of sharing both the rights and the obligations of the British people.

The law is that British citizenship may be granted to an alien applicant if he is of good character, has resided in His Majesty's dominions for at least five years, has an adequate knowledge of the English language and wants to reside in His Majesty's dominions or to enter the service of the Crown.* Since all the pre-war refugees will soon have been in this country for more than five years they will in due course be eligible for naturalisation. It has been administrative practice for many years to consider only applications which are sponsored by four British-born householders. Since the distant days of May, 1940, the work of examining and dealing with applications for naturalisation has been suspended except in a few exceptional cases, so that a backlog of thousands of applications will have accumulated by the end of the war. During the last three years* exceptions were made in only fifty cases, mainly persons in important Government positions.†

This policy has undoubtedly caused hardship, for example to refugees in the British Forces. In so far as they have acquitted themselves well they surely have a moral claim to British citizenship.‡ But so far they have received no assurance that their claims will be considered after the war with due despatch. Those who joined the Forces soon after their admission to this country may be unable to find four British-born sponsors. In such cases good conduct and recommendation by the commanding officer should be sufficient. Such a procedure would require no alteration of the Naturalisation Act. Applications could be dealt with at

*British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914.

†The Home Secretary in the House on September 23rd, 1943.

‡Aliens in the U.S. Forces are automatically naturalised after three months of service.

once without involving the Home Office in too much burdensome administrative work.

At present the Minister decides, at his own discretion, whether a refugee will be granted naturalisation, allowed to stay here on sufferance, or compelled to leave the country. He is not given the reasons for an unfavourable decision and has no opportunity to appeal if he or his sponsors feel that he has not been given a fair deal. Many refugees may believe that citizenship and legal security will be granted to those able to comply with the requirements of the Naturalisation Act, but many more are likely to be less optimistic. No refugee can be certain that good character, good conduct or any creditable achievement will be rewarded by the grant of naturalisation. Without citizenship they remain outsiders and without legal security. Those who feel confident of being welcomed as future citizens in the U.S. or elsewhere can hardly be blamed if they prefer re-emigration to being a stateless alien. It is easy to see that such re-emigration would be detrimental to Britain. Those who would have made the best citizens would be the first to leave and the first to be admitted to the United States; while those who have less regard for the community's welfare would probably have less objection to their inferior status. Two measures would greatly help to remove these misgivings.

1. The provision of opportunity for reconsideration of unfavourable decisions. Aliens have taken their share in the war effort. If they have done so they can clearly claim that the decision upon their future should not be left in any degree to the hazards of administrative practice or to sudden changes in the political atmosphere. If their application is rejected they should be told why and given an opportunity of putting their cases before a tribunal.
2. A statement of post-war aliens policy would also give great encouragement. The Prime Minister, the present Home Secretary and his predecessor,

the Minister of Labour and other members of the Government, have indicated on various occasions that they fully appreciate the valuable work of the refugees before and during the war. This attitude is not only reflected in their statements in the House, some of which have been quoted in this pamphlet: it is also shown in their policy. Since internees were released, refugees have been able to take an ever bigger part in the war effort: most of the restrictions have been removed. It would be fitting to endorse appreciation with a statement of the Government's post-war aliens policy.

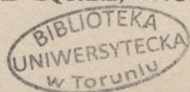
The conclusion is that refugees are likely to be an asset in post-war Britain and that there can be no conflict of interest between the British people as a whole and the refugees who want to stay here. But it must be realised that only if refugees are given a fair chance shall we enjoy the full benefit of the services they are able to render to the community.

SUMMARY

1. The object of the pamphlet is to answer the question, "Should the refugees who wish to stay in Britain after the war be allowed to do so?"
2. The fear of aggravating British unemployment was at the root of the Government's unwillingness to admit more refugees before the war. At its outbreak there were not more than 90,000 refugees in Britain; 73,000 of these were from Germany or Austria, and most of these were Jewish. Emigration and death has now reduced the number of Germans and Austrians to less than 50,000
3. About 75,000 Allied nationals have been admitted during the war. Relatively few of them wish to stay permanently in Britain.
4. Only about 40,000 refugees will want to become permanent residents; about 80 per cent. of these are former German and Austrian nationals.

5. Britain's population is bound to fall. Emigration to the Dominions would enhance the decline. Encouraging refugees to remain would help in small measure to offset British emigration.
6. During the war most refugees have found employment. They have contributed to the war effort.
7. Refugees have developed new industries in Britain. In peacetime they created additional employment and assisted British exports.
8. Refugee scholars and artists have enriched Britain's cultural life. Refugee scientists have cooperated in the advance of war-time science.
9. The record of the refugees before and during the war suggests, in short, that they have been an asset to Britain. The services they are able to render should be no less valuable after the war.
10. If we in Britain want refugees to stay they should be granted equality of rights with British subjects. Those eligible for naturalisation should be granted citizenship.

Published for
PEP (Political & Economic Planning)
by
EUROPA PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
39 BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.1



FOR FURTHER READING

- Sir John Hope Simpson. "The Refugee Problem." Oxford University Press, 1939. 25s.
- Sir John Hope Simpson. "The Refugee Question." Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs. No. 13. 3d.
- Sir Norman Angell and D. F. Buxton. "You and the Refugee." Penguin Special, 1939. 9d.
- F. Lafitte. "The Internment of Aliens." Penguin Special, 1940. 9d.
- C. C. Salway. "Refugees in Industry." Williams & Norgate, London. 1s.
- R. S. Walshaw. "Migration to and from the British Isles." Jonathan Cape, 1941. 5s.

PEP P

No. 1. MEDICAL CARE FOR CITIZENS.

Published September 1944.

A constructive commentary on the Government plans for the reorganisation of the British health services. It analyses present defects and discusses organisation under the heads of *Structure, General Practitioners, Hospitals and Consultants, and Medical Personnel.*

No. 2. DEMOBILISATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

Published September 1944.

Which Servicemen will be demobilised first? Will they, or anyone else, be unemployed immediately after the war? These questions are answered.

No. 3. EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL

Published September 1944.

Must Britain once again endure unemployment after the first phase of reconstruction is passed? This pamphlet takes up the story from No. 2, *Demobilisation and Employment*, and puts forward a policy for ensuring that there is a job for everyone who wants one.

No. 4. ARE REFUGEES AN ASSET?

Published September 1944.

The pamphlet answers the question: Should refugees who want to stay in Britain after the war be allowed to do so?

PUBLISHED FOR
PEP (POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PLANNING)
BY

EUROPA PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
39 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1

