

HUGE REFUGEE PROBLEM IS REVEALED AT EVIAN

Safety of Million Persons at Lowest Estimate Weighed by Conference, With an Agreement Foreseen

By CLARENCE K. STREIT
Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

EVIAN, France, July 9.—What the United States also insists that the extent of the problem facing this committee shall be independent of the Intergovernmental Committee of the League, though "complementary" to and cooperating with Geneva's existing refugee organizations. The British prefer to tackle the problem through the existing League mechanism and along the narrower lines proposed in May by the League Council. The Council would consolidate only the existing organizations—the autonomous Nansen Office and the League's High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany—in one high commission directly under the Council. This commission would be limited, however, to those refugees to which these existing organizations are already strictly confined, though it would do in this field the same work as the committee proposed by the United States would do as regards passports, emigration, settlement and so forth.

The only estimate of the extent of the problem that any of the delegates has ventured to make publicly in the meeting is that with which Myron C. Taylor of the United States, permanent president of the conference, opened it. "Some millions of people as this meeting convenes are actually potentially without a country. The number is increasing daily."

When the writer asked a high European authority on the refugee problem its extent, he held it impossible to answer, saying: "Every Jew east, north and south of Switzerland must be rated as a potential refugee. They number 5,000,000 to 6,000,000, excluding Russia."

"Then there are the wartime refugees still on the hands of the Nansen Office, whom it estimates at 500,000. Then there are at least 30,000 anti-Fascist Italians and the Spaniards, with the number of the latter likely to be heavily increased at any time."

A Problem for the Future
It is evident that the problem, estimated on this broad basis, runs up into the millions. But on this basis it faces the conference as a question of whether and how to establish machinery to deal with it as it develops, that is, as or if the potential refugees become actual refugees.

The actual refugee problem has been pared down by the conference for the purposes of this meeting. Although the present League refugees from Germany, including Austria. Even so, it nears 1,000,000 at the lowest. Before the Nazi reign the Jews in Germany and Austria totaled about 800,000, and all these must be counted as actual or potential refugees except those who are already definitely settled elsewhere—perhaps 115,000 of the 150,000 who it is estimated have already left are definitely settled. Further deductions may be made by those who do not believe that Jews will be forced or even allowed to leave Germany.

On the other hand, one needs to add to the list the non-Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria who, it is estimated, total 10,000,000, including those who have already left. Then one needs to add, too, all those of mixed German and Jewish blood, for they are not spared by racism, and they alone are estimated to number at least 1,000,000.

More Urgent Cases Stressed
It is evidently hard to get away from millions when one is considering the refugees, but it can be and is being done by concentrating on the more urgent cases and on the problem of settling them in new homes.

Even so, the World Jewish Congress, in a memorandum submitted to the conference, estimates the task as "nothing less than to find new homes for at least 200,000 to 300,000 Jews from Germany and Austria within the next few years."

One can reduce the extent of the problem still lower by figuring only on continuing pretty much on the basis of the past few years. Since Adolf Hitler came to power about 150,000 refugees have actually left Germany, or about 30,000 a year. To a good many delegates here the practical problem is to keep the number down to 30,000 yearly to continue to handle them.

The extent of the problem from another angle comprises mainly three things: First, providing the refugees with passport and other documents replacing the legal status they have lost; second, actually helping or allowing them to settle in their homes, and third, getting Germany to let them finance their forced migration with their own money.

The first point is the only one that is important to the anti-Fascist Italians, for example, whereas the third point is of the greatest practical importance to the refugees to whom this session is confined.

Attitude of the U. S.
Proposals to meet all these questions are now confined mainly to the preliminary problem of mechanism—whether to tackle them inside or outside the League of Nations and on a broader or narrower scale. One may divide them along the same lines into American and British proposals.

The United States would have the present Intergovernmental Committee here of thirty-two nations from which, it is important to note, all actual or potential refugee-producing countries are excluded. It would become a permanent body meeting regularly in Paris and equipped with a permanent secretariat.

The United States insists that the committee shall "concern itself with all refugees wherever government intolerance shall have created a refugee problem," though it is willing to have the present session deal directly only with those

What of the Situation

That the September assembly does about the Council's proposals depends on the result at Evian. The situation boils down to this: The world's refugee mechanism is now in the process of complete reorganization, and, thanks largely to the entry into this work of the United States Government, which had hitherto kept aloof, the main question now is whether the refugee work shall be organized in the future predominantly inside or outside the League.

AT EVIAN



Myron C. Taylor was selected to head the meeting on refugees.

Whether it would do so, however, is doubtful in view of the strong British desire to restrict the problem and in view of the Council's attitude toward Italian refugees while Italy was in the Council and toward Russian refugees since Russia entered the Council.

The Council has the disadvantage of including such other potential refugee producers as Poland and Rumania and exposing the refugee work more to general political bargaining.

Because of the financial question, immediate refugee work depends above all for its success on contact with Germany, which the League is handicapped in making.

Finally, the United States, which is now the mainspring in the pro-refugee movement, would seem to be in a weaker tactical position to help the refugees through the League than outside it.

Other Basic Questions

While the Evian meeting discusses this preliminary problem of mechanism, there await, of course, the basic concrete questions of where to settle more refugees from Germany and of how to get Berlin to let them take their money with them to finance their migration.

No government has yet made here any important proposals in this domain except the American one to collect confidential information from receiving countries regarding what refugees they could admit.