



Displaced Persons From Eastern Europe After WWII



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New York Times

POLISH REFUGEES PLACED AT 100,000

Red Cross Finds Complicated
Problem Burdens Nations
Harboring War Victims

LITHUANIA ESPECIALLY HIT

12,000 From Memel Came
First, Then Vilna Brought
More—50,000 in Hungary

Special Correspondent, THE NEW YORK TIMES.
GENEVA, Jan. 16—The exact numbers and peculiarly complex problems of the Polish refugees who are now scattered through Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia have been authentically established for the first time through the correlation here of information gathered in extensive inspection tours by representatives of the American Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

The number of "officially recognized" refugees, both military and civilian, is about 100,000. Some 50,000 of these are in Hungary. Rumania shelters about 30,000. There are about 17,000 in Lithuania, 2,000 in Latvia and 600 in Yugoslavia.

While the political uncertainty and economic poverty prevailing in those countries that have given refuge to the Poles inevitably makes any rapid or lasting solution of their refugee problems extremely difficult, the rapid reshuffling of the map of Europe has complicated even further the task of assimilating and rehabilitating the refugees, according to Red Cross observers.

The present situation in Lithuania, which is listed as harboring only 17,000 refugees, offers the best example of how incompletely the official figures reflect the true refugee problem brought about by the po-

litical repercussions of the Polish conquest.

Lithuania, one of Europe's poorest States with a population of only 2,000,000, received its first refugees when 12,000 Lithuanian nationals entered its borders from the Memel territory after the German occupation in the Spring before the Polish war. In Memel, the Lithuania Red Cross also lost its finest institution, a clinic hospital in which most of its resources had been invested, and thus was faced from the start with a severe strain on its hospital facilities.

In addition to these native-born refugees, whose care alone severely taxed the little nation's resources, the Polish war brought around 17,000 Polish refugees—14,000 soldiers and 3,000 civilians—to Lithuania. These Poles migrated in the clothes they wore and with the few belongings they could carry.

Then, when Russia invaded Poland, the Lithuanians found themselves compensated for the loss of Memel by the Russian gift of the territory of Vilna. But on looking their gift horse in the mouth, the Lithuanians found that the Soviet had kept much of the useful agricultural area of the Vilna territory and had presented between 60,000 and 100,000 Poles along with what remained.

This large group of Poles, who technically are not refugees and practically are inhabitants of what is now Lithuania, the Lithuanian Government has refused till now to enfranchise and has segregated, along with the whole Vilna area, from the rest of the country.

Lithuania has adopted this course on the ground that all these former Polish citizens were Polish civil and police officials who were sent into the Vilna area in administrative capacities after 1920, when Vilna was forcefully wrested from Lithuania by the newly created Poland.

To round out the confused picture, account must be taken of some 25,000 more Polish refugees who have filtered into the Vilna area since the conquest of Poland from both the German and the Russian occupied parts. As penniless as the rest of their unfortunate compatriots, these refugees, too, must be cared for by Lithuania.

Thus the 17,000 official Polish

refugees in Lithuania add unofficially between 85,000 and 125,000 to their numbers. And still the count is incomplete, for the latest Red Cross reports show that about 300 Polish refugees a day have been trickling into the Vilna area for the last three or four weeks.

This last immigration promises to continue, as it is caused first by Russia's recent decision to stop converting worthless zlotys into rubles—which induced many Poles to remain on Russian territory—and secondly, by the Czechs's newly initiated drive against the bourgeois members of the former Polish Left, who at first welcomed the Soviet with open arms as the savior of their country.

In Latvia, a similar but less complicated refugee situation exists. This little country officially has only 2,000 Polish refugees. Actually, however, 17,000 of the 25,000 young Polish agricultural laborers who migrate annually to Latvia in July for the harvest season and return to Poland in December were caught in Latvia when the war started.

The 50,000 Polish refugees listed for Hungary is an accurate estimate, according to American Red Cross investigators. About 38,000 of this number are soldiers and some 12,000 are civilians. Hungary's particular refugee problem is one of housing.

The 30,000 Polish refugees in Rumania, who are divided equally between soldiers and civilians, are comparatively better off than their compatriots as regards treatment, in the opinion of investigators. This is because the former Polish Government had fairly large trade balance credits deposited in Rumania, which the Rumanian Government is now allotting to the refugees at the daily rate of 100 lei to men, 80 lei to women and 50 lei to children.

It is estimated, too, that about 300 Polish refugees a day, mostly soldiers and men of military age, leave Rumania by boat for either Syria or France to take up arms again against Germany. It is an open secret that they are being aided in this migration from Allied sources, while as a kind of counter-competition others have been induced by Nazi agents to return to German-occupied Poland.

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- 100,000 military and civilian Polish refugees
 - scattered through Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia
 - political uncertainty of these countries makes permanence difficult for refugees
 - not technically refugees
 - number Ukrainians often skewed, because some recorded as Russian

May 4, 1941
Los Angeles Times

Message of Hope Given to Polish Refugees by Winston Churchill

Vanquished Nation Will Rise Again After Hitler
Has Been Hurlled Into Dust, Vows British War Lord

LONDON, May 3. (AP)—Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in a message of hope to "Polish people all over the world," said today the presence of the Polish government and its armed forces in Britain has "enabled us to build the foundations for Anglo-Polish relations after a common victory and the restoration of your freedom."

His broadcast address marked the 150th anniversary of adoption of a Polish constitution.

PRaises COURAGE

Churchill told the Polish people that Germany's "brutal attack" on Poland in 1939 resulted from the German "alarm" at the success of the Polish nation.

Churchill praised the Polish people for their stand against the Nazi war machine and said that because of geographical and other reasons little "personal contact" between the Poles and British had been possible in the conduct of the war.

He had met high Polish officials now in England, he said, and he gave high praise to them and to the men of Poland now fighting side by side with the British on land, in the air and on the sea.

DERIDES OPPRESSORS

He spoke of Hitler and German leaders with utmost scorn, recited the countries thus far conquered by the "Nazi oppression" and said his message "of hope and encouragement" was sent to these people to make them know the war would end all suffering.

Churchill acknowledged the task might be long but he insisted the Polish nation would rise again. He spoke about 11 minutes.

Dr. Paul Kahn

FOR

Your



- Churchill acknowledges oppression of Poland
- Still not considered refugees

June 14, 1943
Chicago Tribune

POLISH REFUGEES GIVEN SHELTER IN VACANT HOUSE

But Their Children's Fate
Worries Them.

An abandoned 8 room house at Milwaukee avenue and Throop street has curtains at the windows again. It is a house filled with drama packed with reality—a product of war.



The Rev.
Boniface Slawie.

Chairman of this refuge for homeless Polish men and women who have somehow managed to get to America is the Rev. Boniface Slawie who came here in July, 1939, to study teaching methods in American technical schools. Then suddenly came the September invasion of Poland and the priest has not been able reach home again.

His 70 year old father was executed at Dachau, his brothers were taken to Siberia by the Russians and he has had no word of his aged mother. The home is supported by funds from the Polish Roman Catholic union and was furnished by women of the neighborhood.

On Swiss Vacation.

Two of the residents were once well-to-do wives of Polish professional men. They were vacationing in Switzerland that summer of 1939 and their small sons were enjoying a stay in Polish Boy Scout camps. The vacation period was coming to an end in September when the invading forces struck. The women could not get to their homes. Their husbands were killed in guerilla fighting and the boys were evacuated from their camps by the Russians and marched to Siberia.

A man about 30 years old came to the home in such a mental condition that he was moved to the St. Mary of Nazareth hospital. He had been aboard a Polish merchant vessel at the time of the invasion. His entire family was wiped out in Gdynia and when he heard of this he moved westward alone.

Women Find Employment.

The Polish union cares for the refugees who need medical care at St. Mary's hospital. The others are housed at the Milwaukee avenue hostel until they find employment. Some of the women who were teachers in Poland have organized small language classes. Others do housework, dish washing and any work they can get.

Monthly socials are held in the home and the sparse news of relatives in Poland is shared by the men and women who have been separated and cannot return. The last words the Rev. Slawie had of the folks in Silesia is terse. "The Polish people are very hungry," the message read.

Worry About Sons.

Most of the occupants of the home are women because the men have either enlisted in the Polish army recently recruited in Canada or in the United States forces. The plaint of the women is the welfare of their sons. Some of them have never been heard from. About 350 boys and girls in a remarkable odyssey of endurance and ingenuity arrived somehow in Rhodesia, South Africa, and were taken in by a priest, the Rev. Emil Drobmy at a Polish Catholic mission in Livingston.

The Polish Scout troops on the northwest side started a fund on St. George's day for this mission. By May 31 there was \$800 collected to send to the band of children who were able to escape from all parts of occupied Europe and find a comparative safety in Africa.

Attempt to Move Children.

The Polish embassy is making an effort to move some 10,000 children from occupied countries into Iran. In the meantime the women housed in the temporary refuge on Milwaukee avenue look for work and wait.

The home has two kitchens and a number of comfortable bedrooms. The refugees cook their own meals and do the necessary housework. Fa-

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- refugees relocated to Milwaukee
 - place for homeless Polish men and women
 - have been through incredible trauma
 - funded by Polish Roman Catholic Union
 - furnished by community members
 - organized language classes
 - many women found domestic work

February 10, 1946
Los Angeles Times

Free Choice Put in Refugee Plan

LONDON, Feb. 10. (AP) — The United Nations Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee today adopted its final report on the refugee question, including a provision that no refugee be forced to return to his native country if he has valid objections.

By adopting the “no force” provision, the committee defeated a long campaign by the Slav delegations, which argued that the United Nations should not assist refugees who failed to return to their homelands within four months.

The committee did not interpret what constitutes a “valid” objection and observers said a decision presumably will be made by a committee to be created by the Economic and Social Council, to which the report was submitted.

The report also included a Panamanian proposal that the case of Spanish Republican refugees be dealt with separately and the committee added a recommendation that refugee Spaniards be treated with “particular care and attention.”

- countries impacted by the WWII theoretically received reparations
- non-Jewish DPs expected to return home with in 4 months
- not racially discriminated, so not refugees
- “No Force” allows UN support for DPs with “valid concern”
- did not define
- if returned home, often treated as traitors
- had special stamps on passport signifying time in Germany “valid”

July 7, 1947
Los Angeles Times

Truman Urges Prompt Action for Refugees

WASHINGTON, July 7. (U.P.)—President Truman asked Congress again today for prompt action to bring the United States a "substantial number" of the 1,000,000 anti-Communist refugees from Eastern Europe who now are concentrated in the Western Allied zones of Germany, Austria and Italy.

In a special message to the House and Senate, Mr. Truman asked early enactment of legislation to make effective this government's pledge of support to the United Nations' international refugee organization.

Congress already has sanctioned American participation in the I.R.O., but the President pointed out that special legislation to increase the existing immigration quotas for Eastern Europe is needed before anything practical can be done.

'Duty Is Plain'

"Our plain duty requires that we join with other nations in solving this tragic problem," he said, reminding the legislators that other countries in Western Europe and Latin America already have thrown open their doors to large numbers of displaced persons.

A House Judiciary Committee is holding hearings on a bill to admit 400,000 refugees over a four-year period, but it is doubted the measure will be reported out at this session. Some Republican leaders have taken the position that the problem must wait until Congress can get a clearer picture of the political setup in Europe.

Mr. Truman emphasized that he was not asking for a general

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TRUMAN URGES REFUGEE AID

Continued From First Page

revision of the immigration laws but merely a change in the present "wholly inadequate" entry quotas for Eastern Europeans. Those admitted under this proposal, he said, still would have to meet the rigid requirements of the existing law.

No Number Set

He did not set any specific number to be admitted, but he said the great majority would be people from the northern Baltic areas, Poland, the Russian Ukraine and Yugoslavia.

"These are people who oppose totalitarian rule, and who, because of their burning faith in the principles of freedom and democracy, have suffered untold privation and hardship," he said.

"Because they are not Communists and are opposed to Communism, they have staunchly resisted all efforts to induce them to return to Communist-controlled areas. In addition, they were our individual Allies during the war."

The President said it would be "unthinkable" to keep these homeless people in the refugee camps where the United States and Britain established them at the war's end or to turn them loose on Germany's already overstrained economy.

"This government," he added, "has been firm in resisting any proposal to send these people back to their former homes by force, where it is evident that their unwillingness to return is based upon political considerations or fear of persecution."

Alumni to Meet

The Los Angeles branch of the Valparaiso University Alumni Association will meet at 8 p.m. Wednesday at the First Lutheran Parish Hall, 808 N. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena.

- Truman to bring "substantial" number of Eastern European refugees
- IRO- international Refugee Organization
 - specialized UN agency
- bill to admit 400,000 over 4 years
- president didn't specify a number
- doesn't want change to laws, just increase the number accepted

May 16, 1948
Los Angeles Times

Adopted Refugee Family Welcomed by Claremont
Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File); May 16, 1948;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times
pg. A3

Adopted Refugee Family Welcomed by Claremont

CLAREMONT, May 15—The Sawycka family became Claremonters here today, beginning a new life under the friendly auspices and help of the Claremont Community Council.

Elizabeth Engel, 20 months old, made the first neighborly call of welcome.

Mrs. Adella Sawycka and her daughters, Tetiana, 25, and Natalia, 17, and her mother, Mrs. Elisabeth Ginejko, arrived here yesterday after a trip which brought them from a displaced persons' camp in Vienna within the month.

Program Moved Fast

Claremont's Co-ordinating Council's program to "adopt" a European family and to assist it in adjustment to life in the United States materialized rapidly. Alverda Lerrigo, niece of George Lerrigo of Claremont, who is in the Vienna office of the International Refugee Organization, recommended the Sawycka family as the first family to be adopted under the Claremont plan.

The Sawyckas are no novices in the matter of displacement. Mrs. Sawycka and her mother, born in Russian Ukraine, fled from the Bolsheviks in 1917 to Warsaw. In 1944 they were

forced to flee Warsaw and were captured in Vienna by the Nazis.

With the help of the Claremont Co-ordinating Council, which is headed by O. C. Keesey, housing and employment has already been found for them.

- Claremont Co-ordinating Committee to "adopt" European families
- came from DP camp in Vienna
- community supporting refugee family
- housing and employment has already been found

1949

Los Angeles Times

Contingent of 200 DPs Arrives in Southland

Refugees Greeted in Los Angeles After Rough
Crossing of Ocean and Transcontinental Trip

More than 200 displaced persons from Europe's misery camps arrived yesterday aboard the Southern Pacific Argonaut from New Orleans. While some were to remain in Los Angeles most proceeded to various Southland points, with Santa Paula receiving the largest single contingent—44.

The DPs came to this country aboard the transport General Sturges, which hit three days of such rough weather in mid-Atlantic that one of the group, a 5-year-old boy, carries his left arm in a sling as the result of a fall.

Wears Army Cap

The DPs, most of them banded up in heavy clothing of nondescript kind, with one man even wearing an old Wehrmacht cap, were greeted by representatives of the Council of Jewish Women, the Catholic Resettlement and the Lutheran Church Federation.

Of the 211 arrivals, 99 left within a few hours for other California points—20 to Fresno, 44 to Ventura, 31 to San Francisco, 4 to Modesto and 1 to San Diego.

The injured child was Ivan Soldo, son of Mrs. Zora Soldo, 25, formerly of Yugoslavia, a widow. Mother and son will live with Sam Harach, a relative, of 639 1/2 Centennial St.

Famly Happy

One of the happiest groups was the Gerches family—Viktor and Katerina Gerches, and their son Vladimir, 24, and the latter's wife Eugenia, 22. They spent five years in DP camps. The elder Gerches is a lawyer and his son a student. They are going to San Diego.

Nonchalantly wearing the Wehrmacht cap was Mitrofan Trojan, 45, a gardener from the Ukraine, who said he bought the headpiece in a concentration camp. He was en route to Santa

Paula to work in the citrus orchards.

Another picturesque arrival was Andrej Tonatch, 42, former railway worker, also en route to Santa Paula. He carried his earthly belongings in an overstuffed knapsack. Still another prospective fruit picker was Vladimir Ullin, 41, former Yugoslav civil engineer.

"What else can one do?" he asked with a shrug. "Of course, I should like to be an engineer again . . . sometime."

The only bearded arrival was Tobias Kahan, butcher from Austria, en route to San Francisco with his wife Bertha. He will work in a butcher shop.



CRITICAL OF LOS ANGELES—Things don't look so good to Tomajon Wardkes, 2, daughter of an Armenian couple, on her arrival with contingent of DPs.

Times photo

- 200 European DPs arrived in LA by boat
- Very rough trip; people were injured
- most left for another city within an hour of arriving
- expect to take up old jobs.. eventually

December 4, 1949
Los Angeles Times

Soviet Challenged on Forced Labor

British Defy Russia to Let World
Know Fate of Baltics' Prisoners

NEW YORK, Dec. 3 (AP)—Britain challenged the Soviet Union today to let the world see what has happened to 2,500,000 Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians the British charge have been driven into Russian forced labor camps.

The Russians remained silent on the challenge during bitter British-Soviet debate in the United Nations Assembly.

In a counterblast, Soviet Delegate Alexander Panayushkin shared the British were disseminating "Goebbels-like propaganda" against the Russian government. Joseph Goebbels was Nazi Germany's Minister of Propaganda.

Assembly President Carlos P. Romulo struck all references to Goebbels from the General Assembly's records including British Delegate G. T. Dooley Smith's angry reply. Smith said: "We had no other connection with Goebbels than at the wrong end of a bomb."

Refugee Chief Voted

After Romulo finally succeeded in terminating the heated debate, the Assembly approved a refugee resolution supported by the western powers.

The measure provides for the naming of a U.N. high commissioner to handle refugee problems after the International Refugee Organization (IRO) passes out of existence early in 1951. The key vote was: 35 in favor, 7 against and 13 abstentions.

The Assembly rejected a White Russian proposal which would have obliged U.N. members to send back to Soviet areas next year thousands of displaced persons who do not wish to return to their former homes in Russian-controlled territory.

Policies Attacked
Soviet bloc delegates attacked the policies of the IRO. That organization consistently has refused to allow forced repatriation of refugees.

At Lake Success the Assembly's special political committee approved overwhelmingly a resolution welcoming the recent Dutch-Indonesian agreement at the Hague to create a sovereign United States of Indonesia. The vote was 43 to 5, with four abstentions.

Russia, the Soviet Ukraine and Poland tried vainly to hold up action until the Security Council can investigate whether the Hague agreement actually means independence for Indonesia.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Emiri Menninsky charged the Dutch still are conducting "ferocious" war in Indonesia and holding 70,000 political prisoners.

Treason Denied
Menninsky said the Hague agreement was concluded by "traitors" to the Indonesian Republic. Netherlands Delegate J. G. van Heuven Goedhart announced that it was his "honor and privilege to defend the statesmen of the Indonesian Republic," including Premier Mohammed Hatta, against the charge of being traitors.

The Indonesian Republic put down a Communist uprising at a time when republican troops were battling the Dutch in the now-concluded hostilities in the islands.

- 1,500,000 Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians that Russia has forced into labor camps
- vote to elect UN high commissioner to handle refugee issues after IRO ends
- rejected proposal that forced UN members to send DPs back to Russian controlled territory

More Resources

- <http://remember.org/educate/dingell>
- <http://lightning-and-ashes.blogspot.com/>