

Displaced person...

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DISPLACED PERSONS

Whose Responsibility?



WAR RELIEF SERVICES—NCWC

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Introduction

The recent world conflict has created many new problems requiring the highest application of statesmanship to bring order and confidence out of chaos and fear. Not the least of these problems is that of displaced persons, a large human question in the international arena which now challenges the existence of the guiding principles of Christian civilization.

Two years after V-E Day we find over one million people, uprooted from their homelands during the most violent days of the war, unwilling to return to their native soil. We cannot help but be impressed with the fact that the millions of people from the Western European countries, who were "displaced" during the years of conflict, have returned to their native lands. It is significant that these people, suffering years of privation and oppression, had but one desire after V-E day. That desire was to return home, to rejoin their families and friends, and to take up their way of life so cruelly interrupted by the war.

Why, then, do we find over one million persons still displaced? Why have they not responded to the instinctive desire to rejoin their families, friends, and to resume the culture of their forefathers? Upon examination of this human problem we find an answer which is of fundamental importance to all freedom-loving men. That answer is that these unfortunate people, referred to as displaced persons, are unwilling to return to their native lands because of fear of danger to their lives and liberties, because of their race, religion or political beliefs.

What a travesty this is upon that noble record of objectives for which the recent world war was waged and won. We must keep faith with those who died that a better world might be born. It is not too late to rekindle this faith, but it does require that we take bold and determined action before all is lost.

Freedom-loving people the world over look to us for guidance and leadership in the dark and uncertain days that now engulf humanity. This is a challenge which strikes at the

very roots of our great democracy. We must accept this challenge in a way that will leave no doubt as to our belief in the God-given rights which are the precious treasures of all men.

MOST REV. JOHN T. McNICHOLAS,
Archbishop of Cincinnati,
Chairman, Board of Trustees,
War Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Statement to the Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons

The true purpose of democracy is man's freedom. Yet, two years after V-E Day, there are still nearly one million people of many faiths and from many lands living in exile amidst the desolation of European camps and barracks. These displaced persons are without homes or homelands. A million lives are at the mercy of the United Nations.

I pray in the Name of God, Whose real name is Charity, that we do not permit these misery-ridden peoples to be forced against their will to return to countries where, enslaved, their human rights will be denied them. I pray that America, in her high destiny under God, will stand staunch before the people of the earth as a shining example of unselfish devotion to the ideal that has made us a great nation: the Christian ideal of liberty in harmonious unity, builded of respect for God's image in man and every man's right to life, liberty and happiness. I pray that, loyal to these God-inspired principles upon which our own government was founded, we open our hearts and our doors to these starving, suffering peoples and lead the way for all the United Nations to follow.

HIS EMINENCE
FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN
Archbishop of New York.

Flight into Egypt

MOST REV. JAMES A. GRIFFIN, D.D.

Bishop of Springfield-in-Illinois

TODAY, as once long ago, Christ has been driven into exile. The circumstances of this modern Flight into Egypt parallel with almost incredible similarity the harrowing episode related in the Gospel of Saint Luke. Hundreds of thousands of human sufferers, in whom the practical Christian sees the Suffering Christ, have fled the threat of tyranny, a tyranny which has slaughtered innocents. In the face of this modern Flight into Egypt every man who calls himself a Christian must stand to be counted. For who is more Christian in his treatment of others? The American who, despite neglect of church on Sunday, reaches out his arms to the displaced persons of Europe, or the American, who, sitting smugly in church on Sunday, prates unrealistically that "this is not my problem"?

I have a letter on my desk from a high-ranking member of Congress with reference to H.R. 2910, the measure introduced by Congressman William G. Stratton of Illinois authorizing the admittance of 400,000 displaced persons to this country. The letter concludes with these words: "There exists in the Congress among many members a determination not to tamper with the present immigration laws." I cannot see how that "determination" is based either on Christian or on American principles.

The real Christian says: I see Jesus and Mary and Joseph crouching hungry and frightened beside the long and painful road. The Christian fraud, on the other hand, rumbles to his feet and starts erupting dubious statistics about quotas and dollars and available square mileage. As if there is any argument more cogent than the eloquent eyes of those crouching figures beside the long and painful road!

The measure of a man's Americanism hinges on his attitude toward this precise problem. The only inhabitant of this country who could, with any grace whatsoever, protest

against the proposed immigration of Europe's displaced persons is the American Indian! The rest of us, including our "determined" Congressmen, were either displaced persons ourselves at one time, or else our forefathers were. Potato famines, pogroms, poverty, and persecution displaced us or our ancestors years ago from our European homelands and brought us to America. Were it not for the benevolence of other Americans of generations past, many of us today would find ourselves in the refugee camps of Western Europe.

Congressman Stratton maintains that there is space, both geographic and social, in America for 400,000 refugees. Today we are paying in excess of \$70,000,000 annually for the support of refugee camps in Austria, Italy, and Germany, a staggering sum which would be cut in proportion to the numbers of displaced persons we might admit to the United States. The two great organizations of the American working man, the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O., have given their endorsement to Stratton's humane measure, indicating that the influx of these displaced persons would not impede the progress of American labor.

Of the million displaced persons now enduring a pitiful and spiritually demoralizing hand-to-mouth existence in the refugee camps of the American Zone, the great majority are Christian. It would be imprudent to institute a mass migration of these peoples to America, since some of them might be unworthy of American citizenship. Sad experience has taught us *that* lesson, at least. Only those refugees whose backgrounds and ideals give promise of ready adaptability to American citizenship should be granted immigration visas. This job of screening should be performed by a board of qualified experts without any prejudice to race or religion.

It is distressing to learn that many of these deserving hopefuls still languish in European refugee camps because of the illegal entry into America on the part of some of their less scrupulous compatriots. Let the Federal Bureau of Investigation track down these culprits and ferret them out from high places as well as low. The solution from that point on would be simple: ships run both ways across the Atlantic.

Those who clamor that America is not large enough to embrace these prospective newcomers are blind to statistics. If the members of certain organizations which oppose the Stratton bill would recall the names of Kosciusko, von Steuben, and Lafayette, and would pause long enough to get a good wholesome American look at the suffering descendants of those Revolutionary heroes, I'm sure they would discover that their own patriotism is slipping. I was in Europe in 1946 and I've seen these poor sufferers myself. The wholesale migrations of those peoples who fled to refugee camps to escape the lethal claws of the Russian bear have taxed the capacity of Western Europe. We are their first hope.

The news-pictures of frock-coated diplomats in the halls of the United Nations, endlessly debating the mechanics of peace, mean little to the anxious thousands who form the ration-lines in the refugee camps of Western Europe. Our obligation to mankind did not stop when the emissaries of our enemies signed the surrender terms at Rheims and on the deck of the *U.S.S. Missouri*. What kind of a half-human would rescue his fellow man from a burning building only to abandon him to freeze in the cold night air?

If other Congressmen of decades past, in utter disregard of Christianity and Americanism, had refused entry to the displaced persons of other generations, perhaps our foes in this last war might have numbered among their heroes men named Eisenhower, Nimitz, and Patton! It's disturbing to calculate the hypothetical outcome had such been the case.

Christ is waiting for the answer of a Christian country. If America fails in this test, refusing to "harbor the harborless," how can we any longer call ourselves a Christian people? It would indicate a devitalized and merely nominal Christianity at best. "As soon as Christianity weakens," wrote Bernanos, "you are spawning a breed of persons whom Pius XI described as 'spiritual individualists', and who, thoroughly determined to work out their salvation by themselves, give no thought to the salvation of others except to the limited extent that they think such solicitude may further their own. The Christian faith is not for them a whole life to put in pledge,

a risk to run, but a form of security, analogous to that given on the material level by insurance companies."

Should those Congressmen who are "determined" not to change present immigration laws wish a clarification of American principles in regard to this burning issue, I would ask them to read carefully the following invitation, inscribed on the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor:

. . . Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Should those same "determined" Congressmen wish a clarification of Christian principles, I need only refer them to the words of Christ as reported by Saint Matthew: "As long as you have done it to one of these, my least brethren, you have done it unto Me!"

What will be the answer of Christian America?

Space for Resettlement

MOST REV. WILLIAM T. MULLOY, D.D.

Bishop of Covington

Statement of the President of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference before the Sub-Committee on Immigration of the House Judiciary Committee on June 13, 1947, regarding H.R. 2910.

THE TESTIMONY which I submit bespeaks the mind of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, an organization now well established in some eighty-three of the 108 dioceses in the United States. It represents eighty-three Bishops, 24,570 priests, 91,706 religious, and 13,372,647 lay people in the matter of displaced persons. To substantiate this claim, I submit a select number of excerpts from letters received by me from the Bishops of a cross-section of the dioceses of this country. Their sentiments reveal their interest, and their statements testify to their willingness to cooperate in

settling the displaced persons on the land, first as hired help, during which apprenticeship they will become thoroughly familiar with American methods of agriculture and adjust themselves to life in the community, and ultimately, having been thoroughly absorbed into the community itself, as renters and then owners of the land.

It is to be distinctly understood that the National Catholic Rural Life Conference stresses the advisability of locating these people on the land. A survey of the country reveals that on the land itself there are many large houses no longer occupied. These could be fitted up for the occupancy of the displaced people. It is also true that there is a number of old people eager to retire on the land which they own and willing to employ laborers of this kind to assume the work of the farm, be schooled in managership, and later to become farm owners.

There has been a policy of some years' standing in certain sections of the country to bring in foreign labor for a period of four or five months of the year. For the housing of these people provision was made right on the land on which they worked, as, for example, for the Mexicans or the Puerto Ricans transiently hired in these districts.

However, a permanent labor supply for our truck farming and specialized farming, such as sugar beet raising, onion raising, etc., could be provided through the displaced people. The time is opportune for such provision, for the discovery of foot and mouth diseases among the Mexicans of the South has moved the government of several States to forbid the importation and transportation of laborers so afflicted. Consequently, a labor market will be open in these rural areas for displaced peoples with an agricultural background.

In many of the small country towns, moreover, houses are to be found which could be repaired at slight expense and utilized by these people. The National Catholic Rural Life Conference emphatically does not advocate settling these people in cities or in great industrial centers. The reasons are the housing shortage and the fact that these people themselves have a rural background.

The stand which the Catholic Church has consistently maintained in regard to Communism is proverbial. The explanation of her attitude is outlined graphically in the great encyclical letter of the late Pope Pius XI on Atheistic Communism (*Divini Redemptoris*, 1937). The doctrine therein set forth is taught throughout the educational agencies of the Catholic Church. It is her earnest desire to guard against the advance of Communism in the United States. Therefore, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, as an agency of the Catholic Church, would urge a very careful screening of all immigrants to our country, particularly in matters relevant to their political and religious ideologies.

It should, however, be borne in mind that these displaced people are unrepatriated and unrepatriable for the precise reason that their own countries are under communistic domination. They will not return to such. A return would mean not only the dereliction of their liberties and their religion, but the voluntary abandonment of life itself. Their determined refusal to return to their native land, despite the fact that they are enduring hardships of every kind, as they are, is perhaps the strongest argument that can be advanced in favor of their anti-communistic convictions. Those who have seen the picture with their own eyes testify that the displaced people are enduring unlimited suffering rather than offer sacrifice to the communistic way of life. Let me insist that screening be carefully performed.

It is our Christian duty and moral obligation to remove the displaced persons from their present plight. The ultimate basis of all human rights is the natural moral law which is imposed upon all individuals as creatures of God. This law can be known by the use of reason, and is, therefore, binding upon all without exception. These rights are inalienable; therefore, they cannot be taken from the weak by the strong. They do not depend upon the suffrance of a majority or the whim of rulers. These rights pertain to the individual as a person, to the family, to each nation in its domestic affairs, and to nations as part of the international community.

Among the rights of the human person is the "right of access to means of livelihood by migration when necessary."

The rights of the state likewise flow from the natural moral law. Among the rights of the states in the international community is the right to grant asylum to refugees from injustice.

The humanitarian considerations which should prompt the absorption of the displaced persons into this country, to be settled upon the land, are incorporated in a "Statement on Displaced Persons" adopted by the Executive Committee of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference at a meeting held in Des Moines, Iowa, April 16, 1947, a copy of which is submitted with this testimony.

Refugees and the Americas

RT. REV. MSGR. JOHN O'GRADY

Statement of the Executive Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities before the Sub-Committee on Immigration of the House Judiciary Committee, on June 25, 1947, regarding H.R. 2910.

DURING THE past five months I have had an opportunity of working with various South American countries including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay, in the effort to find new homes for the displaced persons of Europe. I have worked not only with government and Church officials on policies in regard to the acceptance of displaced persons by the several countries, but I have also had a chance of participating in the actual reception and placement of approximately 1,000 displaced persons in Argentina and 500 in Brazil. I have also assisted in setting up committees to assist the Inter-Governmental Committee in Brazil. The basic purpose, however, of my mission was not so much the reception and placement of the limited numbers that were being received while I was in South America but rather the opening of channels for the acceptance of larger numbers later.

In order to explain my interest in displaced persons I should repeat that our Church together with eighteen other national

groups in the United States, has been very much interested in this problem. The War Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, through its relief missions in various European countries, has like other organizations been called upon to do its part in helping with the re-settlement of the displaced persons. It has assumed that its work was that of a cooperating agency in the international program set up by the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees.

Like many others who entered into the work of re-settling displaced persons, I soon found myself in the midst of a great ideological battle. I found that the newspapers in certain countries that I visited were filled with all sorts of criticisms of displaced persons. They were described as physical and mental wrecks, as the refuse of Europe. It was pointed out over and over again that their acceptance by any country would be a serious menace to that country; that they could never meet the economic needs of a country. It took me some time to understand this propaganda. Finally I reached the conclusion that this was part of a general plan of those who wanted the displaced persons returned to their own countries to be imprisoned, tortured or condemned to death. The criticism was very general throughout the various countries. It was rehearsed in parrot-like fashion by hundreds of well-meaning people with whom I talked.

I decided that I would not be satisfied with the mere promotion of the job without first-hand knowledge of the types of people for whom I was trying to provide. I boarded the ships on which they were transported from Europe. I interviewed them for employment. I soon learned from first-hand observation that they were for the most part very high-type, intelligent people. They were neither communists nor radicals as so many people seem to imply. I learned that they represented the very best people of their countries—the best technicians, the best engineers, the best agriculturalists. I learned moreover, that they were by no means demanding about the type of work that should be provided for them. They recognized that they were coming into new countries and must make the best of the things offered to them.

As I discussed the individual problems of these displaced persons I reached the conclusion that they represented the best type of immigration that any country could have, a much higher type of people than one finds in the ordinary flow of immigration.

During my five months' sojourn in South American countries, I witnessed a very decided change in the mentality of these countries toward displaced persons. I have seen a very decided change of policy on the part of the Brazilian Government. There is every reason for hoping now that the Government of Brazil will open up its doors to a very large number of displaced persons. I have seen changes in the general attitude towards the displaced persons in Chile and in Uruguay. Were it not for its Civil War, Paraguay might have offered homes for a considerable number of displaced persons.

Of all the countries I visited, the one that offers the best hope for the displaced persons of Europe is Argentina. It not only offers a greater hope than any Latin American country but of any country in the world. After a very restricted immigration policy since 1933, Argentina has again become immigration-minded. I was told that while Argentina had become immigration-minded, it was going to be very selective and confine itself to Italians and Spaniards. However, on the basis of close contacts with the Argentine Government over a considerable period, I have come to the conclusion that it has decided to adopt a broad policy towards displaced persons, that it has in fact decided to accept an unlimited number of them.

For the immigration of large numbers of displaced persons to Argentina our principal problem is ships. A sizable number of displaced persons could be shipped every month from Italy to Argentina if ships were available. The Argentine Government has also decided to accept large numbers of displaced persons from Germany and Austria. For these we not only have the problem of ships but also the question of making Argentine Consular Services available to them.

In all discussions of the re-settlement of displaced persons in Latin America, one is constantly confronted with this

question: What is the United States going to do? How many displaced persons will it accept? One had to be concerned about this question. One constantly had the feeling that the example of the United States meant a very great deal in the policies of other countries. If the United States adopted a positive policy it would be the best inducement to other American countries to do likewise. There is always the lingering suspicion in the minds of people in South American countries that the United States must have some very good reason for its unwillingness to accept displaced persons and that these same reasons have equal force in South America.

The Government of the United States has been very much interested in the displaced persons of Europe. It has assumed a heavy responsibility for maintaining camps for these people in the hope of eventually finding new homes for them. It is contributing a large amount of money for their support year by year. The best evidence that the United States could give of its continued interest in displaced persons is to open up its own doors to a certain number of them. This would not necessarily involve many fundamental changes in the policy embodied in immigration legislation.

The United States has been committed to the policy of admitting approximately 153,000 persons each year. While it is true that it has committed itself to accepting limited immigration on a national origin basis, the proposal before the Committee involves only a temporary shift in the national origins program.

We know that throughout the United States there is a real shortage of farm labor and that there are shortages in other skills needed throughout the country. The Government has been paying a considerable amount of money for the importing of Mexican workers each year. The United States could really use a considerable number of displaced persons in meeting its own actual labor needs. The proposed legislation would not affect the flow of immigration which is contemplated by the National Origins Act. It merely provides for taking up the slack of the war years. We are asked to do this in the interest of a great world-wide program.

We are now contributing to the support of a million and a quarter in idleness while at the same time we are contributing a considerable sum for importing agricultural workers every year. We have work opportunities available in the country for the displaced persons. Why not give them an opportunity for work rather than maintain them in idleness?

The United States stands out today as the greatest expression of democratic humanism in the whole world. It is the leader among the Nations in the struggle for the maintenance of democratic institutions. It wants people everywhere to be free in the exercise of their God-given rights. It wants the million and a quarter displaced persons given an opportunity to exercise their God-given rights. It is contributing heavily to a relief program for them. Why should it not now do its share in providing homes for a considerable number of them? It expects other nations to join in this effort. The others are hesitating, waiting for the United States to take the lead. It is part of the logic of our cause that we should do so. Otherwise we weaken our position of leadership throughout the world.

Right of Asylum

EDWARD M. O'CONNOR

*Introductory Statement of the Executive Assistant, War Relief Services
—National Catholic Welfare Conference, as a Participant in American
Forum of the Air, June 24, 1947.*

THE United States of America has a long and noble tradition as a haven for the homeless and oppressed. We, as a true democracy, have in the past given practical expression of our belief in the right of asylum. In turn, our Republic has been blessed, and with each generation has grown stronger and better prepared to defend the rights of free men at home and, when necessary, in other lands. In the wake of the recent world conflict we find approximately one million people uprooted from their homelands and unable to return to their native soil for fear of danger to their lives or liberties because of their race, religion or political belief. These unfortunate people constitute one of the greatest problems of our time, because they cannot be settled upon the economy of Germany and Austria, and we must not force them to return to their homelands. There is only one solution for those who cannot with complete confidence return home, and that is that new homelands be found for them. The United States has an unusual opportunity to reaffirm a fundamental tradition by making provision for the entry of a reasonable number of these people to our country. By our failure to do this, we would deny our belief in the right of asylum. Then, too, the discouragement we would bring to these homeless people would do nothing more than to demonstrate that we are unprepared or unwilling to defend human rights so essential to the survival of western civilization. Let us never forget that our great democracy was born and grew strong by the work and labors of those who found asylum here.

The Displaced Persons—A Challenge

VERY REV. MSGR. EDWARD E. SWANSTROM

Address given by the Assistant Executive Director, War Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference, at the annual meeting of the Hartford Diocesan Bureau of Social Service, Stamford, Conn., May 18, 1947.

IT IS now two years since peace came to Europe—in the sense that the cessation from armed hostilities can be called peace—a peace marked by hunger, homelessness, terrible suffering, and most of all by uncertainty and chaos. Is it any wonder then that more and more as time goes on, people all over the world are looking to the United States for a new and greater expression of leadership, for hope, for a re-affirmation of the ideals which we proclaimed so often and so loudly during the conduct of the war.

There is one group of people who look to us particularly for a restatement of our principles, not only in words, but in action. This group of people are not by any means free agents. They live in the midst of a wreckage such as the world has never seen, in our occupation zones of Germany and Austria and in the British and French occupation zones. They live in camps and in barracks. They cannot move from country to country because they have no valid passports.

They cannot claim the protection of any government because they have not the rights of citizens in any country. These people are utterly helpless to help themselves.

A particular group of people about whom I speak are known by the cold technical term of displaced persons. This word probably conjures up in your minds very little in the way of an emotional or imaginative picture. Too little has been written about the displaced persons in our press for you to realize what the term displaced person implies.

During my relief mission to Europe I spent many weeks among the displaced persons, and so the term brings to my mind a very definite picture of need, and to my heart a real feeling of guilt and suffering because up to now so little has been done to meet that need.

There are about 1,000,000 displaced persons still existing

in Germany and Austria. I said existing rather than living, advisedly. Most of them came to Germany not by their own free will, but because they were forced into Hitler's labor battalions which supplied the German army with its weapons of war. Many thousands of them were liberated from Nazi concentration camps by their allies.

The nationalities of the displaced persons are various and their faiths are many. The majority are Poles since a tremendous number of conquered Poles were brought into Germany to perform slave labor. Uncounted thousands of Poles were thrown into concentration camps of the Nazis because of their efforts on behalf of religious and personal liberty.

When the doors of some of the larger concentration camps were opened up, it was found that 40 per cent of the unfortunate inmates were Poles. Among the liberated victims were 750 Polish Catholic priests who had survived the worst tortures and even the medical experiments that were visited upon living human beings. I must say in passing that an equal number of heroic Polish priests had died in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany.

Another group of displaced persons are the Ukrainians, large numbers of whom were also conscripted into Hitler's slave labor battalions. The Ukrainians, who were forcibly conscripted into Hitler's armies after Polish Galicia and the Russian Ukraine were over-run, were for the most part forcibly repatriated to Soviet Russia by virtue of a secret clause in the Yalta Pact.

A third group among the displaced persons are the Jews—pitiful remnants of a race upon whom was visited a blood-bath such as the world has never seen, and please God, will never see again. There were originally about 80,000 Jewish displaced persons, but their number has been increased by Jews fleeing from Eastern Europe.

A fourth group consists of Balts from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Many of these came to Germany because they were conscripted into slave labor, but others fled from their countries because those countries had been absorbed into the Soviet Union by force. A fifth group are the Yugoslavs who,

after having fought with the allies for freedom, now find that they would not receive freedom after they returned to the domain of Tito. There are small groups of other nationalities in the camps, but the million or more displaced persons are composed almost totally of the Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Balts and Yugoslavs.

As you undoubtedly know, Hitler inducted into his slave labor battalions more than 10,000,000 men, women and even teen-age children. Why is it that the others have returned while this group still remains in a destroyed and hopeless land? It is a commentary on our present peace that those slave laborers who were recruited from the Western countries—Belgium, Holland, France, Norway, Luxembourg—went to their homelands without hesitation. Delirious with joy, they jumped on already over-crowded trains and trucks and made their way homeward by any means possible. The natives of Eastern Europe did not show the same anxiety to return.

The Ukrainians from Eastern Poland saw that their homes and homeland had been handed over to Russia, though never in history had Russia owned that section of Europe. They were, therefore, rendered stateless because of the Yalta Agreement. The Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles and Yugoslavs saw that new regimes had been imposed on their nations and feared for their safety if they returned. The Jewish displaced persons felt they could not start a new life in towns and villages which were known to them as the graveyards of their innocent and beloved dead. These people believed in our promises of justice and freedom and so they remained in the Western zones of Germany.

There is an ancient right, the right of asylum for innocent persons, that protects those who flee over borders to escape injustice, persecution or terror. Actually, our great country has been built up on the basis of this ancient right since America's population has grown from the men and women who fled religious persecution, or economic oppression in many countries. Except for a few flagrant exceptions, Britain and America have upheld the right of asylum—that right which had its origin in the Christian Middle Ages when men who

fled from persecution could take refuge inside the holy walls of a church and cry, "Sanctuary."

It is unfortunate, however, that the sanctuary we have offered the displaced persons has been disturbed by uncertainty and by pressures which have to a certain extent made them lose their faith in the United States. When I saw them toward the end of 1945, I could not help but notice the tension under which they lived. I visited barrack after barrack, camp after camp. It was the first winter of peace in Germany. The bitter cold could not be alleviated because of the lack of fuel and of transport. In some of these barracks lived many thousands of people—men, women and little children.

Many months have passed since I visited these people. I shall never forget their simple gratitude and their whole-hearted desire to start life anew, to work to make a future for themselves and for their children. They are all *still* in the displaced persons camps.

The expectancy and uncertainty in the hearts of even the most hopeful ones in all likelihood has now changed to hopelessness and despair.

Many areas of the world, including our own country, need the skills of the displaced persons, but no positive steps toward large scale resettlement have yet been taken. The United States Army handed over much of the welfare work for the DP's to UNRRA officials. It is true that UNRRA was not equipped to organize seriously in the way of resettlement.

However, it is a tragedy that UNRRA made itself the weapon against the displaced persons through its frequent questionnaires, its screenings, rescreenings and repressive tactics. The DP's themselves have begun to feel that, although no one is going to put bayonets in their backs to force them to return to their homelands, any method short of this is acceptable as long as it produces the desired result of eliminating them from camp life and ridding UNRRA of the responsibility for their care.

It was possibly necessary for UNRRA to move large numbers of Polish DP's from camp to camp in the icy winds of

a cruel Winter. The DP's could not be persuaded that it was necessary to evacuate one camp, and fill another one fifty miles away, when little children and grown-ups perished because of the transfer. Not even UNRRA could defend its order closing down Polish schools which had been founded by the displaced persons themselves without UNRRA aid.

When this order was questioned by responsible opinion in the United States, UNRRA quietly rescinded it. Suffice to say that UNRRA's methods have too often seemed to the displaced persons, particularly the Polish and Ukrainian DP's, to be repressive, unjust and aimed at forcing them to return to regimes which they have already renounced.

UNRRA closes out its work with the DP's in June, 1947. Following that, the International Refugee Organization takes over the maintenance of the DP's in cooperation with the occupation armies. It is to be earnestly hoped that the IRO will forswear the methods of UNRRA.

Also serving the displaced persons from the first moment that they could enter the camps in Germany have been the representatives of voluntary agencies. Our own War Relief Services sent ten permanent representatives who were able to hire on the spot a competent staff of workers from among the displaced persons themselves. A fleet of trucks was soon on the ground in Germany in order to get to the various camps the morale, recreational and educational supplies shipped from this country as well as food and clothing to supplement the Army rations. As is done everywhere, these supplies are given out without reference to race or creed.

The majority of the hundreds of camps have been covered by this fleet of trucks—trucks which carry emblazoned the Cross of Christ, the sign of mercy and charity. The staff of War Relief Services has also facilitated the immigration into the United States of more than fifteen hundred displaced persons from Germany and other areas.

However, that is a small service in comparison with the work that still remains. The displaced persons who are still left are what is known as the "hard core" of non-repatriables. No pressures will have the result of making them return to

their homelands now that they have endured so much so long. The public press has carried the accounts of appeals made to the displaced persons to return to their homelands. These appeals were made by responsible American officials. Is this the way that we Americans redeem our promises of freedom and justice? We know that we cannot give them any assurance of safety, any guarantees of security in the places to which we would ask them to go. Are we not assuming a terrible burden of responsibility in asking them to return?

The hard core of the displaced persons awaits positive action on the part of the Allied Nations. In this connection I shall quote to you a statement made by A. A. Berle, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State:

All Allied nations should be working to clear up this problem. But even if others fail, the United State Congress can act. I ask that you and all of your friends join in urging that Congress do something now.

These men, women and children are not going home. They cannot. Some would be killed if they went. Others have been forcibly driven out of the occupying nations. It comes to this: if the United States does nothing, nothing will be done.

There is a bill, H.R. 2910, now in Congress that would allow 400,000 of these freedom-loving people to enter the United States by using up the quota numbers for immigrants that were not used up during the war years. We need the skills that these people have; more than that we need to show the world that we meant what we said when we raised our voices in the name of freedom and justice during the war. We cannot ask other nations to help resettle the DP's if we refuse to accept any ourselves.

And to you, my dear Catholic people, I say do not be misled into thinking that this is a Jewish problem. About 75 per cent of these people are Catholic. It is a Catholic problem. Our rural dioceses could easily absorb most of them without noticing it. Not even selfishness can justify the argument that there is no room for them in our house-scarce and industry-crowded economy.

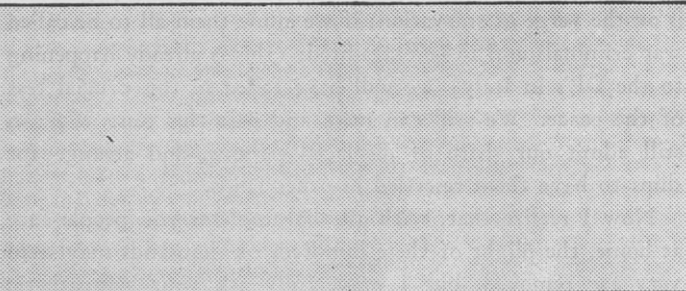
Spade work in resettlement is being done by the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees, and is being aided by the Vatican which will coordinate all Catholic efforts in this field. Down in South America at this moment is Monsignor John O'Grady, Secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, to investigate the terms and conditions of the immigration of large numbers of DP's to the Argentine, to Brazil, to Chile and to other countries. Our own National Catholic Rural Life Conference is preparing to show Catholic America how it can help once our doors are officially opened through the passage of an act of Congress.

The displaced persons are still there, waiting. They are waiting to see if we pass the test that their presence presents to us. If we allow them to be pushed back against their will to their countries of origin by indirect or direct pressures; if we close the camps and let them perish in the economy of a defeated and destroyed country whose own population is on the verge of starvation; if we allow them all to be called war criminals and to be extradited; (this is already happening to the DP's in Italy) we will have failed in this crucial test of the peace. We still can meet and pass this test. We can still admit our share of displaced persons, and arrange for ships to have them resettled in other lands.

Now I realize that, with all the problems you people face at home, the plight of these hundreds of thousands may seem very far removed, but I prayerfully ask your sympathetic interest in them. Follow carefully in the secular and Catholic press the efforts that may be made by governmental or private bodies to assist them.

Raise your voices collectively and individually against any effort to deny to them their God-given rights of freedom, peace and security. Encourage our President and our Congress and those who would offer a large number of them sanctuary within our own blessed land. Help to win the understanding and sympathy of others for them. They too are Christ's children, and must be encompassed in the mantle of our Christian charity.

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gress and those who would offer a large number of them
resettlement within our own borders that I hope to win the
understanding and sympathy of every man, woman and child
in Christ's Church, and especially our own people in the
of our Christian Church.