

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

(This article has been written for exclusive publication in an American magazine to help with the appeal of the "American Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany.")

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CHRISTIAN UNTOUCHABLES

They regarded themselves and were regarded by others as Christians. They toiled and laboured in workshops and offices, and their voice was heard in schoolrooms and the pulpit. They loved their country and they contributed to its greatness with the same energy and devotion as their fellow-countrymen. There was nothing which separated them from their neighbours, who shared their troubles and their joys. They were just ordinary Germans.

And then everything changed, changed overnight. Germany had a new Government. That Government decreed that they were Germans no more, that they were a threat to the country, undesirables, who ought to be eliminated from the body politic of the nation. They were eliminated. Years, decades of loyal service counted for nothing: they were dismissed from their positions, they were disfranchised and many of them found themselves in prison. Their children were segregated, excluded from all the joys of normal childhood. Their devotion to those who had borne them their children was made a crime. For they were "non-Aryans," descendants of an accursed race, contact with whom meant contamination. They had become untouchables.

Much has been written about the tragedy of the "non-Aryan" Christians in Germany. Yet no one has ever succeeded in probing the depth of the misery of these men, women and

children to whom the most elementary individual rights have been denied. In a way their position is even more difficult - if that is possible - than the position of the 500,000 Jews in Germany.

The "non-Aryan" Christians do not and cannot form a community such as the Jews have been able to maintain, in which the individual can find moral and material help. The grounds on which they have been turned into untouchables are so fantastic, so unreal, that they offer no basis on which the "non-Aryans" could unite. All the learned deductions of National Socialist science, all the attempts at legislation of the Hitler Government have failed to produce a clear definition of the term "non-Aryan." The Law of September 29, 1933, about peasant holdings decrees that all those are to be considered as "non-Aryans" and therefore excluded from certain forms of holding land, who cannot prove that no Jewish blood has come into their families since January 1, 1800. Similar laws and regulations are in existence for the press and for other professions. In order to hold a civil service position on the other hand, it is sufficient to prove that the family is purely "Aryan" down to the third generation. The recent marriage decrees based on the Nuremberg laws complicate the situation still further: "Aryan appearance" may be adduced as an argument in favour of certain exemptions from this law, which forbids any marriage between Jews and "non-Aryans" on the one hand, and "pure-Aryans" on the other.

On such a shifting basis it is obviously impossible for the "non-Aryans" to feel as a group and thus enable them following the example of the Jewish community in Germany in starting schools for their own children. They can do nothing to liberate their children from the nightmare through which - beginning with the little ones of 6 and 7 - they have to go in

German schools, where the "non-Aryan" children are not only ostracised but where the official doctrine of race antagonism and hatred is being taught in regular courses. They become the exhibits for the new teaching of racial "science" to be looked upon with awe and horror, just as we in our school days looked on tape worms in alcohol, giant spiders and poisonous chemicals. What that means to the children and their parents can hardly be described. I have seen strong men in the prime of their manhood break down and shake with sobs when they talked of their children and the treatment they were receiving.

The lack of cohesion also makes it impossible for the "non-Aryan" Christians to build up a cultural life of their own - the only cultural life they knew was that of Germany, from which they are now excluded. Finally, they found it impossible to build up any strong organisation which might facilitate their emigration. Without a leader, without organisation, without prospects they see their resources shrink, their children ruined and their minds are filled with the dread of what new forms of anguish the next day may bring.

Owing to the insecurity of the legal position in Germany and because even the National Socialist ardour has not yet succeeded in unveiling all the genealogical tables of all Germans, no definite estimate can be given of the number of untouchables in Germany. There is, however, a consensus of opinion that the number of "non-Aryans" is probably larger than the number of people of Jewish faith. Should January 1, 1800 finally be chosen as the "dead line," their number will be well in the second million. More than a million outcasts, highly civilised and sensitive, submitted to the worst forms of discrimination - it is a ghastly outlook and yet so much of it has already become true! To this number have to be added the political opponents of the régime in as far as they are known

to the Government, liberals, socialists, communists and pacifists, and finally those who had the temerity to place their God before the worldly powers that be.

Only a comparatively small number of these untouchables have found their way to other countries, where they hoped to be able to live again as free human beings. Recent reports of the High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany indicate that there are altogether between 12,000 to 14,000 "non-Jewish" refugees, i.e. "non-Aryan" Christians, political refugees, and exiles from religious persecution including Roman Catholic and Protestant priests and laymen. Prague, Vienna, Paris, Brussels are the main centres of immigration and there are groups in Holland, Norway and Sweden.

Unfortunately the hopes of these refugees have been deceived. Only a section of them has been able to build up a new existence for themselves, and at least 2,500 are completely stranded. Their own resources are entirely exhausted and so are the means of the local relief committees. They are not allowed to work in order to earn an honest living. In a word, their material position is in many cases even worse than it was in Germany, and cases of actual starvation are not infrequent. Undernourishment of many of the children has reached such a degree that they are taken away at the slightest attack of cold.

Notable efforts have been made by certain non-Jewish bodies such as the Quakers and other Christian groups, the Trade Unions, certain academic committees and others, to help the refugees. Their help, however, with the possible exception of what has been done for the academic exiles, has proved utterly inadequate. The response they found in their appeals to the humanitarian impulses and the Christian conscience of

the free countries of Western Europe and the United States was most disappointing. While the Jews numbering only 15,000,000, of whom 6,000,000 are living in more or less destitute conditions, produced nearly \$10,000,000 the world over for aid to the victims of the National Socialist régime, all the efforts of the non-Jewish world combined produced hardly a tenth of that amount! The reason is not far to seek; the Jews had realised that what is happening in Germany today is of concern to the entire Jewish community. The Christian community at large remained indifferent to the suffering of their brethren in faith. Protests were voiced spasmodically here and there, but they made little impression in Germany, whose leaders believe in action rather than in words, and they did not yield any means which would have served to save the refugees.

The failure to provide adequate help, and particularly the lack of funds for the emigration overseas of non-Jewish refugees, has resulted in a considerable increase in the proportion of these refugees residing in European countries where there is no work for them. While during the early stages of emigration from Germany, the proportion of Jews to non-Jews in the main countries of refuge was seven to one, there are now countries such as Czechoslovakia and Austria, where about 50% and 30% of the refugees respectively are non-Jews.

The situation would be entirely hopeless were it not for certain signs of an awakening of the Christian conscience both in the United States and in Europe. The American Christian Committee for Refugees from Germany, on which many of the outstanding leaders of the Christian Church in America are represented, have just launched an appeal for \$400,000.-. Three of the biggest international Christian organisations,

the World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches, the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and the European Office for Inter-Church Aid have combined to appeal to the Christian communities throughout Europe for help to non-Jewish refugees. Their appeal is based on the plans for relief and settlement elaborated by the High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany. The sum of \$600,000 is needed for the realisation of these plans which include schemes for the settlement of the refugees in countries such as Colombia and Southern Brazil. \$1,200 will settle one family of four or five persons on the land, take them out of the slums of Paris or Prague and open up a new life for them.

To raise \$600,000 for "foreigners" in the midst of an economic depression is no easy task. It can only be accomplished if the Churches, the Christians throughout the world rise "like a mighty army" to prove that the spirit of Christ is alive today and that that spirit knows no difference of race, no artificial distinction between "Aryans" and "non-Aryans." And if that army rises it may be found that not only the refugees, but also those who suffer from National Socialist persecution in Germany, will see their lot improved.

Little material help can be given to those in Germany. The magnitude of the problem and the restrictions in the administration of relief imposed by the present system in Germany must impede any direct action. There can be no alleviation of the situation unless the persecutions themselves decrease. To achieve this end the rulers of Nazi Germany must be made to realise that they forfeit the friendship of the civilized world unless they will change their policies. In spite of appearances this may not prove impossible: the German leaders are sensitive to foreign opinion, particularly

the opinions held in the Anglo Saxon countries. They paid little heed to the protests which have reached Germany because they made themselves and others believe that they only represented the point of view of individuals or small groups which had fallen a prey to the Jewish "propaganda." But **as** "the mighty army rises" these make-beliefs will have to yield to reality. Nor is Germany as unified on the "Aryan" questions as the world is asked to believe. Germany may have today a barbarian régime, but no one except people blinded by hatred, will contend that Germany is a barbarian country. The forces which made the greatness of Germany in the past and to which the world owes so much, are not dead, and there are people in Germany, even within the National Socialist Party, who are not deaf to reason and who may be aroused into a new consciousness if they realise that the Christian forces in the world are determined not to tolerate the ruin of thousands and hundreds of thousands of human beings in the heart of Europe, flesh of their flesh, faith of their faith. To help the refugees will give encouragement to the progressive forces still active in Germany, will lighten their task in bringing the Government and the country back to reason.

A mischievous and dangerous myth must be ended. The heroic efforts of the Jews to save their people in Germany, efforts **in** which they remained largely alone, were interpreted in Germany as the proof of the existence of a Jewish plot and as an added reason for further persecutions. The generous impulses of the Jewish people who, within the limits of their means have helped Jews and non-Jews, have been twisted by the present day leaders of Germany into an allegation of sinister designs. It has to be proved to the National Socialist

leaders of Germany and to the sorely stricken country at large that the belief in individual rights, compassion and charity, active help to those who suffer from racial, religious and political discrimination are not all part of a Jewish conspiracy, but the very things which are most highly cherished amongst civilized people, the very essence of the Christian faith.

London, November 20, 1935.