

RESETTLEMENT
OF
DISPLACED PERSONS

MEMORANDUM

By

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN COMMITTEE

Representing

CANADIAN CITIZENS OF UKRAINIAN ORIGIN

to

The Economic and Social Council
and General Assembly

of

THE UNITED NATIONS

Also

TO THOSE, who by the Grace of God or by the will of
the people have the destiny of mankind in their hands.

September, 1946

More than a year has passed since the war ended. It appeared that the democracies, who stand for the freedom of mankind, for the rights of the individual and Christian ideals had won a great victory over the slogans and forces of slavery and callous destruction of humans by humans and that the leaders of victorious nations would be free to concentrate their time, energy and attention on bringing about such state of international affairs that would spare the victims of the most horrible war in human history from further suffering, starvation, death and anarchy and lay a solid foundation for free development of all the peoples and all the individuals in permanent peace and security.

Months grow into years and yet the peaceful reconstruction of Europe and the World as a whole seems to be more distant than ever. Noble efforts of the best leaders of our time still appear to encounter stubborn resistance from those who thrive on distortion of facts and creation of chaos and who manipulate to utilize the victory so dearly won into entrenchment and expansion of their reign of dictatorship and oppression.

While the attempts to establish peace and freedom for all countries, for the time being at least, has an appearance of wasteful wrangle, giving most of the war ravaged countries in Europe very little opportunity for reconstruction and still less hope for free and peaceful development in their native land, *there is one outstanding and dreadful phenomenon* arising seemingly out of the last war, but truly it is the direct result of the fact that the spaces in Europe where there might be a hope for freedom and where the rights of individual and human value have any established standards, diminished to such an alarming extent that the occupied territories by the Western Allies are crowded with panic-stricken mass of humanity seeking refuge and salvation in a strange and uncertain foreign surrounding.

British, American and French occupied forces in Europe are the *keepers* of approximately 800,000 refugees and displaced persons. These, the most unfortunate victims of war and resulting political conditions therefrom, in a strange and unfriendly land, deprived of the most elementary human and civil rights; suffering cold, hunger and starvation; corralled in suspense and uncertainty for months; exposed to abuse, raids and kidnapping by those who claim their ownership; are driven into despair and suicide by persistent pressure and threats of forceful repatriation.

Where is their hope, where is their salvation? Will their keepers, the representative military forces of Western democracies become indifferent and in their callous resignation cease to provide them with meager means of subsistence and hand them over into the strong hand of their claimant to be driven beyond *the iron curtain* into oblivion, or shall we keep them

coralled in idleness wretched existence, and dilemma of uncertainty until their complete deterioration?

While the permanent peace for the time being appears to be a remote possibility, depending on co-operation, goodwill and patient perseverance of all the powers and all the nations, proper solution and re-establishment of displaced persons is exclusively in the hands and within possibility of the Western democracies.

It is a problem of international importance by itself and requires immediate solution.

The same phenomenon confronted the Allied nations to a lesser degree after the Russian Revolution following the First World War and the League of Nations then recognized it as an international problem and partially solved same by allowing such refugees to remain outside of the Soviet State on sufferance mainly in France and Czechoslovakia as wards of the League of Nations under so-called Nansen passports.

Their number then, however, was comparatively small, and the control by the Soviet Regime of the spaces in Europe was much less extensive than it is now. Such a solution of the problem of refugees at the present time would not be possible and neither wise nor human.

It is now obvious that the bulk of displaced persons are political exiles who will not voluntarily return to their native land. And although Soviet powers persistently claim their repatriation, the refugees, however, prefer perishing in their honourable refusal to ultimate liquidation in accordance with established methods practiced by the dictatorial states.

Like *Pilgrim Fathers* these refugees composed of Ukrainians, Latvians, Estonians and Poles, are awaiting for *Mayfair* to take them into distant spaces of a land of opportunity for free and normal life.

Displaced persons can and must be adapted under the direct supervision of an international body created by Western democracies.

As Canadians of Ukrainian origin, we are particularly and deeply interested in the future welfare of that portion of this group of displaced persons, numbering about 300,000, of Ukrainian nationality. They constitute a cross-section of sturdy, self-reliant sons of the soil, a better counterpart of that group of Canadians of Ukrainian origin who have proven their value as loyal and productive citizens of Canada within the last fifty years. Their tenacity, self-reliance, high moral standard, faith and devotion to Christian ideals has economic value

and any country having empty spaces, seeking to develop its natural resources and increase its population by immigration can find no better opportunity than to draw upon this particular group of people as a source of immigration. Their re-establishment, under the international body created for that purpose in any country climatically and politically suitable for free development creates no difficulty or unsurmountable problem. Given an opportunity and freedom they will rapidly establish and adapt themselves into the social and economic framework of any country as useful, loyal and productive element of their adopted land. No better proof or example for the above assertion can be found than the hundred thousands of Canadians of Ukrainian descent settled in Canada during the last 50 years, or the colonies of German refugees of Sudetenland, who came out together in 1939 and have grown into self-reliant and self-supporting settlements in Canada.

We therefore appeal to each and every representative of Western Democracies at the Economic and Social Council and at the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization to create an international body charged with the guardianship, salvation and re-establishment of displaced persons along the following or similar lines, namely:

- (1) That suitable spaces open for settlement under favourable climatic, economic and political conditions be designated for re-settlement by the process of immigration of displaced persons.
- (2) That transportation facilities and elementary needs for re-establishment be provided by international co-operation.
- (3) That a favourable arrangement be made and plan devised with several suitable countries to receive and to absorb as immigrants of a fair portion of displaced persons.

We submit that 300,000 of Ukrainian displaced persons could be easily absorbed by Canada, United States of America and Argentina, resulting in a wise and sound economic venture. We strongly feel that a substantial number of the prospective immigrants on their arrival in these countries will be taken care of by the citizens of Ukrainian origin in Canada, United States of America and Argentina, because of friendship and family relations. A large number of these immigrants could be absorbed in domestic service and industrial development of the respective countries as a whole, while the bulk will settle on the land and other productive ventures and help utilize undeveloped natural resources into production and profit.

In conclusion, we wish to stress our deep conviction that an international body created for solution of the problem of refugees has immediate possibilities to carry such a

plan through. The proposition is sound, logical, wise and possible of accomplishment. Removal of refugees from Europe will relieve United Nations from the responsibility of maintaining them there in idleness and uncertainty, and will by itself solve to a large extent re-establishment of the native population in the after war reconstruction.

In support of the foregoing submission pertinent references are given in Appendix A and B hereto.

We again appeal to you, Gentlemen, to deal with the problem of the refugees on the basis of human value and as a problem of international importance, resting entirely on the shoulders of those, who weigh and solve all the problems from the standpoint of the maximum welfare, safety and happiness of an individual.

We also appeal to the wisdom of statesmanship of the great men leading the world, to the pure and high idealism of all the leaders for whom the progress of Christian civilization is dear, to raise their voices and use their influence on behalf of these abused, maltreated, disheartened human beings and to help carry the suggested plan into effect.

Ukrainian Canadian Committee.

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VERY REV. S. W. SAWCHUK — *Vice-President and
Chairman of Executive Committee.*

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Chairman of Co-Ordinating Committee.*

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APPENDIX A

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

To the Editor of The Times:

Sir,—From your leading articles and correspondents we have heard much about the unhappy plight of political refugees in Europe and the urgency of finding the right solution for this problem. At present very little of real importance has been done about it. Enormous sums are spent on the maintenance of the camps and inmates without removing the basic causes of their unhappiness or bringing any material benefit in return for this expense. I venture to make a suggestion on behalf of one group about which I have special knowledge.

In the British, American, and French zones of occupation in Germany and Austria there are some 350,000 Ukrainians who do not wish to return to their homeland, having fled because of political and religious persecution, or the fear of it. Various representatives of British local authorities (UNNRA and military government officials) report that this group is remarkably useful, industrious, and well behaved. They have built up from nothing their own churches, schools, workshops, theatres, and etc., in the camps. They are reluctant to lead inactive and aimless lives dependent on charity. Above all, I am told, they desire to live somewhere in freedom from fear, working and earning an honest living.

The shortage of miners and agricultural labourers in the United Kingdom is already felt and will become acute with the return to Germany of 384,000 prisoners of war. Why, then, should we not accept in their stead Ukrainian refugees—not as public charges but as “paying guests”? Our national economy would benefit from the toil of these people and the problem of refugees would be partially solved in the most humane and practical manner, by giving them hospitality and asylum in return for their labour.

We need not fear that they will become “permanent guests,” as they will undoubtedly emigrate in due time to the Americas, where they have large and prosperous Ukrainian communities desirous of receiving them. Ukrainians are noted for their agricultural and mining skill. Their homeland is the proverbial “bread basket of Europe” and contains Europe’s richest mines. In Canada they have proved their pioneering worth by developing the virgin prairies of the West. Siberia was also largely developed by Ukrainian colonists

I venture to suggest on behalf of my Ukrainian friends that these “displaced persons,” now inactive in their camps, might help to solve for a time our own difficulties in obtaining labour for the land and producing sufficient coal from our mines.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

Dibdene, Shamley Green, Surrey.

PHILLIP GIBBS.

(*London Times*, August 24, 1946)

APPENDIX B

“The committee also heard evidence from Canadians of Ukrainian origin. Their native country is much like Canada, with broad stretches of agricultural land. They have done wonderful work in Canada, and in our report we say that if we can secure more men of the type that are now located in the West we would do well to accept them.”

(*Honourable Mr. Roebuck*, Hansard debates of the Senate of Canada, Monday, August 19, 1946, Page 742.)

“The Ukrainians have greatly contributed to the development of the West. When they first came to Canada, some forty or more years ago, they had very little capital. I know of one community where they settled. They got their homesteads, 160 acres of land—not very good land—and they built mud cabins in which they had mud ovens for cooking their food. They worked diligently at whatever they could find to do, and saved their earnings. In that district today you find good farms, good roads, good houses, good barns, and all the other attributes of a very fine community. The Ukrainian pioneers who came to this country wore sheepskin coats, were completely ignorant of our language, and had no money in their pockets; but their children, or grand-children are not only in business and in the professions, but are serving as members of municipal councils and of legislatures, and in every way are taking a full part in the life of the community. Besides doing that these groups have made a very definite contribution to the cultural life of not only the communities in which they live but of the Dominion as a whole.”

(*Honourable Mr. Crerar*, Senator, speaking in Canadian Senate on a motion on Immigration, May 8, 1946.)

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