

Programs with Respect to Relief
and Rescue of Refugees: Temporary
Havens

Temporary Havens in Latin America

Red-Persecuted Poles Find Haven in Mexico

Refugees Start Colony After Flight From Enslavement by Stalin

By Cultural Service.

LEON, Guanajuato, Mex., Nov. 4.—Torn from their homes by Russian soldiery in 1940 and forced into virtual enslavement in Russia itself, 1,410 Polish refugees have found welcome, safety and health in a colony near here.

They owe their haven, reached after untold sufferings and many thousands of miles of wanderings, to the sympathy of the Mexican government, particularly to President Avila Comacho and Minister of the Interior Miguel Aleman, whose hearts were touched by the tragedy of these victims of Russian barbarity.

Hope to Return

An additional 2,500 refugees were scheduled to arrive during this month, the Mexican government having agreed to open its doors to a total of 20,000.

The nearly 1,500 here now are established on a former estate at Santa Rosa, halfway around the earth from the Red captors who nearly starved and worked them to death. Happy though they are to breathe the air of a free country, their abiding hope is that some day they will be returned to the homeland they love so profoundly.

But—and this is the essence of their sad fate—they fear that if and when they go back to the cities and towns from which they were brutally dragged, they will be subjects of Stalin rather than citizens of democratic Poland.

For theirs is that part of Poland which Stalin overran in 1939 in the course of his short-lived cynical agreement with Hitler to divide up their ill-starred country. And the Red marshal has made it abundantly clear that he does not intend to get out when the war ends. In fact, the deportation of these refugees—there were a million and one-half altogether, of whom one-third have since died—was designed, they say, to make any future plebiscite in favor of Poland impossible.

There are only 217 men in the Santa Rosa colony. They are either too old to fight, are phys-

cally unfit for military service or have been discharged from the Polish forces because of disabilities. Of the 678 children, 300 are either orphans or are separated from their parents without knowledge of their whereabouts.

Started in 1939

All are members of broken families. That is, everyone has lost mother or father or both or children in their frightful wanderings over thousands of miles. Some of these folk have traveled as much as 50,000 miles in all to reach their present shelter in the equable climate of Guanajuato.

The deportations began in a small scale in 1939, and became wholesale in February, 1940. From then until the Fall of 1941, they were in Russia and Siberia, living under frightful conditions. Through a treaty between the Polish government in exile and the Soviet government, fewer than 50,000 of them were permitted to leave Red territory and make long and perilous journeys to camps in Teheran, Iran; Karachi, India; Ubangi and Kenya, Africa, or Santa Rosa, Mexico.

Hide Family Names

Those who came here took a roundabout route as a result of the exigencies of war. From Karachi and Teheran, they could not sail directly east to the New World because that route would have led them into Jap-infested waters. Instead they had to voyage westward many thousands of miles out of their way, through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean, down the west coast of Africa and around below Australia and then, in comparatively safe seas, to Los Angeles, Calif., where they were later entrained and sent here.

Most of the adults at Santa Rosa colony shy at revealing family names. Many have kinfolk remaining in Poland or Russia and worry lest they be molested. But Mrs. Katherine Zankowska, 60, had no objection to giving her name. When the war began, three of her four sons were in the Polish Army. Her daughter was visiting relatives in a section of Poland invaded by the Germans.

The Russian troops gave Mrs. Zankowska, her husband and their youngest son two hours to pack up. They were hustled into a filthy box car and sealed in with many others in the same plight. For weeks and weeks they rode into Russia, with an occasional crust of bread to keep them alive. Sometimes they went for days without food. There were no doctors, no medicines. Many died en route.

At Farm Labor

Eventually they reached a small, dirty Siberian village. They were put to work at farm labor. The fact that she was a woman and elderly did not prevent the Russians from compelling Mrs. Zankowska to fell trees and perform similar heavy tasks.

They were paid wages, at a starvation rate. Milk, honey, eggs could be bought from the villagers, but the Polish exiles' wages were not sufficient for such luxuries.

The food which the family and other refugees subsisted on chiefly, when they could get it, was salt herrings, mushrooms, berries and edible roots.

Weakened by the hardships and semi-starvation, Mrs. Zankowska's husband died.

When some of the exiles were released through the Polish-Russian agreement, Mrs. Zankowska, with her son, made her way to Teheran, Iran. The boy was then old enough for military service and joined the Polish Army which saw service in the Near East and is now in Italy. Mrs. Zankowska continued on to Mexico.

The three older sons, taken

prisoner by the Germans, escaped. Two reached England and are flying for the Polish forces. The third got to America and is now in the U. S. Army.

Saga of Torture

Mrs. Zankowska, thankful that the boys and she survived their dreadful ordeals and grateful to Mexico for its welcoming hand, keeps as cheerful as possible. But she can't help her anguished speculations about the fate of her 16-year-old daughter who was caught in the path of the German invaders in 1939 and of whom she has never had one word since.

Mrs. Zankowska's story can be repeated, with variations only as to location and details of cruelty, over and over again. Every one of the colonists, except, of course, the few babies born there, has a similar saga of wandering and privations to relate.

Rich or poor, aristocrat or peasant, the sad story runs true to pattern.

Blue blood did not spare the Countess Teresa Tyszkiewicz from the fate of her fellow Poles. A sister of Prince Drucki-Lubecki, now

of New York, the Countess and her husband and their four sons (now ranging from 10 to 16 years) were dragged from their home in Poland and carried to Siberia. The Count died from exposure. With their hands, mother and sons dug a shallow grave for him.

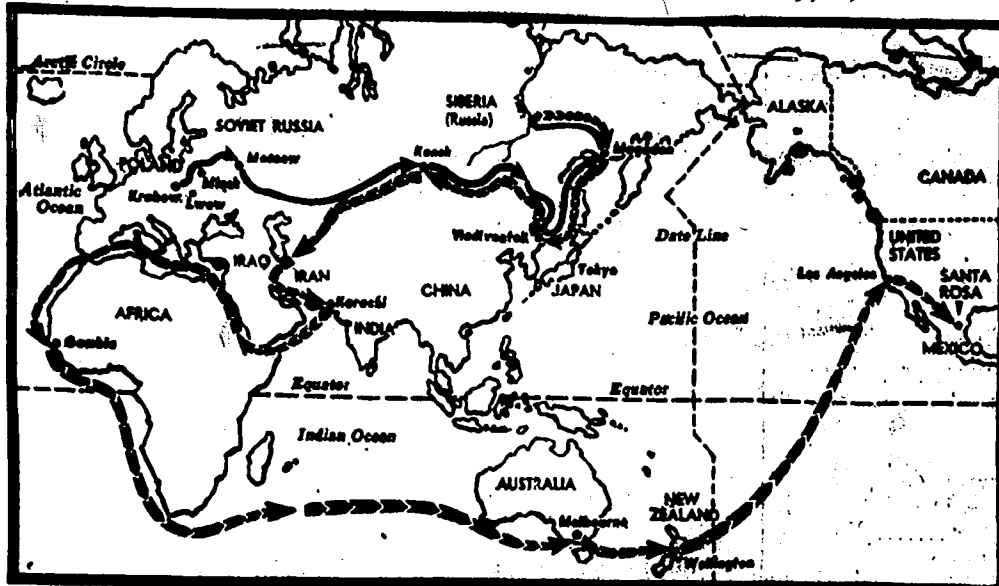
Cannot Leave

Though Prince Drucki-Lubecki would welcome his sister and his nephews to the United States, the colonists, like those in refugee camps in other countries, are not permitted to leave.

At that, the Countess holds herself fortunate. She thinks of the unhappiness of a fellow-colonist, a woman whose husband and ten children died since Stalin's horde descended on their country. The Countess asked:

"What has this poor woman to look forward to? What can peace mean to her?"

There are two boys in the colony, 14 and 16 years old. Their father was visiting the United States in 1939 and was unable to return to Poland when the war began. The father went into the Polish army and has not been heard from since. The boys were deported with an aunt to Siberia.



REFUGEE ROUTE . . . Above map shows how refugees traveled many thousands of miles from the time they were torn from their homes in Poland until they reached safe haven in Mexico. Solid line follows travels into Siberia, broken line follows rest of their long and Odyssean. After severe hardships in Russia and Siberia

for a year and one-half, they went to Teheran, Iran, and Karachi, India. Then, because of Jap infested waters, they were forced to sail westward by a roundabout way, instead of directly eastward, double back around Africa and thence south of Australia to reach their Mexican refuge, Santa Rosa.

Later they were sent to Karachi, India, and from there to Mexico. Their mother is still in the United States.

Own Tutors

The elders among the colonists engage in handicrafts, in sewing and teaching. Schooling is under the direction of Prof. Felix Sobota, delegate of the Polish Ministry of Education, formerly of the Polish army, who instructed Polish troops in Scotland before coming here.

Prof. Eric Kelly of Dartmouth College was sent by the United Nations Rehabilitation Relief Administration to superintend the preparation of the camp for the reception of the colonists. In charge of Santa Rosa is Bohdan Samojko, delegate of the Polish Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.

Praise Mexico

To direct social welfare work, the Polish Legation in Mexico engaged Miss Irene Dalgiewicz, a Polish-speaking welfare worker of New York.

The colonists are loud in their praises of Mexico and her people. Their Mexican neighbors repeatedly demonstrate their sympathy and generosity.

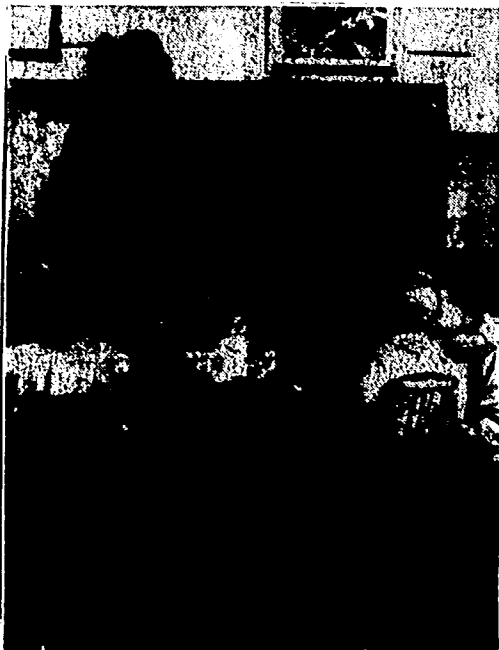
But grateful as they are to the land that gave them refuge, all the colonists, old and young, rich and poor, aristocrat and peasant, dream of the future, hoping and praying that Poland will be restored inviolate, no inch of its oft-ravaged territory still in the grasp of the greedy Reds.

International News Photo.

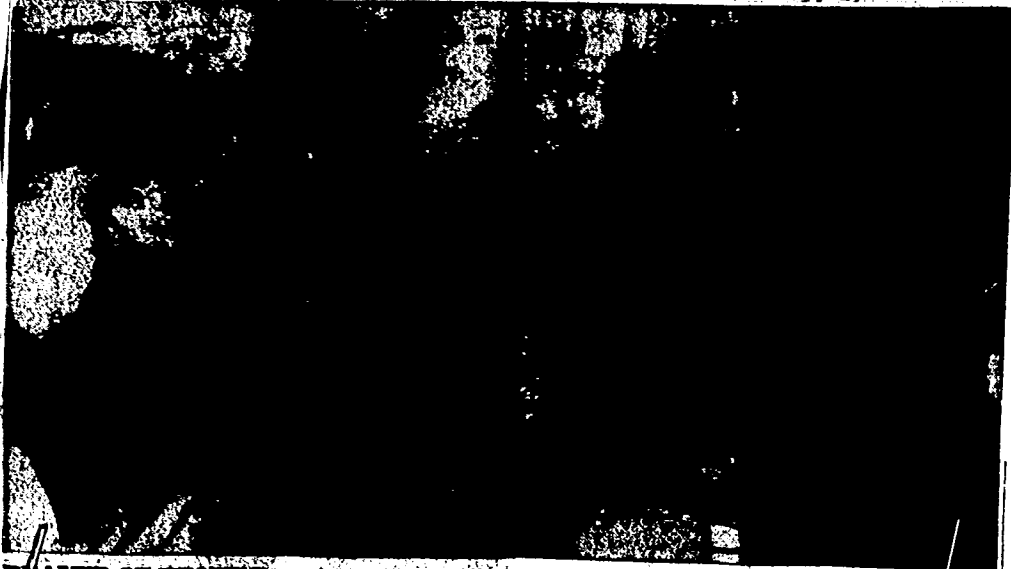


PAWNS OF PERSECUTION . . . Leaders of Boy and Girl Scout troops in Polish colony in Mexico stand on summit of the Mount of Christ the King, in the geographical center of the republic. These young exiles are helping their elders train the younger children, many orphans.

NEW YORK (N.Y.) JOURNAL & AMERICAN - November 5, 1944



VICTIMS OF RED INHUMANITY . . . "They are all good and studious pupils," says the teacher of class of four and five-year-olds in Santa Rosa colony for Polish refugees in Guanajuato, Mexico.



PRAYER OF THANKS . . . Among the 200 children in the colony whose parents have died or have been separated from them are the youngsters above. They are shown saying grace before dinner in Santa Anita, Cal., where they stayed several days prior to going on to camp in Mexico.



FATHER JAGIELNICKI (left), who was flung into Russian prison after Soviet forces entered Poland in 1939, heads Boy Scouts in Santa Rosa colony. fervent patriotism burns in breasts of all refugees, who long to return to their homeland but fear Soviet Russia will swallow it up. Mexico has been very sympathetic to them.

OCT 26 1944

Jewish Refugees Seen Aiding Latin America

Jewish refugees from Europe already have made important contributions to Latin America's economic and social life and can be expected to play an even more prominent role in the postwar era, Morris D. Waldman, vice chairman of the American Jewish Committee's executive committee, said today.

Reporting on a three-month tour that took him through Mexico, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Cuba, Mr. Waldman told a press conference that the United States, too, has profited from heavy immigration to Latin America because the new population has created a higher standard of living and more markets for American exports.

In other respects, he added, post-Hitler immigrants have helped make those countries better off, more self-subsistent.

New Skills Brought In.
"They have brought in new skills, merchandising ideas and trade," he explained. "Products after product which previously had to be imported are now being manufactured by them."

Discussing the general effect of

that immigration, Mr. Waldman said:

"There is a growing awareness that just as mass immigration to the United States in the past century was largely responsible for its colossal industrial, agricultural and commercial development, some countries, particularly Brazil, Cuba and Mexico, have already seen gratifying evidence of the value of immigration in the industries developed by European refugees."

Adjustment Easy.

Mr. Waldman said that European refugees had shown a remarkable aptitude for adjusting themselves to Latin-American life. But because naturalized citizens in most of those countries are not given full citizenship rights, he added, the assimilation of newcomers has been somewhat retarded.

As for anti-Semitism toward the 600,000 Jews in Latin America, Mr. Waldman said it was "largely the result of Nazi propaganda, which until 1941 was allowed to go unchecked."

It is not, he emphasized, a product of the "inherent nature of the people themselves," and he concluded: "Because of the very mixed nature of the populations, it is not likely that the developing nationalisms in any country will assume a serious racist character, such as developed in Nazi Germany."

New York Post
OCT 26 1944

Free Ports in Latin America Refugees Accepted by Mexico, 3 Others

Temporary refugee havens, similar to the one at Oswego, N. Y., are being set up by Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela and Paraguay, Morris D. Waldman, an official of the American Jewish Committee, said today. He has just returned from a three-month trip to Latin America.

Waldman said that he and Jacob Landau, director of the Overseas News Agency, traveling under sponsorship of the War Refugee Board, visited President Avila Camacho in Mexico and suggested the plan to him. Camacho agreed and cabled Mexican consuls in Switzerland to grant visas to 400 Jewish refugee families in Hungary.

The other three countries followed suit, Waldman said, while Brazil and Uruguay agreed to take 500 children each.

Latin Americans Receptive

Waldman declared that Latin Americans are not anti-Semitic and said that what anti-Semitism there is has been artificially implanted by Nazi propagandists.

He said that refugees recently admitted to Latin American countries have generally adjusted well to their new surroundings.

He said that "intelligent Latin

Americans see immigration as essential to the effective development of the economy of their respective countries and the improvement of their standards of living. I anticipate a postwar policy of selective immigration for the majority of Latin-American countries."

THE  SUN

AUG

Mexico Haven For Refugee Jews
Mexico City, Aug. 2 (AP) — The Mexican Government today authorized establishment of a colony for refugee Jews due to arrive soon