

THE PENT-UP GERMAN FLOOD

By CHARLES J. ROSEBAULT

THE other day an Austrian artist came to see me. We had met last in Vienna not long after the armistice. At that time he was slowly recovering from the hardships and privations of four years of life in the trenches. Still a young man, his hair was gray, his color sallow, his eyes lustreless. His lungs were affected, and recuperation discouragingly slow. A man of brains and ambition as well as talent caught up in the madness which had turned a naturally peaceable people into puppets of the crazy war lords, he had been thrown back, broken and ruined.

But it was a different individual who came back to me here. He was blooming, happy, exuberant. The story was soon told. By the grace of God his ancestry had been Czechoslovak. So he had been permitted to return to New York, where, even though we complain of the high cost of living, living is still possible for those who are willing to work.

"It is wonderful," he exclaimed, "to be able to buy a steak, fat, butter. I am all cured. So is my wife, who suffered even as I did. Our child has been reborn. She has blood in her veins; one can see again that her eyes are blue." Then he became thoughtful and a melancholy expression stole into his eyes. "My heart aches for the friends over there who cannot get away," he confessed. "They are waiting, ready to escape at the first chance, but passports are not to be had for those of German blood. They are wild to get away—at any sacrifice—but it is not possible."

In Germany, even more than in Austria, this craze to emigrate has seized upon vast numbers. The Germans have not suffered as much as the Austrians, and are by nature less prone to accept the slings of fate with resignation. In all classes there is evident a mighty urge to flee from the burdens pressing upon the losers in the World War. Emigration is today the one beacon of hope for thousands of Germans, who are convinced that they can no longer find in Germany the possibility of a satisfactory livelihood. So says Dr. Jung, head of the Department of Emigration, adding mournfully that this is due to the "unfortunate outcome" of the war. Hence this overwhelming desire to escape from under the "hard fist of the victor."

The impulse to escape is so strong, Dr. Jung goes on to say, that all hindrances and hardships are disregarded. Anything to get away, to put the Fatherland behind them. The value of the mark, making what once would have been regarded as a fortune a beggarly sum in most of the markets of the world, does not hold them back. Neither do difficulties of travel; the multiplication of frontiers—with endless harassments at each—the lack of facilities, due to restricted means of transportation, the perils of ventures into the unknown—not even the uncertainties of their reception into the known state of hostility to Germans existing in a large part of the world.

Nothing counts except an actual physical barrier. Perhaps it is well that this exists to such an extent

that comparatively few of the would-be emigrants have been actually able to get away, for, if even a tithe of them could have their wish it is not unlikely that the world would witness a tragedy so dire that even those who hate the Teuton would be forced to pity. For, in fact, most of the countries of the world have erected dams against the threatening torrent. The German is not wanted anywhere—certainly not in great numbers. The only real exception among all the peoples of this earth

would like to check the movement altogether, especially to the extent that the participants are trained workers, either industrial or agricultural—and the evidence assembled justifies the belief that these form the great majority. Just why young farmers and farm laborers should be so eager to leave Germany, which has been paying exorbitant prices for the products of the soil for several years, is not clear. Nor is it much more understandable as to mechanics, whose earnings have been fan-

German emigrants and their descendants. Most useful were those who had settled in close colonies, as in Southern Brazil, where the German influence became overwhelming. And it is frankly the desire of the German Government to guide the impending emigration, so far as possible, along colonial lines. With colonies of Germans in various parts of the world, especially in parts not densely populated but possessed of undeveloped natural resources, the foundation for a resumption of the

pire to enable the German emigrant to continue to be a German citizen secretly while pretending allegiance to another Government publicly, has been repealed.

So even the most liberal government is unlikely to permit mass movements of Germans to particular sections for years to come, and this favored idea of the German Emigration Department will have to await the re-birth of confidence in the integrity of German purpose—which will certainly be slow, if it ever eventuates. Already some Governments have passed new laws compelling immigrants to cast off their old allegiances and become bona fide citizens of the land of their adoption within a comparatively short time of their taking up residence.

In such laws the German Government sees a great danger. In his "German History" Treitschke observes that until the German Empire became a world power all of its emigrants throw off their allegiance, and most of them even ceased to be interested in the Fatherland or its affairs. Germany is no longer a world power and its palingenesis lies in the mists of the future. So what more likely than that history will repeat itself and the sturdy sons of the soil and the workshop be lost forever—possibly to swell the forces of some enemy? Hence the almost desperate efforts of the Government to control the movement through the establishment of agencies throughout the country and the encouragement of advisory societies, as well as through the mediums already mentioned.

Admittedly the influence of these various agencies has been slight. Even with the knowledge that passports are unobtainable, that ships are few and crowded to the danger point, thousands have sold their homes and other possessions and have moved to ports like Hamburg and Bremen, determined to seize the first chance for a vacant berth. Thieves and swindlers have not failed to take advantage of them. Not a few have had to wander back painfully to their former homes, bereft of all their money, to swell that already large number of paupers which is a serious menace to the country. Contemtpuous of governmental advice, and even of its attempted intervention, they have formed societies among themselves for the furthering of their purposes.

In Lelpsic such a society, formed under the title "Eastern Colony," to provide for emigration to Russia, sent a delegation to Lenin to arrange conditions, and packed up bag and baggage to move across the border. The delegates returned with glowing accounts of their reception and an agreement freeing the men from military duty for three years—these not to begin, however, until two years after their arrival. In other words, they could be made to serve in the Soviet Army from the moment they crossed the border until two years had elapsed—when the Bolshevik movement would presumably be established or exterminated.

While there were some adherents of Bolshevism in the society, the great majority only pretended to be



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appears to be Iceland. Here is a commentary for those who preached the superiority of the German.

Nor is this the assertion of any Germanophobe. My source of information is German.

In the statement by Dr. Jung from which I have quoted he says frankly that the task of restraining, guiding and advising those seized with the wanderer's itch has grown beyond the powers of the Department entrusted with that duty, and in fact beyond the influence of the entire Government. Hence his public proclamation, in which he calls upon the press and the public to aid in keeping the movement within bounds.

So far as possible the Government

tastic compared with those engaged in intellectual pursuits. Possibly the cause is akin to that which induces the rats to scamper from a ship. Are these quitters possessed of the instinct which divines a sinking in an angry sea?

Failing the power to thwart the expatriation, the Government would like to control it. German emigration in the past has not been a dead loss to the Fatherland, as was proved in the years of Germany's great industrial progress before the war and by its sentimental influence during the conflict. German propaganda would not have been so easily and thoroughly disseminated in foreign countries had it not been helped by

former world commerce under friendly auspices would have been laid, and the loss of able-bodied citizens compensated to a considerable degree.

But here, again, the time is not ripe. The present German Government may be sincerely republican and purged of all militaristic spirit. Preponderating evidence supports that view. Nevertheless, the lessons of the last decade cannot be ignored. Time and consistent good behavior alone will suffice to remove suspicion from alien minds. There has not even been any notice to the world that the trouble-making double allegiance law, cunningly devised by the Ministers of the em-

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so, with the sole object of obtaining permission to enter the country. These were naturally unwilling to fight for the Soviet cause, and another delegation was sent to negotiate. This time exemption for five years was obtained, this to take effect immediately. The delegation returned in triumph, and pictured the prospects in the most radiant colors. The news brought a host of new members, preparations for the migration were pushed feverishly, the most prudent closed out their affairs at home and the leaders went so far as to charter the first vessel to be secured to carry the colonists to the Russian port designated as their place of entry. But the formal permission was yet to be received, and until it arrived no one could enter.

Two hundred adventurous spirits could not be held back and found their way into Russia without passports. What their fate has been no one knows, for the only word received from the Soviet authorities since then has been a curt note to the effect that the experiment must not be repeated. Telegrams and letters from the officers of the society remain unanswered and the disappointed members have been left to make the best of their very sorry plight.

"The emigrant knows," writes one of Germany's most eminent publicists, "that no fairyland awaits him beyond our borders—that everywhere he will meet with hardships; yet will he go, even though he might get along at home. Because of the unsettled and unquiet times, because of the spiritual hysteria which agitates the whole world, he is driven forth, not through worry for wife and child, but because of an uncertain craving for new experiences, for more sunlight and lighter colors, for blue seas and far-away isles. That explains the great numbers who, following the collapse of the old empire, wish to know nothing of the new Germany, and prefer to seek, not without bitter resentment, for better conditions in foreign lands.

"Here lies the peculiar danger which threatens Germany through this emigration—the danger of estrangement. . . . The peace and contentment of lands which have not known the anguish of war will soothe them and it will not be long before, having transferred their Christian names, they will marry non-Germans, whose children will know no more of the Germany of the fathers than, at most, sombre tales of the hell of war and the paradise of peace."

The urgency of the problems to be met has resulted in a degree of frankness of expression on the part of the authorities who have discussed them publicly which would hardly have been indulged otherwise, and from their observations it is possible to gain a clear idea of how the Germans themselves picture their present position before the bar of world-judgment. While the writer quoted above cherishes the belief that Germans are welcome in some of the countries of South America, that Spain will be friendly, and even Canada will have forgotten her animosity within a few years, others are far less sanguine, and those who present themselves as specialists in knowledge of individual lands paint in the prospect in predominantly sombre colors.

In the *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*, one of the best of the German periodicals, Heinrich Waltz sets forth the possibilities for his countrymen in the United States. Beginning with the observation that nowhere outside of the old boundaries of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire have so many Germans found a home as in the United States, he asks whether this country will not again be the first to respond to the demand of the masses who, following the collapse of the fatherland, are compelled to seek

shelter abroad? Answering himself, he points out that the hatred of the Germans has not vanished and is continually being stimulated by Germany's enemies. Beyond that the demand is for untrained factory workers and farm laborers, to which the Germans would not respond. Then there is the opposition of the labor unions, the proposed restrictions on immigration, some of which are aimed particularly against Germans and Russians, and the Americanization movement.

Dr. Otto Pflaum, who is the Consular representative of Spain at Munich, contributes letters from personal correspondents describing conditions in South America. One of these asserts that in the Argentine, Brazil and Chile the attitude toward

Germany is at least neutral and possibly friendly. But intellectuals, teachers, governmental employes, commercial agents and the like have little prospect of success. The same is true of army officers, while engineers, doctors, dentist-technicians, architects and chemists can hardly hope for anything better than jobs as assistants. The small farmer, who is ready to learn local conditions, has reasonable chances of succeeding. Emphatic warning against propaganda or intervention in politics concludes with this "bitter-tasting but weighty" suggestion: "The German had better leave his loud, gruff, commanding, know-it-all manner at home, for it is this which makes him so disliked in foreign parts. To speak frankly, it is this

which makes him unsympathetic and often eclipses his admittedly good points."

From another correspondent, writing from Brazil, comes advice even less auspicious. Let none come, he writes, who has not sufficient capital to protect himself—and 100,000 marks is suggested as the minimum. Neither in Brazil nor in the Argentine will the empty-handed be welcome. The climate must be considered—and there is a dark tale of emigrants who went into the interior, from which only few returned.

West Africa is closed, even if Germans could stand the climate. China is impossible except for the well-to-do merchant and engineer, Siberia cannot be entered without the approval of Soviet Russia, which with-

holds consent. Entente influence is mighty in the new States—Poland, Esthonia, Lettland, Lithuania, Ukraine and those carved out of Turkey. Greece and Asia Minor are impoverished and probably could not be reached. Switzerland is overcrowded with refugees from other lands. In Northern Italy there is alleged to be room for Germans able and willing to work at rebuilding the cities, as the native labor is reported to be hanging back. That part of the Tyrol which was taken from Austria is likewise a friendly station, but in neither of these is there room for many.

It is remarkable how many of the authorities who give public expression to their views seem to feel it necessary to warn the German emigrant to mend his manners, to cease flaunting his superior Kultur, to don a becoming cloak of modesty.

All who in any way approach the subject make it clear that the one country on which all Germans unite as the most desirable haven for the German wanderers is Russia, and there is undisguised chagrin and annoyance that the borders should continue to be held closed. All arguments eventually unite to favor Russia as the goal of German colonization. Nor will this particularly surprise the world. Here and in the regions detached from Russia are rich fields for German exploitation, and it is really most annoying that the peoples of the Crimea and Ukraine, the Letts and Lithuanians should not realize that Germans would help them to solve their industrial, commercial and agricultural problems much more easily and thoroughly than can their present French and English friends. Alas, the world is blind, and it is necessary to wait with such patience as may be summoned for sight to return. Unfortunately, in the meantime the impatient masses are straining at the leash, and no one knows when they will break loose and stampede madly, no one knows whither.

"We have looked over the whole world," writes a despairing editor, "seeking where there might still be room or the wish to take in those of our German brothers who wish to emigrate. The result is shown in the communications we have printed. What lands remain beyond those we have discussed? France or England or their colonies? There would hardly be a soul in Germany possessed of the idea that fortune was to be found there rather than at home. Holland or Scandinavia? They are sending out a flood of their own children, who can no longer find a living at home. Switzerland is full of strangers. Spain? Here and there one of us would doubtless find a welcome, even though France pours into their ears her poisoned arguments against us. . . ."

Well, then, across the sea? Perhaps in Africa? All the north is impossible for Germans, for everywhere are colonies of the Entente. Only in Spanish Morocco would it be possible for a few to slip in. Togo and Cameroon are lost to us. The South African Union, 60 per cent. of whose population consists of white Boers, exhibits occasional friendliness to our people, but only merchants possessing large means could get along there.

So runs the melancholy tale, concluding with the bitter assertion that the ones the country would gladly see go—the untrained casual laborers, the gamblers and adventurers and speculating politicians—remain snug in their burrows; it is the trained middle classes, farmers, small merchants, small manufacturers, mechanics—just those that Germany needs for her reconstruction—that she must see go from her, obstinately set against all persuasion meant to hold them back. Of course, they cannot really go—for the present—but with their minds made up they are of little use while they wait. The Fatherland represents the past—their eyes are fixed on the future.