

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE MONTHLY

BY Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt

To the Jewish community in this country, the plight of the Jews in Europe is ever present, and I thought therefore that you might be interested to know that I had visited one of the Jewish camps near Frankfort. This camp is run by UNRRA, but it is established in a community where German houses have been taken over and the people are actually living in houses and not in barracks. They are over-crowded and the houses vary as to convenience, but by and large, they are better off than in the barracks which exist in many camps. Temporary buildings have been put up for kitchens, schools, infirmaries, etc. One building holds the barber shop, and there will some day be some other shops where men may exercise their skills and improve them for use in civilian life.

The Jewish people themselves in this camp, have built a memorial right in the center of the camp to the memory of the six million Jews who have died in Europe. It is the community meeting place and it was there that their spokesman told me of the present conditions and the hopes and aspirations which they have for the future.

Sometimes one wonders how people live through so much sorrow and misery and still have hopes, but I suppose as long as we are alive, we think something better may turn up in the future. I was particularly moved by the old people who long to go to Palestine. I could not help hoping that it might be made possible for them since that seems to be the only security which will satisfy their sense of being uprooted and homeless.

The children who have lost their parents were particularly pathetic, and yet they were the ones I imagine, who will suffer the least in the future. One little ten year old had wandered in to the camp with his younger brother and was already quite the leader among the boys, since he had a rather nice voice and always led in the singing. He sang for uproot and separate friends me a Hebrew song which they told me was a song of freedom. already been done. It sounded like a song to which people had marched and one could not help but hope that it was keeping alive the feeling of freedom among people who at the moment, had very few tangible signs of being free.

The far greater problem in Europe is that of the great number of displaced Balts, Yugoslavs and Poles. They are, for the moment, out of sympathy with the government of their own countries and they can not return there. What will happen to them in the long run, is difficult to say.

However, where there is a small German-Jewish group it is easy to understand why they would not want to settle anywhere in Europe which has such sad memories, and it should not be hard to find refuge for them either in Palestine or in other parts of the world, whereas for the whole group of displaced persons it will be both a tremendous undertaking and a difficult one to carry through in such a way as not to uproot and separate friends and families any more than has already been done.

This whole problem of displaced persons seemed to me one of the saddest sides of European life today and one can only hope that the United Nations Organization may be able to hold the interest of the peoples of the world and prevent a repetition of the weight of human misery which now engulfs the Continent of Europe.