THE INEVITABLE WEAKENING of the family as an institution during the war years together with the more recent threats associated with overcrowding, unemployment and the breakdown of normal village life which have resulted from the strain on all service agencies of the community caused by the huge influx of refugees, and the social and psychological problems which the refugees bring with them are matters which have had their effect on the moral fiber of society. The church is concerned because of the threat of morality and because it fears that, if the social and economic reconstruction of West Germany cannot be achieved in the near future, Communism may make serious inroads on Christianity as a philosophy and as a way of life.

Both established churches have expanded their programs far beyond the traditional area of youth groups and welfare and relief activities. These include sponsored projects to increase employment, special building programs initiated often by joint action of clergy and laity, vocational training programs for expellees who find themselves unable to practice their former trades, adult education courses for a great number of special groups, training courses for working women, special institutes for training laymen as teachers of religion, orientation courses for refugee clergy who are needed in German churches and, finally, a great variety of programs to encourage lay participation in the solution of current community problems and to foster a sense of civic responsibility in the individual.

It is particularly these last two programs which the Office of the US High Commissioner for Germany has supported and encouraged during the 1949-1950 period.

IN 1950, ONE of the most distinctive developments in the religious affairs field came about as a result of the work of two consultants from Holland, Dr. Antoine Onderdorff and Dr. George H. H. Zeegers, who were brought to Germany under the HICOG Religious Affairs exchanges program to recommend ways and means of encouraging greater utilization of lay leaders in dealing with current social problems.

On their recommendation and as a result of the interest they aroused, there is to be established a sociological institute sponsored by a church group, the first of its kind in Germany. Current plans call for sending the German religious leaders who will establish this institute to the Holland Institute for Social Research for training.

During 1950 there was a striking growth in "community mindedness" in the religious affairs field which has manifested itself not only in the increase in total programs and the total number of persons participating in these, but also in the proportion of programs planned directly around local community problems. Cooperation of the two churches in joint projects has also improved.

For the fields of housing and the refugee the contribution of church groups has been particularly outstanding. Since 1948 both groups have had housing programs and upon the establishment of the Federal Republic, the churches took an active part in securing the organization of a Ministry of Housing which could develop a coordinated housing plan for western Germany.

In February 1949, the Catholic bishops of Germany conducted drives in every diocese for funds to aid workers' housing settlements. In many cases housing reconstruction offices were established to centralize parish efforts and some of these formed building cooperatives. As a result of Catholic efforts, by October 1950 every diocese in West Germany had an organization to promote home building.

The Evangelical Church has also organized a variety of housing projects, some financed wholly or in part by church membership and others organized by church groups on a self-help basis. The activities of the Hillewerk, which has taken the lead in the housing program of the Evangelical Church, will be dealt with later.

IN RELATION TO THE REFUGEE, the churches have concerned themselves with the long-range problem of their reincorporation into the world community as well as the immediate problems of relief and employment. They have been a major factor in the formulation of public policy in relation to the refugee. Less than one year after the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe began, the World Council of Churches directed the attention of the signatories to the Potsdam Agreement to the human distress involved in this transfer of popula-

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"The History of Religious Affairs" is a monograph prepared by the Historical Division, Office of the Executive Secretary, HICOG, in conjunction with other HICOG offices closely affiliated with this activity. It gives a brief resume of the German churches from early times and under the monarchy, Weimar Republic and Nazism. The development since World War II of the churches and their relations to other economic, political and social fields are described in detail.

Author of the monograph is Dr. Beryl R. McClaskey, who recently returned to the United States after being with the Occupation Forces in Germany for several years. She was formerly assistant chief of the Organization and Program Branch, Control Office, OMGUS, and later special assistant to the control officer. With the advent of HICOG, she joined the staff of the Historical Division.

The monograph was produced under direction of Dr. Harold Zink, chief of the Historical Division.
tion, pointing out that expulsions were proceeding without regard to human suffering and that those who had already been transferred were in great need.

It was recommended that the United Nations Organization assume responsibility for the appropriate settlement of transferred populations. The National Catholic Welfare Conference took similar action.

In the autumn of 1948 on the occasion of the international meeting of the World Council of Churches, the English delegate, Sir Henry Carter, took the position that the refugee problem was an international one and must be dealt with on that level. As a result of decisions reached at this meeting, in which German Protestant Church leaders participated, the Ecumenical Council at Geneva, in cooperation with the British Foreign Office, sponsored an international meeting on this subject, which was held at Hamburg in late 1949.

This conference, attended by representatives of various countries, of the German government and of the Western Allies, again focused the attention of the world on the refugee problem. Recommendations were made that Marshall Plan funds be released for use in special projects to house refugees and give them employment. Shortly afterward, the German bishops of the Catholic Church, at their annual conference at Fulda, addressed an appeal to the conscience of the world to assist the refugees to find appropriate homes and livelihoods.

In November 1950, Dr. Eugen Gerstenmaier, director of the Evangelical relief organization, Hilfswerk, who is also a member of the Bundestag (lower house of parliament), was appointed by the Federal Government to draw up proposals for the international handling of the refugee problem under which the United Nations Organization would coordinate all refugee work through four committees: for emigration, for resettlement, for matters of legal status, and for the care of the sick and infirm.

Proposals were presented in the fall of 1950 by Dr. Gerstenmaier to the Council of Europe, to which he was one of the German representatives, at its meeting in Strasbourg. Largely as a result of his recommendations, the Council appointed a Committee for Expellees to study this problem.

The morale of expellees is not good and it has not in general improved during 1950. Bitterness engendered by expulsion, together with resentment of the discrimination often practiced by the native population, particularly in regard to the assignment of housing and employment, have bred an attitude of discontent and a sense of outrage. In recent months these attitudes have found expression in political activities and in at least one state (Schleswig-Holstein) the refugee vote has dominated the election.

Refugee organizations are making an increasingly strong bid for support among all the "dispossessed" classes. With demagogic leadership a united refugee party could become a strong force in any incipient nationalism.

In so far as social assimilation is concerned, it seems fair to say that church groups and foreign voluntary agencies are the only two German organizations which have made serious attempts toward the permanent assimilation of the refugees. There is a fairly general view in many German communities that refugees will some day be able to return to their homes and this is often not discouraged by local authorities.

The local pastor has often played the dual role of persuading the natives to accept the refugees and of convincing the latter that they must adjust themselves to their present environment. Religion has been the one "home" to which the refugees could turn and church-related activities the most important source of social intercourse. The refugees have played an important part in the religious revival that Germany is experiencing.

Among the oldest and most important service organizations of the Catholic and Protestant churches of Germany are the welfare organization Caritas Verband, a 50-year-old association of all Catholic welfare societies, and the Evangelische Hilfswerk, organized by the Protestants in 1945 around their century-old council of social agencies known as the "Innere Mission." On Jan. 9, 1949, the relation of the Hilfswerk to the Evangelical Church in Germany was formalized by a new church law, making welfare work an official duty of the church. Evangelical leaders felt this was a step forward in identifying the interests of the church more directly with those of the community.

These two associations, in addition to distributing 90 percent of the funds and supplies contributed to Germany by US voluntary agencies since 1945, have collected and distributed funds and supplies from private contributions in West Germany, which represent a sizable proportion of the total private relief program.

The financial position of both welfare groups, seriously jeopardized by confiscations under the Nazis and by war losses, was further weakened as a result of currency reform. Hilfswerk, for example, claims to have lost a total of Reichsmarks 110,000,000 at that time. Some organizations were forced to suspend their services; others managed by borrowing to tide themselves over the lean period between currency reform and the resumption of normal giving which would follow economic recovery.

By the summer of 1949 most institutions could count on a fair income to cover current expenses, but interest on debts contracted during the transitional period continued to be a drag, and for many welfare and relief organizations, the actual repayment of principal is still an unsolved problem.

In the fall of 1949 the major welfare agencies in the US Zone, including Hilfswerk and Caritas, joined with their counterparts in the British Zone in appealing to the Occupation Authorities to make certain readjustments in the currency reform laws.

While they acknowledged the necessity for currency reform, they appealed for the immediate release of the seven percent of the impounded Deutsche-mark balances in their accounts, pointing out that these funds had been contributed voluntarily by many people of limited means. Therefore, the agencies argued, their funds could
not justifiably be regarded as belonging in the same category as business firms. Moreover, they could not suspend service to the sick and the needy until times improved.

Meanwhile, they reported borrowing from banks, at interest rates ranging from six to 10 percent. In some cases, as in Hesse, the state granted the voluntary agencies a loan at five percent. In Bavaria, however, the government was dubious as to its own solvency and delayed offering substantial loans until the end of 1949.

In general, agencies in the field of welfare work have received a very limited per capita subsidy from the states. The remainder of their budgets — a large proportion of the running expenses of each — has been gathered through voluntary contributions of the people."

* * *

WHEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC was established, the welfare organizations of both church groups had regained the status in the community which they enjoyed before the advent of Hitler. There can be little question that, with the aid of outside voluntary agencies, they represented one of the greatest constructive forces on the German scene. Another example of cooperation without precedent in German church tradition is the practice of sharing the same place of worship where one church is without adequate facilities.

The Catholic Caritas Verband had a staff of 120,000 professional workers under employment during the year 1949 and an additional 600,000 voluntary helpers. In addition to contributing material assistance to the needy within the parishes, Caritas operated feeding stations, a large number of temporary shelters and youth hostels. Its present long-term program aims to strengthen home life and the activities of its various training-schools, day nurseries, kindergartens and convalescent homes are organized toward this end.

Representing the Protestant Church, the Innere Mission and its related organization, the Hillswerk, had 4,000 related institutions and stations in actual operation in December 1949, with 80,000 workers, some 40,000 of them deaconesses, and 200,000 voluntary part-time workers. The Innere Mission has a threefold program which includes activities in the fields of welfare work, evangelism and social action. Care of the sick, the mentally ill, the imprisoned, the physically handicapped, the spiritually neglected and of homeless youth are among its activities.

During 1949 and 1950 both organizations stressed work among the sick, needy and unemployed among the refugee population. The Protestant welfare agencies have devoted great efforts toward the relief of the refugee and expellee population and there has been, perhaps, no other area of religious activity where interfaith cooperation has been so successful. Both groups minister to the refugee population without regard to church affiliation.

WHILE THE PROTESTANT Hillswerk during 1949 and 1950 had to some extent concentrated most of its efforts on short-range programs, it has attempted to interpret the refugee problem and to relate it to the total community problem. This welfare group has taken over several barracks camps with the object of developing commercial enterprises among the refugees. It also spearheaded the Adelheide project, a joint Catholic-Evangelical effort where 3,000 refugee youths are being trained for vocational adjustment.

One of its most interesting projects is Espel Camp, which, with state assistance, is being developed into a complete town primarily for refugees. This former armament plant is located in a 1,200-acre wooded area with approximately 100 buildings of varying sizes. The British occupation authorities released this property to the Evangelische Hillswerk for a church project with educational and vocational training schools. In order to make the settlement into a real town, the church and the state formed a non-profit reconstruction society which was incorporated in late 1949. Already firms have been established for the manufacture of office furniture, steel mattress springs, machinery and cigars.

Two hundred and forty-four persons, 195 of them expelled, were already at work by the end of 1950. In the planning stage, there are a cardboard factory, a concrete factory, a spinning mill, a factory for the manufacture of electrical appliances and a plumbing concern. The project calls for the eventual employment of 2,000 persons and housing for their families. Further financial assistance will be granted by the state government to complete this program.

END

Expert Reports on “Co-Determination”

In a comprehensive study entitled “Joint Labor Management Control of Industry,” the Rev. John F. Cronin of Washington, D. C., who recently visited Germany for three months, states that equal participation by labor in the control of German industry can best be achieved if it is accepted by all the interests concerned on a voluntary basis, “even though enforced by law.”

An expert on social and economic problems and the author of several books, Father Cronin is assistant director of the Department of Social Action of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington. A visiting consultant under the HICOG exchanges program, his work in Germany was under the auspices of the Religious Affairs Branch. His report points up the extensive work of the churches in developing programs aimed at bettering the lot of the worker. Father Cronin emphasizes that the American government has adopted a policy of “strict neutrality” upon this “extremely controversial problem.”

The result of more than 100 interviews and a detailed study of all available material, the report describes the historical factors and manifold viewpoints concerning the problem, as well as the complications involved in achieving genuine “co-determination” in German industry.

Recommendations made by Father Cronin include suggestions that HICOG concentrate upon programs leading to labor-management collaboration and that it sponsor international interchange and study programs enabling German labor, management and religious leaders to study the methods used by other Western nations in dealing with similar problem. He believes it is important that all affected groups in German society “try to invigorate the German labor movement at the plant level.”