

STATUS OF JEWISH WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS  
IN POST-WAR GERMANY

PURPOSE OF SURVEY

The present survey of the Jewish community (Gemeinde) in Germany, with particular emphasis on the employment outlook for that group, was undertaken in June 1949 at the invitation of U.S. Military Government, Manpower Division. In the exploration of the problem, the writer visited Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and smaller towns in the U.S. Zone. Here he interviewed local Jewish leaders as well as numerous members of the Jewish Community, representatives of Jewish welfare agencies and of the International Refugee Organization, Military Government officials and Germans in all walks of life, including German labor representatives.

The negligible size of the Jewish community may well raise some questions as to the ultimate value of the survey. The once flourishing Jewish community in Germany which contributed so greatly to the German economy and its culture has been reduced from more than 500,000 in 1933 to today's estimated population of 20,000. This is all that can be found in Germany today - the remnants of a group whose ancestors lived in Germany for many centuries.

Even if these 20,000 were concentrated in a single urban center, they would constitute an imperceptible handful in a total German population of 65,000,000. However, no such concentration has, of course, occurred. Outside of the Jewish community in Berlin with its population of 7,121 and Munich, where there are 800, the German Jews are scattered throughout the country in groups not exceeding 500 persons. In Frankfurt, for example, which city before the Nazi regime, claimed the second largest Jewish community in Germany, there are now only about 365 German Jewish residents.

If the effort involved in making this survey requires justification, it lies in the fact that regardless of the insignificance of the present German Jewish community, quantitatively speaking, the extent of its integration in Germany can be taken as a measure of what may be expected from Germany in the way of its own democratization. Under the Nazi regime, the Jews were totally excluded from the economic life of the country. It is axiomatic that the democratic ideal is realized only in the acceptance of the concept of the equality of all citizens. It is, therefore, appropriate to examine the extent to which that concept has permeated the German scene, in terms of the acceptance of the German Jews on a par with the general German population.

The answer to the question posed by this survey must be derived from a consideration of the following related factors: (1) The population structure of the present German Jewish community; (2) Size and occupational character of the Jewish working population; (3) Employment practices; (4) Opinions and emigration trends.