

★ Manchester Boddy

There is nothing in all the pages of history more horrible than the record of Nazi atrocities inflicted on the Jewish people of Europe.

The tragedy is so vast it staggers the imagination, leaves one bewildered and unable to find expression for his desire to do something about it.

Mr. Anselm Reiss, on a visit to Los Angeles, answers a few questions. He is head of the Jewish rescue committee in London and is one of the outstanding leaders of the anti-Nazi underground movement that contributed much to the liberation of Europe.

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Question—How many Jews have been killed?

Answer—Obviously it is not yet possible to conduct an accurate census. However, we can make a fairly dependable estimate. Not including Russia, there were about 6,500,000 Jews in Europe before the outbreak of this war. There are now about 1,200,000 left in Europe—both in the Nazi occupied and liberated countries, including labor and concentration camps. About 250,000 fled and 600,000 were evacuated to Russia from Poland, Bessarabia and the Baltic countries. This would indicate that approximately 4,500,000 were killed by the Nazis, assisted by the Ukrainians, Slovaks, Romanians and Hungarians.

Question—When did the Germans first reveal their intention of total extermination?

Answer—In "Mein Kampf," the bible of the Nazis, Hitler promised the total extermination of the Jews. If from the very beginning attempts had been made to remove the Jews from Hitler occupied countries, great masses might have been saved. The Germans applied a special tactic in order to carry out their extermination plan. This was based on well known German trickery. At first ghettos were created in order to concentrate the mass of Jews in small centers and thus make it more difficult for them to organize and carry out an uprising. The ghettos were carefully separated from one another. It was simpler to send a letter from a ghetto abroad than from one ghetto to another close by. From the ghettos it was easy to deport the Jews.

This powerful empire, armed to the teeth, with a fanatically wild and disciplined Nazi police, did not have the courage to tell the Jews outright what its purpose was. They were told they would be sent to work camps where there were more opportunities for housing, employment and even means of entertainment. When the deportations were started the highest officials gave their word of honor that "there was nothing wrong about the deportations." The Jews from Holland, France, etc., were sent to Treblinka, the mass extermination center for that area. As an indication of the people's total unawareness of what was ahead, they eagerly

asked, when weary of traveling: "Where is Treblinka?"

The situation was similar in Poland. German tactics went so far that trains with Jewish deportees were halted before they reached their destinations and the Jews were given an opportunity to write to their families that they had arrived at their places of work and all was well. Railway employes were changed; replaced by Nazis who took over the service to cover up the business in hand.

Despite these precautions, the truth began filtering through and resistance started. The Germans thereupon stopped the delivery of food to the ghettos for several days. After the people became desperate from hunger they were promised two loaves of bread and six pounds of marmalade upon registering for the "labor battalion." To put the bread in the mouths of their starved children many went to the registration places, and thus resistance was broken and people permitted themselves to be deported.

Question—How did the Jews react—at the beginning—and later?

Answer—At the beginning the Jews were of the opinion that the segregation of the Jews in ghettos was all that the Germans wanted. Despite hunger, unsanitary conditions, contagious diseases, etc., Jews tried to adjust themselves to the new conditions in order to continue to exist. The ghettos—especially the larger ones—organized for mutual aid, tried to create cultural and educational activities, made provisions for improving health conditions, and engaged in social activities permitted by the restrictions of the environment.

Through secret emissaries the purposes of the deportations began to spread, and the youth and workers' organizations began to enlighten the masses and urge the need for resistance. There were no arms available, and, of course, no money. Some arms were acquired through an attack on a German arsenal by members of the Jewish military organization, disguised as German soldiers.

Despite all odds, a secret Jewish military organization arose in Poland and fought in different ghettos. The battle of the Warsaw ghetto received worldwide publicity. It lasted 40 days. There was one almost as fierce, lasting 30 days, in Bialystok. Mention should be made of uprisings in the extermination camps of Treblinka and Belshatz.

In Warsaw the Jewish military organization consisted of 22 units, 14 of which were organized by different Zionist Socialist groups (Hechalutz-Poale Zion). The Jewish military organizations of Cracow carried out 10 acts of sabotage, upon railways, a cafe frequented by officers, and several death sentences on traitors, high Nazi officials, as well as several Jewish traitors.

There were secret military or-

ganizations, also, in France, Belgium and Hungary. In France a unit of the Jewish Maquis captured a small city, taking many German prisoners. Many Jews, particularly members of Zionist Socialist organizations, joined the ranks of Marshal Tito's army in Yugoslavia and the Czech underground. Those who were left after the ghetto fights remobilized last year for the illfated Polish uprising, and now there are probably only stray members left of that valiant group—no one knows how many or where they may be.

Question—What about the liberated countries?

Answer—The news from the liberated countries is bad. The Jews, of course, share the trials and tribulations of the population in general, but in addition they are finding it even more difficult than others to restore their lost homes, jobs and fortunes.

The situation is particularly grave insofar as Jewish children are concerned. Ninety per cent are orphans, without friends or relatives, most of whom were exterminated. Most of these have been taken care of by the church, houses in convents, monasteries, and brought up without Jewish education in a way of life remote to the traditions of the Jews. Grateful as one may be to the rescuers of these children, one cannot underestimate the price paid in losing these children of our people in our struggle for the future. Something must be done to reclaim them to our way of life.

Question—What is the future of the Jews?

Answer—Jews who have lived through and survived the Nazi hell are physical and mental wrecks. The mere restoration of their economic means, even if it could be managed, would be inadequate rehabilitation. The matter goes deeper, and must be approached with heart and understanding. They cannot resume a normal existence on the soil where every stone and house bears a reminder of personal and race tragedy, where the air is still pungent with the odor of burning human flesh and of poison gases. The regeneration must be accomplished in a friendly land, in a warm Jewish atmosphere where there is a common purpose and common goal for the future of our people.

The democratic world, the free, progressive world of culture and ethics and high-mindedness which has in the past years revealed so little understanding of these problems, has a duty to help us now, so that the last remnants of Israel may be saved and helped to build an independent homeland, where they can work out their destinies, and where life and liberty will be assured.

February 6, 1945.

(Hear Manchester Boddy tonight—10:15 o'clock, KFI 640 kc.)

★ Marquis Childs