The following is a brief review of juvenile vagabondage in Germany. Since migration was forced upon so many, it is next to impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between those to whom vagrancy has become a permanent habit and state of mind, and those who would welcome opportunities for resettlement if they were offered. Of course there are many individual cases in which this could be tested, but for the great masses of wandering youths there is no way of estimating even approximately to which group most of them belong. On the whole it can be said that since 1947/48 the total number of migrating children has diminished, whereas the number of vagabonds of both sexes has increased, which makes the problem still more acute.

Social causes of vagrancy: In many cases they are the same as in other war-stricken countries of Europe and are part of the aftermath of war. They are complicated and difficult to survey in Germany owing to the fact that many millions of German families had to leave their communities because of destruction or for political reasons. Children and adolescents often took to the roads and formed groups which in time became gangster bands. They had no elders to whom they could naturally turn for assistance: these were dead, missing, separated from the children during the flight; exhausted, egotistic, indifferent in their ignorance, or overwhelmed with material worries. Certain legal measures to stop or limit the general migration worked against the resettlement of youth. In Fredeburg (British Zone) in September 1948, at a Conference called by "Save Europe Now", Hermine Albers, Director of the Hamburg Office for the Protection of Youth, pointed out that it was prohibited to give ration cards to young people who were without regular papers. In towns they could not get permission for accommodation, even if there were possibilities for employment, while the villages were overcrowded with refugees and offered nothing in the way of work or apprenticeship. This situation has scarcely changed since. A Bavarian law of February 1949 stipulates that persons (including minors) who have no special permit for entering Bavaria from the Eastern Zone, from Czechoslovakia or from the south-eastern States including Austria, have no right to stay in Bavaria nor to be accepted in refugee camps. There are several emergency camps near the Bavarian frontier, but conditions are said to be so primitive that energetic young people feel driven to try for better luck in the streets.
Psychological causes: Here again it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the original reasons for choosing vagrancy when other possibilities were open, and the psychological consequences of enforced migration. There is no doubt, however, that disillusionment and the shock of the sudden breakdown of all they had seriously and fervently believed in turned forceful characters among the young toward a profound denial of civilization and organized society. Cruel though the "ideals" offered to youth in Nazi Germany and in Fascist Italy appear to us, they appealed to the best in dynamically strong youngsters; to "physical courage and strength, to primitivity and youthful desire for adventure as well as for unselfish service, which raised the purpose of life above individual validity", as Wolfgang Sonntag, Stockholm, sums it up in his excellent study on "The Situation of the Young Generation in Germany". The boyish romanticism encouraged by the Nazis and made deliberately attractive to the Hitler youth, "Landsknechtsromantik", as Professor Heinrich Jung of Baale calls it ("Landsknechte - mercenaries in the Middle Ages") - was transformed into vagrancy and nihilism with no romantic features left. Like a great many children in other European countries, these young people never fully experienced childhood. Premature independence and the necessity of making decisions which were far beyond their years gave them an appearance and a false feeling of maturity. The flight of a big stream of refugees and expelled persons resulted in a mentality of constant flight from the past, in a concealed, but permanent fear of life which is stronger than the conscious fear of death or imprisonment; in a hunt for material things and at the same time in a feeling of desperate isolation. They lack the experience of fundamental loyalties which bind a sound family together and which are the prototype of loyalty to the community and to society at large in later life. The feeling of security is unknown to them. No wonder that many of them became bitter, distrustful, mute and introvert - all this combined with a latent longing for sharing, for communion with fellow beings and for social justice. Those uprooted youngsters will open their minds and hearts to a surprising extent if they meet adults who offer them real understanding and friendship. But this rarely happens, and there is not much time for such deeper contacts.

Present situation: Reliable statistics for the whole of Western Germany are not available. The social workers have little time to gather figures, and conditions change a good deal. It is estimated that between 1945 and 1949 about 15 million people were in flight in Germany: families from bombed homes, refugees from the East, deported people from the former German districts of Poland and from Bohemia, German colonists who for generations had been settled in other Central or South-European countries ("Volkadutsche") - with 4 to 5 million minors among them. The number of unaccompanied children cannot be estimated, since most of them are not registered. Before the currency reform it was reckoned that in the British Zone alone more than 40,000 youngsters were tramping about homeless and without proper papers (officials consider this estimate far too low), supporting themselves by black marketing, theft, or prostitution; even murders for ration cards were reported. At that time the rate of increase in the number of wandering girls was supposed to be considerably higher than that of boys. To give some figures as an illustration: there were 20,000 homeless adolescents of both sexes in Hamburg in 1945, not counting those who succeeded in hiding. Attempts were made even then to single
out vagabonds, though the limits of the different types were fluid. In 1947/48 the total number of uprooted stray youths had diminished, but that of vagabonds seemed to grow. In the province of Schleswig-Holstein, where the population has increased 50% owing to the influx of refugees, 3,888 unaccompanied children were counted. It is reported, however, that no more than 3-4% are to be considered as completely destitute and without moral standards. They have an immense desire for total freedom — says Hermine Albers — having lived an adult life in spite of their young age. But the majority can be gained over for constructive living, if genuine opportunities are provided. It is remarkable that reliable reports from experts not only in Schleswig-Holstein, but in Bavaria and Hesse, state that the proportion of refugees among juvenile delinquents is strikingly smaller than the total number of refugees in comparison with the native population would suggest. Apparently they sink or swim. Many of them have developed strength of character through early experience of life. If they are left to themselves, they will inevitably be thrown to the negative side. If they are offered possibilities for resocialization and positive use of their juvenile forces, they may become a valuable asset for the regeneration of Germany.

Public interest: After the first general confusion following defeat, public opinion began to awake to the problem and the perils of juvenile vagrancy. As far as children under 14 years of age are concerned, the problem seems fairly well solved on the whole. The number of families who wish to adopt children is said to exceed by far that of children without homes or families. Children’s Villages for war orphans have difficulty in finding orphans and decide to accept children from broken homes. The immense problem is that of the adolescents. A number of protective laws in favour of endangered youth have been passed both by the Occupation Powers and the German State and the local authorities. But there is a dire lack of trained personnel and money to carry out their provisions. The currency reform has changed the situation on the surface. Quite a number of adolescents got employment, while others were or are now being thrown out of work. Many of those who survived the struggle for existence by black marketing were deprived of all resources except pure stealing and robbery. On the whole, experts agree in the statement that the stabilization of currency has diminished the number of uprooted boys and girls, but has sharpened and rendered more dangerous the problem of vagabondage as such.

Practical measures: In this sketch no differentiation can be made between measures for exterior resettlement and inner resocialization, or between curative and preventive methods. This is partly due to lack of time and space. On the other hand, there is a distinct and constructive tendency in Germany not to single out vagabonds from among other homeless and wandering youth, as far as circumstances allow, but rather to raise the self-respect of those who have been uprooted (or have never been rooted) and have gone astray, by offering them to the highest possible degree the same opportunities as to more or less "normal" young people who became temporarily homeless.

Categories of minors in need of help, whether already vagrant or in danger of becoming vagrants:
homeless and stray youth;
young refugees in mass camps with atrocious conditions,
even if they are still united with one or both parents;
war-mutilated children;
repatriated young prisoners of war without homes or families;
adolescents who for political or, in some cases, for pre-
tended political reasons, have fled from the Russian Zone
and illegally entered Western Germany; (x)
employed youths whose provisional abode is very far away
from their workshop, factory, etc.

In a great many places authorities and voluntary organizations -
the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches joining hands for the
purpose - have started resettlement centres of various types:
hostels in industrial districts;
settlements with workshops of their own which will
eventually make these institutions self-supporting;
social youth centres in part resident and in part
offering leisure activities to young people; by
uniting these two functions they can get some of the
more diffident boys and girls to make at least a try;
villages or rural settlements based mainly on agri-
cultural work and gardening, sometimes combined with
workshops.

It is impossible to describe here even the most important of
these enterprises. In most cases, they separate boys and girls. In some
places successful experiments were made with co-educational hostels and

(x) Every day 40-60 minors, having crossed the frontier illegally, entered
one of the three emergency camps on the Bavarian frontier in the month of
December 1949, 18 months after the currency reform. The whole situation
is best described and the practical measures and future aims well summed up
in an article by Dr. Rolf Lenzhartz on "Das Selbsthilfswerk der Jugend.
Grundlagen, Erfahrungen und Aufgaben" reprinted from "Jahrbuch der Jugend-
arbeit 1949", Franz Ehrlich Verlag, Munich 15. He stressed that
measures should not merely be dictated by the need of the moment. By
their social structure and their spiritual democratic attitude, by an
early and genuine experience in democratic living and self-responsibility
the settlements should form creative cells for the inner regeneration of
Germany. Dr. Lenzhartz is himself the promoter and the inspirer, and if
need be, the critical friend of many of these settlements etc., and is
probably the greatest authority on this development in Germany.
with holiday camps or centres for leisure activities for both sexes. This was effectively supported by the Occupation Powers. The essential factor for the success or failure of these centres, homes, etc. is very often the personality of the Head and that of the House Mother. In view of the scarcity of skilled personnel it is not always considered necessary that these be trained social workers or educators. But great emphasis is laid on the need for supplementary training and a thorough-going orientation in modern educational thought and experience, and in the results of psychological research.

Youth Self-Help Projects: There are many institutions for homeless youth built up on the traditional patterns of public or private welfare work, with youth as the more or less passive object of relief and guidance. But the most interesting movement, and indeed a promising one, is that which arose from the initiative of young people themselves and of their friends in the older generation who believe in the constructive forces of youth. It started and grew strongest in Bavaria, and was inspired, as their leaders assure us over and over again, by what was heard about the Pestalozzi Children's Village for European war orphans at Troggen, Switzerland, but the movement soon spread and found different forms in all four Zones of Germany. It is in part financed by the State, in part by workshops which it is hoped will soon be self-supporting, and in part by donations, collected in some cases by the organized youth movement, comprising groups of different orientation. It is characteristic that the active and sound among German youth - a minority, but a minority of dynamic importance - feel a strong responsibility and comradeship for the unfortunate among their young contemporaries. They want to prove that they are not a "lost generation", but ready to work for the common good and to base social life on co-operation and mutual help. The movement, its realizations, problems and influence must be described elsewhere. Its main features are:

- limited family-like groups with far-reaching self-government;
- work at the construction of the buildings etc., often in their leisure time after working hours;
- the sharing of wages by those who earn for the benefit of the group;
- good comradeship on an equal footing between young people with a more fortunate background and endangered youth.

In Bavaria there are now more than 60 homes and settlements for homeless youth, and 18 youth self-help projects which are recognized as such by their co-ordinating centre in Munich. They work in contact with some others which have not yet been recognized. In Germany as a whole there are about 300 which claim to belong to that group. Careful investigations are made to give full admittance only to those settlements, hostels, etc. which correspond to the definition and the requirements of the self-help projects.

Co-ordination within Germany: In a general conference on welfare work for youth at Rothenburg o.T. a Federation of these self-governing youth communities in the three Western Zones was founded: "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Jugendaufbauwerk" with Herr Willi Weber of Duesseldorf and Herr Fritz Wagner
from Gelting, Schleswig-Holstein, as President and Vice-President, and Dr. Lenhartz, Munich, as responsible Secretary. The provisional seat is the same as that of the Bavarian Centre for these projects: "Bayrisches Jugendsozialwerk", Holbeinstr. 11, Munich. Dr. Lenhartz, originally Secretary to the Bavarian Centre only, has travelled in all three Western Zones to inspect and advise the self-help projects and similar undertakings and to create contacts among them. About 15,000 adolescents without home, employment or training have found assistance and encouragement, enabling them to make a fresh start in life, within the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft".

At the same conference, a wider co-ordinating body for general youth welfare work in the three Western Zones was founded under the name of "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendfürsorge und Jugendpflege". The 48 youth organizations working in the social field which were granted membership have one seat each, with the exception of the "Bayrisches Jugendsozialwerk" which, in acknowledgment of its merits, got two seats, assigned to Herr W. Weber and Dr. Lenhartz.

Preventative work, which may, along with other aims, occasionally help to prevent juvenile vagabondage, is done by the child guidance department ("Erziehungshilfsstelle") of the Psychotherapeutic Institute in Stuttgart, Hasenbergsteige 12. Among the young people who were brought or went there for guidance in November/December, 1948, 21% were between the ages of 14 and 18, of both sexes, and most of them without means. Child guidance clinics are planned or have been started in other parts of Germany.

In more severe cases of juvenile delinquency, whether linked with vagrancy or not, special measures are taken which cannot be dealt with here. Most of the reformatories, many of which had between the two world wars been modernized on the ideas and the inspiring example of Karl H. Willer, Herre Lane and others, had regressed to methods of violence and constraint under Hitler and have not yet been fundamentally remodernized. Many of them are too rigid to touch the deeper chords in the inner life of young law-breakers. They may change their behaviour, but only in a few cases will a change of heart be achieved. If a special report on the treatment of juvenile delinquency is desired, it can be provided later. One of the best experts and promoters of constructive work in penal reform is Dr. Albert Krebs, Hessisches Justiz-Ministerium, Gerichtstr., Wiesbaden. He is responsible for the whole penal system in Hesse, and is specially interested in the educational treatment of young culprits.

There is an enormous task awaiting the comparatively small number of those in Germany who want to help youth which has gone astray. They have found official support in many quarters, but in others they have to fight desperately against bureaucracy and indifference. Most of them have a clear insight into the international aspect of the problem and desire contacts with the outside world and some backing in their fight and effort by a feeling of belonging to a greater movement. They need and deserve encouragement and respect. The young people themselves, most of whom have up to now known foreigners only as "enemies" or occupation officers, long to get in touch with the younger generation in other countries. The best and keenest among them are aware that the larger aim of their effort is not individual help only, but also a whole-hearted and practical response to a realistic vision: the promise of new forms of social life combining the values of a family-like atmosphere with those of collective endeavour, and
the growth of solidarity with unity, but without uniformity; in short, the linking up of the release and self-realization of individual forces with the evolution of the community in a spirit of freedom, tolerance and co-operation.

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