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THE GENERAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND THE
EMPLOYMENT OF RUSSIAN REFUGEES.

REPORT BY M. HANOTAUX,

adopted by the Council, December 11th, 1923.

The Fourth Assembly invited the Council to request the Governments of the States Members of the League to continue to afford the High Commission their assistance and support, especially as regards the development of the means of general and professional education, and the securing of employment for refugees.

Before the Council takes any steps towards carrying out the Assembly's Resolution, it would perhaps be useful to supply it with a brief general survey of the position of Russian educational institutions abroad, and to furnish information in respect of the opportunities offered to Russian refugees for finding remunerative employment in the various countries.

I. EDUCATION.

a) Elementary and Secondary Schools.

The Russian school system, established about three years ago, has chiefly developed in those countries which harbour the great bulk of Russian refugees, namely, the Slav countries and the border States on the European frontier of Russia. In the rest of Europe there are but few Russian schools.

Towards the end of the scholastic year 1922-23, there were included 42 secondary schools and 45 elementary schools, with 8,767 children, 4411 of whom were boarders. The Russian refugee children at the schools of the Russian Minority in the Baltic States and Poland, and a few dozen other pupils, are not included in the figures quoted above.

From the point of view of organisation, the schools for Russian children may be divided into four groups:-

1. The majority of schools and their pupils come under organisations affiliated with or receiving subsidies from the Committee of Russian Zemstvos and towns; there are 4,371 children in all, 3,121 of whom are distributed among 22 secondary schools and 1,250 between 33 elementary schools.

2. The secondary schools in the Czech-Slovak Republic are entirely maintained by the Government, but are under the direction of the Russian associations which organised them.

3. In the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, 8 secondary schools (2,206 pupils) are supported by the Government and supervised by the State Commission.

4. The 10 other secondary schools (67 pupils) and 12 elementary schools (701 pupils) are dependent upon private charitable organisations.

The number of Russian refugee children and adolescents in the various countries of Europe may be estimated at over 100,000.

Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. There are in all 5,275 Russian children and adolescents in this country. Of these, 968 are under 6 years of age; 2,850 receive instruction in the various Russian scholastic institutions. In addition 200 Russian

children are taught in the schools of the country. The Russian scholastic institutions are as follows:- 3 cadet corps, 2 ladies' colleges, 1 mixed grammar school (Iysãe), 1 high school for girls, 7 "modern" schools (no Latin taught) and 13 elementary schools. At present there are still 1,500 children who do not attend school, but the Government Commission hopes to be able to place them during the current year.

Czechoslovakia. Two Russian grammar schools (at Prague and Trzebowa) with 695 pupils, 620 of whom are boarders, are maintained at the expense of the Czechoslovak Government. Czechoslovakia is the only country in which - by reason of important Government grants - a general solution for the problem of schools for Russian refugee children has been found. It is the only country in which every Russian child requiring instruction can attend a Russian school.

Bulgaria. The High Commission grants special assistance to the Russian schools which were transferred from Constantinople to Bulgaria. (In Bulgaria there are 4 Russian elementary schools and 7 secondary schools with 1,425 pupils). The Bulgarian Government has earmarked a sum of about 4 million levas for the upkeep of these schools, and has recently granted a further contribution of 500,000 levas a month. There are a sufficient number of these Russian schools, but the material conditions under which they work are extremely hard.

Germany. There are two Russian secondary schools in Berlin; one belongs to the Russian Academic Group, where the teaching is in Russian; at the other, St. George's school, the teaching is bilingual (Russian and German). Both are completely without funds

and equipment. The Russian schools are responsible for the education in Germany of a total number of 360 children.

France. There are a considerable number of Russian children in France, 4,000 in Paris and the neighbourhood. Of these only 400 can be taught in Russian. There is a Russian lycée in Paris, subsidised by the Government, where teaching is given according to the syllabus of the old grammar-schools in Russia. At Nice, there are special courses in Russian attended by 26 boys and 21 girls. Secondary instruction in Russian is also given in two boys' lycées, two girls' lycées, and at the Versailles lycée.

In Latvia where ^{the} Russian element represents 8% of the total population, there are 217 Russian schools attended by 17,000 pupils. As Russians represent 8% of the population in Latvia, they receive 8% of the State budget allowed for Public Education. About 3,000 of these pupils are children of refugees.

In Poland the number of Russian schools is decreasing; there are now no more than 23 "middle" schools and 13 elementary schools, supported principally by the Jews.

In Esthonia, the 1,400 Russian refugee children are taught in two grammar schools and 9 elementary schools for refugees, or at the schools of the Russian national minority in Esthonia. The upkeep of the schools for refugees' children is provided for almost exclusively by Russian funds.

b) Students.

There are about 15,000 Russian students scattered over the various countries of Europe. They have a central organisation the "CRESCO" or "Russian Organisation for Emigrant Students".

Yugoslavia. 2,200 Russian students have been admitted to the Universities in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and have received scholarships. But there are still 1,250 students who, for lack of means, are unable to continue their studies.

Czechoslovakia. There are 3,200 Russian students in Czechoslovakia. As a rule, the Czechoslovakian Government supplies each student with clothes, lodging and 775 crowns a month. No student is absolutely destitute.

Bulgaria. There are 2,200 Russian students in Bulgaria. Almost all of them are engaged in manual work and are therefore unable to pursue their studies.

France. There are about 1,000 Russian students in France. The French Parliament has voted a credit of 450,000 francs for young Russians who were obliged to interrupt their studies in their own country and are anxious to resume them in France; about ³⁰⁰ 4,000 students hold Government scholarships. Furthermore, free admission to courses is frequently accorded. The total credits granted by the French Government to Russian professors in respect of students, scholars and general assistance, is 760,000 francs, distributed by the Institute of Slavonic Studies.

Germany. There are about 2,000 Russian students in Germany three-quarters of whom live in Berlin. They are in difficult circumstances; the majority of them have to do all kinds of manual labour during the day, enduring all kinds of hardships in order to earn enough money to be able to attend lectures in the evening and thus somehow finish their studies.

The "Jewish Joint Distribution Committee" of New York recently promised the High Commission to help in the establishment of a

scientific institute for Russian refugees in Berlin by the payment of 10,000 g.

The situation of Russian students in the other European countries is even more critical than in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Germany.

c) Professional Education.

Some thousands of Cossack agriculturalists living in Czechoslovakia are studying the practical side of agricultural science, which is highly developed in this country, in order thus to become the pioneers of technical agriculture in Russia.

The special "Co-operative" institute for Russian Cossacks deserves mention. This Institute can accommodate 200 students; it trains "rural instructors" who will, at a later date, take up and promote the agricultural rehabilitation of the Cossack Provinces. In addition, an affiliated pedagogic institute is also shortly to be opened for the Cossacks. It is intended to train schoolmasters and prepare them for the campaign against demoralisation.

Various technical courses have been organised in Yugoslav for young soldiers who have already received some education in the Russian middle schools, - courses in railway and electrical engineering, in mining, and preparatory courses for work in the post and telegraph offices, etc. 559 students have already completed their courses and at present 416 are attending lectures. 456 have been appointed to positions in the various Ministries at Belgrade.

At Wuensdorf, near Berlin, there is a polytechnic school for Russian refugees; the syllabus includes higher mathematics,

mechanics, electrical engineering, thermodynamics, grapho-statistics, whilst practical training in electrical and engineering workshops is also given. Students who have completed the course are divided into two classes - the first including students suitable for employment as assistant engineers or contractors, the second those who can work as blacksmiths, carpenters, miners, fitters and chauffeurs. This schools was founded and is supported by the Y.M.C.A.

No such substantial efforts to promote the professional education of refugees have been possible in the other countries which harbour Russian refugees. The economic depression which at present obtains in Europe has prevented the various Governments from giving attention to the general education and vocational training of the large numbers of foreigners resident in their territory.

II. EMPLOYMENT OF RUSSIAN REFUGEES.

The adoption by 33 Governments of the model identity certificate for Russian Refugees recommended by the High Commission has given the refugees various facilities for proceeding to other countries, where there are possibilities of their finding work.

With few exceptions, all the refugees are prepared to work, but they find great difficulty in obtaining employment of any kind. The unemployment crisis in almost all the countries of Europe compels the Governments to protect their own nationals against the competition of foreign labour. Special tribute is therefore due to several countries which, in spite of the economic crisis through which they are passing, have not hesitated to admit thousands of workers who have been evacuated from Constantinople and Poland.

Russian refugees in Europe show a marked tendency to migrate to France. It may be said that all Russian refugees who are fit and anxious to work, either as agricultural or industrial labourers, or as day labourers, can find remunerative employment in France. The French Government has considerably encouraged Russian immigration by granting travelling facilities to Russians desirous of seeking work in France. It placed 6,471 refugees in 1922 and 1923, whilst the "Aide aux Russes Resident on France" has found work during the same period for nearly 6,000 Russians.

The High Commission, in co-operation with private relief organisations, is at present taking energetic steps to obtain the evacuation to America of several hundred thousand Russian refugees now living in Poland, Roumania and Constantinople. These refugees, the majority of whom are entirely destitute, could undertake productive work in America. Unfortunately, the High Commission is prevented by immigration restrictions from effecting this evacuation before it is too late. We would take this opportunity of paying tribute to the fine humanitarian work done by the "Russian Refugee Relief Society" in New York, which undertakes to find employment for Russian refugees arriving in the United States.

CONCLUSION.

Not all the countries granting hospitality to Russian refugees can be expected to follow the example set by Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, who spend about 20 million gold francs a year on the maintenance and education of Russian refugees. The question of these refugees, does, however, constitute for the whole of Europe a problem of which the final solution - general

repatriation - is not yet within sight. Meanwhile, the various Governments should be prepared for the more or less prolonged presence of these numerous refugees upon their territory. It is in the interests of these Governments, as well as in the interests of the refugees themselves, that the material and intellectual situation of the latter should be improved. The Governments could achieve this aim without incurring excessive material expenditure. The admission of Russian students and children to the national schools, the protection of refugees against exploitation by unscrupulous individuals, the abolition of regulations forbidding the employment of Russian labour, etc., are methods which the Governments might adopt to improve the moral and material situation of Russian refugees.

In conformity with the decision of the Fourth Assembly, and actuated by the humanitarian spirit which informs the work undertaken by the High Commission, the Council might again draw the attention of the Members of the League to the fact that it is incumbent upon all countries affording hospitality to Russian refugees to take measures for the purpose of improving the material and moral situation of Russian refugees, whose lot will, during a considerable period, depend upon the welcome extended to them by the Governments and by public opinion.

On the other hand, in view of the strong desire of an increasing number of the Russian refugees to return to their homes, the Members could further be invited to assist the High Commission to assure the return of these refugees to Russia under satisfactory conditions.

I am sure that the Council will desire to afford the High Commissioner every possible support in this connection and to this

and I have the honour to submit the following resolutions for its favourable consideration.-

"The Council, having considered the report on the situation of the Russian Refugees and the recommendations made therein by the Rapporteur,

"Notes the resolution on the subject passed by the Fourth Assembly;

"But recognising the valuable assistance afforded to the High Commissioner for Refugees by Governments not Members of the League;

Adopts the resolution in the following form:-

"Considering that the present situation of the Russian Refugees, although sensibly improved, remains very precarious, and that the termination of the activities of the High Commissioner would materially destroy the progress already realised on behalf of the refugees;

The Council invites the Governments of the Members of the League and other interested Governments to continue to afford to the High Commissioner the support and assistance which they have hitherto given him, especially as regards the development of the means of general and professional education and the securing of employment for the refugees."

And, taking into consideration the increasing desire manifested by Russian Refugees in many countries to return to their homes if satisfactory arrangements can be made for their reception,

"Invites the Members of the League and other interested Governments to afford the High Commissioner every possible facility to give effect to the wishes of the refugees in this direction."