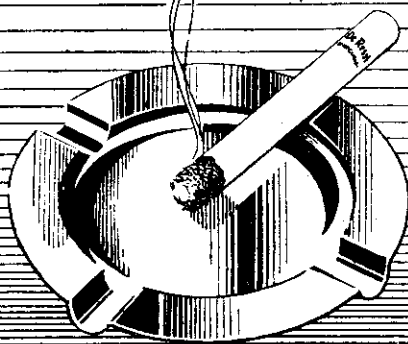


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## IN THE RUINS OF THE THIRD REICH

### Lord Beveridge Finds Germany a Land of Misery

[**LORD BEVERIDGE**, author of the famous Report on social security which bears his name, visited the British occupation zone of Germany recently. It was, in his own words, "a searing experience." In the talk printed below, which he gave in the Overseas Service of the BBC (and which was recorded and re-broadcast the other evening by 2YA), he describes what he saw, and draws three morals from it.

**M**Y first and strongest impression from the British zone of Germany is that of devastation of towns, of how well the R.A.F. and the American Air Force did their work. In practically all the large towns two-thirds of the buildings—sometimes more and sometimes less—have been destroyed completely, or damaged so badly that they cannot be occupied. Of the remaining third of the town a considerable proportion is damaged, with broken windows and leaking roofs.

This devastation of towns gives rise to a housing problem which is frankly appalling. Few people live in houses at all. There are three families where before there was one. Large numbers of people in all the large towns have no ordinary housing. They live ten or more persons to a room, they live in sheds, they live in cellars, they live in bunkers—the immensely strong concrete air raid shelters which survived our bombing. Living in a bunker is like living in a tomb without daylight, without furniture other than a bunk, without cooking facilities. Yet a large number of people have been living in this way now for many months and so far as they know will be there indefinitely.

#### Critical Shortages

With this appalling housing problem there is a deficiency of all the other necessary supplies—food, coal and clothing.

Practically everything eatable is rationed, and the rations up to the present have provided less than half the calories which we in Britain think indispensable for health. It has meant making the rations of fat, meat, sugar, cheese, which we get for a week in Britain (and think insufficient for a week) last a month. There is now some hope of improvement in Germany, but far from sufficient improvement.

There was no domestic coal ration last winter, and on present plans there will be none next winter. Germany is a cold country, and the houses of those people who have houses in the towns will still be largely without glass.

Practically no new clothes are being made and the old ones are wearing out. For next winter many children have the prospect of walking barefoot through the snow, to get the school meal. Or, of course, going without the school meal and the schooling. Everything else, including soap and medical supplies, is as desperately short. Desperate want, of nearly everything, sums up the British zone.

Of course people don't all live wholly on their food rations. They couldn't. There is naturally more food in the country districts. One of the causes of high absenteeism from work in the towns is that the workers spend two or three days each week foraging for food in the country. But they can't all do this, and some, particularly the solitary old, literally starve in the towns. The country, as it has more food, differs also from the towns in that the houses have not been destroyed, but for another reason the housing problem there is almost as acute as in the towns.

The normal population of many parts of the British zone has been doubled by the presence of refugees and displaced persons. Refugees means Germans who have been expelled or have fled from other parts of Germany, or from neighbouring countries like Poland or Czechoslovakia. Displaced persons means people of nationalities other than German who for one reason or another, cannot or dare not go back to their homes. The largest national groups among them are Poles and Yugoslavs, who fear the present regime in their country, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians from the Baltic States, who fled when the Soviet came in. There are also many from the Ukraine. These uprooted millions of refugees and displaced persons, the latter living largely in UNRRA camps, are an added complication of the main German problem.

#### Land of Misery

A visit to Germany to-day is a searing experience. It is a land so full of every sort of misery. There's the misery of sheer physical want, of cold and hunger and acute discomfort in housing, for themselves and for helpless children

#### The Little Ghost

[It is feared that eight of ten millions may die of starvation in Europe this winter.—From an UNRRA report.]

*I DRIVE him daily from my door,  
A little ghost—he never cries.  
Only the horror of his eyes  
Destroys my peace for evermore.*

*I DRIVE him out, yet in he'll creep;  
At night beside my bed he stands,  
Touching with tiny frozen hands  
My coverlid. I may not sleep.*

*AT meals he stands beside my seat,  
He watches the full dishes pass.  
He gnaws a little bit of grass,  
He watches everything I eat.*

*OH, little one! Oh, little one!  
Small unit of that mighty host!  
You haunt my plenty with your ghost  
For all that I have left undone!*

—Marjorie Adams.