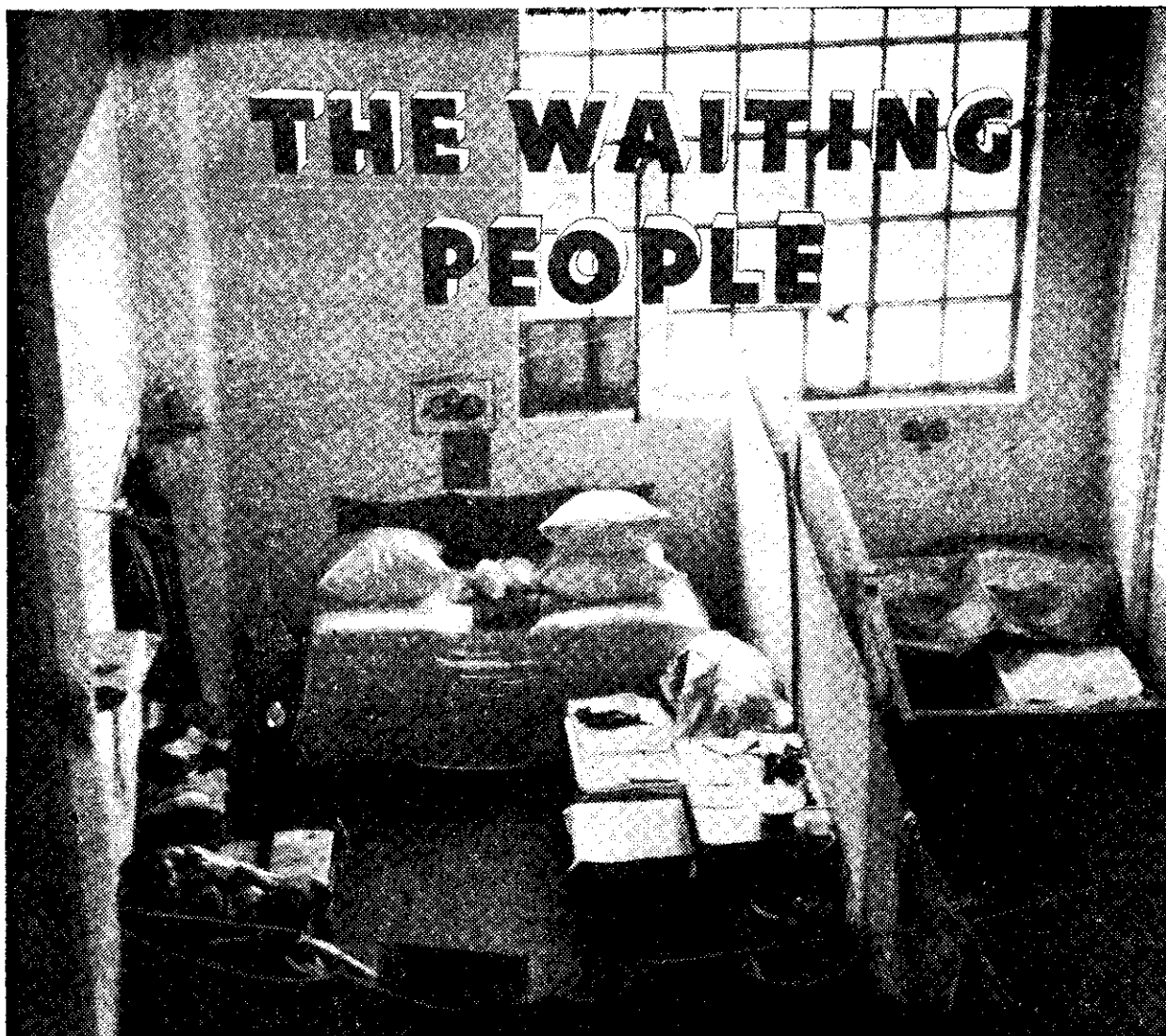


# THE WAITING PEOPLE



**H**AVE you ever stopped to think what it would be like if all the people in two of our large cities were to become homeless, poverty-stricken and without a country? There's little reason, you may think, why you should; but that would give you some sort of idea of the refugee problem still facing the world 10 years after the war.

A year ago the number of Displaced Persons in Europe who had not been established either overseas or in the countries where they were then living was put at something like 300,000. To these must be added tens of thousands of refugees who have arrived in Western Europe since the end of the war and whose numbers grow at the rate of several hundreds a month.

When Radio Nederland had its 10th anniversary not long ago it decided to make a number of special programmes with an international flavour, and as part of its plan it dedicated a series of broadcasts to the problem of the Displaced Person. After the campaign in the Netherlands a team of radio reporters, at the invitation of Radio Nederland, left Holland to tour some of the refugee camps. Reporters from the English, French, German, Spanish and Dutch speaking world had as their assignment the story of the 300,000 who

*LEFT: Congested living space is characteristic of refugee centres, such as this one—a converted tobacco factory in Athens. BELOW, left: Refugees queuing for their daily food ration*

are still refugees. More specifically, they set out to visit camps in Germany, Austria, Turkey and Greece, where about 80,000 of these people are still living.

For periods of four, five, in some cases even eight, years these camp dwellers have been vegetating in what they thought would be their paradise. Old people have died in the camps; children have spent their entire lives there. What once were regarded as transit centres have become an almost permanent feature of the countryside, inexorably pressing "the waiting people" into the mould of despair. Some camps are huts made of wood or corrugated iron, some are stone barracks; all are crowded and exude a blend of the smells associated with the varied uses of kitchen, living-room, bedroom, storeroom, bathroom and playroom. Every room is damp and because of the cost of fuel never dries out. Conditions vary from place to place, and country to country, but common to all is the terrible depression which feeds on lack of privacy, petty jealousies and rivalries, and the hopelessness of life shut off from the outside world.

*The Waiting People*, the English-speaking programmes about these refugees made for Radio Nederland by Richard Dimbleby and Wynford Vaughan Thomas, are now to be heard from YA stations of the NZBS, starting from 4YA on April 3, 1YA on April 4, 2YA on April 5, and 3YA on April 6. These programmes—in which some score of people speak for the many thousands—not only give a graphic picture of the refugee problem which the world still has on its conscience; they are also moving and dramatic human documents.

Next week will also mark the start of Corso's 1956 appeal for funds to continue New Zealand's practical relief work overseas. The appeal will be launched with talks by the Minister of External Affairs, the Hon. T. L. Macdonald, from YA and YZ stations at 6.50 p.m., on April 4, and by Major Percy Smith, in the *Women's Hour* from ZB stations and 1XH.



HON. T. L. MACDONALD

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 29, 1956.