

NEWS

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by the

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

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Friday, June 28, 1940.

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They included some 40,000 Jewish refugees from Germany, many of whom had already tasted life in Nazi concentration camps and were awaiting emigration overseas. Now, with the armistice agreement providing for return of such German subjects as Berlin desires, the refugees tremble in fear of being turned over to the Gestapo.

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I witnessed the exodus of some 50,000 Jews from Paris, precipitated by anti-Semitic agitation of fifth columnists, who, with the approach of the German army, began stirring up anti-Jewish feeling among the depressed Frenchmen in Jewish-populated sections around the Rivoli and Place de la Republique, blaming the Jews for the war.

The demonstrations caused the Jews who, not having means of evacuation, had intended to remain in Paris, to leave their homes and try to reach the city gates on foot. They ran as though spewed from a volcano, trudging for miles with babies in arms, sacks on their shoulders, afraid to look back to where they had left their homes and possessions.

Bombed on the road by Nazi planes, some succeeded in boarding evacuation trains dozens of miles from Paris. Others continued on foot, hoping to remain ahead of the Nazi tanks.

Later, when I entered Spain, I found thousands of Jews among those camped in the no-man's-land between the French frontier town of Hendaye and the Spanish town of Irun, hoping to be admitted into Spain, which they thought to be the only means of escape from the Nazis. Many had reached Hendaye on foot from Bordeaux, Angers and Tours. Others had made their way in refugee-crowded trains from Bordeaux while the trains were still running.

The majority, however, had spent all they had to reach the Spanish frontier by automobile, only to find the border hermetically closed. Among them were many formerly wealthy persons who drove to the frontier in luxurious limousines, ready to abandon them and proceed from the border by train.

But rich and poor were crowded together on the road in the hot sun, unable to cross the bridge which separates France from Spain. They obtained only pity from the Spanish border officials, who had strict orders from Madrid to keep the gates of Irun closed. Not very long ago, during the Spanish civil war, this bridge saw refugees streaming from the other side. Now the flood was pressing the other way.

At the time I was in Irun (June 22), only holders of diplomatic and American passports were able to pass without trouble, and the latter only if they had Portuguese visas. But there remained behind hundreds of thousands without the necessary documents, who included thousands of Polish, Hungarian, Rumanian, stateless and French-born Jews fleeing from France.

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