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## The Jewish Trail of Tears The Evian Conference of July 1938

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The Jewish Trail of Tears  
The Evian Conference of 1938

by

Dennis R. Laffer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
Department of History  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to Ellen, my wife of almost twenty five years, whose love, comfort, guidance and wisdom sustained me through sickness and health and enabled me to complete a long-held dream. The completion of a Master's degree program in history and the writing of a thesis would not have been possible without her presence at my side. For her great patience, insight and support I will always be truly grateful.

I dedicate this work also to my daughters, Lauren Abigail and Jenny Elizabeth for their love, encouragement and patience. My interest in the topic of this work began in 1999 when they were both young and I deeply appreciate their understanding of the time I needed to spend in my quest for knowledge about the Evian Conference. I hope that I have set an example for them that it is possible, even in the latter years of middle age, to reach new levels of accomplishment. My greatest achievement will, however, always be the family with which I am blessed.

Finally, I dedicate this work to the victims of the Nazi era whose lives could have been saved had the world acknowledged, cared about and acted upon the coming catastrophe. I honor those exceptional individuals and institutions, the

upstanders that had the courage to speak out against tyranny and offer relief and refuge to the innocent victims of man's hatred against his fellow man.

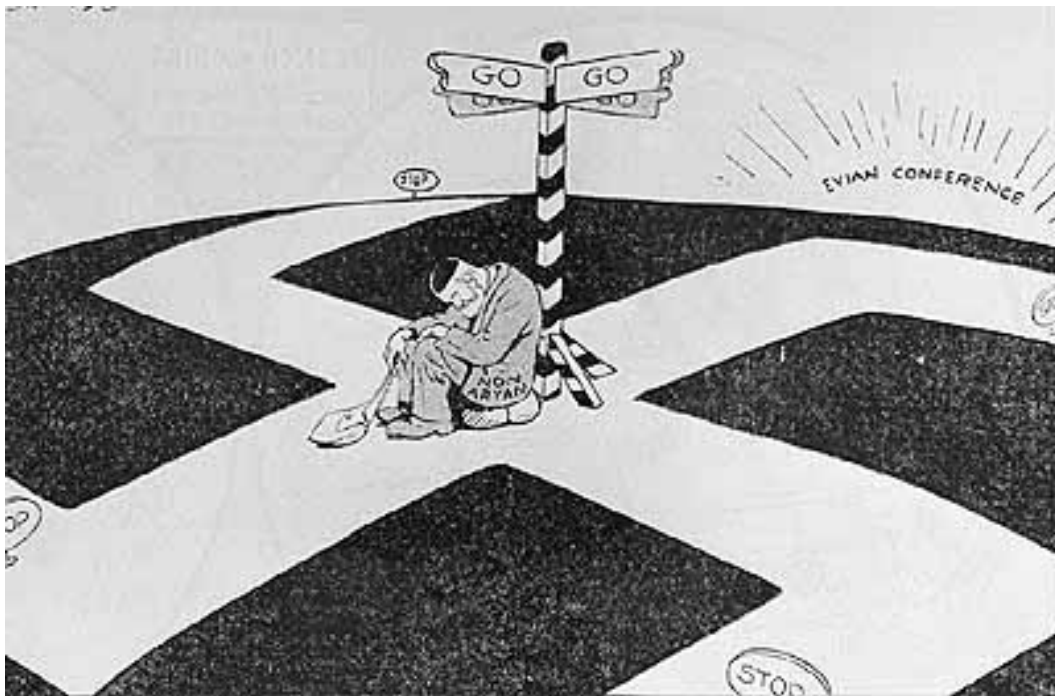
## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Mao Tse-Tung once wrote that “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.” My excursion into the world of history began many years ago but gradually crystallized into certain topics and themes; a focus that would not have been possible without the influence of many people and institutions. I would particularly like to mention Dr. Donald M. Goldstein, the National Center for the Pacific War, the Florida Holocaust Museum and especially Dr. Mary Johnson, for helping to focus my attention on the history of the Evian Conference of 1938 and her encouragement to tell the story. I hope that this work warrants her confidence.

I had always considered returning to academia to obtain a Master’s degree in history and so I want to especially thank for their kindness, support, expertise, guidance and incredible patience Drs. Stefan Huber, Graydon Tunstall, John Belohlavek, and Kees Boterbloem. The research and the writing of this thesis were greatly facilitated by Frank Castellano, Scott Nieves, Brandy Padgett, Barbara Cabot, Lynn Wagner, Maria Cabrera and Lisa Piazza. I also wish to thank my wife and my friends who had to listen to my incessant discussion of the Evian Conference and the trials and tribulations of a late middle aged man writing a thesis. Without the help of these individuals and many others this journey into the past could never have been undertaken.

“But I suppose it has always been that way in the world; people are concerned with their own immediate affairs and when it comes to the sufferings of other people, especially when the people are far away, most people...have not the imagination to be concerned.”

James G. McDonald



*New York Times*, July 3, 1938.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the origins, formulation, course and outcome of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees meeting (better known as the Evian Conference) of July 1938. Special emphasis was placed on contemporary and later historical assessments of this assembly which represented the first international cooperative attempt to solve an acute refugee crisis. A general review followed by a more detailed evaluation was made of existing official and un-official accounts of the meeting utilizing both public records, private diaries, books, newspapers, journals and other periodicals for the period of January 1, 1938 through December 31, 1939. This data was supplemented by later recollections of conference participants as well as post-Holocaust historical scholarship.

Various appraisals have been made of the motivations behind the summit and its ultimate success or failure. Franklin Roosevelt has particularly come under criticism by scholars who believed that his Administration had “abandoned” the Jews to their fate. The President’s supporters, on the other hand, declared that FDR did everything possible given the existing political, economic and social conditions of the late 1930’s. It is my conclusion that although Roosevelt may have been sympathetic to the plight of Central European Jewish refugees their resettlement and ultimate destiny merited a lower priority given his focus upon rebuilding the national economy and defense. The President clearly recognized the looming threat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan but was unwilling to expend political capital on an issue that faced domestic and political opposition. I further

maintain that the conference was set up to fail while providing propaganda value for the participating democracies.

The hypocritical rhetoric and actions of the delegates and the ineffectiveness of the conference's sole creation, the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees, was clearly recognized by Nazi Germany and ultimately influenced its anti-Jewish policies. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the pogrom of November 1938, *Kristallnacht*, occurred only four months later. The avoidance of dealing with the Jewish refugee problem was further highlighted in the futile Wagner-Rogers Bill of 1939, the Hennings bill of 1940 and especially the Bermuda Conference of 1943, a time in which the details of mass murder of Jews and other groups was already well known within official circles. Further work needs to be done on the diverse responses of the Jewish community both within the United States and abroad to the peril facing their co-religionists.

## **“A Refugee’s Prayer”**

Representative James, J. Davis, Penn. entered the prayer of Martin Marden, a 16-year-old German refugee, which had been “recommended for reading by every American by the superintendent of New York City Schools, Harold G. Campbell. We may all be proud that we live in a land where, as this lad says, ‘the youth of all races have a tomorrow.’ Despite the unemployment here, the problems of the depression, the difficulties of the stock market, and the war clouds which loom ever closer, who among us does not respond enthusiastically to these radiant words?”

One day in the year should be reserved for prayers of thanksgiving in which we give thanks for something that has been granted us; for having been saved from some great destruction caused by nature or man.

I am thankful that I have been given an opportunity to be educated in the United States of America.

I am thankful that I live in a land where, regardless of race, everyone may take part in national ceremonies.

I am thankful that I live in a land where a person may sing the National Anthem without having someone tell him that he may not because of his race.

I am thankful that I live in a country governed by democracy rather than force.

I am thankful that I live in a country where one is not persecuted.

I am thankful that I live in a land where there are people who have real sympathy for refugees from European countries who have gone through horrible experiences.

I am thankful that I have been given the opportunity to enjoy the many privileges that are unheard of in European countries.

I am thankful that I shall be able to realize my ambitions, which would have been impossible had I remained in my native land.

I am thankful that I live in a land where the future seems bright and hopeful rather than dark and hopeless.

I am thankful that I live in a land where the youth of all races have a tomorrow, rather than in my native land, where the youth of the race is without a tomorrow.

I am thankful that I have been permitted to tell you of the troubles in European lands in order that you may develop a real sympathy for the oppressed of the earth. I am thankful that I am happy and free.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Mardin, “A Refugee’s Prayer,” Washington Herald, March 31, 1938 cited in Congressional Record Appendix, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., vol. 10, April 1, 1938 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 1269. He left Germany during 1935 with his sister and rejoined his widowed mother, Mrs. Betty Mardin, who had emigrated to the U.S. a year earlier.

## INTRODUCTION

On Rosh Hashanah it is written,  
On Yom Kippur it is sealed:  
How many shall pass on, how many shall come to be;  
Who shall live and who shall die;  
Who shall see ripe age and who shall not;  
Who shall perish by fire and who by water;  
Why by sword and who by beast;  
Who by hunger and who by thirst;  
Why by earthquake and who by plague;  
Who by strangling and who by stoning;  
Who shall be secure and who shall be driven;  
Who shall be tranquil and who shall be troubled;  
Who shall be poor and who shall be rich;  
Who shall be humbled and who exalted.  
*But REPENTENCE, PRAYER and CHARITY  
temper judgment's severe decree.*<sup>1</sup>

1938 was a portentous year in the history of German and Austrian Jewry and ultimately for the Jews of Europe. The *Anschluss* or annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany on March 12 signaled to the world that Jews could no longer survive within the German community. Faced with an existential threat and unable to adopt the time honored stratagem of accepting the status of a protected but second class and subordinate minority, the Jews of Germany were once more forced upon the road of the wanderer seeking sanctuary and resettlement.

The American President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, seemed to offer such salvation through his call for the creation of an international conference to deal with this

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<sup>1</sup>Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis and Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, 1978), 313-314.

refugee crisis. The meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees (better known as the Evian Conference, held in France during July 1938 and attended by thirty two nations), raised expectations that a solution would be found to the problem of forced emigration but such hope proved to be ill-founded. Faced with a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions democratic governments sought a workable solution to this problem but in a half-hearted, constrained and hypocritical fashion. While offering expressions of sympathy, each delegation, with few exceptions, justified its inability to admit the displaced and oftentimes impoverished refugees.

The decisive failure of the meeting and the inadequacy of its sole construction, the Intergovernmental Committee established in London, filled the victims of persecution with despair and their persecutors with a sense of impunity. It demonstrated to an emboldened German leadership that the strategy of compulsory emigration had failed due to the resistance of other nations to offer havens to involuntary, stateless and destitute refugees. Consequently, a far more radical approach would be required. It can be argued that the Evian disappointment and the abandonment of Czechoslovakia during the Munich Crisis encouraged the Nazis to carry out *Kristallnacht*, the November 1938 pogrom that swept Germany and Austria. It was not a coincidence that Crystal Night occurred only four months after the conclusion of the Evian Conference. The liturgy of the “Days of Awe,” the Jewish High Holidays, declares that on Rosh Hashanah the fate of man is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed. The destiny of Central European Jewry was written on the day of the *Anschluss* and sealed on *Kristallnacht*. Eventually, the cover of European war would provide the most radical solution to the problem of the Jews.

The Evian Conference, the Wagner-Rogers bill of 1939, the Hennings Bill of 1940 and the Bermuda Conference of 1943 illustrate the diverse attitudes and approaches adopted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, his Administration, Congress and the American public as well as the global community in dealing with European immigration and refugee issues.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the Evian Conference and Wagner-Rogers bill were regarded as a measure primarily favoring German and Austrian Jews that subsequently failed, the Hennings bill was an attempt to rescue British Christian refugee children (although not refugees in the true sense—not fleeing persecution but potential bombing) that, after receiving widespread public *and* governmental support, successfully made its way through Congress and was written into law. The sentiments and actions of the American public, Roosevelt, the departments of his Administration and the legislative branch and their international counterparts demonstrated similarities but also many contradictions and inconsistencies during these 1938-1940 events. These differences have led to disparate and controversial perceptions of the adequacy of the American and worldwide response and the assessment of responsibility during the years of the pre-war period and the Holocaust.

Various opinions have been offered regarding the reactions of Roosevelt and the democratic nations to this humanitarian calamity. Some writers have asserted that FDR could have done more to aid the refugees but instead abandoned them to their collective fate. Others claim that given the economic, social and political context and climate of the

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<sup>2</sup>The Wagner-Rogers Bill called for the entry of 20,000 Jewish and non-Aryan children into the United States outside of the annual quota from Germany and Austria (27,370)—10,000 in 1939 and 10,000 in 1940. The Hennings Bill offered an Amendment to the Neutrality Act allowing American “mercy” ships to transport British Christian children, in unlimited numbers outside the quota to the United States during a time of war. The Bermuda Conference of April 1943 was convened by the United States and the United Kingdom ostensibly to consider the issue of wartime Jewish refugees at a time the Allies were aware of the Final Solution but it too, like its Evian predecessor, was set up to fail.

time the President did everything that was possible to resolve the problem. This author, however, contends that the Jewish Question was a matter of low priority to a Chief Executive whose major focus was upon domestic economic and political recovery and the strengthening of national defense. Little political capital would be expended upon an issue that lacked widespread public support. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that the invitation to and the framing of the Evian Conference was primarily a thinly guised publicity ploy that was set up to fail; a move clearly recognized by participating countries and by the Nazi regime. The London based Intergovernmental Committee was likewise an illusion, an operation of smoke and mirrors, designed to demonstrate official action but in reality geared to accomplish little.

This thesis will focus in detail upon the initiation, planning, execution, reactions to and the aftermath of the Evian Conference which affected future international refugee policies during the critical inter-war years of 1938 and 1939 and, following the outbreak of hostilities on September 1, 1939, the fate of European Jewry itself. The paper is divided into sections that will examine pre-war Austria and the *Anschluss*, the origins, construction, course, results and consequences of the Evian Conference and contemporary and later historical assessments of the actions of Roosevelt and the convention participants. A general review followed by a more detailed evaluation was made of official and un-official accounts of the meeting utilizing public records, private diaries, books, newspapers, journals and other periodicals for the period of January 1, 1938 through December 31, 1939. This data was supplemented by later writings and statements of conference participants as well as post-Holocaust historical scholarship.



Part I, “The Gathering Storm,” includes Chapter 1-4. Chapter 1 provides information regarding the Austrian Jewish community prior to the *Anschluss*. Jewish emigration from Germany, beginning with the ascension to power of Adolf Hitler, is broken down into four distinct phases. Chapter 2 describes the *Anschluss* itself and the Jewish and international reactions to what many regarded as a violation of the Versailles Treaty. The specter of forced emigration from the Eastern European countries of Poland, Hungary and Rumania appears on the horizon as a potential and greater threat and will influence the formation and scope of the Evian Conference. The immigration policies of various countries are touched upon and the positive actions of Bolivia and a Chinese diplomat, Feng Shan Ho are highlighted. Warnings about the dangers of mass migration are broached by such journalists as Dorothy Thompson and are influential in the American decision to convoke an international refugee conference. Chapter 3 explores the failure and successes of the League of Nations in dealing with refugee matters and frames the United States Department of State official invitation to attend the meeting which will be held in Evian, France. Initial reactions for and against the meeting are discussed and greater details of national immigration policies are provided. The ominous threat of the Eastern countries is again addressed to a greater degree and Palestine is excluded from discussion as a site of possible refuge. Chapter 4 delves more deeply into the reactions of the American and foreign press, politicians and Jewish and Muslim communities towards the convocation of the conference. The Presidential Advisory Committee for Political Refugees, created by Roosevelt and headed by the former High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, James G. McDonald makes its appearance on the scene.

Part II, “Hope Ascending,” includes Chapters 5-10. Chapter 5 describes the planning of the Evian Conference and the creation of two technical sub-committees. The panels were established to hear testimony from refugee organizations and obtain confidential information regarding each nation’s immigration policies and willingness to accept involuntary immigrants. Palestine is secretly excluded from consideration due to British pressure and Myron C. Taylor, the chief American delegate, announced that the annual immigration quota of Germans and Austrians would be combined. This consolidation marked the limits of action on the part of the United States and would have profound ramifications on the policies of the other participants as well as on Germany itself. Day One began with opening statements from Henri Bérenger, the chief French representative, Taylor and Lord Winterton, his British counterpart. The delegates of The Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Argentina and Brazil expressed a common theme that would run throughout the conference and, with few exceptions, would be echoed by the subsequent speakers. Each nation was sympathetic to the plight of real and potential Jewish refugees but domestic conditions precluded mass immigration. Further analysis of the immigration rules and regulations of the attendees are provided. Chapter 6 opens with Day Four of the Conference; two days were spent in electing Taylor President of the meeting. Statements are made by a number of Latin American nations, Denmark and Haiti and continue the premise “we are sympathetic but...” The sole exception is the Dominican Republic which, for a variety of reasons that will be outlined, agreed to receive one hundred thousand refugees.

Chapter 7 discusses the activities of the Technical Sub-Committees and the testimony provided by Jewish and non-Jewish refugee organizations as well as the

League High Commissioner Sir Neill Malcolm. The organizations offer four possible approaches to solving the emigration impasse. Chapter 8 reports the activities of Day 6 in which Sweden, Ireland, Switzerland, Paraguay and Central American countries continue the sympathetic but hollow rhetoric. Behind the scenes, however, the Swiss diplomat is secretly negotiating with the German Government to block all Jewish immigration into Switzerland. Chapters 9 and 10 analyze the reports of the Technical Sub-Committees and include the closing statements of Taylor, Bérenger and Winterton. The latter, for the first time, openly addresses the issue of Palestine as a site of resettlement but discounts it as a site of relocation. The question of the retention of Jewish capital to facilitate migration is raised and will become the major confounding factor ensuring the failure of the Conference. Chapter 11 described the role of Palestine and Jewish attitudes towards Zionism and its interaction with the meeting.

Part III, "Hopes Dashed," includes chapters 11 and 12. Chapter 11 discusses the initial assessments and criticisms of the Evian Conference. Italy now appears on the scene as a possible additional source of forced Jewish emigration due to enactment of Aryan racial policies. The role of Jewish disunity and the failure to provide a united front at the Conference is analyzed as are differing opinions regarding the role of Palestine. German Nazi reaction to and criticism of the lack of success of the meeting is described; a disappointment that will affect subsequent dealings with the Reich authorities and result in a profound change in the tenor of German policies towards its Jewish population. Chapter 12 discusses the sole creation of the conference, the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees, based in London and its attempts to negotiate with the Germans to facilitate orderly migration.

Part IV, “Appraisals,” includes chapters 13 and 14. Chapter 13 analyzes the role played by Roosevelt and lays out the arguments regarding Presidential actions and inactions during this critical time in Jewish history. Chapter 14 concludes the work and continues the discussion of the effect of the Conference on German as well as Polish policies. It also offers a link to future refugee problems.

The Evian Conference marked the first global attempt to resolve an international refugee crisis through diplomacy. Its success hinged on the interplay between varied economic, social, political, racial and ideological factors that came into conflict and eventually resulted in the “Perfect Storm.” The destiny of Continental Jews and of the world itself was ultimately affected by the decisions (or lack thereof) of the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees held in the confines of a luxurious hotel on the shores of a scenic and serene lake.

**PART 1:**  
**GATHERING STORM**

**Chapter 1**

**“Heaviest of Blows”**

“The world seems to be divided into two parts—those where the Jews could not live and those where they could not enter.”<sup>1</sup>

“The emigration problem is therefore for all practical purposes insoluble...”<sup>2</sup>

The rise of Nazism to the central stage of domestic politics and authority threatened and eventually revoked the rights and privileges granted to Jews following the Emancipation of the Nineteenth Century. Jews who had considered themselves Germans first and practitioners of the Judaic faith second found themselves in a position of increasing social, political and economic isolation and disenfranchisement. The application of state sponsored violence and arbitrary imprisonment eventually convinced the majority of German Jews that continued existence within the borders of Germany was no longer a viable or realistic possibility. Consequently, forced migration became the primary modus of survival.

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<sup>1</sup>Chaim Weizmann, *Manchester Guardian*, May 23, 1936 cited in A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (Portland Oregon: Frank Cass, 1994), 112. Weizmann was a British Zionist leader, chemist and first President of the State of Israel.

<sup>2</sup>Joachim von Ribbentrop, “The Jewish Question as a Factor in Foreign Policy in 1938,” Foreign Ministry Circular January 25, 1939 available from <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:kGh4aYQrNIAJ:www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/forpol.html+%22The+Jewish+Question+as+a+Factor+in+Foreign+Policy+in+1938%22&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>; Internet; accessed May 29, 2010.

The period of Twentieth Century Jewish emigration from Germany (and later Austria) can be demarcated into four well-defined phases. The first stage began with the ascension of Adolf Hitler to national power in January 1933 and ended with the enactment of the Nuremberg Racial Laws in 1935. A limited degree of flight occurred during September 1930 when 107 National Socialists gained seats in the Reichstag but the overwhelming majority of Jews continued to maintain a sense of personal security within the new Nazi State. This self assurance, however, dramatically changed following the destruction of the national parliament building (*Reichstag*) on February 27 and the subsequent proclamation of the “Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and State” on February 28, 1933. This edict, purportedly issued to prevent further “Communist acts of violence” against the State, indefinitely suspended a number of the Articles of the Weimar Constitution.<sup>3</sup> Strict limitations were placed on civil liberties granted by law such as the freedoms of expression and of the press, the right of free association and assembly, the privacy of personal and business communications and the sanctity of the home and property. The central government assumed powers originally allocated to the Federal States and could issue draconian punishments for offenses that previously warranted life imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> The *Reichstag*, on March 23,

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<sup>3</sup>The “Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and State” (*Verordnung des Reichspräsidenten zum Schutz von Volk und Staat*) was also known as The Reichstag Fire Decree. The Weimar Constitution was signed on August 11, 1919 following the collapse of the German Empire. It provided for universal suffrage and a nationally elected parliament but ultimately proved unable to withstand economic collapse, rising nationalism and conflicting ideologies. For a delineation of the Articles of the document see “The Constitution of the German Federation of August 11, 1919” cited in H. Oppenheimer, *The Constitution of the German Republic* available from <http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob13.html>; Internet; accessed October 8, 2010.

<sup>4</sup>“Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and State of 28 February 1933” cited in United States Chief Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. III, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), Document 1390-PS, 968-970.

1933, approved the Enabling Act or the “Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the Empire” which granted Hitler dictatorial powers under the veneer of legality. The Reich Chancellor was empowered to issue laws without the consent or participation of the members of the *Reichstag*.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, on July 14, 1933 the Government enacted the “Law against the Establishment of Parties” which effectively made the National Socialist Party the only legally sanctioned political party.<sup>6</sup>

The adoption of dictatorial powers and the escalating hegemony of the Nazi Party over the operations of the State and society led to the relentless implementation of increasingly severe anti-Jewish and anti-non-Aryan policies. These acts were formulated to disenfranchise and separate the Jews and non-Aryans from the heart and fabric of German society and the economy. Random and orchestrated psychological terror, physical violence, arrest and the ominous threat of the concentration camp became an increasingly common *modus operandi* designed to create a fearful atmosphere in which Jews would be forced to emigrate, providing a solution to the “Jewish Question” in Germany.<sup>7</sup> However, by the fall of 1933 it was clear to many in the German Jewish

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<sup>5</sup>“Law to Remove the Distress of the People and the State” (The Enabling Act or *Ermächtigungsgesetz*), reprinted in U.S. Department of State, Division of European Affairs, *National Socialism. Basic Principles, their Application by the Nazi Party's Foreign Organizations and the Use of Germans Abroad for Nazi Aims* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), Appendix, Document 11, 217-18.

<sup>6</sup>“Law against the Establishment of Parties” July 14, 1933 cited in Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, eds., *Documents on Nazism, 1919-1945* (London: Cape Publishing, 1974), 200. Article I: The National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) was the “only political party” and Article II: Anyone who sought to continue an existing or create a new party faced a three year term of “penal servitude” unless the offense mandated a “heavier penalty.”

<sup>7</sup>Dachau was the first concentration camp officially established by the fledgling Nazi regime in March 1933 and was initially utilized primarily for Social Democrats, Communists, trade unionists and other political prisoners. Gradually, Dachau and other concentration camps began to house additional groups considered inimical to the Reich such as the Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals and Jews. The use of the camps as a weapon of terror against the Jewish population rapidly accelerated following the

community that the Enlightenment strategy of “accommodationist secularism” that had promoted the assimilation of Jews into the dominant culture of Germany would no longer provide security.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, many German Jews resorted to the age old formula of survival, utilized in previous periods of persecution, in which second class status was accepted with the hope that conditions would improve in the future. As a result, the number of Jews seeking to emigrate with the help of the Aid Association of German Jews (*Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden*), the Palestine Office and other relief and resettlement organizations dramatically fell. During April-July 1933 four hundred to five hundred Jews per day sought emigration assistance decreasing to one hundred to two hundred per day in the autumn of the year and to ten to twenty per day in early 1934.<sup>9</sup>

Such Jewish sentiments were facilitated by some Government officials while others sought the institution of more discriminatory, punitive and ultimately separatist policies. This reflected the contradictory nature of the anti-Jewish paradigm adopted by the Nazi regime; a conflict between those who opted for a conservative and gradual approach to exclusion and disenfranchisement and those who sought a more radical resolution. The Württemberg Minister of Economics, for example, banned on November 24, 1933 any acts of discrimination against Jewish and other non-Aryan artisans, business

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*Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht* during which Jews faced mass arrest. If a Jew could find the wherewithal to emigrate abroad he would be released from incarceration.

<sup>8</sup>Bernard Susser and Charles S. Liebman, *Choosing Survival: Strategies for a Jewish Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 123.

<sup>9</sup>Mark Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938,” *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 1940): 26-27. The mission of the Palestine Office was to facilitate Jewish immigration into the British Mandate of Palestine. “*Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden*,” Shoah Resource Center available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206371.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206371.pdf); Internet; accessed October 1, 2010; “Palestine Office” Jewish Virtual Library, available from [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0015\\_0\\_15348.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0015_0_15348.html); Internet; accessed October 1, 2010.



owners and laborers and offered police protection to skilled craftsmen at local fairs and markets.<sup>10</sup> The Reich Minister of Labor, Franz Seldte, decreed on the same date that Jewish workers were to enjoy the same privileges and legal protections as their Aryan counterparts.<sup>11</sup> The Reich Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick issued an order to the Governors of the German States that Jewish businesses were not to be harmed by Aryan rules and regulations.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Loewenstein, President of the Union of Jewish Front Fighters (*Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*), declared in their official publication, *The Shield (Das Schild)*, that the “solution of the Jewish question within our homeland” is obtainable provided “racial differentiation” did not connote “racial defamation” which the Jewish war veterans would denounce on the “grounds of our equal-born achievement.”<sup>13</sup> The sons of such veterans would be allowed, according to Prussian Minister of Education Bernhard Rust, to take their final exams in school.<sup>14</sup> Jews who had fought in the post-Great War period in the Baltic and Upper Silesia or against the Spartacist, Communist and Separatists revolutions would also be considered “front fighters” and would be exempt from the “Aryan clause.”<sup>15</sup> The President of the *Hilfsverein* declared on May 27, 1934,

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<sup>10</sup>Harry Schneiderman, ed., *The American Jewish Year Book 5695 September 10, 1934-September 27, 1935*, vol. 36 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1934), 168 available from [http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC\\_DATA/Files/Vol\\_36\\_1934\\_1935.pdf](http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/Vol_36_1934_1935.pdf); Internet; accessed October 8, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration,” 27.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>13</sup>Schneiderman, *The American Jewish Year Book 5695*, 181.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 192.

and again on June 18, 1935, that German Jews sought to remain within “their homeland, Germany, whose future was their own.” Jews would seek to emigrate only for economic reasons or for the education of their children who were excluded from mainstream schools and universities. The February 4, 1934 issue of the *C.V. Zeitung*, the publication of the Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith (*Centralverein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens*), commented that German Jewry cannot and would not “surrender the values which German culture and nature have given to us.” It did, however, acknowledge the right of the “German nation to decide,” with the participation of the Jewish community, “the limits and the extent of our scope of activity and the form and content of our co-operation” within German society.<sup>16</sup>

Overall, the League High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, James G. McDonald, noted that by 1935 more than eighty thousand people had emigrated from the Reich of whom fifteen to twenty percent were non-Aryan or Aryan Christians opposed to Nazism and its anti-theological stance.<sup>17</sup> Thirty thousand immigrated to France from which twenty thousand departed for other destinations. 5,263 refugees found haven in The Netherlands and more than five thousand entered Czechoslovakia.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*Die Arbeit des Hilfsvereins der Juden in Deutschland 1934-35* (Berlin: 1935), 6, 11 cited in Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration,” 27, 28.

<sup>17</sup>McDonald letter of resignation to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, December 27, 1935 cited in Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration,” 26.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.* Supplementary sites of potential immigration during 1933-1935, in addition to Palestine, included: Canada, United States, Mexico, Costa-Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Salvador, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Egypt, Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, Kenya, South African Union, South-West Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Angola, China, Manchukuo, India, Siam, the Philippines, Persia, Netherland India, Syria, Turkey, Cyprus, Australia, and New Zealand.

The second phase of emigration was initiated by the adoption of the Nuremberg Racial Laws of September 15, 1935.<sup>19</sup> The loss of German citizenship and the gradually expanding pool of anti-Semitic rules and regulations finally convinced many German Jews that continued existence within the homeland was no longer a plausible proposition. Only emigration with its potential for resettlement and the re-establishment of normalcy in their lives offered a viable solution. More than two hundred potential refugees approached the *Hilfsverein* in Berlin every day for emigration assistance.<sup>20</sup> Increasing British and Arab resistance and concerns about the absorptive capacity of Palestine, however, diverted the quest for resettlement to other locations:

Emigration	Palestine	Other Locations
1933-35	12,871	3,615
1936-37	5,879	10,106 <sup>21</sup>

German Jews belonging to the Reich Association of German Jews (*Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*), however, maintained their belief that continued Jewish existence within Germany was practicable.<sup>22</sup> Although the Laws dealt the

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<sup>19</sup>The Nuremberg Race Laws were officially announced during a Nazi Party Rally on September 15, 1935. The “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor” banned marriages and sexual relations between Jews and Aryans. Jews were barred from employing Aryan women as domestic servants and could not display the German flag. Violations of this law would be punishable by imprisonment and hard labor. “The Reich Citizenship Law” defined the parameters of citizenship granted to persons living within the Reich and annulled Jewish citizenship in the German State. A citizen was defined as a “subject who is of German or kindred blood” who demonstrated “that he is both desirous and fit to serve the German people and Reich faithfully.” Only officially recognized citizens would be granted “full political rights.” Both laws provided a legal basis for further discrimination and isolation of German Jews and were later applied to Austria following the *Anschluss*. Noakes and Pridham, *Documents on Nazism*, 463-467.

<sup>20</sup>Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration,” 29.

<sup>21</sup>Reports of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany cited in Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration,” 29.

<sup>22</sup>The *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* replaced the earlier *Reichsvertretung* and represented a unification of the State Association of the Jewish Communities, large Jewish private organizations and major Jewish population centers. This reordering was in response to the recognition that German Jewish

“heaviest of blows” to the Jewish community it was still possible, it assumed, to create a “tolerable relationship” between the Aryans and the Jewish minority provided the regime ended “defamation and boycott.” The creation of an “autonomous Jewish leadership” headed by the *Reichvertretung* could accomplish this goal. Emigration would depend upon “large-scale planning” with a focus on young adults who required instruction in the necessary skills and professions for resettlement. The *Reichvertretung* would attempt to safeguard “the existing means of livelihood” as well as provide necessary “economic aid.”<sup>23</sup>

More than ten thousand potential refugees underwent occupational training for new pursuits during 1938 and 1937.<sup>24</sup> However, unemployment rose as Jewish owned enterprises declined and hiring preference was given to Aryans.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, demand for the opportunity to emigrate escalated but was countered by increasing foreign nationalism and greater admission selectivity that limited the number of potential permanent sites of resettlement. For example, the South African Aliens’ Act of February 1, 1937 based admission on the likelihood of assimilability into the dominant European

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survival depended upon “unity and cooperation.” German Jews, it was felt, needed to speak through one voice and structure in order to “struggle for every right, for every place, for every opportunity to continue to exist.” Failure to comply with such a design would be regarded as a “wrong [committed] against the vital needs of the German Jews.” The leadership, headed by Rabbi Leo Baeck, Otto Hirsch and others, “hope[d] for the understanding assistance” of the Nazi Government and the “respect of our gentile fellow citizens, who we join in love and loyalty to Germany.” “Proclamation of The (New) *Reichsvertretung*” in the *Juedische Rundschau*, no. 78, September 29, 1933, available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/proc.html>; Internet; accessed October 8, 2010.

<sup>23</sup>“German Jewish Response to the Nuremberg Laws (September 24, 1935) available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/jewnurm.html>; Internet; accessed October 1, 2010.

<sup>24</sup>Rudolph Stahl, “Vocational Retraining of Jews in Nazi Germany 1933-1938,” *Jewish Social Studies* 1 (April 1939): 169-194.

<sup>25</sup>Wischnitzer, “Jewish Emigration,” 30.

derived population. An Immigrants Selection Board was empowered to admit or bar entry to any immigrant who was not of British or Irish extraction. While 3,615 German Jews entered the Union of South Africa during 1933-1936, following the enactment of this bill only 1,900 managed to gain entrance during 1937-1940.<sup>26</sup> Seizure of Jewish passports by the German Government also led to greater pressures (and larger obstacles preventing migration) upon Jews to leave the country.

The period of March-November 1938 has been described as a “crucial milestone” in the history of Central European Jewry and represented the third stage in emigration from the Reich. (The fourth phase of emigration, commencing with *Kristallnacht*, will not be considered within the context of this paper.) It marked the cathartic moment in time when a majority of German (and later Austrian and Czech) Jews at last recognized that their continued existence within the bounds of the Reich was no longer tenable. Involuntary emigration, oftentimes to points unknown, became the only alternative to potential “annihilation.” 1938 also represented for the German leadership a major turning point because the official policy of forcibly exiling Jews and non-Aryans was proceeding too slowly. Involuntary migration was hampered in large part by the Nazi seizure of financial assets and businesses that increasingly disenfranchised and ultimately impoverished the would-be émigrés, thus diminishing their value as desirable immigrants and potential citizens. The barriers to both exit and entry proliferated creating a pool of

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<sup>26</sup>Richard S. Levy, ed., *Anti-Semitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution*, vol. 2, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2005), 672.

stateless refugees dependent upon the inadequate resources of Jewish and Christian relief organizations, the charity of others and the whims and rhetoric of government.<sup>27</sup>

Following the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws the German Jewish leadership estimated ten years would be required to complete an orderly mass migration of Jews from Germany at a rate of twenty thousand to twenty five thousand per year.

Approximately 135,000 German Jews had already left the Reich by December 1937 of whom 43,000 had entered Palestine. After the *Anschluss* the impetus to emigrate accelerated and one hundred thousand Jews departed Germany.<sup>28</sup> An additional 128,000 refugees quit Vienna between March 1938 and mid-November 1941 when S.S. leader Heinrich Himmler blocked further emigration.<sup>29</sup> Overall, between March 1938 and August 1939, prior to the outbreak of the German invasion of Poland, roughly 380,000 Jews had fled Germany, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>30</sup> As will be seen in the next chapter the events of March 12, 1938 was a wakeup call for the majority of Jews of Greater Germany but was it simply too late?

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<sup>27</sup>Joseph Tenenbaum, "The Crucial Year," *Yad Vashem Studies* 2 (1958): 49

<sup>28</sup>Sir John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 142, 148.

<sup>29</sup>Wilhelm Krell, "*La Communauté Culturelle Israelite de Vienne*," *Les Juifs en Europe, 1939-1945*, vol. 8 (Centre de documentation juive contemporaine: Paris, 1949), 191-192.

<sup>30</sup>Tenenbaum, "The Crucial Year," 49-50. Destinations of the 128,000 Jews who left Vienna: 85,000 Europe, 28,000 North America, 11,580 South America and 9,195 in Palestine. Sir John Hope Simpson was a Liberal MP and Vice-President of the Refugee Settlement Commission which was created to resettle Greek refugees following its war with post-Ottoman Turkey.

## Chapter 2

### ***ANSCHLUSS: “The Leader is Coming”***

“And thus it is all over Germany; wherever the Leader goes there is rejoicing, gigantic crowds; all want to be where he is, to see the Leader. One sees their eyes shine, particularly those of youth; one sees in their boundless gratitude crowds of men and women reach a state bordering on ecstasy; like an electric current the news passes through the teeming masses—‘The Leader is coming!’ ...And the German people know that the longed-for and inspired leader is Adolf Hitler!”<sup>1</sup>

The post-Great War independence of Austria under Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg ended at daybreak on March 12, 1938 when the German Army crossed the Austrian border in violation of Article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles and Article 88 of the Treaty of St. Germain which guaranteed the sovereignty of Austria.<sup>2</sup> A plebiscite would be held on April 10, 1938 among eligible voters (those twenty years of age and older who were not Jewish or of Jewish background) to ratify this unification or *Anschluss*. This was seen as a “mere formality” or legal façade since 99.7% of the Austrian population or 4.287 million voters out of an eligible pool of 4.3 million voted *Ja* for union which became formalized via the Federal Constitutional Law Regarding the Reunion of

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Goering, *Germany Reborn* (Strand, W.C.2, UK: Elkin Mathews & Marrot LTD: 1934), 87, 89.

<sup>2</sup>“The Versailles Treaty June 28, 1919: Part III.” The Avalon Project available from <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partiii.asp>; Internet; accessed March 8, 2010; “Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Austria; Protocol, Declaration and Special Declaration,” September 10, 1919, available from <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1920/3.html>; Internet; accessed March 8, 2010.

Germany and Austria.<sup>3</sup> The ballot asked the voter: “Do you acknowledge Adolf Hitler as our Fuehrer, and acknowledge the reunion of Austria with the German Reich which was effected on March 13, 1938?” Sirens signaled German and Austrian residents and road traffic on the day of the vote to come to a halt for two minutes while planes circling overhead dropped leaflets calling upon the public to vote yes for union.<sup>4</sup> Those who had voted *Ja* were awarded a pin and opponents, who had voted against the *Anschluss*, received nothing, making the dissenters readily identifiable in the public eye.<sup>5</sup>

The Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Theodore Innitzer, ordered the bells to be rung and swastikas flown from all Catholic Churches within the city.<sup>6</sup> Austrian Catholic bishops had come out publicly in favor of unification with Germany prompting a rebuke from the Vatican. A “solemn declaration” had been issued in all Catholic Churches calling upon the faithful to vote *Ja* in the plebiscite. The bishops issued “this appeal without apprehension” because they had been assured that Hitler’s policies were “guided by the words, ‘Render unto God that which is God’s and unto Caesar that which is Caesars.’” A Vatican City radio broadcast warned, however, that any church official who made “declarations of a political or economic nature” was accountable for a “breach of

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<sup>3</sup>*The Glasgow Herald*, March 14, 1938, 14. Preliminary results of the plebiscite (combining German and Austrian voters) were reported on April 11, 1938 in the *Evening Post* (Wellington, New Zealand) April 12, 1938, 11.

Electorate:	49,546,950
Total votes:	49,326,791
Votes for union:	48,799,269
Votes against union:	452,180
Invalid votes:	75,342
Percentage in favor of union:	99.08

<sup>4</sup> *The Straits Times*, April 10, 1938, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *The Jewish Criterion*, April 15, 1938, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 81.



trust and loyalty.” Such actions represented “political Catholicism” which was to be reviled. Consequently, any true Austrian Catholic was not morally bound to follow the dictates of their bishops who had demonstrated themselves to be “cowards [who did] not [recognize] the wolf in sheep’s clothing [and] were unworthy to carry on the struggle for Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

Although there was an atmosphere of intimidation during this vote many Austrians viewed this national merger as a means of ending the political instability of the First Republic, an opportunity for economic revitalization, fulfillment of a pan-Germanic ideology and the creation of a relationship to Germany that would resemble the earlier Dual Monarchy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, reality soon set in when Dr. Artur Seyss von Inquart addressed Hitler in Vienna: “As the last head of the Austrian State, I announce the legal execution of the German nation’s will. Austria is now a Federal State of the Reich. A century-old dream has come true.”<sup>8</sup> Instead of becoming co-equal with Germany Austria became the *Ostmark*, a province of the Greater German Reich. Egbert Krispyn has argued that for Hitler the *Anschluss* possessed potent “private [and] emotional significance” as it represented an “act of revenge” on his native homeland for its failure to appreciate and recognize “his genius.” Consequently, planning for annexation began soon after the Nazi accession to power.<sup>9</sup>

Observers noted that the German Army was warmly received by the bulk of the Austrian population who bore flowers and waved Nazi flags. One soldier, Ludwig

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<sup>7</sup>*Evening Post*, April 4, 1938, 11.

<sup>8</sup>*The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 16, 1938, 17. Seyss-Inquart was named Minister of the Interior and Director of Public Security and Dr. Guido Schmidt assumed the position of Foreign Minister.

<sup>9</sup>Egbert Krispyn, *Anti-Nazi Writers in Exile* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 63.

Sertorius, viewed the *Anschluss* as the fulfillment of “ancient German longings” in which a “great German people’s Reich” was created. German soldiers entered Austria not as combatants or conquerors but as “representatives of a general...will” to unify the German Nation through ties of “brotherhood”; an emotion reciprocated by their Austrian cousins. There was a “spontaneous [connection linking] heart to heart.” It simply was “love at first sight.”<sup>10</sup> Hermann Goering described Hitler’s reception by the Austrian populace as a scene of “overwhelming joy” coupled with “absolute [and] complete enthusiasm” for the National Socialist ideology. The entire “affair,” to his surprise, had “crystallized into a march of joy.”<sup>11</sup>

Hitler returned to the land of his birth with a grand entrance, like a “modern Caesar,” that absolved the personal failings of his youth, the obscurity of his artistic work and his life as a penniless house painter. Standing erect with an outstretched arm in a large black open Mercedes Benz he received a tumultuous “royal” welcome in his hometown of Linz with cries of “today Germany is ours!” and “tomorrow the whole world!”<sup>12</sup> A “million shouting, flag-waving Viennese in a state of mad frenzy” greeted the Fuehrer as he coursed through the city streets. Storefronts were adorned with flowers and placards acclaimed “Welcome to our Fuehrer.”<sup>13</sup> “Masses of shouting, singing, flag-waving Viennese” paraded and drove through the streets uttering “Seig Heil!” (Hail

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<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Sartorius, *Mit den deutschen Soldaten im befreiten Österreich* (“With German Soldiers in Liberated Austria”), *Die Wehrmacht*, 2, no. 6 (1938) 4-5, German Propaganda Archive available from <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/wehr01.htm>; Internet; accessed March 8, 2010. Sertorius later served as Hitler’s favorite radio correspondent for the German Transocean News Service.

<sup>11</sup>Robert E. Conot, *Justice at Nuremberg* (NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc. 2000), 145.

<sup>12</sup> *Time*, March 21, 1938, 18-22

<sup>13</sup>*Tampa Daily Times*, March 14, 1938.

Victory!) and “One Reich, One People, One Fuehrer!”<sup>14</sup> An Austrian, Susi Seitz, recalled the warm sentiments elicited by Hitler’s arrival. As one they called upon the Leader to ““get us to the German country, get us to Germany, let us be with you.””<sup>15</sup> Women street vendors sold flowers, metal swastika pins and homemade flags. Hitler proclaimed from the balcony of the Imperial Hotel that “no force on earth can shake” the resolve of the Greater Germany. “The German Reich as it stands today is inviolable. No one can shatter it!”<sup>16</sup> “An eternal historic bond” linking Germany and Austria was restored following its disruption in the aftermath of the Great War.<sup>17</sup>

Following the *Anschluss* the Austrian Federal Army was placed under the control of the Reich and its officers, as well as Aryan public officials, were required to take a personal oath of allegiance to “Hitler, Fuehrer of the German Reich and People.” Jewish officials were excluded. The assets of the Austrian National Bank were transferred to the Reichsbank and 21-year-old men were ordered to report for active military service. A decree issued by Hitler and the German Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm von Frick, applied the Reich laws, including the Nuremberg Racial Laws of 1935, to the *Ostmark*.

Opposition of the other European powers to the annexation of Austria was limited. Hitler obtained Mussolini’s acquiescence in return for the Italian retention of South Tirol. The United Kingdom, following a policy of appeasement under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, would not take up arms over Austrian independence and

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<sup>14</sup>*Washington Post*, March 14, 1938, 7.

<sup>15</sup>Laurence Rees, *The Nazis: A Warning from History* (London: New Press, 1997), 110.

<sup>16</sup>*Tampa Tribune*, March 15, 1938, 1.

<sup>17</sup>*The Montreal Gazette*, March 14, 1938, 11.

France, scarred by memories of the 1914-1918 war, was unable to act unilaterally and would remain in a defensive posture.

Preceding the *Anschluss* the Habsburg Statute of 1890 had granted the Austrian Jewish community (*Kulturgemeinde*) religious autonomy. Although there were only 190,000 Jews (three percent of the total population) residing within Austria, primarily in Vienna (ten percent of the city population), the community was quite diverse with more than 440 synagogues (Sephardic and Ashkenazic), museums, libraries, schools, medical clinics and hospitals, orphanages, theaters, sports associations, political groups, newspapers, journals and the Jewish Great War Veterans Association. Jews controlled a significant percentage of the textile industry and were heavily represented within academia, the arts, medical and legal professions, industry, newspapers and the stock market.<sup>18</sup>

The *Anschluss* marked *the* major turning point in the lot of Jews and non-Aryans residing within Greater Germany.<sup>19</sup> Prior to March 1938 German anti-Jewish laws and

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<sup>18</sup> “The Austrian Jewish Community before the Anschluss,” The Claims Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany available from <http://www.claimscon.org/index.asp?url=austria/before>; Internet; accessed March 12, 2009; Robert S. Wistrich, *Laboratory for World Destruction: Germans and Jews in Central Europe* (Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism: Jerusalem, 2007), 62.

<sup>19</sup> Anti-Semitic actions and edicts did occur under the Schuschnigg regime although not to the same extreme as the Nazi program. The Ministers of Justice and Social Welfare banned doctors from practicing medicine (July 1937) unless they had worked for at least one year in an Austrian hospital; an opportunity denied Jewish physicians since 1933. The Federal Court voided the Austrian nationality of the children of naturalized citizens unless the children had been naturalized at the same time as their parents, potentially affecting hundreds of Jews. During July 1937 the Government barred the establishment of a society to aid Russian Jews on the grounds that such an organization would create an “influx” of Russian Jews into Austria. In September 1937 the Government introduced the “Aryan paragraph” which defined membership in the Association of Blind Musicians and Piano Tuners (an act refused by the Association). Jewish students began to be segregated from their Christian counterparts during October. On the other hand, the Chancellor appointed several Jewish professors to university posts and donated 10,000 schillings to a Jewish winter relief fund. Anti-Semitic activities and the proliferation of anti-Jewish groups, however, increased in number and frequency as pressure for Anschluss gained momentum. Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 205-208.

regulations had been introduced slowly and incrementally due to concerns about adverse domestic and foreign public opinion. The Government also feared that the sudden expulsion of Jews from the national economy would have disruptive effects on German economic recovery from the Depression and Hitler's plans for military rearmament. Between 1933 and 1937 135 anti-Jewish laws were enacted, marked especially by the 1935 Nuremberg Racial Laws. Many Jews, as noted earlier, hoped that the latter promulgations would lead to an inferior but stable position within German society; a situation reminiscent of previous events in Jewish history. Hitler, however, had issued a warning during a 1935 speech in Nuremberg that if this arrangement for a "separate secular solution" collapsed then it would become necessary to grant to the Nazi Socialist Party the legal authority to devise a "final solution" to the Jewish Question.<sup>20</sup>

Hitler undoubtedly had long hoped for the failure of such a "secular" solution. Reflections within *Mein Kampf*, as well as a discussion held with a journalist and retired Major, Josef Hell, in 1922, revealed that the would-be Fuehrer predicted the slaughter of German Jewry if he acquired the reins of national authority. His "first and foremost task" would be the "annihilation" of Jews by public hanging. Jews would be executed "indiscriminately...until the last Jews in Munich has been exterminated." Such a program would continue until the Fatherland had "been entirely cleansed of Jews."<sup>21</sup>

Anti-Jewish laws and regulations were enacted rapidly within Austria over the course of two to three months. The seizure of Jewish monies and other assets were

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<sup>20</sup>Max Domarus, ed., *Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen 1932-45* (Würzburg, 1962), I 537, *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, Munich, cited in Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 483, 484-5.

<sup>21</sup>Josef Hell, *Aufzeichnung*, 1922, ZS 640, 5, *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* cited in Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 17.

followed by a policy of forced emigration. Jews were ordered on April 27, 1938 to register with the Government all resources exceeding \$2,000 (personal, bank or saving accounts, stocks and bonds, insurance policies, pension payments and other forms of revenue and wealth); a cumulative sum estimated to be worth \$800,000,000. The amount of money that could be withdrawn from bank accounts per week (except for the payment of wages or business expenses) was severely limited in order to prevent the “smuggling of ‘Jewish capital’” out of the country.<sup>22</sup> All postal packages leaving Austria would be subject to search and seizure. Such a program was to be carried out in an orderly fashion to avoid economic disruptions.

The French Police reported in April 1938 that the speed and rigor with which anti-Semitic policies were enacted within Austria far surpassed that of Germany itself. “The misery that has overtaken Vienna's Jewish population is indescribable.”<sup>23</sup> Jews in Austria constituted three percent of the population as compared to one percent in the Reich. More than six hundred thousand “half-Jews” or roughly ten percent of the Austrian population would fall victim to the racial clauses of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 which were instituted during May 1938.<sup>24</sup>

Unification allowed legitimization and expression of Austria's own anti-Semitism as well as the proliferation and dissemination of German anti-Jewish policies. Many Catholic, rural and conservative Austrians resented and felt threatened by Jewish inroads

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<sup>22</sup>*The Times*, March 15, 1938, 14.

<sup>23</sup>Police report, “*Information: La Situation des juifs à Vienne*,” April 13, 1938, *Archives Préfecture de Police*, Paris (APP) BA 269P 163-300-C cited in Vicki Caron, *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 172.

<sup>24</sup>*New Republic*, March 30, 1938, 212.

into the economic, cultural and political spheres of Austrian life, especially in the capital of Vienna, in which the majority of Jews in 1938 resided. Whereas the Socialists and Communists were the first victims of Hitler's accession to power, in Vienna it was the Jews who bore the "brunt of the Nazis revolutionary fire," facing mass arrest, plunder, impoverishment and the fury of the mob.

The Central Office for Jewish Emigration (*Zentralamt jüdischer Auswanderung* or ZjA) was established in March 1938 in Vienna by Adolf Eichmann of the *Sicherheitsdienst* or S.D. (in the former Rothschild palace at 20-22 Prinz-Eugen-Strasse) to systematize and expedite the emigration process and the transfer of Jewish capital. He compared the process to that of a factory conveyor belt: "The initial application and all the rest of the required papers are put in at one end, and the passport falls off at the other end."<sup>25</sup> Eichmann informed his superior in the Gestapo Department of Jewish Affairs, Herbert Hagen, on May 8, 1938 that he had "demanded" that twenty thousand Jews "without means" emigrate from Austria during the period April 1, 1938-May 1, 1939 and received assurances from the Jewish community and Zionist groups "that they would keep to this."<sup>26</sup>

Eichmann and many other Nazi ideologues viewed the Jews as the "eternal" and "most dangerous enemy" of National Socialism. Germany had to become *Jüdenrein* or

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<sup>25</sup>Statement given by Eichmann during his trial in Jerusalem in 1962 cited in Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 121.

<sup>26</sup>Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 244. For a fuller account of Eichmann's recollection of this period in time see "The Trial of Adolf Eichmann Session 18 (Part 5 of 6)" available from <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/Sessions/Session-018-05.html> ; Internet; accessed March 12, 2010. Eichmann and Hagen had travelled to Palestine in 1937 to assess the possibilities of mass German Jewish emigration.

free of Jews by forced emigration based on financial, social and political disenfranchisement. However, such resettlement could not threaten German interests and should be focused on the “backward” regions in Palestine, Africa, Asia and South America.<sup>27</sup> This pro-Zionist view of Palestine as a potential haven was, according to Hanna Arendt, an “indisputable” component of the early phase of German anti-Jewish policy. Eichmann’s success served as the model for the management of Jewish affairs in Berlin and later in Prague following the creation of the Protectorate over Bohemia and Moravia as well as the forced deportation of Jews and Poles during 1939-40 from regions of occupied Poland and their replacement by ethnic Germans, the *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>28</sup>

Fear rapidly engulfed the Jewish community as the Nazis assumed power in Austria, accelerated by the rapid enactment of anti-Semitic laws coupled with a one week long pogrom. Hundreds and later thousands of terrified Jews would besiege foreign consulates seeking visas that would aid their escape from the Reich. Jewish men and women were randomly assaulted on the streets and Jewish owned stores and businesses were ransacked and destroyed. Jews tried to hide themselves within the confines of their homes located in the Leopoldstadt suburb of Vienna in which one-third of the city’s Jews resided. This area, allocated to the Jews by Emperor Ferdinand II in the Edict of

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<sup>27</sup>Eichmann outlined the aims and methodologies of the S.D. in a training paper, “The Jewish Problem,” during early 1937. Wildt, *Die Judenpolitik des SD*, 95-105 cited in David Cesarani, *Becoming Eichmann Rethinking the Life, Crimes, and Trial of a “Desk Murderer”* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006), 51. Following a trip to Palestine Eichmann and Hagen concluded that Palestinian resettlement would only strengthen Judaism in the Middle East and the creation of an independent Jewish State needed to be prevented.

<sup>28</sup>Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem—The Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 58. During the period of December 1939 and March 1941 500,000 Jews and Poles were forcibly deported. Eichmann attempted during October 1939 the first mass deportation of Jews to a reservation near Lublin, Poland in the unsuccessful Nisko project but later was promoted to the directorship of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration for the entire Reich.



Privileges in 1624 as a ghetto and later known as District II, was situated within the heart of the capital, and formed, together with Brigittenau (20<sup>th</sup> District), a large island bounded by the Danube River and the Danube Canal. Jews comprised 38.5 percent of the population in 1923 and consequently the region was nicknamed *Mazzesinsel* or “Matzoh Island.”<sup>29</sup> By March 14, 1938 approximately 191,000 Jews (ten percent of the city’s population) lived within Vienna, making it, after Warsaw and Budapest, the third largest community of Jews in Continental Europe.<sup>30</sup>

Following the *Anschluss* all Austrian Jews were ordered to relocate to Vienna and eventually into Leopoldstadt itself. The “relentless tramp of Nazi storm troopers’ boots on the stairs and the knocks of rifle butts” on the doors of Jewish residences signaled impending arrest or the plundering of their businesses. Members of the Hitler Youth (*Hitler Jugend*) roused Jewish merchants living in the Jew’s Alley (*Jüden-gasse*) and compelled them to open their stores from which goods were plundered. Jewish coffee houses were forcibly closed or turned over to new Aryan managers.<sup>31</sup> Jews were forced to their knees to scrub Schuschnigg crosses (placed by the Fatherland Front, two weeks earlier in support of an anti-*Anschluss* plebiscite) from the pavement and were serenaded by the gathering crowd with the shouts of “Perish Jewry”, “Out with the Jews” and “Who

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<sup>29</sup> “Leopoldstadt, Vienna” available from [http://www.fact-index.com/l/le/leopoldstadt\\_vienna.html](http://www.fact-index.com/l/le/leopoldstadt_vienna.html); Internet; accessed March 13, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan Pelt, *Flight from the Reich: Refugee Jews, 1933-1945* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2009), 97.

<sup>31</sup> *Washington Post*, March 15, 1938, 4

has found work for the Jews? Adolf Hitler!”<sup>32</sup> Stores that were not marked by a swastika, the inscription “Aryan Store” or other sign of Aryan ownership were highlighted by a red painted *Jude*. Many cafés posted notices that “Jewish customers [were] not desired.”<sup>33</sup> Jewish businesses were to be boycotted by Aryan customers.<sup>34</sup> The ultimate goal was the Aryanization of Jewish holdings at the lowest financial costs. The Reich Governor or *Statthalter*, Dr. Seyss-Inquart, decreed that a “trustee manager” would be appointed to take over the operation of a Jewish business concern if the owner disappeared, was incarcerated, unable to conduct business or posed a threat to smuggle assets out of Austria.<sup>35</sup> Jews were conscripted by Nazi brownshirts (S.A. or *Sturmabteilung*) for forced labor in “cleaning brigades” so that Jews would “learn what real manual labor means.”<sup>36</sup>

Field Marshal Herman Wilhelm Goering warned that Jews no longer had a place in Austrian society and must emigrate. He warned that Vienna would “become German again. The Jew must know we do not care to live with him. He must go.”<sup>37</sup> He also announced that the Government would begin the process of “legally and quietly”

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<sup>32</sup>*New York Times*, March 16, 1938, 8. The Fatherland Front (*Vaterländische Front* or Patriotic Front) was a right-wing fascist organization founded in 1933 by the Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in an attempt to create a one-party state linking Austrian nationalism with Catholicism.

<sup>33</sup>*The Times*, March 17, 1938, 14.

<sup>34</sup> “Letter by a German Official to Goering,” March 26, 1938, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression Military Trials Nuremberg*, vol. 5 (Washington, 1946), 275-276 available from <http://www.nizkor.org/ftp.py?imt/nca/nca-06/nca-06-3577-ps>; Internet; accessed March 16, 2010.

<sup>35</sup>*The Times*, March 31, 1938, 13.

<sup>36</sup>*Tampa Tribune*, March 20, 1938, 4.

<sup>37</sup>*Washington Post*, March 27, 1938, 1.

converting Jewish firms into Aryan enterprises.<sup>38</sup> 1,000-1,500 Jews besieged the American Consulate in Vienna per day in their quest for immigration visas following the Reich Marshal's speech and warning.<sup>39</sup>

Dr. Leo Lauterbach, the London based Director of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and a secretary of the Zionist Executive, reported from Vienna to the Executive of the WZO on April 29, 1938 that the new policies within Austria appeared to be “essentially different from that adopted in Germany” and threatened the “complete annihilation of Austrian Jewry” by their exclusion from “economic life,” the deprivation of “all their financial resources” and their ultimate starvation or forced expulsion “without means,” dependent upon Jewish charity and the “help of such countries as may be willing to receive them.”<sup>40</sup> A petition was submitted to the Executive Council of the League of Nations in Geneva calling for an end to the “martyrdom of Austrian Jews” and warned that failure to intervene would result in suicides.<sup>41</sup>

The international press reported that “plunderings, beatings, arrests and dispossessions were only a forerunner of a more drastic persecution” to come.<sup>42</sup> “Brutal terrorism” awaited every Austrian regardless of “class or creed” who stood for national independence. The Jews in Austria were destined to be subjected to “unrelenting

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<sup>38</sup>*Miami Herald*, March 27, 1938, 1.

<sup>39</sup>*Washington Post*, March 29, 1938, 10.

<sup>40</sup>Leo Lauterbach, “The Situation of the Jews in Austria, April, 1938,” London Zionist Archives, S5/653 available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/about\\_holocaust/documents/part1/doc43.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc43.html); Internet; accessed October 8, 2010. Lauterbach was one of the Zionist co-founders of the post-Great War Polish Zionist student movement, *Agudat Herzl*. He was an attorney and later general secretary of the leadership committee of the World Zionist Organization and director of its organizational committee.

<sup>41</sup>*Tampa Tribune*, March 23, 1938, 1.

<sup>42</sup>*Washington Post*, March 15, 1938, 4.

persecution” but without knowing where Hitler would “strike next” how could the Jewish victims “find certain sanctuary?”<sup>43</sup> The British muted acceptance of the *Anschluss* was criticized as “sheer boot-licking” while the League of Nations refused to accept the Italian seizure of Abyssinia.<sup>44</sup> One Jewish editorialist observed that the fate of Austrian Jewry was clear. “Hitler’s brown-shirted executioners [were] already at work” and their labors would not cease “until the destruction of the Jewish community in Austria is complete.”<sup>45</sup>

The *New York Times*, noting that the daily Jewish suicide rate in Vienna had dramatically increased, commented that “death [had become to the Jews] the kindest gift”; a means of avoiding the “great gates of the central prison” which, for many, marked the “first stage of [perhaps the final] journey to the concentration camp.”<sup>46</sup> Austria had been transformed into a “vast prison from which there is no outlet and with which all chance of a livelihood is dead.” Jewish leaders noted that the number of suicides was “increasing by the hour” but such acts were viewed with an air of complacency by the Gestapo.<sup>47</sup> The Viennese police reported that between March 12 and 21 approximately one hundred suicides had been reported, averaging four to five per day.<sup>48</sup> Reportedly a “suicide epidemic” was rampant among Jewish students and youth who were expelled

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<sup>43</sup>*Prescott Evening Courier*, March 12, 1938, 3.

<sup>44</sup>*Evening Post*, April 6, 1938, 10.

<sup>45</sup>Norton Belth, “The Fate of Austrian Jewry,” *The Sentinel*, March 24, 1938, 6.

<sup>46</sup>G.E.R. Gedy, “Old Vienna is Dead: A Nazi Vienna is Born,” *New York Times*, March 20, 1938, 61.

<sup>47</sup>*Washington Post*, March 17, 1938, 1.

<sup>48</sup>*The Times*, March 24, 1938, 14. By the end of April 1938 the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that at least 2,000 Jews had committed suicide. Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 214.

from academic institutions and who only had bleakness on their horizons.<sup>49</sup> Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels noted in his diary entry of March 23, 1938 that increasing numbers of Jews were taking their lives in the Austrian capital. “Previously,” he claimed, “Germans committed suicide. Now it is the other way round.”<sup>50</sup> Goebbels declared before an Austrian crowd of 25,000, that it was impossible for the authorities to “protect every Viennese Jew with a special policeman” to prevent suicide from occurring.<sup>51</sup>

Putting it more clearly into human terms it was reported from Vienna that the suicide of a Jewish eighteen-year-old musician, Gertrude Wolkner, marked the extinction of three generations; her entire twenty two member family. All had taken their own lives with the exception of a brother who died in a concentration camp. Prior to ending her short and unfilled existence Gertrude left a message requesting that a single grave marker be placed over the burials of all of the fallen Wolkners.<sup>52</sup> Suicides were not limited to Germany or Austria. Liesel Wolfe, a thirty seven year old woman from Germany, leapt to her death from a window on the fifth floor of the Do Hirsch Residence Hall for Young Women in New York. Unable to provide immigration authorities proof that she would not become a public charge she was due to be deported back to the Reich on the following day.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>*Jewish Criterion*, April 8, 1938, 4. Sources within Germany “reliably reported Jewish suicides are still averaging 25 daily,” *The Sentinel*, April 7, 1938, 33.

<sup>50</sup> Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 100-101.

<sup>51</sup>*Time*, April 11, 1938, 19.

<sup>52</sup>“Young Girl’s Death Reveals 22 Suicides in One Family,” *The Southern Israelite*, July 1, 1938, 2.

<sup>53</sup>“German Woman Jumps from Fifth Floor,” *The Southern Israelite*, June 10, 1938, 3.

Israel Cohen, another representative of the WZO in Vienna, noted that rising levels of “despair” drove “thousands of Jews” to besiege the Embassies and Consulates of different Governments in frantic efforts to obtain visas”<sup>54</sup> It was estimated that by the end of April twelve thousand Jews had been arrested and an additional one thousand were charged during May with violation of the Nuremberg Racial Purity Law. Arrests continued for the next two months with many prisoners dispatched to concentration camps, especially Dachau.<sup>55</sup> Conditions within Germany and Austria thus drove Jews to seek legal and illegal means of escape to other nations.

European countries enacted special precautions at their borders to prevent a flood of Jewish refugees. Switzerland ordered reinforcement of its customs and security forces along the Austrian frontier and the placement of barbed wire to block an invasion of Jewish and non-Aryan refugees.<sup>56</sup> The Dutch Government decreed on May 7, 1938 that The Netherlands would no longer accept forced émigrés. Instead, all migrants “will in future be considered persona non grata...an undesirable foreigner” who must be “expelled” or barred from entry.<sup>57</sup> Dutch Jews were also concerned about the incursion of refugees into their country. R.H. Eitje, one of the two primary assistants to David Cohen, the head of the Amsterdam based Committee for Jewish Refugees (*Comité voor Joodsche*

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<sup>54</sup>Israel Cohen, *Travels In Jewry* (NY: Dutton, 1953), 42 cited in Ronald Sanders, *Shores of Refuge A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988), 436-443. Cohen had served for more than thirty years in the secretariat of the Central Office of the WZO.

<sup>55</sup>Schneiderman, *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 208-209.

<sup>56</sup>“Swiss Disturbed: Reinforce Border,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1938, 36; “Swiss Bars Refugees with Barbed Wire,” *New York Times*, August 31, 1938, 3.

<sup>57</sup>Circular of the Minister of Justice, May 7, 1938, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hague, A-185, box 508 cited in Dan Michman, “The Committee for Jewish Refugees in Holland (1933-1940),” *Yad Vashem Studies* 14 (1981), 213.

*Vluchtelingen*), claimed that the organization had prevented the admission of more Jews into Holland than the entire “police and Government put together” by advising their “contacts” within the Reich “as we still do today” that the “flood of refugees” into the country must be prevented.<sup>58</sup>

Edouard Daladier assumed the mantle of French Prime Minister again on April 10, 1938 marking the rise to power of a center-right political coalition that would disavow the liberal immigration policies of the Popular Front under Léon Blum. A Decree of May 2 legally differentiated between prior groups of political refugees and the new wave of forced émigrés. Russians and Armenians who had entered France during the 1920s were granted permanent residence but Spanish, German and other more recent entrants were obligated to apply for increasingly more restricted temporary residency permits. In addition, security forces on the frontiers were allocated greater authority to block the entry of refugees.<sup>59</sup> Daladier advised Justin Godart, president of the Committee for the Defense of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, that “humane suggestions might be entertained” regarding Spanish and German refugees in France but temporary or permanent havens could not be assured due to the potential threat of conflict with neighboring Fascist countries.<sup>60</sup>

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain addressed the House of Commons on March 14, 1938 and noted that both England and Germany were signatories to treaties

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<sup>58</sup>Eitje to G. van den Bergh, March 23, 1938, Archives of the Jewish Relief Committee, file 5 in Michman, “The Committee,” 219.

<sup>59</sup> Timothy P. Maga, “Closing the Door: The French Government and Refugee Policy, 1933-1939,” *French Historical Studies* 12, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 435.

<sup>60</sup>Daladier to Godart and Godart to Myron C. Taylor, May 24, 1938, Box 9 of the Papers of Myron C. Taylor, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY cited in Maga, “Closing the Door,” 436.

which guaranteed the independence of Austria and required the approval of the Council of the League of Nations for any union with the Reich. The *Anschluss* called for the “severest condemnation” of an act that threatened the preservation of “European peace” and the policy of appeasement. However, the British Nation had to face the “hard fact” that Germany would have only been deterred by force and any response offered by the United Kingdom or other nations would have to be tempered by “cool judgment” and a review of national defense.<sup>61</sup> Many in the press viewed British acquiescence as a sign of a “new realistic [diplomatic] policy” or recognition that a German confrontation with Austria represented a “danger point” that threatened stability on the Continent.<sup>62</sup> Other editorialists predicted that another *Anschluss* “will be only a question of time,” most likely against Czechoslovakia.<sup>63</sup> On March 12 the Foreign Office did, however, send a memo to Vienna describing the “Desire of his Majesty’s Government to Protect the Jews and Socialists in Austria” and articulated “considerable anxiety” for the plight of these minority groups.<sup>64</sup>

Major Herwald Ramsbotham, the Minister of Pensions and a Conservative government spokesman, asserted that it is one thing to proselytize about the sanctity of international treaties, brotherhood, minority rights and the rule of law but a realist faced

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<sup>61</sup>Neville Chamberlain statement on the *Anschluss*, Foreign Affairs (Austria) House of Commons Debate, March 14, 1938, vol. 333 cc 45-169 available from [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1938/mar/14/foreign-affairs-austria#S5CV0333P0\\_19380314\\_HOC\\_256](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1938/mar/14/foreign-affairs-austria#S5CV0333P0_19380314_HOC_256); Internet; accessed October 7, 2010.

<sup>62</sup>*Evening Post*, April 4, 1938, 11.

<sup>63</sup>*Evening Post*, April 26, 1938, 11.

<sup>64</sup>Public Records Office, Foreign Office (PRO FO) 371/22317, R2907/137/3 March 12, 1938 cited in Gemma Romain, “The Anschluss: the British Response to the Refugee Crisis,” *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 8, no. 3 (Winter 1999): 91.



with a struggle with “cold, hardheaded, ruthless [and] determined men” acknowledged that the British people cannot save Europe by acting like a “knight-errant rescuing damsels in distress.” It was not the Nation’s role to act as “our brother’s keeper” or an “amiable Don Quixote.”<sup>65</sup> Some Home Office officials suggested that a prime motivating factor behind the Nazi anti-Semitic policies was to create a forced emigration dilemma that would create for the United Kingdom a domestic “Jewish problem.”<sup>66</sup> Such sentiments were, of course, applicable to all of the Western nations.

Home Office Assistant Under-Secretary Courtenay D.C. Robinson advised Sir Neville Bland, British Minister to The Hague, that German annexation of the Austrian Republic mandated that the Royal Government revisit its policies allowing the entry of “aliens” possessing “Austrian passports. who may seek admission” into the United Kingdom. These emigrants would in all probability, Robinson believed, have the status of stateless refugees and consequently, it would become “impossible” to expel such people once they gained admittance. In addition, despite the 1933 written assurances to the Home Office from the leaders of the British Jewish community that all Jewish refugees would be financially provided for by private sources and thus avoid going on the public dole, by 1938 the scope of the new refugee crisis prevented Jewish relief organizations from bearing the economic costs of resettlement and assimilation. Therefore, Robinson concluded, the Government needed to institute stricter passport controls that would severely curtail the numbers of foreigners admitted into the country.

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<sup>65</sup>*Time*, April 4, 1938, 18.

<sup>66</sup>PRO FO 372/3282, T3517/3272/378, March 15, 1938, “Question of Admission to the United Kingdom of Aliens holding Austrian Passports.” The Memorandum noted that “the latest information is such that pressure is already intensified as a matter of deliberate policy, with the express purpose of creating a Jewish refugee problem in this country and stimulating a Nazi reaction” cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 97.

Visas would be required of all refugees possessing Austrian or German passports.<sup>67</sup> The “potential threat” of the admission of “enemy agents” among the Jewish refugees was also touted as a rationale for restricting immigration.<sup>68</sup> Similar fears would greatly influence immigration policies of the United States following the outbreak of the European War in September 1939 and would be used as justification by the Administration for severely limiting the entry of aliens from Germany and Austria.

Sir Andrew Noble, an expert on artillery and explosives, observed that the Home Office regarded the “visa system as more humane than a scheme of uncontrolled immigration” as it would be less likely that emigrants would be barred from entry at their port of call.<sup>69</sup> The Government would be spared the “ultimate” embarrassment of returning a refugee to the Reich who faced the real possibility of imprisonment within the concentration camp system.<sup>70</sup> The press echoed such sentiments warning that an open door policy would create selection problems for the immigration authorities and inflict “hardships” on all who had undertaken “fruitless journeys across the continent.”<sup>71</sup> The Foreign Office did attempt to achieve some form of balance between humanitarianism, the British historical tradition of admitting forced exiles and the interests of the nation and viewed it “extremely undesirable to restrict more than absolutely necessary the

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<sup>67</sup>PRO Kew, FO372/3282, T3398/3272/378, Robinson to Bland, March 14, 1938 cited in Romain “The Anschluss,” 89, 90.

<sup>68</sup>PRO FO 371/22317, R2907/137/3 A. Noble March 21, 1938 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 97.

<sup>69</sup>PRO FO 371/22317, R2907/137/3 March 21, 1938 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 91.

<sup>70</sup>C.B. McAlpine (Aliens Department) memorandum, March 1, 1938, PRO HO (Home Office) 213/94 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 93.

<sup>71</sup>*The Daily Telegraph*, March 23, 1938 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 91.

immigration of Austrian refugees at the present time.”<sup>72</sup> However, emphasis was placed on the provision of temporary havens with a view to future migration to a place of permanent resettlement.<sup>73</sup> The Foreign Office stressed that the United Kingdom was not an “immigration country” due to its “being an old country...highly industrialized, very densely populated” suffering from high domestic unemployment.<sup>74</sup> Such rationalizations would be utilized by Britain as well as other nations during the Evian Conference as justification for containing Jewish immigration.

Austrian Jewish refugees attempting to enter Britain without sufficient funds to support themselves without the public dole were barred from entry.<sup>75</sup> Between March 13 and 20 the Home Office reported that 422 applications for landing had been received but 61 were denied. Fourteen thousand Austrians were already residing in the United Kingdom but naturalization law required the alien to reside within the Dominions for five out of the prior eight years, of which one must have been spent in Britain.<sup>76</sup> The Labor Party introduced into the House of Commons a bill that would grant unlimited and unrestricted admission and British citizenship to Austrian refugees but was defeated by a

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<sup>72</sup>PRO FO 372/3282, T3272/378, Director of the Central European Department of the Foreign Office William Strang to Holderness, March 12, 1938 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 90.

<sup>73</sup>David Cesarani, ed., *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 90. A number of refugee organizations agreed with this policy of providing only temporary refuge with the ultimate goal of emigration overseas. Claudena M. Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe: The Emergence of a Regime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 221.

<sup>74</sup>RO FO 371/22530, March 13, 1938 cited in Fiona Horne, “Explaining British Refugee Policy, March 1938-July 1940,” Masters of Arts in History Thesis, University of Canterbury, New Zealand (March 2008), 5.

<sup>75</sup>“Britain Stops Refugees,” *Washington Post*, March 16, 1938, 4.

<sup>76</sup>“Austrians in Britain: Recent Applications to Enter,” *The Times*, March 31, 1938, 8

vote of 210 to 142.<sup>77</sup> The Labor Member of Parliament (MP) for Newcastle-under-Lyme, Colonel Wedgwood, asserted, in his motion concerning “Austrian Refugees Immigration and Naturalization,” that British honor would suffer if German and Austrian refugees were prohibited from entry. The United Kingdom could not be perceived as being “less generous than the French” and the “voice and spirit of Cromwell, of Palmerston, of Gladstone” must be preserved. During the Nineteenth Century the British had provided aid and succor for the “negro slaves.” Failure to act similarly for the persecuted of Central Europe would “destroy the traditions of our race and sacrifice to unworthy fears the honor of England.”<sup>78</sup>

Major Sir George Davies, Conservative MP from Yeovil, asserted, in the debate over Wedgwood’s motion, that the refugee community should be viewed as a whole, composed of both Jews and non-Jews, and special consideration could not be granted to one group over another “when the conditions that appeal to the hearts of all of us may be the same in many other countries.”<sup>79</sup> Davies was not, however, averse to using late Nineteenth Century negative imagery of Eastern European Jewish immigrants that had been utilized in anti-alien debates:

Think of the difficulty after their landing, after their spreading amongst the population, of the police department, the safety department of this country, which has to see that our own people are protected against

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<sup>77</sup>*New York Times*, March 23, 1938.

<sup>78</sup>House of Commons Debates March 22, 1938, PRO FO, 372/3282 cited in Romaine, “The Anschluss,” 93, 100. Wedgwood’s Parliamentary motion called for amending the “Aliens Acts and Naturalization Acts.” The Secretary of State for the Home Department would be empowered to permit entry into the United Kingdom of Austrian refugees for “a period of six months from the date of the passing of this Act, and the granting of British nationality to such immigrants.”

<sup>79</sup>House of Commons Debates, March 22, 1938, PRO FO 372/3282 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 95.

those who might quite easily slip in—drug traffickers, white slave trade traffickers, people with criminal records.<sup>80</sup>

C.B. McAlpine and others feared that the admission of sizeable numbers of Jewish refugees would create a domestic Jewish Question and its attendant risk of anti-Semitic hostility. The United Kingdom had “benefited greatly” by the admission of talented and resourceful Jews but such progress “may be too dearly bought at the price” of unbridled immigration.<sup>81</sup> Similar concerns were presented in the press. The *Daily Express* warned that increased Austrian and German Jewish immigration would foster home grown anti-Semitism and garner support for the “extreme left.” A liberal admission policy could also prompt the Eastern European countries of Poland, Rumania and Hungary to forcibly expel their own Jewish population. Would Britain, they asked, be obligated to “admit them too? Because we DON’T want anti-Jewish uproar we DO” insist upon the application of “common sense in not admitting all applicants.”<sup>82</sup>

Home Secretary Samuel Hoare acknowledged that Britain had a long standing policy of granting sanctuary to victims of political, racial and political persecution but concerns about the domestic economy and unemployment would, by necessity, temper such a compassionate policy. He warned that while he was willing to be supportive in aiding refugees “there was a good deal of feeling growing up in this country—a feeling which was reflected in Parliament—against the admission of Jews to British territory.”

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>81</sup>C.B. McAlpine memorandum, March 1, 1938, PRO HO 213/94 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 96-97.

<sup>82</sup>Ari Joshua Sherman, *Island Refuge, Britain and the Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933-1939* (London: Elek Book Limited, 1973), 94.

Consequently, the decision to admit a refugee would have to be individualized but the Government would attempt to maintain its “traditional policy...of offering asylum” with the greatest latitude.<sup>83</sup> As early as 1933 the Home Office was dismissive of a “right of asylum... [for] political refugees.” The granting of entry into the country would not be based upon strict humanitarian concerns but whether or not the alien would serve “the public interest.”<sup>84</sup> Parameters were established by the Government that would gauge the admissibility and desirability of prospective emigrants. The absence of sufficient “resources” and the lack of “definite prospects” for self sufficiency that would potentially place the refugee on the public dole served as grounds for automatic exclusion. The Nazi appropriation of Jewish funds and its resultant impoverishment severely limited the number of desirable émigrés. Other groups were labeled as “*prima facie* unsuitable” due to the risk of competition with local labor.<sup>85</sup> Once again, similar themes would resonate throughout the dialectic of the Evian Conference.

Fears of escalating immigration of non-Anglo-Saxon stock driven by political and ethnic instabilities within Eastern Europe and the Czarist Empire coupled with domestic

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<sup>83</sup>E.L Woodward, et al. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ser., I (London: H.M.S.O., 1949), 44-48; Cabinet Conclusions 33, July 20, 1938, CAB 23/94 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 93; 333House of Commons Debate, 991-994, March 22, 1938 cited in *ibid.*, 121.

<sup>84</sup>Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees from the First World War through the Cold War* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2002), 150.

<sup>85</sup>PRO FO 372/3284, T7056/3272/378 Foreign Office, Passport Control Department, Visas for Holders of German and Austrian Passports entering the United Kingdom, April 27, 1938, 2-3 cited in Romain, “The Anschluss,” 94. The other groups considered undesirable for admission included “(a) Small shopkeepers, retail traders, artisans and persons likely to seek employment; (b) Agents and middlemen, whose livelihood depends upon commission and therefore on trade activity; (c) Minor musicians and commercial artists of all kinds...; and (d) The rank and file of professional men—lawyers, doctors, dentists.” Exceptions would be made for those who faced “special danger because of [their] political views or activities” or those who possessed familial or friendship connections who could offer “hospitality” and the guarantee of “support while arrangements are made for [their] future.”

economic, labor, social and racial concerns had led the British Government to earlier embark on a policy of increasingly restrictive immigration controls. Between 1905 and 1920 Parliament enacted four series of progressively stringent measures against the entry of aliens which would remain operative until the outbreak of war in 1939 and beyond. The 1905 Aliens Act was written in reaction to the mass migration of Eastern European and Russian Jews and introduced a system of admission controls at approved ports of entry. The poorest of the émigrés were obliged to undergo official inspection by immigration officials who were authorized to deny admittance to refugees considered undesirable for health, psychiatric, criminal or economic reasons (unable to demonstrate the ability to provide for themselves and their dependents). Exceptions would be made for those who feared persecution for religious or political reasons should they return to their country of origin.<sup>86</sup>

With the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 the Government issued the Aliens Restriction Act which obligated all foreign émigrés to register with the police and reside within specified areas. The Home Secretary was granted the power to bar or deport any refugee; such individuals were denied the right of appeal. Thirty two thousand aliens were interned during the conflict and 28,744 were deported.<sup>87</sup> The wartime Restriction Act was formulated to be a temporary measure that would be rescinded with the coming

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<sup>86</sup>Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16; B. Wasserstein, "The British Government and the German Immigration 1933-1945" in Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany* (London: Berg Publishers, 1984), 64; Louise London, "British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees 1933-1939," in Werner E. Mosse, *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 489.

<sup>87</sup>Colin Holmes, "The Myth of Fairness: Racial Violence in Britain 1911-1919," *History Today*, 35, no. 10 (October 1, 1985): 43.

of peace but Parliament annually renewed this policy until 1971, while adding more stringent controls.<sup>88</sup> The subsequent Aliens Restriction Act of 1919 and the Aliens Order of 1920 decreed that every immigrant (except those entering on a temporary basis) who lacked sufficient means of support or a work permit from the Ministry of Labor would be barred from landing. Any right of appeal to the Home Secretary was again abrogated and the traditional claim of asylum was revoked.<sup>89</sup> The Government would selectively admit refugees on the basis of national need but in the “rhetoric of debate on refugee questions, the tradition of asylum was accorded quasi-constitutional sanctity.”<sup>90</sup>

French Interior Minister Albert Sarraut sent reinforcements to the borders to prevent Jews without proper documentation from entering France. The Government was opposed to the admission of any new refugees and informed the German Government that France would no longer tolerate the dumping of German and Austrian refugees across the border onto French territory. A decree was issued on May 2, 1938 that categorized potential immigrants as “desirable” or “undesirable.” Sarraut justified this edict by claiming that “the ever-growing number of foreigners” that had crossed into France posed an internal threat to the economy and national security. Therefore, the granting of permission to enter and reside within French territory would have to become highly selective, differentiating between the “foreigner[s] of good faith” who demonstrated “an absolutely correct attitude vis-à-vis the Republic and its institutions”

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<sup>88</sup>Paul Gordon., *Policing Immigration: Britain's Internal Controls* (London: Pluto Press Ltd., 1985), 9.

<sup>89</sup>Hirschfeld, *Exile*, 64-65.

<sup>90</sup>London, “British Immigration Control Procedures,” 489.



and those “‘clandestine’ foreigners, irregular guests...unworthy of living on our soil” who would be forcibly expelled.<sup>91</sup>

The 1920s marked a shift in French immigration policies which previously had been very liberal in its scope. The growth rate of the French population during the time span 1836-1936 had been relatively flat increasing from thirty six million to thirty nine million. A steadily declining birth rate coupled with the male casualties of the Great War, an aging population and a need for manpower to reestablish and expand the domestic economy and military led France to adopt an open door policy for émigrés. During the Nineteenth Century France had received the greatest number of immigrants in Europe and, prior to August 1914, the majority of aliens originated in Belgium, Italy and Spain.<sup>92</sup> Following the War many Russians sought refuge in the wake of the November Revolution.<sup>93</sup>

As national recovery progressed, however, the demand for foreign labor diminished. Thus, the French Government began to adopt more restrictive measures (applied to the immigrant population as a whole) during the late 1920s in an attempt to stem the tide of immigration that threatened the employment of French citizens. Unemployed foreign workers were deported and residency permits were not renewed for aliens working in sectors in which French laborers remained idle. Labor contracts with

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<sup>91</sup>Prefect, Gironde, to the Prefect, Bas-Rhin, June 21, 1938, ADBR D 391/19 (dos. 182), HICEM report, “*Note sur l’état actuel de l’émigration d’Allemagne et d’Autriche*,” from Oungre to George Rublee, September 7, 1938, 3, AN 14 (13/56) cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 74, 181.

<sup>92</sup>Jean Pierre Dormois, *The French Economy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2, 4.

<sup>93</sup>Maga, “Closing the Door,” 425.

foreign workers were discouraged and pressure was exerted upon employers to terminate these agreements.<sup>94</sup>

1931 marked the high water mark of French immigration with an estimated three million alien laborers and their dependents residing within the Republic.<sup>95</sup> By 1932-1933 the Government attempted to limit the number of immigrants, differentiating between political refugees and economic migrants. Nazi persecution of its Jewish population was initially seen as a transient phenomenon but the realization of the scope, magnitude and probable permanence of this humanitarian problem drove the French authorities to adopt a harsher immigration doctrine. The implementation of accords dealing with the problems of Russian refugees in 1922 and Armenian refugees in 1924 elevated the issue of the care and protection of refugees onto the international stage.<sup>96</sup> Consequently, France would view its moral obligations towards German and Austrian refugees as a burden to be shared by the international community as a whole.

Bolivia was one of the few nations in the world to accept Jewish refugees following the *Anschluss* although primarily as a temporary haven, later known as “Hotel Bolivia.” Prior to Hitler assuming the mantle of the Reich Chancellor and Fuehrer less than one hundred Jews had immigrated to Bolivia. However, beginning in the mid-1930’s thousands of refugees, Jews and non-Aryan political exiles, from Central Europe found shelter in this Latin American nation. Between *Kristallnacht* and the end of 1939 approximately twenty thousand refugees from Germany and Austria had entered this

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<sup>94</sup>Greg Burgess, “France and the German Refugee Crisis of 1933,” *French History*, 16, no. 2 (June 1, 2002): 213.

<sup>95</sup>Dormois, *The French Economy*, 4.

<sup>96</sup>Burgess, “France and the German Refugee Crisis,” 211.

republic; a number exceeding Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and Canada combined. Most of the immigrants settled in the area of La Paz and smaller urban and agricultural communities.<sup>97</sup>

Feng Shan Ho (1901-1997) served as the Consul General of China in Vienna during the period of the *Anschluss*. A political economist with a Ph.D. from the University of Munich in 1932, he observed that the persecution of Austrian Jews by “Hitler’s devils” was increasing on a daily basis prompting him to maintain secret contacts with American charitable and religious organizations involved in refugee work. He recalled that he “spared no effort in using any possible means” to rescue “innumerable Jews” by adhering to a “liberal” policy of granting visas to Shanghai to any and all who requested one. This Chinese port city, however, was then under Japanese occupation and thus outside of sovereign Chinese control and authority. Although an entry permit was not required for admission into this coastal city it served as proof of destination to the German authorities and opened the door to escape to Shanghai and other locations. The Shanghai visas also served as a means of release of Jewish inmates from Dachau and other prisons. The Chinese Ambassador to Berlin and Ho’s superior, Chen Jie, viewed the granting of visas to Jews as an impediment to friendly German-Chinese diplomatic relations but was unable to curtail the Consul’s activities. Chang Kai-Shek, facing war on two fronts with the Chinese Communists and Japanese, depended upon German weapons and military advisors. His son, educated in Germany, became a second lieutenant in the German 98<sup>th</sup> Jaeger Regiment and took part in the takeover of Austria. When asked years later why he was willing to intervene and rescue the Jews of Austria

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<sup>97</sup>Leo Spitzer, “Rootless Nostalgia: Vienna in La Paz, La Paz in Elsewhere,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 10.3 (2001): 6-17.

Ho responded that “I thought it only natural to feel compassion and to want to help. From the standpoint of humanity, that is the way it should be.” The number of visas granted by Ho remains a matter of speculation but by October 1938 1,900 visas had been issued and by the time of the outbreak of war in September 1939 more than eighteen thousand European Jewish refugees had immigrated to Shanghai.<sup>98</sup>

Prior to the *Anschluss* many Americans in their private, professional and official capacities condemned Nazi policies of persecution. The U.S. Ambassador to Berlin, William E. Dodd, resigned from his position on December 7, 1937 and was replaced by Hugh R. Wilson on January 7, 1938. On January 8 Dodd condemned the German record of anti-Semitism, rearmament and violations of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. He believed that it was the responsibility of American diplomats to remind the world of the “significance of democratic civilization for which peoples have struggled since the sixteenth century.” Speaking on January 13 Dodd denounced the tenets of Aryanism and accused the Reich Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, of murdering “more personal enemies in five years than Charles II of England did in twenty years” precipitating an official protest from the German Ambassador to Washington, Dr. Hans Dieckhoff. During February the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work held a dinner in New York City honoring Dodd. One of the speakers, Dr. Ernst Wilhelm Meyer, who until May 1937 had been a career German diplomat and

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<sup>98</sup>Eric Saul, “Response to the Article by Joan R. Deman ‘A Rebuttal to the Claims Made by the Organization Visas for Life’” available from <http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/exhibitions/rescuers/ericSaul.html>; Internet; (Last update October 22, 2009); accessed March 19, 2010; “Feng Shan Ho and the Rescue of Austrian Jews” Visas for Life Project available from <http://isurvived.org/4Debates/Exhibit-RickshawORG/FengShanHo-bio-Eric.html> ; Internet; accessed March 19, 2010; “The Angel of Austria’s Jews” by Mark O’Neil *South China Morning Post* available from [http://journeyeast.tripod.com/angel\\_of\\_austria\\_s\\_jews.html](http://journeyeast.tripod.com/angel_of_austria_s_jews.html) ; Internet; accessed March 20, 2010.

first secretary of the Embassy in Washington, expressed harsh criticism of Hitler and his regime, categorizing them as betrayers of the “lasting interests of the German Fatherland...[and] the foe of so many things I had been taught Germany stands for.” One could not serve the Reich, he argued, if it was necessary to abandon “moral law and loyalty to the true Germany” while supporting false doctrines of Aryan superiority. Meyer condemned Nazi anti-Semitism and declared that the German Jew had always been a “devoted and useful citizen” and to claim otherwise represented “ignorance or lying.”

The American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting, held in Indianapolis during late December 1937, denounced the suppression of “intellectual freedom” as “intolerable forms of tyranny.” An earlier resolution, introduced by physicist Dr. Robert A. Millikan and astronomer Dr. Henry Norris Russell, was reaffirmed and viewed the “suppression of independent thought and its free expression as a major crime against civilization itself.” Scientists and all such thinkers were duty bound to rebuke “all such nations as intolerable forms of tyranny” with whom compromise was inherently impossible.

On January 17, 1938 a large percentage of leading American publishers announced that they would withdraw from the annual Leipzig International Congress of Book Publishers. Such participation, it was felt, would represent a “contradiction of the very essence of our function as publishers.” They criticized the censorship, banning and criminalization of the possession of ninety percent of the works of modern German writers whose works had been translated into English. The German Publishers Association planned to introduce into the Congress a resolution calling for international

cooperation in preventing the publication of all works “libeling the head of a State or the sacred institutions of a State through misrepresentation of history.” Such a resolution was declared unsupportable by the American publishers and represented a source of “humiliation.”<sup>99</sup>

American political and popular reaction to the *Anschluss* was mixed. President Roosevelt ended the preferential tariff treatment of Austria and Secretary of State Cordell Hull advised the German Government that the American Administration held the Reich responsible for the payment of Austrian financial debts to the United States—both actions signaling American acquiescence to the annexation of Austria.<sup>100</sup> Hull directed U.S. Ambassador to Berlin Hugh Wilson to protest the persecution of Jewish American citizens and the confiscation or the destruction of their property. The Reich Government granted in return limited concessions: American Jews would not have to comply with the mandatory registration of their property unless they were living within Germany or Austria or had been German citizens who emigrated after 1933.<sup>101</sup>

A survey of newspaper editorials on the Austrian situation noted that fifty three percent favored isolationism while forty seven percent believed that a strong national defense and a willingness to fight would ensure the peace.<sup>102</sup> Senator Elbert D. Thomas

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<sup>99</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 569, 89-93. The American publishers included John Day Co., E.P Dutton and Co., Farrar and Rinehart, Harcourt, Brace and Co., Harper and Bros., Macmillan Co., and the Harvard, Oxford and Yale University Presses.

<sup>100</sup> “Austria Removed from Preferential U.S. Tariff List,” *Tampa Tribune*, April 8, 1938, 6.

<sup>101</sup>Sheldon Spear, “The United States and the Persecution of the Jews in Germany, 1933-1939,” *Jewish Social Studies* 30, no. 4 (October 1968): 221-222. Following *Kristallnacht*, however, these concessions were ended as new anti-Semitic policies called for the total disenfranchisement of all Jews, foreign and domestic, from the German economy.

<sup>102</sup>*US News*, March 21, 1938; *The Times*, March 23, 1938, 15.

argued that the failure of the Great War victors to contest German violations of the Treaty of Versailles proved that war was a futile means of resolving international conflicts. He anticipated the abolition of freedom of religion, speech and the press in Austria and predicted future Hitlerian expansion into Central and Eastern Europe. Recent events had demonstrated that the European War had failed to preserve democracy on the Continent and consequently, American attention and resources needed to remain focused at home.<sup>103</sup> This theme that the United States should avoid foreign entanglements and focus its resources on the needs of the American citizen would echo throughout the future debates on national defense and immigration policies.

Washington Representative John M. Coffee addressed the National Jewish Unity Conference at the Mecca Temple in New York City on March 12 and claimed that Jewish persecution was not a unique phenomenon but rather the “Jewish problem” needed to be viewed in its economic and social milieu. “Never in history have the ‘chosen people’ alone been chosen for oppression.” The destiny of the Jews was “inseparable from the fate of all the common peoples of the world...The future of the Jews is the future of democracy.” The “Jewish problem” would be forever solved if the problems of food, shelter, jobs, clothing and freedom were eliminated.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>*Congressional Record Appendix*, March 15, 1938, Seventy-Fifth Congress, Third Session, vol. 9, 1016-1017. Senator Thomas: June 17, 1883-February 11, 1953; Democratic Senator from Utah, 1933-1951. A critic of Nazi anti-Semitic policies and a supporter of American rearmament he called for the rescue of European Jews during the Second World War. “It is the first time in history that the physical extermination of a whole people—the Jewish people—has become declared policy, in fact, one of the major policies and war aims, of a powerful aggressive nation.” The rescue of Jews and creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was “the last question on which we can afford to be silent or evasive.” November 1942, “Senator Elbert D. Thomas: A Courageous Voice against the Holocaust” available from <http://www.wymaninstitute.org/education/Elbert%20T.pdf> ; Internet; last update 2004, accessed March 14, 2010.

<sup>104</sup>*Congressional Record Appendix*, March 15, 1938, Seventy-Fifth Congress, Third Session, vol. 9, 1036-1037.

The National Conference of Jews and Christians issued a declaration of principles, co-signed by ninety-nine leading Jewish, Protestant and Catholic theologians, predicting that Nazi policies would be “relentlessly furthered in Austria” and that all of the religious faiths were obligated to unite in the defense of universal “human rights and liberties.”<sup>105</sup> Dr. Cyrus Adler expressed in a statement, issued in the *New York Journal* and *American* (among other Hearst papers), that only force could alter the ideological path of Hitler as there were “no forum or bar to which decent world opinion can appeal from the unconscionable assaults of Nazi Germany.” Adler called on American Jews to “steel themselves” in order to provide aid to their beleaguered co-religionists. The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America passed a resolution critical of the “extension to Austria of the [German policy of] inhuman persecution of the Jews” which threatened “our Christian brethren in Austria, both Catholic and Protestant, whose religious liberty is destroyed with the loss of their political independence.” The Women’s Division of the American Jewish Congress on March 30 condemned the *Anschluss* and its resultant persecution of religious minorities, Jew and non-Jew.<sup>106</sup>

Herbert Feis, a Jewish economic advisor in the State Department and a supporter of New Deal policies, called for American engagement in the refugee crisis and noted

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<sup>105</sup>The signers of this declaration included President Henry Sloane Coffin of the Union Theological Seminary; Dr. Robert J. Cannon, President of Fordham University; Dr. Cyrus Adler, President of the American Jewish Committee; Dr. Stephen S. Wise, President of the American Jewish Congress, and Dr. Edgar de Witt Jones, President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

<sup>106</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 94-96.



FDR's receptiveness to such an idea.<sup>107</sup> He viewed Under Secretary of State George S. Messersmith (considered the State Department's authority on the Reich with influence over the Visa Division) as a possible impediment to any refugee rescue plan. Feis believed Messersmith was "slow to recognize the inadequacy" of American immigration practices and was hampered by the "fear [of] any new though wholly reasonable and justified flexibility in our laws."<sup>108</sup>

Foreign correspondent and Berlin bureau chief for the *New York Post*, Dorothy Thompson, observed that the *Anschluss* was an international incident of the "first order" that threatened to generate an uncontrollable cascade of events that would result in American entrapment in foreign affairs, war or the "utter capitulation" of the world's democracies. The drama being played out on the streets of Austria—the beatings, terrorization, imprisonment and economic disenfranchisement—had been predicted by the earlier events within Germany itself. The world had already been provided with a "blueprint" of fascist plans and the ultimate question was whether or not "western liberal culture can indefinitely tolerate the aggrandizement upon it, step by step, of a barbarian revolution!" Democracies were not threatened by nation-states but by "international revolutionary movements" of which fascism posed the greatest danger. The democracies, although endowed with "enormous wealth and power", were "totally paralyzed" and unable to see the ideological peril. Isolationists were "blind and worse than blind" for

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<sup>107</sup>Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 56.

<sup>108</sup>Herbert Feis to Felix Frankfurter, March 22, 1938, Herbert Feis Papers, Box 33, Library of Congress cited in Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 57.

awareness of that danger is the first true line of defense.<sup>109</sup> Thompson also warned that the forced expulsion of unwanted minorities threatened international order with anarchy. If involuntary émigrés were not provided with the means to reestablish themselves as productive citizens then they would “become [an unwanted] burden upon their hosts.” As a result, the immigrants and receiving nations faced potential “catastrophe.” Mass migration, she believed, was no longer solely a matter of humanitarian concern but “must now be regarded as a problem of international politics.”<sup>110</sup>

Consequently, she called upon the Roosevelt Administration to enter into discussions with the German Government to devise a rescue scheme along the lines of the earlier *Ha'avarah* Agreement which coupled Jewish immigration into Palestine with increased German foreign trade; a process that allowed émigrés to retain adequate monies to facilitate resettlement and assimilation into a new homeland.<sup>111</sup> She believed that only the United States, with its “faith in the democratic principles,” could lead an international

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<sup>109</sup>“On the Record Wake Up and Live!” by Dorothy Thompson in *Congressional Record Appendix*, March 16, 1938, Seventy-Fifth Congress, Third Session, vol. 9, 1046-1047. Thompson was the Berlin bureau chief for the *New York Post* and in 1934 she became the first journalist to be expelled by order of the Fuehrer from Germany because of her criticism of Hitler and the Nazi Government.

<sup>110</sup>Dorothy Thompson, “Refugees: A World Problem,” *Foreign Affairs*, 16 (1938): 377.

<sup>111</sup>The *Ha'avarah* or Transfer Agreement was an accord arranged during 1933 between the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the German Zionist Federation and the Reich Ministry of Economics. The plan allowed those Jews who were immigrating to Palestine to transfer a portion of their wealth and property in the form of German trade goods purchased within Germany. Subsequently, such merchandise, equipment, etc. could be resold in the Mandate for Palestinian currency. The nature of this exchange of Jewish bodies for German wares was kept confidential due to its potential controversy until it was revealed in 1935. The Nazi regime was motivated by the significant effect of the world wide economic boycott of Germany in 1933. Jews who supported this arrangement were opposed to such an embargo although, in the view of many contemporaries and later historians, the boycott and the loss of foreign exchange could have forced the collapse of Nazi rule. “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Movement: A Jewish Dilemma on the Eve of the Holocaust” by Yfaat Weiss, Shoah Resource Center, available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203231.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203231.pdf); Internet; accessed October 7, 2010. For a more detailed analysis of this event and the marked divergence of opinion within the international Jewish community see Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers), 2001.

rescue effort; a project based not on “pity for the exiles” but as a symbolic “reaffirmation of our own [core] beliefs.”<sup>112</sup> Thompson argued that any solution to the refugee crisis would require multinational cooperation and the creation of an organization that would have the proper amount of expertise, influence and finances. The European refugee situation, however, created a potential “trap” for the United States and the Western European nations. Any failure to act could “make them complicit” in Hitler’s anti-Jewish policies and “discredit them before their own publics” or “force them into ineffectual action divisive of their domestic public opinion.”<sup>113</sup>

Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut have suggested that Feis and Thompson were the sources of “four key proposals” adopted by the U.S. Government in its approach to the refugee problem. Feis argued for the consolidation of the annual German and Austrian immigration quotas; “streamlining” the mechanism of obtaining and providing “affidavits of support” from American sponsors and the creation of the Presidential Advisory Committee for Political Refugees. Thompson’s primary focus was on the creation of an international refugee organization to deal with forced migration as a multinational effort.<sup>114</sup> Some historians, as will be described, have asserted that it was Thompson’s public criticism of the Administration for its official inaction that prompted FDR to call for a refugee summit

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<sup>112</sup>Thompson, “Refugees,” 387.

<sup>113</sup>Conrad Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Champion of Freedom Public* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 487.

<sup>114</sup> Herbert Feis to Felix Frankfurter, March 22, 1938; Feis to Cordell Hull, March 22, 1938, Feis Papers, Box 33, Library of Congress; Moffat Diary, March 16, 1938, Moffat Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University cited in Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 57.

## Chapter 3

### Flight: “A Problem of Growing Gravity and Complexity”

Austrian refugees in Bolivia: “Visas! We began to live visas day and night. When we were awake we are obsessed by visas. We talked about them all the time. Exit visas. Transit visas. Entrance visas. Where could we go? During the day, we tried to get the proper documents, approvals, visas. At night, in bed, we tossed about and dreamed about long lines, officials, visas.”<sup>1</sup>

The world is closing in on the Jews as Fascism is triumphing over democracy. The Jews as Jews seem powerless to do anything about it. Only the voice of Secretary Hull has been lifted inviting the governments to give the refugee problem immediate and practical attention.<sup>2</sup>

The goal of the first phase of Nazi anti-Jewish policy was to make Greater Germany *Jüdenrein* or cleansed of Jews by means of forced emigration, the seizure of their assets and property, the elimination of Jews from the workforce and by the use of terror. 525,000 Jews resided primarily within the urban areas of Germany when Hitler assumed the Chancellorship in January 1933 (one percent of the total population with one-third of Jews living within Berlin) and two hundred thousand dwelled in Austria at the time of the *Anschluss*. Seventy percent, or four hundred thousand Jews, resided within municipal communities with half located within the ten largest German cities. Four hundred thousand Jews (eighty percent) living within Germany held German citizenship and the remainder were primarily of Polish origin; the majority born in

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<sup>1</sup> Leo Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refugee from Nazism* (NY: Hill and Wang, 1999), 35.

<sup>2</sup>*The Southern Israelite*, April 29, 1938, 20.

Germany who had been granted permanent resident alien status. Table 1 demonstrates that the majority of Jews were of non-agricultural backgrounds; a deficiency that would greatly hinder resettlement.

**TABLE 1: Jewish Occupations in Germany in 1933 Census**

Occupations	Percentage
Agriculture	1.0
Industry and handicraft	19.1
Trade, insurance, communications and Transportation	52.5
Public service and professions	10.7
Domestic service	0.7
Independent; no occupation	16.7

*Die Glaubensjuden im deutschen Reich*, 25 cited in Tartakower, "The Jewish Refugees," 332-333.

Hitler's rise to power led 37,000-38,000 Jews to move to neighboring European countries, primarily France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. "Stabilization of the domestic political situation" and increasing resistance of the United States and other nations to accept refugees, however, led to a decline in the number of migrants seeking refuge. The passage of the 1935 Nuremberg Racial Laws did not significantly accelerate the emigration process. 15,000-135,000 Jews left Germany between 1933 and 1937 of whom 42,000 entered Palestine, 48,000 migrated overseas and 25,000 returned to their countries of origin.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>"Memorandum of the Jewish Agency, Palestine, to the Evian Conference" The Central Zionist Archive S7/693 available from <http://www.zupdom.com/icons-multimedia/ClientsArea/HoH/LIBARC/ARCHIVE/Chapters/Terror/RefugeeP/Memoran1.html>; Internet; accessed May 15, 2010; "Germany: Jewish Population in 1933," Holocaust Encyclopedia available from <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005276>; Internet; accessed June 12, 2010. According to the 1922 Census 168,000 Jews or 4% of the total population lived in the capital Berlin with 26,000 in Frankfurt am Main, 20,000 in Breslau, 17,000 in Hamburg, 15,000 in Cologne, 13,000 in Hanover and 12,000 in Leipzig. Approximately 10,000 lived in the Free City of Danzig. During 1933 20% of Jews lived in smaller town. An estimated 178,000 Jews lived in the Austrian capital Vienna and 35,000 in Prague.

The *Anschluss* (and *Kristallnacht*) clearly revealed the fragility and the precarious situation of the German Jewish community. State sponsored terror generated a “flood of visa applications.” The initial émigrés in 1933 were able to retain seventy-five percent of their assets but expanded anti-Semitic measures, Aryanization of Jewish enterprises, economic disenfranchisement and the pre-Nazi era Flight Tax or *Reichsfluchtsteuer* reduced their resources to ten percent with the balance seized by the Nazi government.<sup>4</sup> Following *Kristallnacht* and the enactment of the Atonement Fine Jews were able to retain only ten *Reichmarks* per person. The ultimate impoverishment of the real and potential refugees would prove to be one of *the* critical factors complicating resettlement efforts. It was the plight of these Jews and non-Aryans and fears of involuntary mass migrations from other European locales that led to calls for an international solution to this refugee crisis.

Eventually, 36,000 Jews managed to leave Germany and Austria during 1938 and 77,000 in 1939. The latter year marked the first time that the entire American annual quota for Germany and Austria was filled (including the annexed portions of Czechoslovakia following the Munich Agreement).<sup>5</sup> 305,000 Jews and non-Aryans had filed applications for approximately 27,000 visas by June 30, 1939. Prior to the onset of hostilities in September 1939 282,000 Jews had emigrated from Germany and 117,000 from Austria of which 95,000 entered the U.S, 60,000 Palestine, 40,000 the United Kingdom, 75,000 Central and South America (primarily Argentina, Brazil, Chile and

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<sup>4</sup>*The Times*, July 6, 1938, 15.

<sup>5</sup>The Munich Agreement of 1938 that ceded the Sudetenland to Germany, the establishment of the Hlinka Autonomists, the pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic regime of Slovakia and the return of the Free City of Danzig to the Reich led to a significant worsening of the Central European refugee crisis.

Bolivia) and 18,000 to the port of Shanghai, China. By the end of 1939 202,000 Jews remained within Germany and 57,000 within Austria. Further emigration was blocked by order of the S.S. *Reichsfuehrer* Heinrich Himmler in October 1941.<sup>6</sup> Table 2 and 3 provides a detailed breakdown of the numbers and destinations of Jews who were able to flee Greater Germany.

**TABLE 2: Emigration of Jews from Austria and Germany  
April 1933-May 1939**

US	63,000
Palestine	55,000
UK	40,000
France	30,000
Argentina	25,000
Brazil	13,000
South Africa	5,500
Italy	5,000
Other European countries	25,000
Other South American countries	20,000
Far Eastern Countries	15,000
Other	8,000
Total	304,000

110,000 fled to neighboring countries only to fall under German control during the war. "Jews in Germany 05: Third Reich 1933-1939," *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971), vol. 7, col. 491, available from [http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/eu/D/EndJud\\_juden-in-Deutschland-05-3R-1933-1939-ENGL.html](http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/eu/D/EndJud_juden-in-Deutschland-05-3R-1933-1939-ENGL.html); Internet; accessed March 12, 2008.

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<sup>6</sup>"German-Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939," Holocaust Encyclopedia, available from <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005468>; Internet; accessed January 6, 2008.

**TABLE 3: Austrian Jewish Emigration, 1933-1945**

NO. OF AUSTRIAN JEWS	
<b>Europe</b>	69,390
United Kingdom	31,050
Switzerland	5,800
France	4,800
Czechoslovakia	4,100
<b>North America</b>	29,942
United States	29,860
<b>Palestine</b>	15,200
<b>Asia</b>	7,190
Shanghai	6,220
<b>South America</b>	6,845
Argentina	1,690
Bolivia	940
<b>Africa</b>	1,125
South Africa	332
<b>Australia</b>	1,050

Jonny Moser, *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs 1938-1945*, DÖW, Vienna, 1999, in “The Austrian Jewish Community before the *Anschluss*,” Claims Conference The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

Consequently, on March 25, 1938, the U.S. State Department issued a press release announcing that the President and the American Government had recognized the “urgency” of the refugee crisis (ninety percent of real and potential refugees were Jews; remainder were primarily non-Aryan Christians or political dissidents) and sought to establish a “special committee” of European and Western Hemisphere nations, including New Zealand and Australia, that would meet in Europe with the goal of “facilitating the [orderly] emigration from Austria, and presumably from Germany, of political refugees.” Invitations were to be limited to those nations that could be categorized as “receiving States,” i.e., those countries that had already received or could potentially accept forced emigrants. Special emphasis was placed on the countries of Latin America which, it was



anticipated (and which proved to be a wrong assumption), could be coerced into accepting European Jewish refugees. The British Dominions and Colonies were also regarded as likely sites of resettlement.<sup>7</sup> Following Secretary of State Cordell Hull's advice Germany was not invited as Hull felt that it was improper to "negotiate with the felon about his misdeeds."<sup>8</sup>

It was hoped that a form of international passport would be granted to these stateless refugees along with a *permis de sejour* (residence permit) and *permis de travail* (work permit).<sup>9</sup> Officially, the Conference was to deal with all refugees coming from Germany and Austria but it was blatantly clear that the vast majority would be Jewish. The United States Government had not communicated diplomatically with the German Government (nor the League of Nations or High Commissioner for Refugees from

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<sup>7</sup>It was assumed by the American and European planners of the Evian Conference that the readiness of Latin American countries to receive immigrants during earlier periods of migration would translate into an acquiescence to accept Jewish refugees, especially in Argentina and Brazil. However, it was clear that the Jewishness of the potential émigrés would play a critical role in opening (or closing) the doors to immigration. A high level Brazilian official observed that "all the South American Republics made it clear at Evian that they were repulsed by Jewish immigration [and would never] receive these subversive elements who bring social disorder." Others warned that such charity would lead members of the domestic German minorities into the ranks of an enemy fifth column threatening national security. Brazil was viewed as the Latin American nation with the greatest potential for receiving refugees and was specifically "targeted." However, the existence of domestic pro-National Socialist or anti-refugee groups was ignored by the U.S. State Department. It was believed that the "similarity of outlook and traditional close collaboration" between the two large Western Hemispheric states would bridge such gaps and gain Brazilian cooperation. Jeff Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 112, 191-192, 199

<sup>8</sup>Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 27, 32. Ultimately, the Latin American countries introduced or changed existing laws to severely limit or bar completely Jewish immigration. Myron Taylor to Cordell Hull, August 5, 1938, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1938, vol. 1, 760.

<sup>9</sup>*The Times*, July 6, 1938, 15.

Germany) regarding aid to refugees and it became apparent that the Reich authorities first became aware of the Conference planning following the Hull announcement.<sup>10</sup>

The terms of the American invitation set the hypocritical tone for conference, provided an official basis for inaction and helped to guarantee its failure:

**UNITED STATES PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE  
ON REFUGEES:**

The government has become so impressed with the urgency of the problem of political refugees that it has inquired of a number of governments in Europe and in this hemisphere whether they would be willing to cooperate in setting up a special committee for the purpose of facilitating the emigration from Austria, and presumably from Germany, of political refugees. Our idea is that whereas such representatives would be designated by the governments concerned, any financing of the emergency emigration referred to would be undertaken by private organizations with the respective countries. Furthermore, it should be understood that no country would be expected or asked to receive a greater number of immigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation... It has been prompted to make its proposal because of the urgency of the problem with which the world is faced and the necessity of speedy cooperative effort under governmental supervision if widespread human suffering is to be averted.<sup>11</sup>

It appeared that the plan had been promoted by the President without prior consultations with foreign governments and without formulation of specific goals and proposals. It followed upon the heels of earlier refugee organizations which had a limited degree of success such as the Nansen International Office for Refugees (established by the League of Nations in 1931 and scheduled to be closed in 1938) and the Migration Bureau of the International Labor Office. The High Commission for Refugees Coming from Germany was launched on October 11, 1933 by the League Secretariat to provide for the political and legal protection of forced refugees. It was accountable to the fifteen

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<sup>10</sup>*The Deseret Times*, July 1, 1938, 36.

<sup>11</sup>Department of State, *Press Releases*, XVIII, March 26, 1938.

nations Governing Body under the leadership of the American, James Grover McDonald (October 1933-December 1935) and his successor, Major General Sir Neill Malcolm.<sup>12</sup>

More than one million Russian refugees had sought shelter in European countries following the November Revolution of 1917, the Russian Civil War and the famine of 1921. This led the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to demand that the League of Nations provide relief to these now stateless refugees. The ICRC President, Gustave Ador, noted that this particular group of émigrés lacked “legal protection,” clearly delineated “legal status” or “any legal means of subsistence.” Therefore, an “obligation of international justice” necessitated the appointment of a High Commissioner for Russian Refugees.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the League named Fridtjof Nansen as the first High Commissioner for Russian Refugees. He introduced a form of passport that officially recognized these migrants who were granted the right to a twelve month period of foreign travel. This system was later expanded to include Turkish, Armenian

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<sup>12</sup>The League Assembly meeting of September 30, 1938 decided to replace the Nansen Office and the High Commission for Refugees from Germany with a new organization, the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees under the Protection of the League of Nations, headed by Sir Herbert Emerson (commencing on January 1, 1939). Emerson would later assume the directorship of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees following the resignation of George Rublee (who had been chosen by the Intergovernmental Committee to negotiate with Germany and nations of potential refuge). McDonald had been the president of the Foreign Policy Association and a professor of political science and history. As High Commissioner he dealt with the issues of passports, travel and identification documentation and permits granting the right of residence and work. He also sought sites of permanent resettlement abroad aided by less restrictive German policies on the transfer of capital and foreign exchange. After two years of ineffectual work, coupled with a paucity of support from the League, McDonald resigned on December 20, 1935. He called for the League and its constituent members to utilize their “moral authority” to persuade the German Government, for the sake of “humanity and of the principles of the public law of Europe,” to end its policies which created international “unrest and perplexity” by the forced emigration of Jews and other refugees. He argued that proactive action must be taken and “considerations of diplomatic correctness must yield to those of common humanity.” “League Aid Asked by McDonald to End Nazi Persecution,” *New York Times*, December 30, 1935, 1, 12.

<sup>13</sup>Gustave Ador to the League of Nations, “The Question of Russian Refugees, League of Nations *Official Journal*, Annex 2, 1921 (February 20, 1921): 228.

and Chaldean refugees and by 1924 the documents were accepted by more than fifty governments.<sup>14</sup>

The *Commission centrale pour l'étude de la condition des réfugiés russes et arméniens* attempted to codify the rights of these refugees through international agreements but it was not until 1928 that the “Arrangement on Russian and Armenian Refugees” was adopted. This document allowed nations to grant non-statutory consent conceding the refugees the right to work, access to the judicial system and protection from deportation.<sup>15</sup> The 1933 Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees expanded the terms and scope of the 1928 agreement to include social welfare, education, and labor conditions.<sup>16</sup>

The Great Depression, with its mass unemployment among native workers, created domestic hostility towards foreign laborers. Consequently, the host nations adopted policies of restriction, limitation of privileges and *refoulement*.<sup>17</sup> Critically, the

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<sup>14</sup>“Circular Letter from the League of Nations Secretary-General August 14, 1928, *Official Journal* (1929): 323. The White Russians fleeing the Soviet takeover were granted by the League of Nations a special form of papers: the Nansen passport, named after Fridtjof Nansen. Nansen was appointed League High Commissioner for Refugees in 1922. This passport was granted to other stateless refugees and was recognized by 52 nations. Approximately 450,000 had been granted.

<sup>15</sup>James Hathaway, *The Rights of Refugees under International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 86.

<sup>16</sup>Article 3 of the Convention pledged each signatory power “not to remove or keep from its territory by application of police measures, such as expulsion or non-admittance at the frontier (*refoulement*), refugees who have been authorized to reside there regularly,” unless they represented a threat to “national security or public order.” Refugees must not be denied entry “at the frontier of their countries of origin.” The “Contracting Parties” retained the right to utilize necessary “internal measures” for those refugees “expelled for reasons of national security or public order [who] are unable to leave its territory” or lack the necessary papers or official permission to relocate in another country. Nine nations, including the United Kingdom and France ratified the agreement but Britain disavowed the right to deny entry at the border. Gilbert Jaeger, “On the History of the International Protection of Refugees,” *International Review of the Red Cross* (IRRC) 83, no. 843 (September 2001): 727-736.

<sup>17</sup>Hathaway. *The Rights of Refugees*, 88.

1933 Convention on Refugees restricted legal safeguards to earlier groups and individuals who had already been subsumed under the rubric of “refugee.” The flight of German Jews and non-Aryans from Hitler’s Germany, in essence, created a new class of *stateless* refugees who were devoid of legal status and protections, contradicting Nansen’s 1926 belief that the international refugee problem would remain limited in scope and soluble by international agreement.<sup>18</sup> By 1933 the willingness of host nations to accept additional refugees became increasingly constrained by domestic economic and political conditions as well as rising nationalism.<sup>19</sup> The League, in a half-hearted attempt to solve this new refugee crisis, created the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany under the chairmanship of James G. McDonald in October 1933 but, in contrast to the support offered to the Nansen Office High Commissioner for Russian Refugees, all funding for the new establishment had to be derived from private sources as a means of placating German hostility towards the League and its activities.<sup>20</sup>

The checkered past of prior attempts at international cooperation for the resettlement of refugees led Franklin Roosevelt to believe that an organization separate and distinct from the League of Nations was necessary if a solution to the problem of German refugees was to be found. The High Commission for Refugees Coming from Germany encountered much resistance and many obstacles to the facilitation of immigration and did not achieve any meaningful results. The primary tasks of the High Commissioners were to facilitate and coordinate the resettlement of stateless refugees and

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<sup>18</sup>Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 109.

<sup>19</sup>Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 139.

<sup>20</sup>Louise Wilhelmine Holbom, Philip Chartrand and Rita Chartrand, *Refugees: A Problem of Our Time*, vol. 1 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975), 14.

to conduct negotiations with foreign governments to provide temporary or permanent havens.

Although James G. McDonald was named to this position by the League his salary and expenses were funded by non-governmental private Jewish organizations. Secretary-General Joseph Avenol informed McDonald that the initial 25,000 Swiss francs provided by the League to the High Commission was to be regarded merely as a loan to fund and establish operations that would have to be repaid within one year.<sup>21</sup> In addition, McDonald would report directly to a special Governing Body composed of nations that were deemed likely to accept refugees rather than to the League Assembly as a whole.<sup>22</sup> With the exceptions of French Senator Henry Bérenger, the American Joseph Chamberlain and the British Sir Robert Cecil the Governing Board was composed of low level professional diplomats assigned to the League in Geneva, who, according to Norman Bentwich, “knew little, cared little, and wanted to do as little as possible about the cause.”<sup>23</sup> The democratic European powers had, by this time, concluded that oversaturation mandated resettlement beyond the borders of Europe, funded by private sources. Bérenger countered Chamberlain’s justification of the restrictive quota system of the United States by noting that “hard times were universal, so was the problem...Whereas, France was caring for nearly half the refugees, the United

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<sup>21</sup>Claudena M. Skran, "Profiles of the First Two Commissioners" *Journal of Refugee Studies* 1, no. 3/4 (1988): 277-95.

<sup>22</sup>Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 216; Barbara McDonald Stewart, *United States Government Policy on Refugees from Nazism, 1933-1940* (NY: Garland Publishing, 1962), 99.

<sup>23</sup>Norman Bentwich, *My 77 Years: An Account of My Life and Times, 1883-1960* (London: Routledge, 1962), 131.

States...had scarcely taken any.”<sup>24</sup> The Roosevelt Administration had announced, in March 1938, the consolidation of the annual German and Austrian immigration quota but would not liberalize its policies to admit larger numbers; a stance that would resonate throughout the Evian Conference.

Consequently, the Governing Board accomplished very little prompting McDonald to resign his position during December 1935. His resignation letter severely criticized the League for its “diplomatic correctness” that prevented the rescue of Jews who faced “demoralization and exile.” “Common humanity,” he believed, expressed through the actions of the League Assembly, member states and global public opinion would “avert the existing and impending tragedies.” The separation of the High Commission from the body of the League had fatally weakened the effectiveness of his office.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the catastrophic conditions facing the refugees from Germany mandated “reconsideration by the League...of the entire situation...”<sup>26</sup> He acknowledged that the League and private relief organizations could “only mitigate a problem of growing gravity and complexity.” Since European nations would only accept limited numbers of stateless refugees the solution of the problem could only be “tackled at its

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<sup>24</sup>Stewart, *United States Government Policy*, 120.

<sup>25</sup>Norman Bentwich, *The Refugees from Germany*, in S. Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference on the Refugee Question,” *Year Book XIII of the Leo Baeck Institute* (London: 1968), 268; “Letter of Resignation of James G. McDonald” December 27, 1935 C1538 20A-80732-22873, ix, League of Nations Archives cited in Richard Breitman, Barbara McDonald Steward and Severin Hochberg, *Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald 1935-1945* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 102. Other entities such as the Nansen Office of the League of Nations and the Migration Bureau of the International Labor League also encountered similar difficulties and lack of success.

<sup>26</sup>James G. McDonald, *The German Refugees and the League of Nations* (London: Friends of Europe, 1936), 5-12.

source [meaning Germany] if disaster [was] to be avoided.”<sup>27</sup> It was necessary for the Reich, McDonald argued, to demonstrate “courage and generosity” by allowing their “non-Aryans” to maintain a “tolerable” existence while awaiting emigration. In addition, Germany must provide the financial means (i.e., the release of sufficient personal assets) to facilitate such a population transfer. Furthermore, the potential countries of resettlement should not “fear” calling upon Germany for a greater degree of cooperation in resolving the refugee problem by issuing a “general appeal” that stems from “deep springs of pity” for the “sufferers” of persecution and the “indignation that our common humanity should be so wronged.”<sup>28</sup>

McDonald’s departure from the High Commission generated positive responses from the international press. The *Washington Post* described his action as “one of the most powerful indictments of the Nazi regime of terrorism yet given to the outside world.” The *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that the persecution of Jews was “nobody’s legal... [or] military business” but the “uncivilized” actions of Germany made it the “moral business of civilization.” The *Nation* observed that McDonald “resigned with a bang [with] reverberations...still sounding in every corner of the world with results that have only begun to be felt” and represented the “most effective act” of his official tenure. “His mission was an honorable failure.” The *Manchester Guardian* ominously warned, however, that “for the Jews the Dark Ages have returned.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>“Letter of Resignation of James G. McDonald,” December 27, 1935, ix cited in Harriet Davis, *Pioneers in World Order: An American Appraisal of the League of Nations* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1944), 228.

<sup>28</sup>“Britain is Aroused by McDonald Plea,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1935, 7.

<sup>29</sup>Breitman et al, *Refugees and Rescue*, 103-104. *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Manchester Guardian* (December 31, 1935); *The Nation* (January 15, 1935).



McDonald's relinquishment of his office "both shocked the League and shamed it into continuing the Nansen tradition of humanitarian assistance."<sup>30</sup> The League membership was divided between those who wanted to dissolve the Nansen Office and end its refugee efforts and those who sought the creation of a new refugee body. Many States endeavored to avoid any action that would "prevent the eventual return of Germany to the League" or provoke the fears of the Soviet Regime that the League was planning to continue the Nansen Office (which had provided passports for White Russians) despite its earlier decision to dissolve this organization in December 1938.<sup>31</sup>

A Committee of Experts was established to examine the refugee problem as a whole and concluded that any project to promote mass resettlement of stateless migrants required cooperation between nations who belonged to or remained outside of the League. The Committee called for the merging of the Nansen Office and the High Commission for Refugees from Germany and the granting of a wider scope of authority to the High Commissioner. In addition, the Committee believed nations needed to share the financial, political, legal and bureaucratic responsibilities among themselves coupled with a greater degree of cooperation with private organizations. However, the recommendations of the Committee of Experts were ignored. Instead, the activities of the High Commissioner were to be limited "to seeking the assistance of Governments" to resolve issues regarding the "legal status of refugees." Changes to national immigration

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<sup>30</sup>Skran, "Profiles," 292-293.

<sup>31</sup>*Observations Présentées par Sir Horace Rumbold (annexe) - Comité Pour L'Assistance Internationale aux Réfugiés. Procès-Verbal (C.A.I.R./P.V.)*, December 18, 1935, League of Nations Archives R5633/21365/20038 cited in Philip Orchard, "A Right to Leave: Refugees; States, and International Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2008), 191.

quotas were to be avoided and the internal affairs of States continued to be regarded as sacrosanct. Direct assistance to the involuntary exiles was to remain solely within the “province of the private organizations.”<sup>32</sup> The United Kingdom favored an international solution to the refugee crisis but disavowed the acceptance of any further obligations for the support and resettlement of refugees.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the functions of the High Commission were to be restricted to “existing, not...potential refugees.” Otherwise, greater numbers of Jews would be emboldened to leave Germany for other lands.<sup>34</sup>

Sir Neill Malcolm proved to be less intimately involved with refugee matters than had been his predecessor, McDonald. He was primarily concerned with issues of “legal and political protection, on which he...effectively intervened with governments.”<sup>35</sup> Norman Bentwich, the Secretary of the Liaison Committee between private organizations and the High Commission, was unimpressed with Malcolm’s abilities and accomplishments. The High Commissioner was “devoid of initiatives and ideas [thinking] exclusively in terms of formalities and meetings.” His reports to the League were a “sad confession of inactivity.”<sup>36</sup> He did personally intervene, however, in the rescue of approximately five thousand refugees by 1938.<sup>37</sup> Sir Neill declined financial

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<sup>32</sup>Sir Neill Malcolm, *Refugees Coming From Germany: Report submitted to the Seventeenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations*, A.19.1936.XII. September 1, 1936 cited in E. Reut-Nicolussi et al, *Recueil des cours*, vol. 73 (The Hague, The Netherlands: *Académie de Droit International de la Haye*, 1948), 39.

<sup>33</sup> Orchard, “A Right to Leave,” 191.

<sup>34</sup>British Foreign Office Memorandum on Report of Committee on International Assistance to Refugees. January 16, 1938, PRO FO 371 W445-172-98 cited in Orchard, “A Right to Leave,” 192.

<sup>35</sup>Simpson, *Refugee Problem*, 216-218.

<sup>36</sup>Stewart, *United States Government Policy*, 232.

<sup>37</sup> Orchard, “The Right to Leave,” 193.

support from private parties and, although he asked for advice from relief organizations (via the Liaison Committee), he was wont to ignore their recommendations.<sup>38</sup> The League granted a restricted number of Nansen passports to German refugees, as outlined in the non-binding Provisional Agreement of 1936 (between the U.K., France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway and Denmark), but the Nansen Office itself would not cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner in the handling and processing of these travel documents.<sup>39</sup>

The League ultimately decided to combine the Nansen Office and the High Commission in 1938. Although the United Kingdom now favored the consolidation of the two organizations the Home Office was wary of the new entity pursuing an “idealistic and adventurous policy” that could bring undue pressure upon “countries of temporary refuge.”<sup>40</sup> The Soviet Union dropped its opposition to the plan provided the organization would operate on a temporary basis separate from the League bureaucracy and any reference to Nansen in its title would be avoided.<sup>41</sup> The focus of the newly created High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees would remain centered upon the legal and political safeguards offered to the refugees. The facilitation of emigration and

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<sup>38</sup>Stewart, *United States Government Policy*, 231-232,

<sup>39</sup>John George Stoessinger, *The Refugee and the World Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 37-38

<sup>40</sup>Cooper to Hayter, January 11, 1938, PRO FO 371/22525, W527/104/98 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 81.

<sup>41</sup> Orchard, “A Right to Leave,” 194.

permanent resettlement necessitated some degree of cooperation between governments and private relief organizations.<sup>42</sup>

The retiring Governor of the Indian province of Punjab, Sir Herbert Emerson, was appointed as the new High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany and, like McDonald and Malcolm, was limited in his authority and powers.<sup>43</sup> The League refused to provide any financial or legal support and he was barred from entering into any agreement regarding refugees while acting as the representative of the League of Nations.<sup>44</sup> The primary aim of the League was to streamline the emigration process, improve and simplify cooperation between relief organizations and governments and encourage resettlement of stateless refugees. Emerson was viewed by the British Foreign Office as a dedicated bureaucrat who would focus on the machinery of immigration and not seek to “forge” his own refugee policies.<sup>45</sup>

The U.S. State Department agreed to the appointment of Dr. Joseph Chamberlain, a protégé of McDonald, to be the American representative on the new High Commission but he would not receive any direct financial support from the Department.<sup>46</sup> However, it

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Emerson became Director of the Intergovernmental Committee upon George Rublee’s resignation in February 1939 and remained in this position until the Committee’s dissolution on June 30, 1947.

<sup>44</sup>Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics: A Perilous Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 32.

<sup>45</sup>Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 166.

<sup>46</sup>Stewart, *United States Government Policy*, 116. Other individuals had been considered for this position as well, including Admiral Mark Bristol, who had been involved in the issue of the Armenian Genocide and refugees following the end of the Great War and the occupation of Constantinople. He declined this appointment as the State Department refused to pay for his traveling expenses. McDonald advised Cordell Hull on February 6, 1934, NARA 548.D 1/94: “...there is no provision under the laws for the issuance by the United States authorities of documents of Identity and Travel to aliens.” During the mid-portion of the 1920’s the State Department declared that “American Consular officers certainly cannot

was predictable that “there was no hope” that such a consolidation of refugee offices would result in any meaningful accomplishments. The League leadership was politically conservative and averse to risk taking. In addition, the potential countries of permanent refuge were limited in their willingness to admit involuntary exiles.<sup>47</sup> John George Stoessinger had observed that the League was a house “divided against itself,” with member states both supportive and opposed to international efforts at solving the refugee crisis.<sup>48</sup> Many members believed that their parochial interests would be threatened by any weakening or liberalization of their respective immigration policies and quotas.<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, the reluctant efforts of the League High Commission would be replaced by those of Roosevelt’s Evian Conference and its creation, the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees from Germany.

Pessimistic views soon arose regarding the likelihood of success of the upcoming refugee talks. Solomon Adler-Rudel commented on June 3, 1938 that the Evian Conference was a “total improvisation” due to the lack of a working agenda. Harold Ginsburg, a representative of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), was informed by

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be authorized to issue travel documents” to Armenians who had survived the Genocide but would accept Nansen Passports. Letter from the Acting Secretary of State to Drummond NARA 511.1 C1/7. The Department of State advised the League Secretary-General that the U.S would not become a signatory to the 1933 Refugee Convention, arguing that the “status of all persons coming to the United States of America is fully defined by existing legislation...” The State Department also opposed the issuance of Nansen-like travel documents for potential refugees still residing in their country of origin. Memorandum from John Farr Simmons, Visa Division, March 3, 1934. NARA, 548.D 1/100. McDonald, while High Commissioner, was informed by the Secretary of State that U.S. immigration policies were inflexible and application of the Likely to become a Public Charge clause (LPC) would block entry of the vast majority of German refugees unless they possessed sufficient monies. Hull to McDonald April 28, 1934, NARA D.1/127.

<sup>47</sup>Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 166.

<sup>48</sup>Stoessinger, *The Refugee*, 32-33.

<sup>49</sup>Loescher, *The UNHCR*, 29.

the American delegates to Evian during a June 27 meeting of the Council of Germany Jewry held in London, that the United States wanted the meeting itself to set the agenda and procedures. Ginsburg advised the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem that the conference would fail due to lack of adequate preparatory planning. Eliahu Dobkin, the director of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department, addressed the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem and echoed Ginsburg's sentiments. James G. McDonald, the head of the newly appointed President's Advisory Committee, was also ill-informed regarding the structure and functions of the meeting and was uncertain about the results to be expected from the Conference.<sup>50</sup>

The United States had hoped to hold the conference in Geneva, Switzerland but the Swiss, wary of offending Germany, loyal to the Geneva based League of Nations and also conscious of its own restrictive immigration policies, declined. The Swiss also feared that they would be called upon to host any permanent refugee committee created by the Evian Conference.<sup>51</sup> The French government, under Premier Léon Blum and the French Foreign Minister Joseph Paul Boncour, offered the "luxurious" Hotel Royal,

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<sup>50</sup>Adler-Rudel/Correspondence, 171, 240, Minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive meeting June 26, 1938, Adler-Rudel *Diplomatische Politische Korrespondenz* II, 240 cited in Shabtai Beit-Zvi, *Post-Uganda Zionism in the Crisis of the Holocaust*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: AAARGH Publishing House, 2004), 142. Dobkin (December 31, 1898-October 26, 1976) was a leading Zionist and signatory to the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Adler-Rudel was born in Czernowitz, Austria-Hungary (June 23, 1894-November 15, 1975) and worked as a social worker in Vienna and Berlin. He served as the executive secretary of the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* and on the executive board of the *Zionistische Vereinigung fuer Deutschland* from 1933-36 when he immigrated to the United Kingdom and later resettled in Israel in 1949. Fred Grubel, ed., *Catalog of the Archival Collections Leo Baeck Institute* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1990), 2.

<sup>51</sup>Michael Mashberg, "American Diplomacy and the Jewish Refugees, 1938-1939," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 15 (1974), 346; "Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland—Second World War "Switzerland and Refugees in the Nazi Era" (Bern: 1999), 41 available from [http://www.swissbankclaims.com/Documents/DOC\\_15\\_Bergier\\_Refugee.pdf](http://www.swissbankclaims.com/Documents/DOC_15_Bergier_Refugee.pdf); Internet; accessed June 19, 2010.

located in the spa town of Evian-Les-Bains, “the gayest resort town” lying on the French shore of Lake Geneva, as the conference site.<sup>52</sup> The locale was described as a “pretty place, quiet and old-fashioned; its waters and baths have a high repute; its hotels are among the best in France, and its summer climate is perfect... [I]ts greatest attraction is the enchanting country with which it is surrounded.”<sup>53</sup>

Secretary of State Cordell Hull stated, in his proposed agenda submitted to foreign governments and refugee organizations, that humanitarian concerns required “speedy cooperation if widespread suffering is to be averted.”<sup>54</sup> The two major provisions of the American invitation had, as noted earlier, specified that the cost of resettlement would be borne by “private organizations” and “no country would be expected or asked to receive a greater number of immigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation.”<sup>55</sup> The focus of the proposed Committee’s work would be the resettlement of the “most urgent cases” as allowed by the “regulations of the receiving countries...” Each government was expected to provide “strictly confidential”

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<sup>52</sup> “Non-League Body Favored by U.S. to Handle All Refugee Problems,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 6, 1938, 1. Joseph Paul-Boncour (August 4, 1873-March 28, 1972) served as Premier from December 18, 1932-January 28, 1933, the French Permanent Delegate to the League from 1932-1936 and as Foreign Minister in several cabinets including Leon Blum and Daladier. He later represented France at the San Francisco Conference on the United Nations and signed its Charter in 1945.

<sup>53</sup> Sir Frederick Treves, *The Lake of Geneva* (London: Cassell and Company, LTD, 1922), 88.

<sup>54</sup> The conference would be held between July 6-15, 1938 but needed to end prior to the state visit of the King and Queen of England to France; *Tampa Tribune*, March 25, 1938, 1, 9. Cordell Hull (October 2, 1871-July 23, 1955) was the longest serving Secretary of State (1933-1944) and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1945, acknowledging his efforts in the founding of the United Nations. He had served 11 terms in the House of Representatives 1907-1921 and 1923-1931).

<sup>55</sup> Department of State, *Press Releases*, XVIII, March 26, 1938. The financial resources of Jewish refugee relief organizations were already stretched to the limit by the time of the *Anschluss*. It has been estimated that \$50,000,000 had been expended between 1933-1938 for the support and maintenance of refugees. Thus, the pecuniary burden placed upon private non-governmental organizations created a major impediment to the success of any plan of resettlement adopted by the Evian Conference. Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 241.

information regarding its immigration policies and statutes as well as a “general statement” detailing the “number and type” of aliens it would accept. In addition, a mutually agreed upon “system of documentation” would be required for those migrants who lacked the “requisite documents.” Finally, a permanent organization was to be established “to formulate and to carry out, in cooperation with existing agencies, a long range program” that would lead to the resolution or the “alleviation of the [refugee] problem in the larger sense.” Success, however, of such a construction depended upon fruitful negotiations with the German Government.<sup>56</sup> The convening of such a meeting may have served an unspoken purpose, i.e., the expression of international sympathy for the persecuted Jews of Germany but, as will be demonstrated, such consideration did not translate into tangible and significant actions. The Committee ultimately defined the forced émigrés as “political refugees,” devoid of any specific religious or ethnic identity, who sought to leave or had already succeeded in departing the Reich.

Undersecretary of State Sumner Wells cautioned the President to remain cognizant of domestic restrictionist opinion and to avoid any representation that implied or overtly stated that the annual quota or immigration laws would be modified.<sup>57</sup> The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 marked the first American legislation that limited immigration into the United States and represented white opposition to the importation of cheap labor. The closure of the American frontier in 1890, coupled with increasing mechanization and industrialization, reduced the need and demand for foreign labor. Congress in 1891 established the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration and

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<sup>56</sup> *FRUS*, 1938, vol. 1, 748.

<sup>57</sup> Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 29.



enacted a Federal program of comprehensive immigration reform that barred the entry of certain categories of aliens and provided for the deportation of those who had entered the nation illegally. The Immigration Act of 1917 and its amendments created the Asiatic Barred Zone encompassing most of the Pacific islands and East Asia from which no immigrants would be allowed entry. Literacy tests were adopted and émigrés could be excluded on the basis of economic, mental, physical and moral standards or on the basis of political ideologies. The 1921 Emergency Quota or National Origins Act limited immigration to three percent of a particular nationality based on the 1910 census or approximately 375,000 per year. This Act was driven by nativist fears of Eastern and Southern European immigrants and of the “Red Scare” (the importation of Bolshevism).<sup>58</sup> The Johnson-Reed or National Origins Act of 1924 adjusted the quota to two percent of a nationality based on the 1890 U.S census. Initially 164,000 foreigners would be admitted per year but by 1927 annual immigration would be reduced to 150,000 per year with the greatest percentage allocated to the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and Germany. Limitations were not placed on Canada or Latin American but all Asians were denied entry and restrictions were placed on Southern and Eastern Europeans and Russians.

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<sup>58</sup>James T. Kimer, “Landmarks in U.S. Immigration Policy” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39, no. 1 (July/August 2005), 34. Eugenists, who believed in a biological racial hierarchy, helped formulate the 1921 Act. They believed that “severe restriction of immigration [was] essential to prevent the deterioration of American civilization....The ‘melting pot’ theory [was] a complete fallacy...because it suggest[ed] that impurities and baser qualities [were] eliminated by the intermingling of races, whereas they are likely to be increased.” “Eugenists Dread Tainted Aliens,” *New York Times*, September 25, 1921, 1. For more information regarding this topic see the works of Charles B. Davenport, Director of the Eugenics Record Office, Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, Francis Galton and Madison Grant. See also, Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (NY: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003).

Preference and admission outside of the annual quota was granted to the parents, spouse and children of American citizens.<sup>59</sup>

Table 4 describes the number of foreign born residing within the U.S. as a percentage of total population from the mid-Nineteenth to mid-Twentieth Centuries and Table 5 lists the number of total immigrants during the a similar time frame. The latter highlights the significant drop in aliens admitted during the critical years of the 1930s and 1940.

**TABLE 4: Foreign Born in the United States, 1850-1940**

Year	Number (millions)	Percentage
1850	2.2	9.7
1860	4.1	13.2
1870	5.6	14.0
1880	6.7	13.3
1890	9.2	14.7
1900	10.4	13.6
1910	13.6	14.7
1920	14.0	13.2
1930	14.3	11.6
1940	11.7	8.9
1950	10.4	6.9

Roger Daniels. *Guarding the Golden Door*, 5.

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<sup>59</sup> Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (NY: Hill and Wang, 2004), 49-57.

**TABLE 5: Immigration 1851-1950**

Years (millions)	Numbers
1851-60	2.6
1861-70	2.3
1871-80	2.8
1881-90	5.2
1891-00	3.7
1901-10	8.8
1911-20	5.7
1921-30	4.1
1931-40	0.5
1941-50	1.0

Ibid.

The Department of Labor under Frances Perkins controlled the processes of immigration and naturalization until 1940. She was the sole member of the Cabinet calling for a more tolerant immigration policy. Perkins argued that liberalization of the quota system was “consistent with American traditions and policies to grant free entry to refugees.”<sup>60</sup> She advocated for a Presidential Executive Order on April 18, 1933 that would suspend the Likely to become a Public Charge clause of the 1924 Immigration Act. This Hoover era provision was strictly interpreted and enforced by overseas U.S Consuls creating an under filling of the annual German and Austrian quotas.<sup>61</sup> Perkin’s efforts were bolstered by the finding of Circuit Court Judge Julian W. Mack, an immigration authority and a member of the American Jewish Congress, that Section 21 of the Immigration Act of 1917 allowed the posting of a financial bond guaranteeing that an

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<sup>60</sup> Alan M. Kraut, Richard Breitman, and Thomas W. Imhoof, “The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* (Spring 1984): 9. Perkins was the first woman appointed to a Presidential cabinet and was named Secretary of Labor in 1933.

<sup>61</sup> Bat-Ami Zucker, “Frances Perkins and the German-Jewish Refugee, 1933-1940,” *American Jewish History* 89, no. 1 (2001): 38.

immigrant would not end up on the dole.<sup>62</sup> This approach was opposed by Max Kohler, an immigration consultant to the American Jewish Committee, who asserted that if any German Jewish refugees became public charges the consequences would “queer all our efforts.”<sup>63</sup>

The State Department also objected to this policy but a ruling by the Attorney General Homer Cummings allowed its implementation.<sup>64</sup> Officials in the State Department Visa Division warned that the arrival of ships in New York Harbor “laden with Jewish immigrants” would result in a communal backlash against Foggy Bottom and another cautioned that easing the entry of German refugees would result in the United States becoming “flood[ed]” with Jews.<sup>65</sup> Following the *Anschluss* Perkins called for a more liberal approach to the granting of visitors’ visas in cases where it was clear that the foreigner could not return to Germany. The State Department responded that such a policy would lead to the “complete breakdown” of established immigration protocol. The annual “quota restriction would become a farce” with stateless refugees acquiring “permanent admission...without immigration visas and without quota restrictions.”<sup>66</sup>

Sumner Welles also believed that the stature and importance of an international conference was reflected by the rank of its attendees rather than a planned agenda.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>63</sup> Max Kohler to Eugene S. Benjamin, HIAS, December 12, 1933, Cecilia Razovsky Papers, Box 1, AJHS. Ibid., 40.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>65</sup> Fletcher to Hodgdon, January 8, 1934, 150/01 2168, NA. Ibid., 44.

<sup>66</sup> Unknown author, U.S. State Department, Visa Division, “Does the President Have Authority to Abolish or Waive the Requirement of Passports and Visas in the Case of German Religious, Racial or Political Refugees?” October 24, 1938, 811.111 Regulations/2176 ½, NA. Ibid., 54. Perkins was the first woman appointed to a Presidential cabinet and was named Secretary of Labor in 1933.

Consequently, he recommended that Roosevelt appoint Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Welles, Assistant Secretary of State George Messersmith, and Secretary of Commerce Frances Perkins to represent the United States at the international conference.

Instead of following Welles' counsel FDR selected 64 year old Myron C. Taylor, the former CEO of U.S. Steel, to lead the delegation assisted by State Department Divisional Assistant and disarmament expert Robert Pell and Foreign Service Officer, Class III George Brandt who were familiar with immigration issues. Taylor was granted the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and was elected by the Conference's delegations to the chairmanship of the meeting.<sup>67</sup>

Some representatives interpreted the appointment of Taylor, rather than a professional diplomat, as a sign that the American Government lacked seriousness about the Conference and its work. It was reported that the attitude of the United States was “one of helpfulness rather than direction.” Officials were quoted as saying America would facilitate the formulation of planning but did “not intend to be the final judges of whatever may be done”; an attitude that would elicit some “hesitation” in accepting the French proposal that Taylor chair the conference. Taylor was apparently disinclined to take the position and some American officials “hoped ‘it would not happen.’”<sup>68</sup>

The President did accept Welles' (and Feis') recommendation regarding the creation of a consultative body, the Presidential Advisory Committee on Political

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<sup>67</sup> Feingold *Politics of Rescue*, 28.

<sup>68</sup> *Amsterdam Evening and Daily Democrat*, July 6, 1938, 1.

Refugees (PACPR).<sup>69</sup> Although inclusive of a number of Jewish leaders the composition of the membership embraced many who lacked a “particular commitment to the Jewish cause.”<sup>70</sup> Hamilton Fish Armstrong, who had succeeded McDonald to the presidency of the Foreign Policy Association, declined the chairmanship of the PACPR citing his greater interest and commitment to “international relations than relief or philanthropy as such.”<sup>71</sup>

George Strausser Messersmith addressed the committee during its first full session on May 16, 1938 and warned its members not to expect any concrete results from either the Evian Conference or its creation, the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees from Germany. He presented his confidential sentiments that although humanitarian rhetoric would be expressed the invited delegations and their respective governments were not “approaching the problem with enthusiasm and very few with the disposition to make sacrifices.” Their decision to attend the conference was motivated in large part by a desire to avoid appearing as a bystander to Jewish persecution. Therefore, it was to be expected that the attendees would merely be offering “lip service” to the idea of rescue coupled with “unwillingness” to liberalize their respective immigration policies. Likewise, the range of actions open to the United States was severely constrained by American immigration law and the quota system. Messersmith hoped that the “liberal

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<sup>69</sup>This advisory panel was constituted by Henry Morgenthau, Bernard Baruch, Dr. Stephen S. Boise, Rabbis Stephen Wise, Hamilton Fish Armstrong (editor of *Foreign Affairs*), Paul Baerwald (Chairman of the American Joint Distribution Committee), the Rev. Samuel Calvert, Joseph P. Chamberlain, Basil Harris, Louis Kennedy, the Most Reverend Joseph F. Rummel, James M. Speers and James G. McDonald who would serve as chairman.

<sup>70</sup> David Clay Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors: The Story of One Family Abandoned to the Holocaust* (NY: Basic Books, 2003), 71.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

attitude” the American Government had displayed towards granting visas (combining and more completely filling the annual German and Austrian quotas) and the resettlement of refugees on U.S. soil would “serve as an example and incentive” to motivate other nations to follow a similar path.<sup>72</sup>

Various motives have been offered to explain the presidential decision to convene the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees, also known as the Evian Conference. FDR asked his Cabinet during a meeting on March 18: “America was a place of refuge for so many fine Germans in the period of 1848. Why couldn’t we offer them again a place of refuge at this time?”<sup>73</sup> The President would later assert that America had long served as the “traditional haven of refugee” for those facing persecution in foreign lands. Therefore, he believed, it was both appropriate and proper for the Administration to resume its “traditional role and take the lead in calling and conducting the Evian meeting.”<sup>74</sup> However, Roosevelt knew that the Depression had worsened during 1937-38 with higher levels of unemployment, estimated by the American Federation of Labor in 1938 to have reached a level of 11 million or roughly twenty percent of the available workforce. A 1938 Roper Poll revealed that only 4.9% favored liberalization of the annual quotas, 18.2% called for removal of all limits on

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 71-72. Messersmith had been appointed Consul-General in Berlin in 1930 but had been serving in the Foreign Service since 1914.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>74</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt 1938*. vol. 7, “The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism” (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 170.

admission and 67.4% of respondents called for an end to immigration entirely. Twenty percent of American Jews, during July 1938, also favored a strict immigration policy.<sup>75</sup>

Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes recorded in diary that during the March 18 Cabinet meeting the President suggested the Administration should “make it as easy as possible for political refugees” to enter the country while postponing any “future determination” as to whether or not the émigrés could remain under the existing quota restrictions. Ickes believed that the provision of refuge, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, represented a “fine gesture” and he anticipated that the émigrés would become a “fine class of citizen,” similar to those who entered following the Revolution of 1848. The Vice President doubted that Congress would allow any amendments to the immigration laws and believed that if a “secret” ballot were held, the Legislature would ban all immigration.<sup>76</sup>

Although the United States would take the initiative in the call and management of the Evian Conference FDR was reluctant to have America assume *the* leadership role and face the risk of having to commit the nation to receive the bulk of the stateless refugees. Echoing his March 1933 Inaugural Address the President repeated that the “policy of the Good Neighbor...can never be merely unilateral” but must be a part of a larger “bilateral [and] multilateral policy” in which any actions on the part of the United States must be met with “certain fundamental reciprocal obligations.”<sup>77</sup> Unless it was

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<sup>75</sup>Large, *And the World Closed its Doors*, 70.

<sup>76</sup>*Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*, March 19, 1938, II, 342-343 cited in Breitman, *Refugees and Refuge*, 125.

<sup>77</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers*, 563-566. “Presidential Address in New York,” June 30, 1938. FDR expanded on this theme of the “Good Neighbor Policy” in a message to Latin America: “Friendship among Nations, as among individuals, calls for constructive efforts to muster the forces of



clearly demonstrated to the American public that the “good neighbor policy [was] responded to wholeheartedly by our neighbors,” warned Under-Secretary of State Welles, it would be doubtful that the nation would “favor indefinitely a continuation...of any policy which prove[d] to be one-sided.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, it could be argued that the mere convocation of an international committee to deal with a humanitarian crisis met America’s moral obligation. The burden would clearly have to be shared on a global basis.

Roosevelt, according to Barbara McDonald Stewart, argued that the German refugee crisis meant that “America could never return to the passive role she had been playing.”<sup>79</sup> Sidney Feingold believed that FDR was influenced by charitable ideals, especially for those “prominent refugees whose caliber impressed him and whose personal misfortunes aroused his sympathy.”<sup>80</sup> This, of course, was more of a rhetorical question, since Roosevelt was well aware of the difficulties and risks inherent in any attempt to manipulate U.S. immigration laws.

Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, who had promoted the idea of the conference to the President and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, envisaged the meeting as an opportunity “to get out in front” of liberal opinion, especially from such influential

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humanity in order that an atmosphere of close understanding and cooperation may be cultivated. It involves mutual obligations and responsibilities, for it only by sympathetic respect for the rights of others and a scrupulous fulfillment of the corresponding obligations by each member of the community that a true fraternity can be maintained.” “Address before the Pan American Union”, April 12, 1933 available from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/7-2-188/188-01.html> ; Internet; accessed August 24, 2010.

<sup>78</sup>Welles Address to the *Herald-Tribune* Forum, October 26, 1938, *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. 7, 411-413.

<sup>79</sup>Stewart. *United States Policy*, 267.

<sup>80</sup>Feingold, *Politics*, 23.

columnists as Dorothy Thompson and “certain Congressmen with metropolitan constituencies” and attempt to “guide the pressure [to increase Jewish immigration], to seize the [diplomatic and political] initiative before pressure built and to spread responsibility among the thirty two nations [which attended the conference] instead of us.” He was also concerned about a potential backlash from restrictionist forces opposed to any alteration in the immigration laws; a concern that was reflected in the terms of the Evian invitation.<sup>81</sup> Welles may have been further motivated by humanitarian concerns after receiving a letter from Samuel Rosenman, the Jewish speechwriter of FDR, who was seeking aid for some German-Jewish friends. Welles expressed to a State Department subordinate, George Messersmith, on March 12, 1938, that it was “shocking” that immigration restrictions limited the granting of entry visas to German Jewish refugees “solely because under present German law they have been convicted of *Rassenschande* [racial shame]. We should...correct this injustice.”<sup>82</sup> Messersmith observed in a memorandum sent to Hull and Welles that “in spite of the difficulties involved in doing anything constructive” for involuntary refugees the potential for positive action remained “good.” Mass resettlement could only be accomplished over a prolonged period of time and would require the “cooperative action” of a host of

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<sup>81</sup> National Archives 840.48 Division of European Affairs, Memorandum on Refugee Problems, attached to the Division of American Republics, memo of November 18, 1938 cited in Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many* (NY: Random House, 1983), 16. Welles was the official of the State Department closest to FDR. Dwork and Jan Pelt suggested Roosevelt was the initiator of the Evian Conference and that Dorothy Thompsons’ article had “pricked the conscience” of the President who, soon after reading a preliminary version of Thompson’s article, publically announced his plan to call for an international refugee conference. Dwork and Jan Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 98.

<sup>82</sup> Memo from Sumner Welles to George Messersmith, March 12, 1938, Sumner Welles Papers in Benjamin Welles, *Sumner Welles: FDR’s Global Strategist A Biography* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1977), 220.

countries that would be facilitated by the convening of such an international refugee conference.<sup>83</sup>

Roosevelt could adopt the visage of “international humanitarianism” while avoiding any changes to the annual quota or immigration laws and preserve the political support of those who opposed the admission of stateless émigrés.<sup>84</sup> Gallup and other polls from June 1936 to January 1938 demonstrated that approximately sixty five percent of Americans were against Roosevelt seeking a third term; highlighting the potential political risks for the President.<sup>85</sup> Preemptive action to curtail forced expulsion, migration and the limitation of the conference to consideration of German and Austrian refugees would, it was hoped, prevent the “dumping” of unwanted Jews from Rumania, Poland and Hungary; countries that were formulating their own anti-Semitic policies. Therefore,

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<sup>83</sup>Messersmith to Hull March 31, 1938. NARA RG 59 840.8 Refugees/84.5 cited in Orchard, “The Right to Leave,” 200.

<sup>84</sup>Breitman *American Refugee Policy*, 230. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1924 established the annual immigration quota system. The Act, suffused with racial undertones, aimed to limited entry of cheap foreign labor that would unfairly compete for employment with American workers. Aliens, once regarded as necessary elements for the development and exploitation of the American Continent, were now viewed through a xenophobic nativist prism that feared entry of foreign ideologies that threatened the democratic system. Roosevelt did receive pleas from local Jewish leaders for aid to Austrian and German Jews and non-Aryan Christians. Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, president of the Rabbinical Council of America, called on the President to “sound the note of humanitarianism as the voice of America to the German Government for justice and mercy to Catholics and Jews...We do not presume to ask you to involve our beloved country in any political question [but] we believe that the elementary human right to live unfettered and unchallenged is the concern of all mankind.” The leaders of the European democracies were “unable to speak in the same disinterested non-partisan manner as you can.” The fate of humanity depended upon the “compelling voice” of a statesman who would be the recipient of the “unquestioned confidence and support” of the international community. Only FDR, Goldstein believed, held such influence and he called upon the White House to be the “instrument through which the Catholics, Jews and any other oppressed people may be allowed to live without fear of being seized, humiliated and tortured...” “Roosevelt Urged to Intercede with Germany for Catholics and Jews,” *The Sentinel*, March 24, 1938, 31.

<sup>85</sup>*Time*, April 11, 1938, 11.

the refugees under consideration were euphemistically categorized as “political refugees from Germany and Austria” and not as Jews.<sup>86</sup>

Such a conference could also serve as a means of converting isolationist sentiments in the American public to “active opposition [to] international gangsters” and reinforce America’s long-established image as a “haven for the politically oppressed.”<sup>87</sup> The mere convocation of such a meeting served to demonstrate American disapproval of German anti-Semitic policies.<sup>88</sup> However, if the conference successfully created a mechanism that facilitated the orderly exodus of Jews from Germany then, it was hoped, German “militancy” regarding Aryans and non-Aryans could be curtailed.<sup>89</sup> A Jewish advisor to FDR, Isador Lubin, believed that the decision to call the Evian Conference was the result of pressure applied by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, a Roosevelt friend and advisor, “for whom [Roosevelt] had a great deal of affection.”<sup>90</sup> FDR met with Wise, Bernard M. Baruch and Louis Kennedy during April 1938 and informed these Jewish leaders that the U.S. would have to “relax” the rules and regulations dealing with visa affidavits and “if we really want to be of help, we will have to permit the incoming of refugees without affidavits.”<sup>91</sup> Frances Perkins, U.S. Secretary of Labor, held that the President had been

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<sup>86</sup>Mashberg, “American Diplomacy,” 346.

<sup>87</sup>*Newsweek*, April 4, 1938.

<sup>88</sup>Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney, Australia: Croom Helm, 1985), 127.

<sup>89</sup>*Tampa Tribune*, March 25, 1938, 1, 9.

<sup>90</sup>Letter from Lubin to Feingold, September 26, 1963 in Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*, 23.

<sup>91</sup>Memo of conference with Roosevelt and State Department, April 13, 1938, Robert Szold Papers, Box 25/File 16, Zionist Archives, New York, cited in Herbert Druks, *The Uncertain Friendship: the U.S. and Israel from Roosevelt to Kennedy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 3.

influenced by the opinion of social activist, Jane Addams, who contended immigration created future consumers who would strengthen the domestic economy.<sup>92</sup> Jewish Presidential advisor Ben Cohen assumed that if the conference ended in failure then Nazi Germany could be blamed for creating and facilitating the international refugee problem.<sup>93</sup>

Others believed that the consultation was part of a “subtle and far-reaching international campaign” to promote the benefits of democracy in a world in which totalitarianism appeared to be ascendant. In addition, any attempt to proffer aid to “fear-ridden minorities abroad, be they Jewish or Christian, German, Italian, Russian or Spanish” would reap political benefits in an election year by touching “a responsive chord in a considerable group” of domestic voters bound by “ties of blood, of race, of religious or political philosophy.”<sup>94</sup> Some writers believed that the American initiative for the conference symbolized a return of an increasingly isolationist United States to the affairs of Europe and sent a “clear political warning” to Hitler and his Government.<sup>95</sup> Roosevelt’s involvement allowed the Administration to cast the United States in the iconic role of protector of human rights but at little cost to the Nation. Other nations were expected to share in the burden of resettlement.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 23.

<sup>93</sup> Herbert Pell to Moffat, September 10, 1938, Houghton Library, Harvard, cited in Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 61.

<sup>94</sup> “Refugee Plan Pushes Ideal of Democracy,” *Tampa Tribune*, March 27, 1938, 14.

<sup>95</sup> *Tribune de Genève* (Paul de Bouchet), July 7, 1938 cited in Shlomo Katz, “Public Opinion in Western Europe of the Evian Conference of July 1938,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 9 (1973): 110.

<sup>96</sup> Ronald J. Berger, *Fathoming the Holocaust: A Social Problems Approach* (NY: Walter de Gruyter, Inc.: 2002), 96.

Roosevelt initially believed and expressed during a press conference in Warm Springs, Georgia, that the forthcoming refugee conference should include additional groups facing persecution such as Spanish Loyalists, German Catholics and Lutherans and Trotskyites. However, the editors of *Newsweek* claimed that the most logical explanation for the President to extend the range of the conference was to avoid accusations of giving preference to Jews. They argued Roosevelt was more interested in “belaboring Hitler” than offering a workable solution to the refugee dilemma. The State Department could have ordered the consulates to liberalize immigration requirements to allow entry of German and Austrian Jews in numbers that could “not amount to much.”<sup>97</sup> Although the United States Government had called for an international conference to deal with the refugee problem the policies of the State Department acted to impede the entry of German and Austrian refugees. Visitors’ visas would be denied to foreigners who were unable to enter under the quota system, who lacked an “unrelinquished domicile” in and the means and ability to return to their country of origin.<sup>98</sup>

A long standing anti-Jewish attitude or complacency towards anti-Semitism was prevalent among officials of the State Department which impacted upon their willingness to facilitate the entry of immigrants. For example, soon after the Nazi ascension to power in 1933 the U.S. Consul in Munich, Charles M. Hathaway, Jr., compared the German anti-Semitic program to the earlier actions of the infamous Spanish Inquisition under Torquemada. The German Government, like the Catholic hierarchy in Spain, viewed the

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<sup>97</sup>*Newsweek*, April 4, 1938.

<sup>98</sup> For a detailed analysis of U.S. immigration policies regarding Jews from Germany see Bat-Ami Zucker, *In Search of Refuge: Jews and US Consuls in Nazi Germany 1933-1941* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001).2000

struggle to save “human souls” as a fight between good and evil in which “no quarter” could be offered. A “cancerous infection of the Jewish plague” maintained a “dangerous hold” upon the life and survival of modern day Germany.<sup>99</sup> The Consul-General in Hamburg believed that the new Reich would have a “salutary effect” on the “Communist plague” (with Marxism and Communism often linked to a Jewish worldwide conspiracy) that threatened international capitalism.<sup>100</sup>

The State Department had recognized since 1933 that Jews within Germany were living under a perilous cloud. Berlin Consul General George Messersmith advised the President, via Under-Secretary of State William Phillips, that the official sanctions and actions taken against the Jewish population were “being carried out daily in a more implacable and a more effective manner.”<sup>101</sup> A confidential German Ministry of the Interior memorandum dealing with the Jewish Question was sent from the U.S. Embassy in Berlin to the Department of State. The document asserted that the problem of the German Jews could only be resolved if they were “detach[ed] from the Reich; an action that could only be accomplished through a “systematically attacked final solution...We must build up the country without the Jews...”<sup>102</sup> The Roosevelt Administration at that time was less focused upon compassionate concerns than upon maintenance of

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<sup>99</sup>Charles M. Hathaway, Jr. to Cordell Hull, May 13, 1933, Department of State 862.00/3013 quoted in Shlomo Shafir, “American Diplomats in Berlin (1933-1939) and their Attitude to the Nazi Persecution of the Jews,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 9 (1973): 75.

<sup>100</sup>John E. Kehl to Hull, March 31, 1933, Department of State 862.4016/634. Ibid. 75.

<sup>101</sup>Messersmith to Phillips, September 29, 1933, Department of State 862.4016/1280 Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>102</sup>Messersmith to Hull, September 21, 1933, Department of State 862.00/3097, 5. Ibid., 77.

diplomatic harmony between the two nations, repayment of German reparations and war debts, expansion of commerce and disarmament issues.<sup>103</sup>

FDR advised William E. Dodd, former professor of history at the University of Chicago and the newly appointed American Ambassador to Berlin (who was sympathetic to the plight of Jews in Germany), that the United States could only act in the interests of American citizens in the Reich by attempting to “moderate the general persecution by unofficial and personal influence...”<sup>104</sup> Presidential advisor, Colonel Ed House, expressed to the new Ambassador words of sympathy and warning. The United States should try to “ameliorate Jewish sufferings [which were] clearly wrong and terrible.” However, the Jews should not be allowed to once again “dominate the economic and intellectual life in Berlin...”<sup>105</sup> Dodd did, however, attempt to restrain German anti-Jewish policies by warning Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath that Germany would suffer from international economic boycotts and negative public opinion “so long as eminent leaders like Hitler and Goebbels announce from platforms in Nuremberg ‘that all Jews must be wiped off the earth.’”<sup>106</sup> Dodd expressed similar sentiments to Hitler who claimed that fifty nine percent of the “officials of [Soviet] Russia were Jews, responsible for the collapse of Czarist Russia, and who posed a threat to the survival of

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<sup>103</sup> Assistant Secretary of State Wilbur Carr memo May 31, 1933 of Department conference discussing American strategic interests. Wilbur J. Carr Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Box 10. Ibid., 80.

<sup>104</sup> William E. Dodd, Jr. and Martha Dodd, eds., *Dodd's Diary* (NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), June 16, 1933, 5.

<sup>105</sup> Charles Callan Tansill, *Back Door to War* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), 49 cited in John Weitz, *Hitler's Banker: Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht* (NY: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), 233.

<sup>106</sup> Dodd, *Dodd's Diary*, September 14, 1933, 37.



Germany. The Fuehrer warned that if Jews continued their Marxist activities then he “shall make a complete end of all the Jews in Germany.”<sup>107</sup> Consequently, the consistent conflation of Jews and Communism in Hitler’s worldview led Dodd to warn the State Department to “keep this fear of Communism in mind” in the context of any official American criticism of German anti-Semitic policies.<sup>108</sup>

Despite such admonitions Dodd became increasingly critical of German policies and actions. Following the Night of the Long Knives of June 30-July 1, 1934, during which a number of the leaders of the Brown Shirts or SA and conservative nationalists were arrested and murdered, the Ambassador stated that he had become repulsed by the spectacle of the “country of Goethe and Beethoven revert[ing] to the barbarism of Stuart England and Bourbon France.”<sup>109</sup> Dodd criticized British and French policies of appeasement in 1937 and openly opposed any official American presence at the annual Nuremberg rally of the Nazi faithful; a declaration that engendered increasing German Governmental hostility towards the Ambassador.<sup>110</sup>

The 1935 Nuremberg Racial Laws, as mentioned, were applied to both German and American Jews residing within the Reich. When Dodd suggested to the State Department that the application of such restrictions to American citizens represented a violation of the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Consular Rights he was advised that the United States Government did not consider it feasible to issue a formal opinion on the

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<sup>107</sup> Dodd, *Dodd’s Diary*, March 7, 1934, 89.

<sup>108</sup>Dodd to Cordell Hull, March 12, 1934, Department of State 862.00/3419 cited in Shamir, “American Diplomats,” 85.

<sup>109</sup>Dodd to Hull, July 14, 1934, Department of State 862.00/3307. Ibid., 87.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 88.

subject nor would it seek joint action with other Western Governments.<sup>111</sup> However, if a specific case involving an American Jew did arise Dodd was to informally call upon the German Government to protect the rights of all United States citizens; an approach that was variably effective.<sup>112</sup> These laws, he believed, were the harbinger of more severe restrictions against the Jews and did not represent “the last word...on this question.”<sup>113</sup>

During 1937 the Third Secretary of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Jacob D. Beam, predicted that Nazi attempts at forced migration as a means of resolving its Jewish Question would inevitably be unsuccessful due to lack of sufficient foreign exchange. Consequently, the German Government would adopt such policies that would make Jewish life in Germany “uncomfortable, if not impossible” and would result in falling Jewish birth rates. Therefore, German Jews would “die out in the course of one or two generations.” The Embassy also believed that external diplomatic or economic pressures were incapable of altering German anti-Semitic policies. Rather, “outspoken protests” would only result in “stiffening resistance” and any form of compromise was impossible as it would appear to be a form of “submission to foreign dictates.”<sup>114</sup>

Dodd was eventually recalled from his post due to official German criticism and pressure from Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles and was replaced by Hugh R. Wilson, a devoted anti-Communist, who possessed a more liberal, conciliatory and less critical view of Germany. Joseph Davies, one-time American Ambassador to Moscow,

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<sup>111</sup>862.4016/1580 Dodd to Hull, November 15, 1935, *FRUS*, 1935, II, 409-412.

<sup>112</sup>862.4016/1580 Hull to Dodd, January 21, 1936, *FRUS*, 1938, I, 194.

<sup>113</sup>Dodd to Hull, September 17, 1935, *FRUS*, 1935, II, 279.

<sup>114</sup>Mayer to Hull, Report on National Socialist Internal Policy, August 2, 1937, Department of State 862.00/3667. *Ibid.*, 91.

and potential candidate for the Berlin post, claimed that the President wanted to replace Dodd with a career diplomat who would represent, “in the narrowest and most formal sense,” the interests of the United States.<sup>115</sup> Moffat asserted, however, that FDR believed that only the avoidance of open criticism of the Nazi regime would offer any American Ambassador the “hope to influence events.”<sup>116</sup> The new Ambassador believed that the Jewish Question was the primary point of conflict that threatened the harmony of U.S.-German relations. He feared that public reaction to the *Anschluss* and its aftermath would “maintain international exasperation against Germany at a high pitch.”<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, Wilson convinced the President in 1938 to re-institute an American diplomatic presence at the annual Nuremberg Party rallies.<sup>118</sup> The State Department discounted Jewish criticism that such an attendance would be viewed by the Reich as acceptance of the “Nazi program of racial and minority persecution.”<sup>119</sup> Following the Munich Crisis Wilson attacked the negative attitude of the American press as a “hymn of hate [that ignored German] efforts...to build a better future.”<sup>120</sup> Wilson warned Under-Secretary Sumner Welles that Jews were fomenting a “hostile state of mind” that threatened to involve America in a Continental conflict over issues that did not “appeal to

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<sup>115</sup>Joseph Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1941), 255-256.

<sup>116</sup>Moffat Diary, January 13, 1938 cited in Shafir, “American Diplomats,” 93.

<sup>117</sup>Wilson Diary, April 24, 1938, 66. Ibid., 95.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>David Surowitz to Hull, August 25, 1938, and Moffat to Surowitz, September 8, 1938 in Charles C. Tansill, *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952), 387-388. Ibid., 95.

<sup>120</sup>Draft of Letter from Wilson to Hull (not sent), Hugh Wilson, *A Career Diplomat, The Third Chapter: The Third Reich*, 51-53. Ibid.

the vast majority” of the public as a legitimate reason to go to war.<sup>121</sup> Wilson did support the convening of the Evian Conference as a means of “banish[ing] the hatred in which Germany was held abroad”; compassionate concerns were of secondary value.<sup>122</sup>

Several days prior to the opening of the conference Roosevelt stated that he expected “deeds and not speeches.” He regarded the establishment of a permanent intergovernmental committee that would facilitate and oversee emigration to be the ultimate goal of the meeting.<sup>123</sup> Peter Novick had argued that FDR sought to enlighten the American public—especially “nativists and isolationists”—that greater involvement in European affairs enhanced American self-defense and did not represent “some globalist do-gooding.” Jewish affairs and problems would not be allowed to dictate or redirect American foreign policies.<sup>124</sup> Jewish attendee Solomon Adler-Rudel expressed similar sentiments believing that “inner political considerations” and calculations rather than issues of humanitarianism regarding the Jews motivated the President to convene the Evian Conference. The invitation itself served as a symbolic expression of the desire to help others while preserving morality. Although Jews accounted for ninety percent of the real and potential refugees that fell under the scope of the assembly a deliberate choice was made to avoid direct referral to Jews, Hitler or Germany<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Wilson to Welles, June 20, 1938 cited in Wilson *A Career Diplomat*, 38-39. Ibid., 96.

<sup>122</sup>Discussion with the Nazi Minister of Economic Affairs Wilhelm Funk as related to Hull quoted in Wilson, *A Career Diplomat*, 43-44. Ibid., 97.

<sup>123</sup>*Davar* July 3, 1938 cited in Beit-zvi, *Post-Uganda Zionism*, 143.

<sup>124</sup>Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (NY: Mariner Books, 2000), 52.

<sup>125</sup>Adler-Rudel, “Evian Conference,” 238-239

George Rublee, who would be later selected to direct the permanent committee on refugees established in London, later expressed the opinion that Roosevelt's primary incentive was to express "some sort of gesture" that could "assuage the [moral] indignation" that resulted from the German persecution of Jews. The conference had minimal "hope of success" and primarily served as an "impressive protest."<sup>126</sup>

Foreign observers speculated on potential Presidential motivations in initiating the Conference. It perhaps served as an indirect means of re-connecting the United States with European affairs. "By returning to the tradition and the methods utilized by President Wilson," while America retained a status of neutrality during the Great War, FDR could assume the mantle of "defender of the victims" of Nazi persecution by involving America in the "humanitarian and juridical problems" of the Continent.<sup>127</sup> Collaboration between the United States, France and the United Kingdom represented "a [form of] success" as it implied the future involvement of the American public with European issues and events.<sup>128</sup> The formulation of the Evian Conference not only served charitable purposes but it signaled American engagement in the refugee crisis and demonstrated a commitment to battle for the "principles of law" in the entire world.<sup>129</sup> The initiation of such a conference demonstrated that the refugee problem was not an "internal German problem" or primarily a benevolent concern but represented an

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<sup>126</sup>George Rublee, *The Reminiscences of George Rublee* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1972), 284, 285 cited in Marc Eric McClure, *Earnest Endeavors: The Life and Public Work of George Rublee* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 249.

<sup>127</sup>*L'Europe Nouvelle* (Paris), July 23, 1938 cited in Katz, "Public Opinion," 117.

<sup>128</sup>*Le Populaire* (Paris) July 17, 1938. Ibid., 117.

<sup>129</sup>*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Zurich) July 11, 1938. Ibid., 118.

“international-political” issue that required a solution not based on “charity” but rather upon global cooperation.<sup>130</sup> Roosevelt, it was believed, regarded anti-Semitic persecution as a “Nazi germ” that posed a risk of a generalized, more widespread, infection.<sup>131</sup>

The British Foreign Office commented that the willingness of the United States to participate in solving an international refugee crisis represented a marked departure from its “years of aloofness from the League of Nations refugee work” and, consequently, was “unreservedly welcomed in Whitehall.” American participation provided an opportunity to diffuse the refugee problem around the world; an approach to which the League had proven inept and unsuccessful.<sup>132</sup>

There were, however, dissident foreign voices who viewed the Conference with concern. British Foreign Office official Roger Makins believed that Germany was attempting to utilize real or potential violence and suppression of its Jewish and non-Aryan population as a form of blackmail which, with the constitution of an international refugee committee, would merely serve to “encourage” the Reich to forcibly expel those elements residing within Germany that it considered undesirable. Such actions and the potential for the democracies to accept refugees would lead, Makins feared, Poland, Rumania and Hungary to pursue similar policies of persecution as a means of solving their own Jewish Question “through the good offices of the Committee.” Therefore, he concluded, “great caution” was needed in the formulation of the Committee and its

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<sup>130</sup> *National Zeitung* (Basel) July 7, 1938. Ibid., 119.

<sup>131</sup> *L'Oeuvre* (Paris) June 26 and July 8, 1938. Ibid., 119.

<sup>132</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 96-97.

function and scope lest the Eastern European countries would “make the refugee problem even worse than it is at present.”<sup>133</sup>

The British Government did adopt a policy of forced repatriation of refugees from East and Central Europe (other than Germany and Austria) arguing that such peoples were not subject to the same degree of persecution of Jews and non-Aryans within the Reich.<sup>134</sup> Makins asserted that the Americans had not made adequate preparations for the conference and warned that the meeting could generate “wild and impracticable” proposals. Consequently, the British needed to carefully construct the position they would adopt. In addition, he called for the Americans to allocate three quarters of the combined German and Austrian quotas for refugees.<sup>135</sup> Treasury officials were quick to comment that the use of governmental funding “was almost out of the question” while the Colonial Office noted that the Colonies “were not in a position to make a serious contribution” to the re-settlement issue.<sup>136</sup>

Walter Adams, the General Secretary of the Academic Assistance Council (Society for the Protection of Science and Learning) and Secretary of the Survey of Refugee Problems, also feared the ramifications of “ominous statements” issued by other Central and Eastern European countries vis-à-vis their own Jewish Problem. A Jewish

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<sup>133</sup>Memorandum March 25, 1938, Roger Makins, PRO, FP 371/2231 cited in Dwork and Jan Pelt, *Flight from the Reich*, 99.

<sup>134</sup>Louise London, “Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy, 1930-1940,” cited in Cesarani, *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, 171.

<sup>135</sup>Memorandum, May 23, 1938, R. M. Makins “International Assistance to Refugees,” PRO FO 371/21749 C5319/2289/18 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 100. In addition to Lord Winterton and Roger Makins the British delegation included Under-Secretary of State Sir John Shuckburgh, Director at the Colonial Office J.G. Hibbert and Director at the Home Office E.N. Cooper.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, 103.

migration from Eastern Europe was already underway and if left unchecked it would devolve into a “refugee catastrophe” that was without parallel in contemporary history. Such a threat reflected the conundrum of the “German refugee problem; in itself a minor disaster, but in its implications it is terrifying.”<sup>137</sup> Sir John Simpson similarly argued that the “success” of German anti-Semitism and its policies of forced emigration and economic disenfranchisement coupled with a sense of “impunity” had emboldened other nations to adopt similar strategies as a means of ridding themselves of “a population labeled as ‘undesirable.’”<sup>138</sup>

Myron C. Taylor held preliminary discussions in Europe with other diplomats, which established further ground rules for the discussion. The Evian Conference would be a “confidential meeting” of official representatives and not a public forum for the airing of “all sorts of ideas.” Thus, only one public session would be held at the commencement of the summit in which “general statements may be made.” Further deliberations would be conducted privately and at the conclusion of the conference a “formal declaration” would be released. It was necessary to terminate the meeting by July 17 in order to accommodate the state visit of the King of England to Paris on July 19 which required the presence of many of the delegations. However, there was an “understanding” that the Committee could reconvene in Paris “if necessary.”<sup>139</sup>

The original invitation to the Evian Conference was to have been limited to European nations (with Germany excluded) but the United Kingdom, fearing that too

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<sup>137</sup>Walter Adams. “Extent and Nature of the World Refugee Problem,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 203 (May 1939): 35.

<sup>138</sup>Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 520.

<sup>139</sup>*FRUS*, 1938, I, 750-751.



much emphasis would then be placed on Palestine (although it had a labor shortage due to Zionist development of the land and its resources) as a potential asylum, insisted that non-European countries be invited as well.<sup>140</sup> The British accepted the invitation with the stipulation that Palestine would not be discussed at the conference and that the U.S. would guarantee that the U.K. would not be pressured to accept more Jewish refugees into Palestine. Conversely, Britain would not attempt to pressure the United States into revising its immigration laws to accept more stateless refugees.

Taylor, during a preliminary meeting with the British delegation, indicated that Nahum Goldmann had approached him and discussed the potential role of Palestine as a place of permanent resettlement. Goldmann requested that Chaim Weizmann, the head of the Jewish Agency, meet with Taylor in private session to present the argument that Palestine offered the best haven for Jewish refugees.<sup>141</sup> However, Sir Michael Palaire, deputy head of the British delegation, declared that the British government “would naturally prefer that this meeting should not take place.” Taylor informed Goldmann that there would be an “opportunity” for a confidential meeting with Weizmann but it would not be scheduled prior to the commencement of the Conference. Weizmann later noted:

In those days before the war, our protests, when voiced, were regarded as provocations; our very refusal to subscribe to our own death sentence became a public nuisance, and was taken in bad part. Alternating threats and appeals were addressed to us to acquiesce in the surrender of Palestine.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of the War 1941-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1959), 207-208.

<sup>141</sup>Weizmann, as President of the Jewish Agency, was regarded by the League of Nations as the representative of the Jewish people before the League and the U.K. which had been granted the Mandate over Palestine.

<sup>142</sup>Telegram from M. Taylor to Sumner Welles, photocopy, Geoffrey Wigoder, ed., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. VI, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1970), 988; Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), 498.

The U.S. State Department also agreed to avoid broaching the subject of Palestine. The Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Wallace Murray, advised the American Consul General in Jerusalem, Wadsworth, that it was highly likely that “various groups” would seek to influence the representatives of the foreign governments attending the Evian Conference to take up the issue of Jewish immigration into Palestine. Such actions should be avoided as “Zionist and non-Zionist questions” would generate “bitter passions” that threatened the success of the meeting.<sup>143</sup>

Following the announcement of the Evian Conference, Germany exerted pressure upon Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary to hold a counter-conference which met in Bled, Yugoslavia during the latter half of August 1938. The conferees called for a further international meeting that would deal with the global aspects of the Jewish Question and emigration. However, the apparent impotency of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees from Germany led the Reich to abandon support for such a project.<sup>144</sup>

The final list of invitees included Australia, the Argentine Republic, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, Venezuela and of course, the United States. Poland, Hungary,

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<sup>143</sup>Murray to Wallace, July 2, 1938, 867N.01/1106, *FRUS*, vol. 1, 752.

<sup>144</sup> Joseph Tenenbaum, *Race and Reich: The Story of an Epoch* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 220.

Rumania and the Union of South Africa sent unofficial observers. The United States, the United Kingdom and France dispatched selected representatives to serve as their delegations. The remaining attendees were drawn from diplomats assigned to the League of Nations in Geneva or in other foreign capitals.

Canada was a reluctant participant. Prime Minister Mackenzie King felt it would be “unwise” to abstain lest Canada “be classed only with Italy as refusing the invitation.” Further, such reticence would potentially offend the Jewish members of his political party who believed that a Canadian presence was essential even if “we could do nothing later on.”<sup>145</sup> He regarded the Roosevelt invitation as a “very difficult question” which could result in the entry of refugee Jews. He believed that such admissions would create an “internal problem” and that Canada could not afford to “play a role of the dog in the manger...with our great open spaces and small population.” Domestic stability was paramount and the intermingling of “foreign strains of blood” must be avoided or risk facing a domestic situation that paralleled the “Oriental problem.” Such refugees, he feared, would spawn riots and internecine conflict between the Dominion Government and the Provinces.<sup>146</sup> King had earlier described to an American diplomat his recollections of a meeting with Hitler in Berlin in 1937. The Reich Chancellor, he believed, could eventually be viewed as “one of the saviors of the world.” Hitler had

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<sup>145</sup>William Lyon Mackenzie King *Diary for 1938*, April 25, 1938, 307 available from [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/001059-119.02-e.php?&page\\_id\\_nbr=18976&interval=20&&PHPSESSID=8qe57287o5tfs49mreeinfmuh2](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/001059-119.02-e.php?&page_id_nbr=18976&interval=20&&PHPSESSID=8qe57287o5tfs49mreeinfmuh2); Internet; accessed June 11, 2010.

<sup>146</sup>King *Diary*, March 29, 1938, file 21, 1 available from [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/001059-119.02-e.php?&page\\_id\\_nbr=18919&interval=20&&PHPSESSID=d9ot3urcitbgv7jj76a9no8qp5](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/king/001059-119.02-e.php?&page_id_nbr=18919&interval=20&&PHPSESSID=d9ot3urcitbgv7jj76a9no8qp5); Internet; accessed June 11, 2010.

such an opportunity at Nuremberg in 1935 but instead chose the road of “Force... Might and... Violence” as the method to reach his goals “which were, I believe, at heart, the well-being of his fellow-man; not all fellow-men, but those of his own race.”<sup>147</sup>

Secretary of State Cordell Hull opposed German participation in the conference due to his belief that a unified international position and solution was preferable to direct negotiations with the nation that was primarily responsible for the refugee crisis in the first place. Portugal was not invited although its African colonies, Angola and Mozambique, were later regarded as potential sites of resettlement. Ireland sent delegates although it too was not formally invited.<sup>148</sup> The Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Alexander Troyanovsky, viewed the conclave suspiciously, as a Western means to support Trotskyites hostile to the Communist regime.<sup>149</sup> The League of Nations High Commissioner for German Refugees Sir Neill Malcolm was also in attendance. A variety of Christian, socialist and liberal humanitarian groups were present along with at least one hundred journalists and a number of political, scientific and artistic notables such as Pablo Casals, the Italian historian Ferrero, and the exiled Italian politicians Nenni and Spora, the chair of the Pan-European Alliance and Count Condanhove-Kalergi.<sup>150</sup>

A number of nations were excluded from the meeting and included Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey and Spain. Italy was invited but

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<sup>147</sup>King Diary, September 15, 1938, in Abella & Troper, *None Is Too Many*, 36-7.

<sup>148</sup>Three Irish delegates attended including Francis Thomas Cremins, the Irish Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations; Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Justice John Duff and Second Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce William Maguire.

<sup>149</sup>Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 27.

<sup>150</sup>Beit-Zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism*, 146-147.

attendance was declined by the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Galeazzo Ciano, who, while acknowledging humanitarian concerns cited political considerations. He believed that such a meeting could foment hostility against the Italian Government due to its own domestic problems with anti-Fascist political refugees and its close diplomatic and economic ties with Germany.<sup>151</sup> Iceland and El Salvador also refused to participate.

There were anxieties within the U.S. State Department that Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Rumania and Hungary, were planning to expel their own Jews.<sup>152</sup> Such actions, it was believed, could dissuade other nations from liberalizing their respective immigration policies while promoting more “refugee dumping” into the Western Hemisphere. The Polish Government noted that large numbers of Polish Jews residing in Austria and other European countries were returning to Poland despite the high level of domestic anti-Semitism. The Polish Government enacted a new law on March 31, 1938 which threatened to annul passports issued to Poles living abroad but it was directed primarily to the fifty thousand Polish Jews residing in Austria. Anti-Jewish rioting, with the killing of two Jews and the wounding of more than one hundred along with the looting of hundreds of Jewish businesses, occurred in Warsaw on March 19. Crowds shouted “Down with the Jews!” and “To Madagascar with the Jews!”<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup>Telegram from US Ambassador in Italy Phillips to Secretary of State Rome, March 24, 1938, 840.48 Refugees/5, *FRUS*, 1938, 741.

<sup>152</sup>During the period 1938-1941 the Jewish population of Hungary numbered approximately 800,000. László Kontler, *A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 374. The Jewish population of Poland was estimated to be 3.5 million. Thompson, *Refugees*, 98.

<sup>153</sup>The proposal to resettle the Jews of Europe on Madagascar, a French colonial possession off of the southeast coast of Africa, was raised at various times following the conclusion of World War I: by the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Poland and Nazi Germany. During 1937 the Polish Government

Despite the efforts of the central government and local authorities to prevent anti-Semitic violence the return of large numbers of Jews from Austria and other nations stimulated wide spread anti-Semitic sentiments and actions. The Camp for National Unity, established in March 1937, sought to unify the various Polish nationalist groups under the patronage of the political elite while promoting anti-Semitism and the exclusion of Jews from Polish society. General Stanislaw Skwarczynski, the leader of the Camp, declared on February 21, 1938 that Jews represented an “obstacle to the normal evolution of the State” due to their loyalty to international Jewry; a state of affairs that was bound to generate “hostile feelings” between the Christians and the Jews. Such a situation could only be resolved by a “radical decrease” in the size of the Jewish population utilizing a system of organized mass emigration to Palestine, Madagascar and other locales. During May he called for the “Polonization” of the national economy as a means of countering the Jewish threat.<sup>154</sup>

Anti-Semitic actions in Poland, of course, antedated the *Anschluss*. A petition to the Polish Government on July 9, 1937, signed by 130 Cincinnati multid denominational clergymen, was read into the House *Congressional Record* by Representative Herbert S. Bigelow (Ohio) accusing the Government for failing to protect its minorities as called for

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dispatched a three man team of investigators to analyze the island’s potential for mass resettlement. Adolf Eichmann submitted a report during early 1938 to higher S.S. officials on the same topic. Following the Fall of France Hitler authorized the enactment of such a scheme but the failure to gain control of the sea from the British Royal Navy put an end to such planning. “Madagascar Plan” Shoah Resource Center available from [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org) ; Internet, accessed October 3, 2010. The Polish Government decision to annul the passports of expatriates residing in Greater Germany during October 1938 helped to set in motion the series of events that culminated in *Kristallnacht*.

<sup>154</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 40.

by the Versailles Treaties.<sup>155</sup> The American Jewish Congress appealed to Secretary of State Hull on July 12, 1937 to intercede with the Polish authorities on behalf of Polish Jewry. The World Federation of Polish Jews and Rabbi Stephan S. Wise (on September 23, 1937) sent a request to the Warsaw Government via Count Jerzy Potocki, the Ambassador to the United States, appealing for protection of Jewish Polish citizens against domestic violence. On September 24, 1937 the Federation of Polish Jews publicized a letter sent to Potocki criticizing renewed pogroms against its Jewish population. The Federation also sent a petition to Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs in the State Department, calling for intercession by the American Government. He replied on October 6, 1937 that, while sympathetic, the United States Government could not interfere in the internal affairs of a foreign nation unless American citizens or their interests were directly involved. Nonetheless, the Jewish People's Committee against Fascism and Anti-Semitism submitted a similar

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<sup>155</sup>The minority treaties aimed to resolve problems inherent in the redrawing of national boundaries and the principle of self-determination. The social, cultural and linguistic character of minorities was to be protected under the auspices of the League of Nations promoting "harmony and tranquility in the same national community." "A Re-Evaluation of the Versailles Peace," William R. Keylor *Relevance* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1996) available from <http://www.worldwar1.com/tgws/rel007.htm>; Internet; accessed July 17, 2010. The Little Treaty of Versailles, or the Polish Minority Treaty, served as the template for a number of Minority Treaties signed between the lesser European Powers and the League of Nations. The Polish Minority Treaty was signed on June 28, 1919 at Versailles and ratified by the Polish Parliament (*Sejm*) on July 31, 1919 and came into effect on January 10, 1920. Article 2 called for the "total and complete protection of life and freedom for all people regardless of their birth, nationality, language, race or religion." Article 7 asserted that "difference of religion, creed, or confession shall not prejudice any Polish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as for instance the admission to public employment, functions and honors, or the exercise of professions and industries." Such guarantees were regarded as "obligations of international importance" and were protected by the League to which minorities could register complaints. The Little or Small Treaty of Versailles was subsequently renounced by Poland in Geneva on September 13, 1934. "Little Treaty of Versailles," Elihu Lauterpacht, C.J. Greenwood, A.G. Oppenheimer, *International Law Reports*, Cambridge University (2005) available from <http://www.spiritus-temporis.com/little-treaty-of-versailles/the-treaty.html> ; Internet; accessed July 17, 2010. There was also an air of hypocrisy attached to the Minority Treaties in that they did not apply to the Great Powers such as the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union and Germany. The decline of the influence of the League of Nations through the 1930's led to increased tendencies to ignore or the renouncement of the articles of these treaties which exacerbated the general refugee problem.

memorandum and received a comparable response from the Chief of the Division of Western European Affairs, James Clement Dunn.<sup>156</sup>

During October 1937 the Polish Government enacted a policy of “ghetto benches” in which Jewish students would be segregated from non-Jews in academic institutions. Many foreign and domestic critics assailed this new policy. The President of the American Federation of Teachers, Jerome Davis, representing 25,000 members, condemned such an action as representing the “most serious possible violation of the solemn obligation assumed [by the Polish Government] towards [its] minority peoples” and was an anathema to the American aid and support that restored Poland to independence, freeing it from the “yoke of centuries.” On December 6 and 16, 1937 respectively, the American Youth Congress (three million members) and the American division of the International League for Academic Freedom called on the Polish Minister of Education to disavow such discriminatory policies as “alien to the spirit of academic knowledge and of free cooperation in the pursuit of knowledge that is so essential to the world of scholarship.” The American Committee on Religious Rights and Minorities called on the Polish Government to end its anti-Semitic policies that were neither “just nor humane.” The Committee requested that the League of Nations and other governments provide “outlets for [Poland’s] surplus population.” The Institute for International Education warned on December 20, 1937 that the creation of “ghetto benches” represented the “beginning of the regimentation” of Polish academic life and

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<sup>156</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 99-100.



served as a signpost on the road to totalitarianism. Similar sentiments were issued on December 27 by the American Writers' Committee to Aid the Jews of Poland.<sup>157</sup>

The international protests fell upon deaf ears. The Polish Parliament or *Sejm*, in response to Jews returning from Austria and Germany, empowered the Minister of the Interior, via an edict issued on March 31, to nullify citizenship for certain categories of Poles (with Jews undoubtedly serving as the main focus). Those who had resided outside of Poland in Central and Eastern Europe for five or more years and adopted a "passive and indifferent attitude" towards the State, worked overseas to the detriment of the Polish Nation, fought in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side or failed to return to Poland when summoned, would automatically lose their membership in the national body; an act affecting forty thousand Jews in Austria. The law was set to take effect in late October.<sup>158</sup>

When the Evian Conference was formally announced Poland demanded that the scope of the meeting be extended to Polish Jews. Count Potocki approached the leadership of the American Jewish Committee and the Joint Distribution Committee

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<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 99-102, 238-241.. Two years of anti-Semitic violence in Poland culminated in major pogroms in Brzesc and Czestochowa in May and June 1937. The American section of the International League for Academic Freedom consisted of 994 teachers affiliated with 110 universities. The officers of the League included President Alvin Johnson, Vice-presidents Dr. Albert Einstein, Dr. John Dewey, Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell and Secretary Dr. Horace M. Kallen. The officers of the American Committee on Religious Rights and Minorities included Honorary Chairman Dr. Arthur J. Brown, Rev. Dr. John H. Lathrop, Chairman; Michael Williams and Carl Sherman, Vice-Chairmen and Linley V. Gordon, Secretary. The Institute for International Education, directed by Dr. Stephen Duggan, issued a memo signed by 179 non-Jewish American academics, including five Nobel Prize winners (Arthur H. Compton, Robert A. Millikan, Thomas Hunt Morgan, William P. Murphy and Harold Urey) along with eight members of the Committee on International Relations of the American Association of University Professors plus 59 presidents of colleges and universities and 107 professors and deans. 33 authors signed the protest of the American Writer's Committee to Aid the Jews of Poland and included Van Wyck Brooks, Thornton Wilder, Archibald MacLeish, Lewis Mumford, Kyle Crichton, Clifford Odets, Genevieve Taggard and Vardis Fischer.

<sup>158</sup>*Miami Herald*, March 27, 1938, 5A; *The Times*, March 30, 1938, 13.

(JDC) on June 8, 1938 and called for the emigration of fifty thousand Polish Jews per year as a means of diminishing domestic anti-Semitism.<sup>159</sup> Poland (and Romania) did offer to attend the Evian Conference with the status of “refugee producer” nations and sought international cooperation to promote the exodus of their respective Jewish minorities.<sup>160</sup>

Roosevelt attempted to placate the Polish Governments and dampen its calls for Jewish expulsion by offering Angola as a form of compensation. Confidential discussions were held with the Poles and the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax. The Poles assured the American President that they would not publicly raise any territorial or political demands for this Portuguese African colony. Negotiations continued under the direction of the IGCR following the completion of the Evian Conference.<sup>161</sup> FDR ordered Taylor to support Angolan resettlement as a “Supplemental Jewish Homeland” and he emphasized the significance of this project to the “solution of the Jewish problem” as well as his ardent belief that “Angola offers the most favorable facilities for its creation.” It was possible that Roosevelt viewed such a scheme as a means of diverting pressure on the United States to accept Eastern European Jewish refugees while obtaining British support in return for ignoring the potentialities of Palestine for resettlement. The Polish Government also

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<sup>159</sup>Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1929-1939* available from [http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/judentum-aktenlage/hol/joint/Bauer\\_joint05-prelude-of-holocaust-whole-chapter-ENGL.html](http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/judentum-aktenlage/hol/joint/Bauer_joint05-prelude-of-holocaust-whole-chapter-ENGL.html); Internet; accessed May 2, 2010.

<sup>160</sup>Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, 209.

<sup>161</sup>Cables sent by Potocki to Beck cited in Emanuel Melzer, “Poland, the United States, and the Emigration of East European Jewry—The Plan for a ‘Supplemental Jewish Homeland’ in Angola, 1938-1939,” *Gal-Ed* 11 (1989): 65, 81-85.

viewed the Sinai Desert, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq as prospective areas of Jewish colonization as well.<sup>162</sup>

The American Minister to Rumania informed the State Department that the Rumanian Government hoped that the issue of the Jews of Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland would be placed on the agenda of the Evian Conference. The Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs intimated that his country would like to expel annually the number of Jews corresponding to the Jewish birth rate.<sup>163</sup> Sumner Welles warned it would be “unfortunate” if the creation of an international refugee conference would be “construed as an encouragement of legislation or acts” that would foster further refugee problems.<sup>164</sup> Rabbi Stephen Wise echoed such sentiments in an interview in which he stated that the Evian Conference would not “sanction” the actions of any other nation engaging in forced emigration. In addition, he warned the governments of various Central and Eastern European nations that the United States Government would not “deal with the problem of their own so-called superfluous populations.”<sup>165</sup> The Roosevelt administration, therefore, planned to limit discussion at the refugee conference to strictly German and Austrian refugees. It also avoided a specific reference to Jews, choosing instead the term “political refugees.”<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Hull to Taylor, January 1939, *FRUS*, 1939,” I, 66-69.

<sup>163</sup>Gunther to Secretary of State, April 13, 1938, 840.48 Refugees/15, *FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938, 742-743.

<sup>164</sup>Welles to Gunther April 16, 1938, 840.48 Refugees/165, *FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938, 743.

<sup>165</sup> “Urge American Aid to Open Palestine,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1938, 13.

<sup>166</sup> Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 89

The right-wing Christian Front government of fifty-seven year old Rumanian poet and Premier Octavian Goga enacted anti-Semitic legislation, “following closely the Hitler pattern,” that eliminated Jews from a variety of professions and occupations, banned the use of Yiddish, barred the employment of Rumanian non-Jewish servants and closed all Jewish newspapers.<sup>167</sup> These anti-Semitic policies, he asserted, would continue regardless of who occupied the premiership.<sup>168</sup> He sought the denaturalization of Jews who had become Rumanian citizens after 1918.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, Goga announced that his Government sought to expel five hundred thousand “vagabond” Jews (out of a total Jewish population of 1,000,000-1,500,000/19,000,000) who came into Rumania “allegedly...as refugees” and who lacked any rights to citizenship.

Forty-four year old King Carol von Hohenzollern II declared that two hundred fifty thousand Jewish refugees from Galicia and Russia who had entered Rumania following the end of the Great War had arrived “illegally” and did not constitute “a good element” of the population. Such “invaders” were not protected by minority rights treaties and must be removed from the body politic.<sup>170</sup> Rumania would only serve as a temporary haven for these now stateless Jews and would offer “asylum [only] until

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<sup>167</sup>*New Republic*, 93, no. 1209 (February 2, 1938): 350-351.

<sup>168</sup>*Tampa Tribune*, February 3, 1938, 1.

<sup>169</sup>Goga was appointed by King Carol on December 28, 1937 until his forced resignation on February 10, 1938. He was a high profile Rumanian anti-Semite and leader of the avowedly anti-Jewish National Christian Party. The Party’s slogan was “Rumania for Rumanians!” Minority rights had been guaranteed through the Treaty of St. Germain (1919). It was suspected by the French and the British that Rumania, under Goga, wanted to strengthen ties with Nazi Germany. In support of Goga’s anti-Jewish policies the official German news service raised the issue of minority rights for Germany in the Sudetenland and the British suppression of the Boers and the Arabs in Palestine. *Time*, 31, no. 3 (January 17, 1938): 26-27.

<sup>170</sup>*Time*, 31, no. 3 (January 17, 1938): 26-27.

means of forcing them to leave...have been found.”<sup>171</sup> The law, however, was subsequently ruled unconstitutional by Rumanian courts.

Eighty-two year old Alexander Cuza, Minister without Portfolio, announced plans for an international anti-Semitic conference in which the Jewish Question would be studied as a world-wide problem. The issue needed to be “confronted frankly and realistically” and the only workable solution was the creation of a “Jewish nation” in which the Jews could be concentrated in one location, left to “work out their own destiny.” Palestine would be excluded from consideration as it belonged to the Arabs but Madagascar (located 240 miles off the coast of East Africa) offered promise as it was a possession of France which “soon must solve its own very acute Semitic problem.”<sup>172</sup>

Sixty-eight year old Patriarch of the Rumanian National Orthodox Church Miron Christea (who later succeeded Goga as Premier) had earlier warned, during August 1937, that Jews were the cause of an “epidemic of corruption and social unrest” that endangered the “spiritual treasures” of the Rumanian Nation. Defense against the threats of the Jews was both a “national and patriotic duty.”<sup>173</sup> In addition, he believed, the nation should be expunged of “these parasites who suck Rumanian and Christian blood.”<sup>174</sup> A number of anti-Jewish riots occurred during late 1937 and early 1938 in Bucharest and outlying

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<sup>171</sup> Adrien Thierry, French Minister, Romania, to the Foreign Ministry, no. 46, December 31, 1938, MAE SDN I M 1818, 111-12 cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum* 173.

<sup>172</sup> *Tampa Tribune*, January 23, 1938, 6.

<sup>173</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Yearbook Review of the Year* 5698, 283.

<sup>174</sup> Howard Morley Sachar, *A History of the Jews in the Modern World* (Vintage eBooks) available from [http://books.google.com/books?id=TLxA9W7q74sC&pg=PT477&dq=%E2%80%9Cthese+parasites+who+suck+Rumanian+and+Christian+blood+%22Rumanian+Jews%22&hl=en&ei=DrpzTe2wPMS1tweO3JTLBA&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9Cthese%20parasites%20who%20suck%20Rumanian%20and%20Christian%20blood%20%22Rumanian%20Jews%22&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=TLxA9W7q74sC&pg=PT477&dq=%E2%80%9Cthese+parasites+who+suck+Rumanian+and+Christian+blood+%22Rumanian+Jews%22&hl=en&ei=DrpzTe2wPMS1tweO3JTLBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9Cthese%20parasites%20who%20suck%20Rumanian%20and%20Christian%20blood%20%22Rumanian%20Jews%22&f=false); Internet; accessed March 6, 2011.

areas, resulting in injury and death. Cuza informed a German newspaper on February 9, 1938 that the Government would resort to pogroms if the Western democracies failed to accept involuntary Jewish refugees.<sup>175</sup> Clear intimations of the precarious position of the Jews within Rumania led many to decide to leave the country but the question of where to re-settle remaining unsettled.

American attempts were made to intercede on the behalf of the Rumanian Jews. Senator James J. Davis (PA) introduced a resolution on January 3, 1938 calling on the President to inform the Senate of any anti-Semitic “edicts” enacted by the Rumanian Government and to utilize his “good offices to obtain a peaceful settlement of proposed threats” to minority groups.<sup>176</sup> On January 6 Representative William Sirovich (NY) and January 25 Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr. (NY) announced similar resolutions calling on FDR to intervene “in the name of humanity against the shameful treatment” of Rumanian minorities and to sever diplomatic relations should the need arise.<sup>177</sup> The American Jewish Committee passed a resolution at its 31<sup>st</sup> annual meeting condemning Rumania's violation of the Minorities Treaty signed after the end of the Great War.<sup>178</sup> The United Rumanian Jews of America endorsed a petition to King Carol, signed by Jewish and non-Jewish Rumanians, urging the Government to avoid any actions that would “remove the name of Rumania from the roster of enlightened and humane countries of

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<sup>175</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Yearbook Review of the Year 5698*, 287-288, 296.

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>177</sup>“The Tragedy of Racial Minorities in Rumania: Extension of Remarks of Hon. William L. Sirovich of New York in the House of Representatives,” *Congressional Record Appendix*, Seventy-Fifth Congress, Third Session, 99-103.

<sup>178</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Yearbook Review of the Year 5698*, 104.

the world.”<sup>179</sup> On January 25 the Jewish Labor Committee held a mass protest rally in New York City and on January 28 the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress headed by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and the American Jewish Congress on the 30<sup>th</sup>, called upon the League to protect the rights of minorities within Rumania.<sup>180</sup>

Secretary of State Hull, echoing earlier responses regarding the situation of Jews within Poland (and also about Greater Germany), announced on January 6 that the United States Government could not intervene in the internal affairs of another nation unless American interests were threatened.<sup>181</sup> The American Minister to Rumania, Franklin Mott Gunther, did, however, “unofficially” advise Goga on January 12 regarding negative American (especially Jewish) opinion towards Rumania and its policies to which the Prime Minister responded that such protests were “merely impudent!” The Soviet Ambassador Mikhail Ostrovsky informed Goga that Rumanian policies had led his presence in Bucharest to be “no longer useful” and consequently, he was returning to Russia within ten days. The Rumanian Foreign Office replied publicly that the Government “would in no way object to the departure of the Soviet Ambassador at an even earlier date.”<sup>182</sup>

The application of British, French and American diplomatic pressure, (as well as the failure of the law to denaturalize Jews, a faltering economy and concerns about the

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<sup>179</sup> “Rumanian Jews Here Appeal to King Carol,” *New York Times*, January 17, 1938, 34.

<sup>180</sup> Senator Charles L. McNary accused Rumania of violating the terms of the Minorities Treaty and submitted a petition from the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress to the Council of the League of Nations, *Congressional Record Appendix*, March 29, 1938, Third Session, vol. 10, 1220-1221; “Mayor Denounces Rumanian Policy,” *New York Times*, January 25, 1938, 12.

<sup>181</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Yearbook Review of the Year 5698*, 104.

<sup>182</sup> “Rumania ‘Impudent,’” *Time*, January 24, 1938, 16.

fascist Iron Guard), did have an effect: the dismissal of Goga by the King and his replacement by the Patriarch Christea who initially planned to carry out his predecessor's anti-Semitic program.<sup>183</sup> However, on February 22 King Carol announced a new constitution and the creation of a "royal dictatorship," termed the "National Concentration Government," which granted the monarch autocratic powers with which he pledged to guarantee "equality before the law to all people of other races which have lived for centuries on Rumanian soil."<sup>184</sup> Cristea, who earlier had advocated anti-Semitism, then promised the Jewish community the restoration of "spiritual peace, unity and brotherhood."<sup>185</sup> In addition, the King took steps to suppress the anti-Semitic Fascist Iron Guard and arrested its leader, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.<sup>186</sup> Despite outward appearances journalist Dorothy Thompson claimed that King Carol did "not make a secret of his conviction that there are too many Jews in Rumania and that the world should help him get rid of at least a few hundred thousand of them."<sup>187</sup>

The Jews of Hungary also faced an increasingly precarious existence. Stimulated by the anti-Semitic actions of the Reich many non-Jewish Hungarians called for the limitation or the total exclusion of Jews from many professions and other occupations

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<sup>183</sup> "Rumania Hohenzollern Dictator," *Time*, February 21, 1938, 28.

<sup>184</sup> "Rumanian King Sets Up Royal Dictatorship," *Tampa Tribune*, February 21, 1938, 1. Following the announcement of a new government and constitution King Carol held elections in which 5,413 voted orally that they were opposed to the changes (and their names were recorded by officials) and 4,283,395 voted in support. The Interior Minister Armand Calinescu announced that "by a majority of 99.8% the people of Rumania overwhelmingly approved the personal dictatorship of King Carol II." *Time*, March 7, 1938.

<sup>185</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Yearbook Review of the Year 5698*, 297.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>187</sup> Thompson, *Refugees*, 65.



and the establishment of quotas for Jewish entry into colleges and universities.<sup>188</sup> Kálmán Darányi, the pro-German Prime Minister, enacted measures aimed at excluding Jews from the national economy and cultural and social life while depriving them of Hungarian citizenship. The Prime Minister believed that Jews held a “strangle hold” over the nation and a solution to this problem was urgently needed in order to provide employment for “Christian youth” while guaranteeing that the “sons of Hungarian peasantry” would have the opportunity for the “betterment of their social standing.” The Government announced in January 1938 that Jews living within the northeast provinces who could not prove Magyar descent from 1851 onwards would be denaturalized. Following the Polish model, the Government negated the citizenship of Jews living abroad. During February Finance Minister Fabinyi called for an end of Jewish predominance in the trades. It was time, he believed, for the “Christian Hungarian population...to conquer the positions” it voluntarily relinquished over many years. One month later the Minister of Education, Valentin Homan, declared that Jews could not be assimilated into the body politic due to their membership in a different “race.” In April, Justice Minister Edmund von Micecz announced that Jewish interests were “diametrically opposed” to Hungarian national interests. As in Germany anti-Jewish riots took place and police raids were made into Jewish quarters and random arrests were made. The post-war nationalist Union of Hungarian Protectors of Race was established in May 1938 led by the “White Terrorist” Ivan Hejjas who believed that the Jewish Question would

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<sup>188</sup>Minority rights in Hungary had been guaranteed by the Treaty of Trianon signed in 1920.

have been solved in 1919 if the country had resorted to a widespread policy of pogroms.<sup>189</sup>

The threat of forced mass migration from Poland, Rumania and Hungary thus played a significant role in the conception of the Evian Conference. Fears of a flood of destitute refugees from the East helped to shape the terms of the official invitation, the scope of the committee's action and the deliberate decision to avoid any reference to the Jewish ethnicity of the real and potential refugees. Anti-Semitism would be conveniently subsumed under the rubric of "political" persecution paving the way for the Jews of Central Europe to merely play the role of spectator in a drama in which the central figure was increasingly desperate for salvation. The Evian Conference was seen by many as a beacon of light in an ever more dark and dangerous world but, as will be demonstrated, it proved for the majority in peril to be a road to nowhere.

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<sup>189</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 215-219.

## Chapter 4

### “Firmly Fixed American Tradition”

“It is a fantastic commentary on the inhumanity of our times that for thousands and thousands of people a piece of paper with a stamp on it is the difference between life and death.”<sup>1</sup>

The revelation of the Evian Conference generated varying degrees of public and private support. On the same day as the State Department announcement of the proceeding the President declared that the primary American contribution to the immigration dilemma would be the consolidation of the annual German and Austrian quotas (open to both Christians and Jews) but he did not anticipate any change in immigration laws.<sup>2</sup> FDR knew that his administration faced political risk in promoting Jewish immigration into the U.S. and he attempted to downplay its focus on Jews by asserting that “a great many Christians, too, a very large number” would benefit from the conference.<sup>3</sup>

Roosevelt confided in Judge Irving Lehman, the brother of the New York Governor, that he hoped that “narrow isolationists” would not attack his conference

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Thompson on the importance of being granted an exit and entry visa. “Deathly Silence Teaching Guide: Bystander Psychology” The Southern Institute for Education and Research available from [http://www.southerninstitute.info/holocaust\\_education/ds9.html](http://www.southerninstitute.info/holocaust_education/ds9.html) ; Internet; accessed October 4, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>*Press Conferences of FDR*, vol. 11-12, 1938 (NY: Da Capo Press, 1972), #445.

<sup>3</sup>Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 161.

proposal out of “purely partisan objectives.”<sup>4</sup> Lehman lauded the Chief Executive for his efforts and declared him to be the spokesman and moral voice for “those who are oppressed [and] deprived of freedom.” The Presidential action, Lehman believed, followed in the wake of time-honored American values and would “rouse the conscience of humanity [and] restore sanity to a world gone [mad]...As an American and as a Jew I want to say, ‘Thank you.’”<sup>5</sup> The President responded that he believed the conference would engender “far-reaching consequences” for “political refugees” but he regretted the inability of the United States to accept “more than a small proportion.”<sup>6</sup>

The formation of the meeting carried on a “firmly fixed American tradition” dating back to the days of the Pilgrims, Puritans, Huguenots and Catholics. The “new world has been and is a haven for the politically oppressed.”<sup>7</sup> New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia was convinced that the clarion call of the President had “made a profound impression on the chancelleries of Europe. At least there [was] one land that says ‘shame, shame, on your outrageous conduct!’” Women’s rights advocate, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, appealed to the Administration to dispatch naval vessels to Europe to transport involuntary émigrés to the United States while carrying, in the opposite direction, pro-Nazi sympathizers residing within America.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library (FDRL)/OF 3186, FDR to Lehman, March 28, 1938 cited in Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Irving Lehman to FDR, March 28, 1938, FDRL, Official File 3186, Box 1, Political Refugees, January-May 1938 cited in Breitman, *Refugees and Rescue*, 123.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., FDR to Irving Lehman, March 30, 1938.

<sup>7</sup>*Tampa Tribune*, March 28, 1938, 3.

<sup>8</sup>*The Sentinel*, April 7, 1938, 34. Catt added: “Let the bands play and the flags fly when the battleships come and go on this errand of mercy. The ships need not go empty across the Atlantic. Advertise widely and smartly from ocean to ocean to find those Germans who, according to Adolf Hitler, ‘have been

Conservative Rabbi Simon Greenberg of the *Har Zion* Temple and President of the Rabbinical Assembly of America viewed the announcement of the conference as heartening to “every lover of liberty and human decency” regardless of the lack of any liberalization of immigration quotas. Elias Rex Jacobs (1892-1979), editor and publisher of the pro-Zionist *Buffalo Jewish Review*, called upon Congress to “modify the Immigration Act” as “the number admissible under the present quota is much too limited.” Dr. Dan B. Brummett, editor of the Methodist *Christian Advocate* in Kansas City, envisaged the Evian Conference as a shining example of the “best American traditions” of offering sanctuary to political and religious refugees and urged liberalization of national immigration policy. Dr. William E. Gilroy, editor of the 122 year old Congregational Christian Churches' *The Advance*, believed that United States' immigration policy “ought to be subject to modification or...appeal to some higher authority where consideration of justice and humanity are involved.” Dr. William Hiram Foulkes, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, believed the convocation of the meeting harmonized with the “essential American spirit” and together with Dr. Willard E. Shelton, the editor of *The Christian Evangelist*, sought modification of the quota system.<sup>9</sup>

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captured by the idea of a community of the German people,’ and offer them all a free passage of return to the fatherland. The only reservations would be, first, no passport to return, and second, the same financial conditions the Germans have fixed for the Jews...The funds so procured would apply on the costs of transportation. Such a plan would give happiness to a great number of people and it would be a most commendable act of the only nation in the world whose specialty has been freedom for the oppressed.”

<sup>9</sup> “Question of the Week: What should be the American policy toward oppressed minorities of foreign nations who look to this country as a haven of refuge? Should the barriers set up under the immigration laws be lowered to help them find new homes here or should the present regulatory restrictions on entry apply to them the same as every other alien?” *The United States News* April 4, 1938.

Joseph Tenenbaum, one of the leaders of the American economic boycott against Germany, presciently warned that failure to act at the planned talks would result in a “campaign of extermination of the six million Jews living under the shadow of Hitler.”<sup>10</sup> The Executive Council of Churches of Christ in America adopted a resolution on March 25 supportive of the Presidential invitation. “We rejoice in the action of our State Department in appealing for international cooperation to provide a haven of relief” within the United States and abroad for “all refugees from Austria. We commend the cause of these new victims to the prayer and active support of the churches of America.”<sup>11</sup>

Popular support was reflected in various newspapers. Foreign correspondent, columnist and Pulitzer Prize winner Anne O’Hare McCormick described the “heartbreaking” scenes of long lines of Jews seeking visas from U.S. Consulates abroad while “waiting in suspense” for the outcome of the Evian Conference. She believed that the issue facing America and the world was not how many “unemployed” could be added to the national rolls of the unemployed. Rather, the world faced a fundamental “test of civilization.” Could America accept the moral guilt, McCormick asked, if Germany was allowed to continue with its blatant “policy of extermination” of the Jewish people?<sup>12</sup>

Some writers to the Editor shared the sentiments of Carrie Chapman Catt and suggested that the United States expel Nazi sympathizers and replace them with anti-Nazis seeking to leave Germany.<sup>13</sup> British journalist Wickham Steed castigated Prime

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<sup>10</sup>*Boycott: Nazi Goods and Services* (March-April 1938), 3 cited in Spear, “The United States and the Persecution of German Jews,” 242.

<sup>11</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 98.

<sup>12</sup>Anne O’Hare McCormick, “Europe,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1938, 12.

<sup>13</sup>*Washington Post*, March 30, 1938, 6.

Minister Neville Chamberlain and Foreign Minister Lord Halifax for not attending the meeting in France or issuing a statement condemning the “abominable persecution” of the Jews. Steed suggested that for every Jew “robbed” and expelled from the Reich “one Aryan German” should be sent back to Germany, “deducting from his wealth the proportion needed to help the Jewish destitute.” How long, he asked, could Western civilization sit back and watch the “greatest” atrocity of the century?<sup>14</sup>

The Evian Conference was lauded as a testimonial of America’s tradition of providing a haven to the oppressed of the world and represented history’s first endeavor utilizing a “round-table conference of nations” to resolve a dilemma “as old as the Caesars.” Many refugees seeking entry were seen as representing the most desirable category of immigrants possessing intelligence and resourcefulness that would benefit the country. Thousands of refugees could be admitted “without changing anything—except for the better.”<sup>15</sup> The American Committee for the Protection of Minorities published an appeal in the press, supported by 125 notable citizens, calling upon the world’s citizenry to join together in a “great cooperative endeavor to ask the dictatorships to let the oppressed people go; to welcome these exiles in so far as it is possible; to respect their integrity and to protect their liberty.”<sup>16</sup> Correspondent Clarence Streit observed that the three major powers, the United States, Britain and France controlled “so large a share of

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<sup>14</sup> “Deport Aryans, Steel Advises,” *The Southern Israelite*, July 8, 1938, 3.

<sup>15</sup> *The Lewiston Daily Sun*, July 6, 1938, 1.

<sup>16</sup> “Democracies Urged to Succor Refugees,” *New York Times*, April 11, 1938, 4.

the less populated” regions of the world and its resources that the outcome and “fate” of the Evian Conference lay “virtually in their hands.”<sup>17</sup>

A commentary in a Jewish newspaper predicted that “history will be made” at the commencement of the international council. Although the possibilities of rescue were uncertain and it was doubtful that participating nations would significantly alter their immigration restrictions, “the significance of the refugee conference is profound when viewed in the light of the isolationist policies of the great, modern democracies.” The occasion “mark[ed] the re-entry of Democracy—as a way of life—into the mainstream of world political action”; a counterbalance to the “ideology of totalitarianism.” Asking the ultimate question: “Where is the conscience of the world?” he believed the answer would be given at Evian.<sup>18</sup> Some heralded the Conference as the “voice of Democracy” overpowering the “angry roar of Fascism’s thunder” and represented the “first rebuke” of Nazi ideology on the “part of Democracy”; an “uncompromising and...vigorous” response.<sup>19</sup> FDR’s call for the conference represented, to one editorialist, the “strongest kind of condemnation of Hitleristic and other savage attacks upon human rights” and the “moral isolation” of those committing such “barbaric practices.” It also demonstrated that America was fulfilling its humanitarian responsibilities and could no longer be accused of “failing to act.” Optimistically, and perhaps unrealistically, the writer predicted that “such spontaneous expressions [of support] by organized groups of all

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<sup>17</sup>Charles Streit, “U.S. Spurs Nations to Prompt Action at Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1938.

<sup>18</sup>“Eyes on Evian,” *The Southern Israelite*, July 1, 1938, 6.

<sup>19</sup>“America’s Open Door,” *The Southern Israelite*, April 1, 1938, 6.



kinds [left] no doubt” that the American people favored the granting of “asylum...to as many as can possibly be provided with such means of escape...”<sup>20</sup> Roosevelt’s move was a “precedent-shattering move tantamount to a public rebuke” of the Reich’s racial policies.<sup>21</sup>

The editorial board of *The Crisis* expressed dismay at the “crushing brutality” inflicted on the Jews in the Reich that was similar to the persecution faced by African-Americans within the United States. The journal criticized those who had “expressed...sympathy” for foreign Jews while turning a blind eye to the plight of blacks living within the United States. However, “unlike the Jews in modern Germany, they know lynching” and view “with a twisted smile” white protests against Nazi anti-Semitism that ignored the plight of the “Negroes”: “raiding mobs in Dixie,” limited admissions to institutions of higher education, the observance of “rigid color lines” by white Christians and attempts to provide employment for European refugees while the black “knocks at the doors of a thousand businesses seeking employment in vain.”

Nevertheless, *The Crisis* called upon all African-Americans to oppose “Hitler and all that he represents.” The primary institutional difference in the treatment of blacks within the United States and Jews living in Germany was the application of “every instrument of the state” against the Jewish minority. Jews faced governmental censure while African-Americans faced institutional “indifference.” All blacks should contest “Hitlerism” but American priorities should be directed towards a democratic institution that operated as a “reality for all minorities of whatever race, religion and or color.”

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<sup>20</sup> A.A. Freedlander, “The American Refugee Move,” *The Sentinel*, March 31, 1938, 4.

<sup>21</sup>“U.S. Offers Plan for Refugees: Invites Twenty-Nine Countries to Form International Committee on Emigration,” *The Sentinel*, March 31, 1938, 33.

Secretary of the NAACP Walter White called upon “intelligent American Negro citizens” to demonstrate “contempt for and condemnation” of German anti-Jewish policies and warned that the failure of the white and black races and all religious denominations to oppose prejudice would result in the establishment within the States of the “horror that is Nazi Germany.”<sup>22</sup> “American Negroes,” the NAACP declared, hailed the actions of the Administration for its efforts to find sanctuary for Jewish refugees.<sup>23</sup>

While many agreed with the premise of the conference there were groups and individuals who opposed any modification of the immigration quota or the concept of the conference itself. Such differences cut across religious and political lines. Dr. Guy Emery Shipler, editor of the Episcopalian magazine *The Churchman*, viewed the international gathering as representative of the “finest American tradition in a world shot through with fear and cursed with timid politicians” but opposed, along with Rev. R. I. Gannon, S.J. President of Fordham University, any revision of the quota system due to the high level of domestic unemployment. The Reverend Francis Talbot, editor of the Catholic weekly *America*, alleged modification of the annual quota would not be in the interest of the nation as it would be “folly for us to admit a greater influx of refugees with alien ideologies who could not be absorbed without grave economic, political and social readjustments.” Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, supported the “overture” of the Administration but

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<sup>22</sup>Roy Wilkins “Negroes, Nazis and Jews,” *The Crisis*, December 1938, 393; “Walter White Scores Persecution of Jews,” *The Crisis*, 399-400 available from [http://books.google.com/books?id=6VoEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA393&dq=Jews&hl=en&ei=j1RJTIImEJcH48Ab12vntDg&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=90&ved=0CL8EEGgBMFk4ZA#v=onepage&q=Jews&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=6VoEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA393&dq=Jews&hl=en&ei=j1RJTIImEJcH48Ab12vntDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=90&ved=0CL8EEGgBMFk4ZA#v=onepage&q=Jews&f=false); Internet; accessed July 23, 2010.

<sup>23</sup>A.A. Freedlander, “The American Refugee Move,” *The Sentinel*, March 31, 1938, 4; “Negroes Urge Haven for Jews,” November 16, 1938, 8.

believed that the current quota allotments were “sufficient” to meet the needs of a “substantial number” of involuntary refugees. William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, believed that the United States “should take the lead” in the refugee resettlement issue and cited America’s custom of offering succor to victims of political and religious persecution. It would be “cruel [and] illogical” and out of step with time honored “principles” if immigration was closed off entirely. However, current domestic economic conditions mandated that the nation continue to follow the existing quota limitations. Dr. Hiram Wesley Evans, the Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, opposed any scheme to encourage additional immigration believing that the available openings would “most likely...be filled” by those refugees who met the mandated entry requirements.<sup>24</sup>

Dr. Stephen S. Wise, president of the American Jewish Committee and Roosevelt confidante, did not believe Congress “should or would” change the existing quotas. He would accept the admission of a “rather limited number of children” but if there should develop a “conflict between our duty to those children and our duty to our country, speaking for myself as a citizen, I should say, of course, that our country comes first.”<sup>25</sup> Wise predicted in an address to a Detroit meeting of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) that the conference would result in a “dismal failure” unless Britain altered its Palestine immigration policy.<sup>26</sup> Privately, he labeled Roosevelt's plan as a “gesture which meant little...One might have expected more from an administration that

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<sup>24</sup>“Question of the Week,” *The United States News* April 4, 1938.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>“Urge American Aid to Open Palestine,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1938, 13

pretends pity.”<sup>27</sup> Publicly, he read to the conference a telegram received from FDR supportive of Zionist aspirations for Palestine in which the President stated that he had followed the “rehabilitation of the Jewish Homeland with deep interest” and hoped that “constructive action” on the part of the ZOA would lead to the “realization of a noble ideal.”<sup>28</sup> Despite such expressions of support, however, the Administration had ensured that during the Evian Conference Palestine would not be considered as an option for Jewish resettlement.

Representative Samuel Dickstein, Democrat, NY, the Jewish Chairman of the House Committee on Immigration, stated that “under the existing conditions it would be unwise to tamper with the immigration or quota law.” Dr. J. D. Hertzler, Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska, supported an international refugee congress as a means of dispersing the refugees over a number of democratic nations while highlighting the political and cultural milieu that had created the crisis but he opposed any alteration of immigration quotas as detrimental to American employment.

Dr. Cyrus Adler, president of the American Jewish Committee, resisted changes in the immigration laws “as it is not likely that any larger numbers would seek admission here than are now possible under the quotas.”<sup>29</sup> Adler and his colleagues preferred the time-honored “*sha-sha* philosophy of Jewish polemics, which sought to turn away wrath

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<sup>27</sup>Sumner Welles to Harry Friedenwald, August 18, 1938 cited in Melvin I. Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982), 305. Wise was a strong advocate of an economic boycott of the Reich.

<sup>28</sup>*The Jewish Criterion*, July 8, 1938, 4.

<sup>29</sup>“Question of the Week,” *The U.S. News*, April 4, 1938.

with gentle words, to obscure the Jew from public gaze.”<sup>30</sup> Mrs. C. M. White of Ft. Dodge, Iowa, opposed the admission of agitators from Germany, Austria and Russia and wanted aid to be given to the American poor before admitting “Europe’s penniless...”<sup>31</sup>

An opinion poll for March 1938, at the time of the *Anschluss*, revealed that forty one percent of Americans believed that “Jews have too much power” in the United States; i.e., control of finance, commerce and entertainment. Twenty five percent of respondents supported the exclusion of Jews from “government and politics” and twenty percent favored the expulsion of Jews from the country. Nineteen percent were in support of an anti-Semitic campaign within the U.S. itself.<sup>32</sup> Sixty eight percent of respondents to a May poll opposed the admission of Austrian and German refugees.<sup>33</sup> A June *Fortune* magazine poll demonstrated that 67.4% of Americans believed that “with [economic] conditions as they are we should try to keep [refugees] out.” 18.2% replied that “we should allow them to come but not ruin our immigration quotas” and only 4.9% favored increasing the annual allowance. The remainder was undecided.<sup>34</sup> A June Gallup poll demonstrated that seventy two percent of Americans believed “we should not allow a

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<sup>30</sup>“How to Combat Anti-Semitism in America” (New York: 1937), 33, sponsored by the American Jewish Congress and *Boycott: Nazi Goods and Services* (March-April 1938), 3 cited in Jeffrey S. Gurlock, ed., *America, American Jews* (NY: Routledge, 1998), 237, 242. The *Sha-Sha* philosophy, opposed by the more pro-active American Jewish Congress, was the belief that if Jews pretended “that the Jew does not exist...he will not be missed; the anti-Semite, unable to find his victim, will simply forget about him.” Henry Popkin, “The Vanishing Jew of Our Popular Culture,” *Commentary* 14, no. 1 (July 1952), 46 cited in Edna Nahshon, ed., *Jewish Theatre: A Global View* (Leiden, The Netherlands, Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 207.

<sup>31</sup>*Boycott: Nazi Goods and Services* (March-April 1938), 3 cited in Spear, “The United States and the Persecution of German Jews,” 242.

<sup>32</sup>Charles H. Stembler, *Jews in the Mind of America* (NY: Basic Books, 1966), 121-131.

<sup>33</sup>Edwin Harwood, “American Public Opinion and US Immigration Policy,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1986): 202.

<sup>34</sup>Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 438.

larger number of Jewish exiles from Germany into the U.S.” and fifty two percent were opposed to contributing “money to help Jewish and Catholic exiles from Germany settle in other lands.”<sup>35</sup> Eighty three percent stated in a 1939 poll that if they were elected to the Congress they would oppose any legislation that would allow “more European refugees” to enter the country.<sup>36</sup>

Roman Catholic Father Charles E. Coughlin, an initial FDR supporter but later a vocal, high profile and passionate foe of the Administration’s New Deal, was one of the most outspoken anti-Semites of the 1930’s who actively made use of the press and broadcast media. His rhetoric increasingly conjoined economic turmoil and an unstable banking system with world Jewry and Communism. He called for the creation of a “corporative state” in America in which political parties would be abolished and each social “class” would have its own Congressional representative. Selection of the President would be through a House vote rather than popular election.<sup>37</sup> Utilizing his magazine, *Social Justice*, and his organization, The National Union for Social Justice, plus an association with the Christian Front, Coughlin maintained that he held “no animosity towards the Jews [but] did distinguish most carefully between good Jews and bad Jews as well as I do between the good gentiles and bad gentiles.” He asserted that his primary focus lay on the “atheistic Jew and gentile, the communistic Jew and gentile who have been responsible...for the discriminations and the persecutions inflicted upon the Jews as a body.” He believed that Jewish renunciation of and active opposition to

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<sup>35</sup>Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Roosevelt and Hitler: Prelude to War* (NY: Paragon House, 1989), 256.

<sup>36</sup>Harwood, “American Public Opinion,” 202.

<sup>37</sup>*Daily Worker*, March 14, 1938, 1. Coughlin (1891-1979) became a Catholic priest in 1923 and pastor of the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan in 1926.

communism (which he postulated was the source of Nazism) would lead Christians to “extend the right hand of sympathy towards the persecuted Jews in Germany.”<sup>38</sup>

The Veterans of Foreign Wars adopted a resolution calling for a complete cessation of immigration into the United States for a period of ten years. Mrs. William Baker, President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution, argued that the Federal Government should not “meddle in the affairs of other nations” and called for a more restrictive immigration policy and increased aid to American citizens.<sup>39</sup> The American Legion Executive Committee opposed any move to liberalize the entry of “political and religious refugees” into the United States. Such action would be “inimical to the welfare” of the nation. Although the Legion was sensitive to the predicament of the victims of German policies its responsibilities toward “our own citizens under the present distressing circumstances compels consideration even to the exclusion of those in foreign countries, however sympathetic we may be to them in their present plight.”<sup>40</sup>

Representative Edward T. Taylor (Dem., CO) demanded reassurances from the Administration that American involvement in the Evian Conference would not result in an “invitation to use the United States as a dumping ground for all these people.”<sup>41</sup> Representative Martin Dies, Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, warned Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the Evian Conference would result

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<sup>38</sup>Charles E. Coughlin, *Am I an Anti-Semite?* (Detroit: Condon Printing, 1939), 94-95, 104-6 cited in Robert H. Abzug, “Father Coughlin ‘From Am I an Anti-Semite?’ December 18, 1938,” *America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999), 77-82.

<sup>39</sup>*The United States News*, April 4, 1938.

<sup>40</sup>“Legion Opposed to Quota Increase,” *The Sentinel*, May 12, 1938, 35.

<sup>41</sup>Manus I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 244.

in an inundation of the U.S. by “persecuted and jobless” European refugees and feared that there would be “little or no reciprocal action on the part of the other countries involved.” He also declared that the “first duty “of the American Government was to the American people, especially the unemployed and “overburdened taxpayers.” Admitted aliens would either displace Americans from the workforce or would have to be maintained on the public dole. Consequently, he supported the use of private funds to promote resettlement in the underdeveloped and less inhabited regions of South America.<sup>42</sup>

Representative Thomas J. Jenkins criticized Roosevelt for attempting to “embroil us in European entanglements [by] asking the people of the United States to make a haven here for those who are undesirable to European dictators.” He warned that any refugee plan would “provide an opening for a more liberal immigration policy” and represented a presidential “visionary excursion into the warm fields of altruism” while ignoring the “cold winds of poverty and penury” that affect the “ill-clothed, ill-housed, and ill-fed” American citizens. He proposed that the European nations use the funds owed to the United States as war debt as the financial means of resettling refugees in “some uncontested section of the world.” Entry of such aliens into the United States

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<sup>42</sup>“Relief of Political Refugees,” Rep. Martin Dies, *Congressional Record Appendix*, March 28, 1938, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., vol. 10, March 28, 1938 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 1207. European restrictions on employment of aliens would result, he believed, in the further impoverishment of refugees who would seek admission into the U.S. Consequently, they needed to be diverted away from America and Dies called for re-settlement in Paraguay and other under populated South American countries.



would foster “enmity and suspicion” that would be disruptive to American society and life.<sup>43</sup>

Democratic Senator Robert R. Reynolds, North Carolina, opposed any loosening or modification of U.S. immigration laws and blamed an “enormous alien influx” during the Great War and in the post-war period as being the root of widespread American worker unemployment. “Excess alien baggage” had led to “burdensome taxation,” rising national debt, a budget deficit and the importation of “subversive” ideologies and activities.<sup>44</sup> Reynolds called for slashing the current immigration quotas by ninety percent for at least ten years until rampant American unemployment was resolved. Any aliens committing a crime within U.S. borders must be deported and non-citizens barred from organizing or heading labor organizations. The Government for its part should cease employing noncitizens, all immigration laws should be rigidly enforced and America must be protected from the “importation of inferior human stock.”<sup>45</sup>

Republican Congressman Karl Stefan criticized an amendment submitted to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization that supported the Evian Conference, describing it as “the most dangerous piece of legislation” that risked American involvement in “foreign entanglements.” The Evian Committee would serve as a replacement for the failed League of Nations transforming the United States into the

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<sup>43</sup>Rep. Thomas J. Jenkins, *Congressional Record*, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., vol. 83, part 4, March 28, 1938 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 4227.

<sup>44</sup>Sen. Robert R. Reynolds, “Displacement of Americans by Aliens,” *Congressional Record Appendix*, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., vol. 9, March 14, 1938 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 989-990.

<sup>45</sup>Sen. Robert R. Reynolds, “Deportation of Aliens,” *Congressional Record Appendix*, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., vol. 9, March 24, 1938 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 1170-1171. Reynolds (June 18, 1884-February 13, 1963) served in the Senate from 1932-1945.

“dumping ground” for all political refugees. He believed that such aliens already resident in the country should be deported. The United States should “clean our own house before meddling in foreign affairs.” Stefan also asserted that creation of the Committee was a ploy to create a highly paid (\$17,500 per year or twenty percent of funds appropriated for the U.S. delegation) Ambassadorship for Myron C. Taylor. Taylor’s role as the head of the American delegation could be filled, the Representative believed, by the current Ambassador to France at no additional cost to the American taxpayer. South Dakota Republican Representative Francis H. Case echoed these sentiments by labeling Taylor’s salary as exorbitant and called for a reduction to \$7,500 with the difference used for “the real purposes of the item.” Rep. Clinton A. Woodrum, on the other hand, argued that “no one would seriously contend” that Taylor, “the distinguished gentleman,” would “be attracted to [the chairmanship of the committee] because of the salary.” His payment should be reflective of the “high rank” of his prospective position.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Joint Resolution, (H.J. Res. 637) for “relief of political refugees” submitted to Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Congressional Record*, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., March 30, 1938, vol. 83, part 4, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 4418. Stefan (March 1, 1884-October 2, 1951) was born in Bohemia but immigrated with his family to Nebraska in 1885 and was elected to Congress in 1935. Case (December 9, 1896-June 23, 1962) first entered the House in 1936 and was later elected to the Senate in 1951.

The “Distribution of estimate for International Committee on Political Refugees” was broken down as follows:

- Taylor salary: \$17,500 per year.
- Salaries for four clerks; average \$2,100 per year.
- Supplies and materials: \$1,000.
- Communication service: \$5,000.
- Travel expenses: steamship and railway: \$20,500.
- Freight on furniture, drayage, etc.: \$700.
- Printing of necessary materials and reports: \$2,500.
- Rent of office space (5 rooms, \$6 per day for 365 days): \$10,950.
- Equipment for offices: \$1,500.
- Special and miscellaneous expenses, entertainment, rent of motor vehicles, unforeseen items, rent of office machines, etc.: \$3,100.
- Total of all expenses: \$72,500.

Michigan Representative Clare E. Hoffman, addressing the fifth Annual National Defense Meeting held in Philadelphia on March 29, attended by seventy-three patriotic organizations, argued that America could no longer serve as the refuge of the “downtrodden and oppressed.” Rather, the alien posed an internal threat by spreading dissatisfaction, intolerance, Communism and calls for the “destruction of the only existing land of refuge”; acts facilitated by a President who had ignored historical lessons, abandoned campaign promises and who had “charted a course at the end of which lay dictatorship.”<sup>47</sup>

One writer to the editor of a leading national newspaper voiced the concerns of many average Americans. The nation should provide assistance to citizens in need rather than extending “an invitation to feed and care for the agitators of Russia and Germany and Austria.”<sup>48</sup> *The Nation* believed that any loosening of current American immigration laws would require an “unmistakable demonstration of [positive] public opinion” in order to persuade Washington politicians to confront an issue that was deemed “too hot to handle.”<sup>49</sup> Others continued the argument that FDR should aid America’s own impoverished and unemployed and not allow entry of thousands of foreign “unwanted citizens” in violation of immigration laws.<sup>50</sup> A writer to an African-American newspaper described the “colored people of the United States [as] among the most persecuted in the world.” He believed that American attention should be diverted away from the plight of

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<sup>47</sup>Rep. Clare E. Hoffman, “The Enemy within Our House,” *Congressional Record Appendix*, Seventy-Fifth Congress, 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., vol. 10, April 2, 1938 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), 1283-1285.

<sup>48</sup>*The United States News*, April 4, 1938.

<sup>49</sup>*The Nation*, December 10, 1938, 609-610.

<sup>50</sup>*Washington Post*, March 30, 1938, 6.

Jews in Germany and the excesses of Soviet Communism and re-directed towards domestic prejudice. “If America would realize the situation as it is over here and forget Europe, we, the colored people, would receive some justice.”<sup>51</sup>

Foreign popular reaction was as mixed as the American to the announcement, planning and course of the Evian Conference. Jews, to some, were the innocent sufferers of “barbarous persecution and attacks” resulting from a “biological war of extermination.”<sup>52</sup> Jews who were forcibly returned to the Reich faced a “death sentence.”<sup>53</sup> Emile Borel contended that if a workable solution was unobtainable with Germany then the democratic nations must remain true to the tenets of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and adopt a consistent approach and equitable cost sharing that would lead to a solution of the refugee dilemma.<sup>54</sup> George Bidault argued that the “enlightened nations” must provide assistance to the Jewish and non-Aryan refugees or risk dishonoring French principle, pride and the Christian ethic.<sup>55</sup> Swedish diplomat Olof Lamm called upon the United States to admit one hundred thousand Jewish refugees immediately “so that we can catch the refugees alive.”<sup>56</sup> The *Times of London* noted three

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<sup>51</sup>Letters to the Editor, “Attention, Uncle Sam,” *The Afro-American*, July 23, 1938, 4.

<sup>52</sup>*De Volksgazet* (Brussels), July 7, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 112.

<sup>53</sup>*Le Progrès* July 11, 1938. Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>*La Dépêche*, Toulouse, July 7, 1938. Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>*L’Aube*, Paris, July 8, 1938. Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Olof Lamm to Hendrik Van Loon, November 1, 1938, cited in Gurlock, *America, American Jews*, 242. Félix Edouard Justin Emile Borel (January 7, 1871-February 3, 1956) was a mathematician and later a Republican-Socialist politician who served in the Chamber of Deputies and was later active in the French Resistance. George Bidault (b. 1899) aided the establishment of the left-wing newspaper *L’Aube* that was anti-Fascist and protested against anti-Semitism. He was opposed to the Munich Agreement, active in the Resistance, served as Foreign Minister under the De Gaulle Provisional Government and later held the post of Prime Minister.

weeks prior to the opening of the Evian Conference that the German police had arrested several thousand people, primarily Jews. These actions were designed to “frighten those Jews who remain in Germany and thus confirm them in their desire to emigrate.” Simultaneously, it was a means of “exert[ing] pressure” upon the international delegations soon to meet on the banks of Lake Geneva.<sup>57</sup>

The “civilized nations” owed a “moral obligation” to aid and assist the forced émigrés but faced the great difficulty of reconciling such obligations with “practical considerations”: the costs of resettlement, effects upon local economies and jobs and the fact that the majority of refugees were Jews who were not “universally welcome.” America, the editorialist believed, approached the Conference with “good intentions” but was constrained by its existing immigration laws and quotas. The greatest benefit the United States could offer to enhance the likelihood of the meeting’s success was to provide funding for resettlement and the creation of an “atmosphere of liberal mindedness” that would “stimulate” the other attendees to “generous action.”<sup>58</sup>

The British journal *The Round Table* compared the German refugee problem with that of the Bulgarians and Greeks following the end of the Great War. None of the post-war refugee problems was “capable of a single radical solution.” The Greeks and Bulgarians were returning to their national homes whereas the German refugees were being forcibly expelled and sent onto the world stage as a stateless alien. The first refugee problem was one of “movements of concentration” while the latter was a

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<sup>57</sup>“Nazi Round-Up of Jews,” *The Times*, June 17, 1938, 15 cited in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *The Fate of the European Jews, 1939-1945: Continuity or Contingency?* (Oxford: University Press, 1997), 59.

<sup>58</sup>*The Glasgow Herald*, July 6, 1938, 12.

movement of “dispersion.” Moreover, land was available to the Greek and Bulgarian refugees due to the evacuation of other peoples and most of the migrants were agricultural rather than urban workers. Outside of Zionist circles the concept of Jewish statehood was not envisaged as a rational solution by this and most other papers, the general public and governments.<sup>59</sup>

During July, in the *Portsmouth Evening News*, English philosopher Bertrand Russell called for aid to the displaced Jews. He believed that it was essential to exert “pressure [upon] our own Government to be hospitable to refugees and not too niggardly in granting them” entry and the right to re-establish a new life on British shores. This prompted a response by the paper’s leading commentator, Raymond Burns, who believed that the refugee issue could only be solved if it was not tainted by “helpless emotionalism” which had the potential to create a “real anti-Semitic problem” in the island nation. Britain, like France and the United States, Burns believed, could make the “greatest contribution” to solving the problem of resettlement but all three were nearing the “saturation point.” Further Jewish immigration, he predicted, would generate “latent hostility to the newcomers” and could only result in a “sense of grievance” among the domestically unemployed natives. Significantly, such emotion was shared by the professional classes, including physicians who feared that foreign doctors would engage in a “cut-price racket.” Burns acknowledged that some form of resettlement was necessary but “for the sake of the refugees [Jews] it must not mean Great Britain.” Consequently, “extensive territory [such as East Africa and excluding Palestine] must be delineated for mass colonization. The Bournemouth *Daily Echo* asserted that Britons

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<sup>59</sup>*Round Table*, September 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 107.

feared the “unrestricted entry” of all refugees: “Just as we don’t want too many Jews we don’t want too many Chinese or Frenchmen for that matter.” Ironically, less than ten thousand refugees were in Britain in July 1938.<sup>60</sup>

Lord Beaverbrook’s *Daily Express* vocalized its opposition to Jewish immigration in an editorial, “Shall All Come In?” Although the British public was moved by “some sad stories of the persecuted Jews” it was necessary to ask “where will it end?” “Powerful agitation” was at play in the United Kingdom seeking the admission of all Jews “without question or discrimination.” Such a humanitarian policy would be “unwise” as it could “stir up” domestic factions that “batten on anti-Semitic propaganda.” Fearing that the nation would come under pressure to admit Jewish co-religionists from Eastern Europe the paper concluded that “because we DON’T want anti-Jewish uproar we DO need to show common sense in not admitting all applicants.”<sup>61</sup>

Beaverbrook’s other paper, the *Sunday Express*, warned of the refugee Jewish threat to the domestic economy and professions. Jews were “overrunning the country” seeking the right to practice in the law, medicine and dentistry. Consequently, the British professional class was driven to “resent their living being taken from them by immigrants from foreign countries, whether they be Jew or gentile.” Continental Jews had contributed to the rise of foreign anti-Semitism by being “too prosperous.” After all, “half

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<sup>60</sup>Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National, and Local Perspectives* (NY: Frank Cass, 1999), 153, 401. Kushner noted that following the Russian Revolution of 1917 the British Government allowed the entry of 15,000 White Russians but barred the less “racially desirable” Jews and Armenians.

<sup>61</sup>*Daily Express* (London), March 24, 1938 cited in Theodore S. Hamerow, *Why We Watched: Europe, America and the Holocaust* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 104.

the lawyers and doctors in Germany were Jews.”<sup>62</sup> The Socialist Medical Association in London warned that admission of German refugees would threaten the “dilution of our industry with non-Union, non-Socialist labor.” The Conservative *Sunday Express* editorialized that “just now there is a big influx of foreign Jews” into the United Kingdom who were “overrunning the country.”<sup>63</sup> An editorial in the *Palestine Post* forecast the inevitable failure of the Evian Conference. Although nations had voluntarily offered support to the cause of the Chinese Nationalists and Spanish Republicans there remained a global “conspiracy of silence” towards tangible aid to the persecuted Jews of Germany.<sup>64</sup>

Echoes of the *L’Affaire Dreyfuss* and the lack of a meaningful international response led commentator Victor Basch to lament that the “sentiment of human solidarity

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<sup>62</sup>*Sunday Express* (London) March 24, 1938. Ibid., 106. Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Home Secretary, and Lord Winterton met with delegates of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons and the British Medical Association, the University of London and the Society of Apothecaries and reassured them that only a “limited number” (50) of Austrian doctors, undergoing “careful selection” would be admitted to practice. A special committee composed of members of the British medical community would aid in this selection. “Austrian Doctors in Britain,” *The Times*, July 5, 1938, 14. Dr. A. Welpy, the general secretary of the Medical Practitioners Union, threatened that “much more drastic action will be taken—something to arouse the whole country,” such as a “stay-in-strike” should Austrian physicians be allowed to practice within the United Kingdom. He claimed that foreign doctors lacked the proper qualifications to take care of local patients. “British Doctors Threaten Strike,” *California and Western Medicine*, 49, no. 2 (August 1938): 170. Similar concerns arose in Australia. Legislation was proposed to mandate completion of a five year medical course in Victoria or a nation that had signed a reciprocal agreement before alien physicians would be allowed to practice independently. “Refugee Doctors in Victoria; Proposed Restrictions,” *The Times*, July 16, 1938, 12. The British Dental Association followed the lead of the BMA and called for a limitation on the number of Austrian dentists (50) to be allowed entrance into the United Kingdom. A similar committee would be established to evaluate the qualifications of these émigrés. The American Medical Association echoed sentiments similar to their British counterpart and believed that a strict ceiling needed to be placed on the number of refugee physicians. Overall, the “situation is fraught with difficulties arising from economic stress, chauvinistic prejudices, fears that have been stimulated by propaganda, and other motivations.” *Newsweek*, October 3, 1938, 30.

<sup>63</sup>Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 2.

<sup>64</sup>*The Palestine Post*, June 8, 1938, 8 cited in Abraham J. Edelheit, *The Yishuv in the Shadow of the Holocaust: Zionist Politics and Rescue Aliya, 1933-1939* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 190.



no longer survives.”<sup>65</sup> Another French paper warned that failure to act in a meaningful manner would hurl the “humane principles” espoused in the Rights of Man into the “abyss.”<sup>66</sup> The Depression and its associated economic stresses were believed to foster the development of anti-Semitism for it was a “natural tendency” to blame a defenseless population for “disagreeable conditions.” Such a worldview predicted the proliferation of Nazi anti-Jewish ideology as manifested by events in Poland, Rumania, Hungary and within some French political factions.<sup>67</sup> Hatred of Jews, some believed, was the genesis of the refugee crisis and the convocation of the Evian Conference was proof of its recognition by the international community. Its solution, however, depended upon the “Christian conscience” granting charity to the stateless; a humanitarian act that could not cause any recipient nation to be harmed.<sup>68</sup>

Some argued that the creation of a “class of unwanted people” was the natural consequence of political upheaval and cited earlier events such as the French and Russian Revolutions.<sup>69</sup> The “booming guns of August 1914” marked the end of relatively free transit across national borders and led to governments enacting stricter passport controls.<sup>70</sup> A unique species of humanity, “Homo Europaicus,” appeared on the world

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<sup>65</sup> *L'Oeuvre* (Victor Basch), June 26, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 111. Victor Basch (1863-1944) was a *Dreyfusard* and a co-founder in 1898 of the League of Human Rights. He and his wife were murdered by the Vichy militia or Gestapo.

<sup>66</sup> *Le Progrès*, Lyon, July 7, 1938. Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> *Le XXème Siècle*, Brussels, July 8, 1938. Ibid., 110.

<sup>68</sup> *The Spectator*, July 29, 1938. Ibid., 111.

<sup>69</sup> *Le XXème Siècle*, Brussels, July 7, 1938. Ibid., 108.

<sup>70</sup> John C. Torpey, “Passports and the Development of Immigration Controls in the North Atlantic World during the Long Nineteenth Century,” Andreas Fahmeir, Olivier Faron and Patrick Weill, eds., *Migration*

scene, devoid of home, hearth and country. Democratic nations had become “inured to the sight of Jews and Aryans, Liberals and Communists—whether they were professors, traders, politicians, students, authors and priests—streaming out of Germany.”<sup>71</sup> A new political and social reality had been created.

Time, some believed, was working against the resettlement of large numbers of Jews and a “catastrophe” could only be averted by the Reich taking positive actions that would assist resettlement.<sup>72</sup> Some papers warned that the forced emigration of Jews, especially those deprived of adequate funds, would foster the spread of anti-Semitism within the receiving countries. No state, it was argued, could absorb Jewish refugees without generating the “same kind of prejudice” that had led to such “extreme measures” within Germany.<sup>73</sup> Some attempted to place the roots of anti-Semitism within Jewry itself. The “victims” of Nazi persecution “were not so blameless as it was first thought.” Although acting in a fashion “contrary to ethical principles,” the Germans were compelled to take steps that would counter the perceived Jewish dominance of the professions, press and the economy. “Some think that they have got too strong a

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*control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period* (New York: Bergahn Books, 2003), 73-91, 84.

<sup>71</sup> *The Economist* July 9, 1938 cited in Katz, “Political Refugees,” 108.

<sup>72</sup> *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* (London), July 7, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 106.

<sup>73</sup> *Western Mail and South Wales News*, July 11, 1938. Ibid., 109.

position for such a small minority.” Resentment and “opposition” to such control was a natural reaction which, under the proper circumstances and setting, could devolve into a “general attack” against the perceived oppressor. “This is how pogroms occurred in Russia and Rumania.”<sup>74</sup> The right wing anti-Semitic Argentine paper, *La Fronda*, cautioned that the “waters of Evian bring typhus.” *El Pueblo* called for immigration restrictions that would protect Argentina from dangerous “physical, moral and ideological point[s] of view.”<sup>75</sup>

The extreme French Right, like its American counterpart, sought to totally ban the admission of any political or religious refugees. Journalist Raymond Recouly commented in the *Gringoire* that official German anti-Semitism was an inhumane policy but nevertheless acceptance of persecuted Jews would result in a “violent reaction” in France. *Le Journal* called for the internment of refugees within concentration camps and during the *Anschluss* Lucien Rebatet predicted that “sooner or later the concentration camp will become a necessity that remains open to the scum of the entire continent.” Unless the French Government enacted strict controls on immigration the influx of alien Jews would result in a “blind pogrom—brutal and liberating... [that would] take care of everything.” Maurice Ajam strongly supported immigration restrictions in an issue of *La Dépêche de Toulouse* (*The Dispatch from Toulouse*), a strong advocate of the Radical Party in the provinces. “Racism may be a folly” but it was essential for a “nation’s general well-being.” The resistance of Jews to assimilation into the dominant culture

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<sup>74</sup> *Gazette de Lausanne* (Lausanne), July 11, 1938. Ibid., 108.

<sup>75</sup> Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church*, 141.

posed a threat to all of the “admirable mixed breeds” responsible for the uniqueness and “prodigiously interesting” aspects of the nation.<sup>76</sup>

The French Catholic paper *La Croix* (*The Cross*) echoed the opinion of the French delegation to Evian that the admittance of two hundred thousand refugees following the end of the Great War had brought France to the saturation point and could no longer accept forced émigrés. While France had traditionally served as a “haven” for involuntary migrants further admissions would place the nation in “danger...of self-destruction on the altar of love of its neighbor.” The totalitarian regimes had been “generous enough to make us a present of some of their bacteria,” i.e. Jews who were the purveyors of Marxist dogma. Nonetheless, despite such potential perils, France could not ignore human suffering and owed a “duty to be upright and humane.”<sup>77</sup> Otherwise the nation would be complicit in the absolute “extermination” of an entire people. Others in the United Kingdom averred that inaction would “make cowards of us all.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>“Faisons le point,” *Gringoire*, October 13, 1938; “Des Centres spéciaux de concentration pour les étrangers indésirables”, *Le Journal*, Nov. 21, 1938; Lucien Rebatet, “Les Emigrés politiques en France: Peut-on éviter le pogrom?” (“The Émigré Politics in France: Can We Avoid the Pogrom?”) *Je Suis Partout*, March 4, 1938; Maurice Ajam, “Le Mélange des races,” *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, August 29, 1938, 1 cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 276.

Lucien Rebatet (1903-1972) was a French fascist with pro-Nazi sympathies who wrote for the right-wing publication, *Je Suis Partout* (*I am Everywhere*). He was also a journalist, author and movie and film critic for *Action Française*. During the occupation in 1942 he blamed French politicians, military leaders and Jews for the fall of France (published in *The Ruins* or *Les Decombres*). Robert Michael and Philip Rosen, *Dictionary of Antisemitism from the Earliest Times to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007), 381. Jews, represented in Rebatet’s world view a form of *vermine*. Solange Leibovici, “Pierre Drieu La Rochelle: Le roman de la haine,” cited in Roland A. Piorloot, Henk Hillenaar and Walter Schönauf, eds., *Fathers and Mothers in Literature: Psychoanalysis and Culture* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1994), 179. Following the end of the war Rebatet was accused of collaboration with the Vichy Government and was described as a “true killer, a hunter-down of Jews, Resistance fighters, and Gaullists.” He was condemned to death but later received amnesty. George Steiner, *George Steiner at the New Yorker* (NY: New Directions Books, 2009), 207.

<sup>77</sup> *La Croix*, July 7, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 114.

<sup>78</sup> *The Economist*, July 10, 1938. Ibid., 114.

Some foreign circles regarded Roosevelt's initiative as a symbol of American responsibility or obligation to open its doors to would-be immigrants. The United States should provide a "fitting welcome" for Austrian and German Jews as it is "clear" that the geographic size and resources of America outstripped those of any Continental European power. The solution of the Jewish Question posed "manifold and grave difficulties." It was unreasonable to expect that nations which did not participate in the persecution of its Jewish minority should bear any financial, economic or social burdens or responsibilities for the maintenance and support of stateless refugees.<sup>79</sup>

Some opposed the idea of mass Jewish migration and relocation and supported a policy of gradual infiltration or dispersal. It was preferable to place Jews "in equal numbers everywhere" in order to avoid reaching a population threshold that threatened to incite anti-Semitism in the native population of the receiving countries. Consequently, Jews would remain a perpetual minority that would not generate fear within the dominant majority.<sup>80</sup> "The troubles of the Jews" began when their "numbers or influence" exceeded a certain ceiling resulting in a negative "impact" upon the local residents of the country of resettlement.<sup>81</sup> It should be openly expressed, it was believed, that the mere presence of large groups of Jews would precipitate "difficult problems within certain countries" especially when their domestic influence was disproportionate to their group size.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>*Le Temps* (Paris), July 8, 1938. Ibid., 118.

<sup>80</sup>*Journal de Genève*, July 8, 1938. Ibid., 118.

<sup>81</sup>*The Tablet* (London), July 9, 1938. Ibid., 119.

<sup>82</sup>*The Times*, July 6, 1938. Ibid., 120.

Jews and Jewish groups around the world responded to Roosevelt's invitation with expressions of appreciation and support. A joint cable, signed by noted philanthropist and the Pittsburgh owner of the Kaufman Department Stores, Edgar J. Kaufmann, was sent from the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the B'nai B'rith and the Jewish Labor Committee to Myron Taylor wishing the Conference success in achieving an "effective and speedy solution" of the refugee crisis.<sup>83</sup> The German Jewish newspaper, *Centralverein Zeitung (C.V. Zeitung)*, the official publication of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Central Union of German Citizens of Jewish Faith) posted a headline: "Are the Doors Opening?" Alfred Hirschberg, a liberal German attorney and editor-in-chief, believed that deliverance lay just beyond the horizon. A *CV Zeitung* reporter, upon arrival in Geneva, became skeptical that the international gathering would bear any fruit. Such pessimism was echoed by *Der Schild (The Shield)* which represented the National League of Jewish Frontline Veterans. The *Jüdische Rundschau (Jewish Review)* of Robert Weltsch, on the other hand, alleged that the Evian Conference carried great symbolic value focusing international attention on the Jewish Question, "one of the great public problems of our time" which would be greatly aided by American leadership and participation.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>*The Pittsburgh Press*, July 8, 1938, 5.

<sup>84</sup>*Centralverein Zeitung*, March 31, 1938; Alfred Hirschberg, "Thoughts for Évian Conference," *Centralverein Zeitung*, June 9, 1938; *CV Zeitung*, June 23, 1938; *Der Schild*, June 24, 1938; "Today Évian Comes to a Close," *Jüdische Rundschau*, July 15, 1938 cited in John V. H. Dippel, *Bound Upon a Wheel of Fire: Why So Many German Jews Made the Tragic Decision to Remain in Nazi Germany* (NY: Basic Books, 1996), 225-226, 232. The CV was founded in Germany during the late nineteenth century as a response to rising German anti-Semitism and listed 72,500 members in 1924. It became the most influential and largest German Jewish organization representing the liberal middle class and called for greater assimilation of Jews into German society and culture and maintained an anti-Zionist stance until

Banker Max Warburg opposed mass resettlement of Jewish refugees due to its potential for stimulating global anti-Semitism and supported a slower rate of evacuation lest rescue efforts “defeat its own ends.” He wanted the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees to exert pressure on the German Foreign Ministry not to increase the pace of forced emigration. A more orderly system of departure could be financed by Jewish investment in German companies located abroad allowing, he believed, for Jews to retain a viable amount of financial assets. By 1938 the Nazis, however, were no longer willing to allow direct transfer of Jewish assets as had been carried out under the earlier *Ha'avarah* plan and would later refuse to meet and negotiate with George Rublee, the Director of the IGCR.<sup>85</sup> Jewish Federations within Poland lauded Roosevelt for his plan to rescue refugees but Myron C. Taylor sought, prior to the opening of the Evian Conference, to evade any consideration of the Jewish Question in Poland by avoiding official discussions with Polish Zionists.<sup>86</sup>

The Jewish Agency for Palestine hoped that the delegations would “emphatically protest” German anti-Semitism and adopt a “bolder immigration policy”

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1933. The organization began in 1893 but lost its autonomy following the 1938 *Kristallnacht*. During 1936 the association was renamed the *Jüdischer Centralverein*. Hirschberg was later arrested and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp but later was allowed to emigrate overseas. Katherine Morris, *Odyssey of Exile: Jewish Women Flee the Nazis for Brazil*, (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 116. Robert Weltsch fled to Palestine in 1938 and became a correspondent for *Ha'aretz*. During the Nazi economic boycott of April 1, 1933 in which a yellow star had to be prominently displayed on the outside of Jewish establishments, Weltsch wrote: “This is a painful reminder to all those who betrayed their Judaism...The Jew who denies his Judaism is no better a citizen than his fellow who avows it openly...The Jew is marked a Jew. He gets the Yellow Badge...This regulation is intended as a brand, a sign of contempt. We will take it up and make it a badge of honor.” Robert Weltsch, “Wear It With Pride, The Yellow Badge,” *Jüdische Rundschau*, no. 27, April 4, 1933, available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/about\\_holocaust/documents/part1/doc14.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc14.html); Internet; accessed March 12, 2009.

<sup>85</sup> Dippel, *Bound Upon a Wheel*, 226, 238.

<sup>86</sup> Mashberg, “American Diplomacy,” 348.

that would afford “immediate relief.” The Agency recognized, however, that the numbers of immigrants that could be admitted into Palestine could not “be answered now with any degree of certainty.”<sup>87</sup> The World Jewish Congress viewed the convening of the Evian Conference as an historic event representing the “first attempt to evolve a constructive and all-inclusive solution of the refugee problem” and believed it represented the “only hope” for hundreds of thousands of persecuted Jews. The Congress called upon the international missions to pressure the German Government into altering its economic policies that place Jews into a “state of complete destitution.” The Evian Conference would be a futile exercise in diplomacy if it failed to “raise a firm protest against this shocking system which tramples underfoot the fundamental principles of justice and humanity.” The World Congress also called for the inclusion of the Jews of Eastern Europe who also faced involuntary displacement. New territories for immigration should be sought in underdeveloped regions but would entail a slow and expensive process. Palestine, the World Congress held, could absorb an annual quota of sixty thousand to one hundred thousand refugees per year. Thus, it was necessary for the nations represented at the Evian Conference to convince the United Kingdom to honor its commitment to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine as outlined in the 1917 Balfour Declaration.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> “Memorandum of the Jewish Agency, Palestine, to the Evian Conference” July 6, 1938 available from <http://www.zupdom.com/icons-multimedia/ClientsArea/HoH/LIBARC/ARCHIVE/Chapters/Terror/RefugeeP/Memoran1.html> ; Internet; accessed May 15, 2010.

<sup>88</sup> “Memorandum of the World Jewish Congress to the Evian Conference” July 6, 1938, S7/693, World Jewish Congress Executive Committee Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem available from <http://www.zupdom.com/icons-multimedia/ClientsArea/HoH/LIBARC/ARCHIVE/Chapters/Terror/RefugeeP/Memoran2.html>; Internet; accessed March 23, 2008.



The editor of the Palestinian paper *Ha'aretz*, Moshe Glickson, recorded that the Evian Conference had generated “immense esteem and admiration” for the American President from the Jews of the Diaspora.<sup>89</sup> Moshe Kleinman, the editorialist for *Haolam*, expressed gratitude to FDR and acknowledged the “historic importance” of the gathering. He was concerned about the potential for “further dispersion [of Jews] instead of the ingathering” into Palestine that was the dream of all Zionists; an ideal severely constrained by high costs, British immigration policies and Arab hostilities.<sup>90</sup> Dr. Mordechai Ehrenpreis, Chief Rabbi of Sweden, who went to the conference as an observer, was moved by a “sense of growing optimism... [F]rom afar there shone the thought of Evian as a star of hope.” The meeting could potentially reflect the “world’s conscience.” Finally, he believed, the community of man had awakened to the evil that threatened Jewish existence in Central Europe. The very convening of the Evian Conference represented a “resonant act” which provided hope for a “downtrodden and oppressed” people.”<sup>91</sup>

The Zionist Organization of America announced that a special edition of the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund would be dedicated to Roosevelt with a citation acknowledging that his efforts on behalf of the Jewish people deserved to be “engraved in the hearts of the Jewish people.”<sup>92</sup> Palestine was, however, to remain the prime focus of Jewish transfer and the Jewish Agency drafted a memorandum calling for

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<sup>89</sup>*Ha'aretz*, July 8, 1938 cited in Beit-Zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism*, 145.

<sup>90</sup>*Haolam*, July 7, 1938. Ibid., 152-153.

<sup>91</sup>Dr. Mordechai Ehrenpreis, *Between East and West* (Av Oved: 1957), 223-224. Ibid., 144.

<sup>92</sup>*Davar*, July 5, 1938. Ibid., 145.

resettlement within Palestine and Transjordan. British Zionists called upon the Home Government to immediately admit large numbers of German and Austrian Jews into the Mandate. When it became clear that Britain did not intend to alter its policy on immigration into Palestine and would not broach the subject at the Conference the Zionist delegation at Evian announced that it would not be considered “worthwhile” for Chaim Weizmann to appear before a sub-committee “as one of fifty representatives of other private organizations.”<sup>93</sup>

A number of private organizations dealing with the refugee problem submitted to the British Home Secretary a memorandum on June 15, 1938 regarding the treatment of émigrés who had been allowed entry into the United Kingdom. A deputation, chaired by the Archbishop of Canterbury called upon the Government to exert the utmost degree of international cooperation at the conference.<sup>94</sup>

It soon became clear at the Conference that territories with sizable Muslim minorities would be excluded from consideration as possible sanctuaries for stateless Jews. The colonial powers feared that Muslim-Jewish discord would lead to instability within their possessions. The importance of maintaining Arab support for Britain in the Middle East and elsewhere was summarized in statements made by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on April 20, 1939 (before the issuance of the May White Paper severely curtailing Jewish immigration into Palestine): It was of “immense importance” strategically “to have the Moslem world with us...If we must offend one side, let us

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<sup>93</sup>*Davar*, July 14, 1938. Ibid., 146.

<sup>94</sup>Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 240. The delegation included Lord Sempill, the Bishop of Chichester, Otto Schiff, Brigadier General Sir Wyndham Deedes, Lord Cecil, Sir Frederick Kenyon, and A.G. Brotman and other experts.

offend the Jews rather than the Arabs.”<sup>95</sup> Sir Herbert Emerson provided the British Government with a definition of “refugee” which would be utilized to control the numbers of Jews allowed via quota to enter Palestine. According to this definition a refugee was a person who had “fled his country” for another locale due to fears that “his life was in jeopardy.” Jews would not be considered refugees as long as they remained within Germany proper, albeit “oppressed” and “pursued” by an intolerant government and society. They remained “responsible for their own fate.” Therefore, the rescue work of Sir Herbert began only when the potential refugee crossed the frontier of the Reich.<sup>96</sup>

Some Jews, however, strongly doubted the success of the Conference. S.A. Whaley, the Jewish Principal Secretary of Finance in the United Kingdom, predicted that the meeting would result in a “fiasco.” He noted that few governments were currently admitting significant numbers of refugees and were unlikely to alter their entry policies. He expected the uttering of “platonic sympathies” from the various delegations and believed that the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees would not serve any “useful purpose” and, in fact, might interfere with the functions of the League’s High Commissioner.<sup>97</sup> The Dutch Committee for Jewish Refugees advised relief organizations within The Netherlands not to send memoranda or petitions to the meeting as it had been “earnestly advised by the Foreign Office and the [Ministry of]

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<sup>95</sup>Bat Ye’Or and Miriam Kochan, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2002), 355.

<sup>96</sup>Meier Sompolsky, *Britain and the Holocaust: The Failure of Anglo-Jewish Leadership?* (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), 43.

<sup>97</sup>S.D. Waley to Sir Frederick Phillips, memorandum, Evian Conference, June 17, 1938 cited in London, *Whitehall*, 88.

Justice, for highly commendable reasons that *no* petitions should be sent, particularly by Jews...either to the Dutch Government or to the Evian Conference.”<sup>98</sup>

Roosevelt apparently believed, as stated in the official invitation, that the bulk of the refugee work would be carried out and financed by private organizations. Consequently, he called upon the leaders of these groups to meet with him in Washington on April 14 in order to create the Presidential Advisory Committee on Political Refugees (PACPR); a construction which was tasked to cooperate with and render assistance to any rescue plans formulated by the international conference in Evian. The objectives, however, were not clearly defined and any financing was expected to be donated by non-governmental sources. The majority of its membership was, significantly, non-Jewish.<sup>99</sup>

James G. McDonald assumed the chairmanship during the first meeting on May 16, 1938 and Samuel Cavert became secretary. The committee set out to assess potential sites of resettlement and worked through the offices of the State Department with Roosevelt assuming little or no personal involvement. Assistant Secretary of State George Messersmith cautioned against too much optimism. He advised the PACPR to “frankly face certain facts at the outset.” Although the various delegations were “deeply moved by humanitarian instincts” the American diplomat observed they were attending

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<sup>98</sup>David Cohen (head of the Committee) to D.M. Sluys, Secretary of the Union of Ashkenazi Communities, June 21, 1938, Archives of the Jewish Refugee Committee, file 5 cited in Michman, “The Committee,” 218.

<sup>99</sup>FDRL/OF 3186, April 8, 1938, Invitation to White House Meeting cited in Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 25. The group included Joseph Chamberlain, Law Professor and Chairman of the National Coordinating Committee; Samuel Cavert of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans, chairman of the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany; Louis Kennedy, president of the National Council for Catholic Men; Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury; Bernard Baruch, presidential adviser; James G. McDonald, former League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany; and later Rabbi Stephen Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress.

the congress with little “enthusiasm,” “much reserve” and minimal willingness to make national “sacrifices.” Messersmith expected the delegates to “render lip service” to the assistance of refugees while avoiding any modification of their immigration policies. Although the consolidation of the American quotas for Germans and Austrians offered “little positive action” he hoped that the “liberal attitude” adopted by the United States towards the involuntary émigrés would “serve as an example and incentive to other countries” that would “go far towards relieving the situation.”<sup>100</sup>

Messersmith’s sentiments proved to be quite accurate. The groundwork was laid both privately and publically for the approach that would be adopted during the oration of the conference. The importation of Jews created a potential risk to internal national security and stability. Refugees posed a threat to the native work force and raised the specter of dependency upon the public coffers. Palestine could have offered potential rescue to some of the refugees but British foreign interests vis-à-vis the Muslim world trumped humanitarian concerns. Perhaps more importantly, the failure of the Jewish community to present a united front and to speak with one voice relegated the Central European Jews, the principal figures of the conference to the inconsequentiality of the sidelines; mere onlookers in the drama of life and death.

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<sup>100</sup>Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the PACPR, May 16, 1938, YIVO, Joseph Chamberlain Papers, Box 3, Folder 58 cited in David Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 20-31.

**PART II**  
**HOPE ASCENDING**  
**Chapter 5**  
**Day One**  
**“Actual Racial Problem”**

“Shall we refuse the unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which the savages of the wilderness extended to our forefathers arriving in this land? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe?” Thomas Jefferson<sup>1</sup>

“A conference is a gathering of important people who singly can do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done.” Fred Allen<sup>2</sup>

The original planning for the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees (IGCPR or more familiarly known as the Evian Conference) called for two public sessions, which were later extended to six. The expansion of the number of open sessions provided the envoys with an opportunity to indulge in lofty oratory that highlighted their humanitarian concerns while simultaneously explaining why their respective nations could not act. Only one private meeting, composed of all the delegations, was held. Two sub-committees, imbued with the spirit of the official invitation, would actually carry out the work of the conference.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address March 4, 1801.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Allen available from <http://www.quotes.net/quotations/%22Evian%20Conference%22>; Internet; accessed July 23, 2010.

The first, the Technical Sub-Committee, chaired by Judge Michael Hansson of Norway, was charged with the examination of the legal aspects of emigration. Each country would be asked to supply the particulars of their immigration laws and policies, an estimate of the number of refugees that would be allowed entry and the specifics regarding any required documentation. The panel would report their findings to the general conference. The Hansson Committee would be composed of delegates from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, The Netherlands and Switzerland, assisted by Sir Neill Malcolm; nations that had already expressed their resistance to accepting and subsidizing additional involuntary émigrés. The response of this committee's membership to its appointed task was "far from enthusiastic" marked by poor attendance at its initial meeting. In fact, by the time of the fourth public session Chairman Hansson, frustrated by the panel's lack of interest, was forced to ask the delegations "to be good enough to send representatives to the second meeting of the Sub-Committee." As will be noted later by the Chief Concierge of the Hotel Royal the opportunities for entertainment and recreation in the vicinity of Evian and Lake Geneva proved too difficult to resist.<sup>3</sup>

The second working group, the Sub-Committee on the Reception of Those Concerned with the Relief of Political Refugees from Germany (including Austria),

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<sup>3</sup> Adler-Rudel, "Evian Conference," 251-252. Judge Michael Hansson assumed the office of President of the Nansen Office during January 1936 and directed the International Commission for the Assistance of Spanish Child Refugees during the Spanish Civil War. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace on behalf of the Nansen Office on December 10, 1938. The Norwegian jurist declared that the "biggest social question of our time" was the refugee problem and warned that five million Jews were at risk of becoming homeless and stateless and called for international loans to assist all refugees. "Suggest Loan," *The Kingston Daily Freeman* (Kingston, NY), December 18, 1938, 7 available from <http://fultonhistory.com/newspaper%2010/Kingston%20NY%20Daily%20Freeman/Kingston%20NY%20Daily%20Freeman%201939%20Grayscale/Kingston%20NY%20Daily%20Freeman%201939%20b%20Grayscale%20-%2000126.pdf>; Internet; accessed August 7, 2010.

chaired by the Australian Minister of Commerce, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas W. White (who openly opposed immigration into Australia), included emissaries from Belgium, the United Kingdom, United States, France, Mexico, Peru, Cuba, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Venezuela. Testimony would be restricted to those “organizations concerned with the relief of political refugees from Germany (including Austria)” and a memorandum would be submitted to the general meeting synthesizing the presentations.

Thirty nine refugee organizations were in attendance at the Evian Conference but only twenty four were ultimately permitted to address the Sub-Committee limited by severe time constraints. Each group would be allowed one spokesman who would be granted a maximum of ten minutes; later abbreviated to five minutes.<sup>4</sup> Although these Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) were expected to finance any resettlement project they were allowed to participate only in an unofficial capacity.<sup>5</sup> Four different strategies or themes resonated among these PVO's: 1. Mass emigration to Palestine coupled with a relaxation of the British imposed quota; 2. Assimilation within lands of temporary haven; 3. Resettlement in remote and underdeveloped territories and 4. Granting minority rights to Jews in nations offering sanctuary.<sup>6</sup> The Jewish representatives were “marched in one at a time, like military defaulters brought up before their commanding officer,” allowed to make their presentation and answer questions (if any were asked) and then “dismissed.” The hearing was handled by the chairman, T.W. White, with such

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<sup>4</sup> Proceedings of the Evian Conference July 7, 1938, 24; Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 103. Out of the thirty nine refugee groups attending the meeting twenty were Jewish; Anthony Read and David Fisher, *Kristallnacht: The Nazi Night of Terror* (NY: Random House, 1989), 231.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee (Evian) on July 14, 1938, Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Adler-Rudel, “Evian Conference,” 256.



“exemplary efficiency and dispatch” that it was completed over the course of one afternoon.<sup>7</sup>

Representatives of Austrian refugee organizations were barred from attending any of the meetings. Artur Rosenberg, representing the Federation of Austrian Exiles, labeled such a restriction as “scandalous [as] the committee was called to discuss our own people.”<sup>8</sup> He had informed the American delegation that seventy-five percent of Austrian citizens would leave Greater Germany if allowed to retain sufficient financial assets. A Nazi Government spokesman, however, branded such a claim as “too ridiculous for words” and cited the plebiscite of April 10, in which 99.75% of eligible Austrians supported the *Anschluss*.<sup>9</sup>

The German authorities (possibly Artur Seyss-Inquart himself) sent two Austrian Jews, Professor Heinrich Neumann von Hethars, a noted otorhinolaryngologist and Dr. Joseph Loewenherz, head of the Jewish community in Vienna, to the meeting and were rumored to have been authorized to seek specific proposals that would increase the facility and rate of Jewish emigration.<sup>10</sup> It was reported that Neumann bore an unofficial plan from the Reich Government in which Germany sought the evacuation of forty thousand Austrian Jews by August 1; a request that Neumann claimed Bérénger took “under advisement.” The physician claimed that his personal situation was “very, very difficult” as he was required to return to Germany “with a definite number to be

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<sup>7</sup> David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 886.

<sup>8</sup> *Washington Post*, July 7, 1938, 9.

<sup>9</sup> “Incident Mars Calm,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1938, 1.

<sup>10</sup> *The Times*, July 7, 1938, 16.

evacuated, not promises of investigation by commissions, or offices.”<sup>11</sup> Neumann denied that he had been given concrete directives by the German Government to present to the delegations. Rather, he would simply be following recommendations offered by Nazi officials in Vienna.<sup>12</sup>

Otto Hirsch of the National Representation of German Jews (*Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*), Michael Traub of the Palestine Office, Paul Eppstein, Zionist Seigfried Moses and Dr. Werner Rosenberg, who led a mission from the *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland*, attended the conference.<sup>13</sup> Lord Winterton, the head of the British delegation and later chairman of the permanent Intergovernmental Committee based in London, met privately with the German Jewish mission during the beginning of the Conference.<sup>14</sup> Hirsch advised him of the importance of Jews being allowed to retain sufficient financial assets to facilitate resettlement and estimated that approximately two hundred thousand Jews sought to leave the Reich. Hirsch intimated that the Nazi Government would negotiate with the *Reichsvertretung* upon the conclusion of the

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<sup>11</sup>“Public Sessions Tomorrow,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1938, 7. Heinrich Neumann von Hethars (June 10, 1873–November 6, 1939) was the premier ear, nose and throat specialist in Vienna prior to the onset of the war and had served as a consultant to British King Edward during September 1936 and also the Duke of Windsor.

<sup>12</sup>“Taylor Made Head of Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1938, 1.

<sup>13</sup>The German Government allowed official Jewish delegations to attend the Evian Conference: the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*—National Representation of German Jews established on September 29, 1933 and led by Rabbi Leo Baeck and Dr. Otto Hirsch (including Dr. Paul Eppstein and Michael Traub of the Palestine Office) and Dr. Werner Rosenberg of the Aid Association of German Jews or *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland* established in 1901 to aid Jews fleeing Eastern Europe. With the advent of Hitler its focus changed to aiding Jews seeking to leave Germany). The Jewish Community in Vienna (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien*) was represented by Prof. Dr. Heinrich Neumann, Dr. Joseph Loewenherz and a businessman, Bertold. J. Storfer. The two delegations jointly composed and submitted to the Conference a detailed statement outlining a potential scheme for orderly emigration from Germany and Austria. Storfer was later involved with the smuggling of illegal immigrants into Palestine.

<sup>14</sup>Edward Turnour, the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Winterton (April 4, 1883–August 22, 1962). Winterton had been appointed the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in March 1938 and was the Cabinet official dealing with refugee matters.

conference. The one remaining detail was the choice of destination and Palestine, Hirsch believed, provided the best location. However, unbeknownst to him the British Government, through discussions with the Americans, sought to block discussion of the Mandate at the Conference. Winterton did allow that a limited number of Jews would be resettled in African colonial holdings but it was not possible to increase the number of visas for Palestine.<sup>15</sup>

Myron C. Taylor met with Lord Winterton and Sir Charles Michael Palaiet, K.C.M.G., (a Jesuit; Minister Plenipotentiary to Austria at the time of *Anschluss*) during the evening of July 5 prior to the formal opening of the conference. The British, supportive of the work of the League's High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, Major General Sir Neill Malcolm, would not agree to any measures that would lead to a diminution of the League's work. Taylor responded that the United States could and would not participate in the creation of any international refugee body that would serve an "advisory" role to the High Commission but believed that the refugee organizations should serve complementary not subsidiary roles. He also acknowledged that it was the bureaucracy of the Secretariat of the League, and not Secretary General Joseph Avenol, that maintained "hostil[ity] to the extreme" towards the Evian Conference and hoped for its failure.<sup>16</sup> A Major Abrams, an official involved with League refugee operations, was

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<sup>15</sup>Dippel, *Bound Upon a Wheel*, 231. Hirsch (1885-1941) was arrested following *Kristallnacht* and sent to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp for two weeks and rearrested in February 1941 and was dispatched to Mauthausen Concentration Camp where he died. Eppstein assumed the role of Reich Union president following Hirsch's demise.

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Louis Anne Avenol (June 9, 1879-September 2, 1952). Avenol has been portrayed in James Barros, *Betrayal From Within: Joseph Avenol, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, 1933-1940* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969) as an ardent supporter of British and French attempts to appease Nazi Germany while, according to Lord Halifax, seeking to "protect the League of Nations from having to decide any questions of principle." Avenol opposed criticism of Japanese aggression in

distinctly antagonistic and engaged in “stirring up” opposition to the Conference especially among the Latin American delegations.<sup>17</sup>

The British delegation eventually agreed to join their American counterparts in the establishment of an “informal drafting committee,” excluding the Latin American nations, to produce a final resolution that would be presented to the heads of the various delegations.<sup>18</sup> Foreign Office Advisor Roger Makins believed that America, by necessity, must assume the leadership role in the Conference lest the “meeting...be chiefly occupied with passing the buck.” French Diplomat Pierre Bressy expressed his Government’s opposition to locating the planned Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees in Paris maintaining that such a site would “attract undesirable elements” and risk jeopardizing cordial diplomatic relations with Germany.

Taylor then outlined his conception of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees (IGCPR) which “tremendously impressed” Winterton. The American believed that Sir Neill Malcolm and Judge Michael Hansson of the Nansen Office possessed too much of a “pushing character” that would be disruptive to the efforts of the

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Manchuria and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia and offered only a muted response to the German annexation of Austria and silence following the Nazi invasion of Poland. During May 1940 Sean Lester, the Irish Deputy Secretary General, express dismay at the “dearth of [Avenol’s] leadership and inspiration...The office seemed without soul...” available from <http://www.historynet.com/joseph-avenols-betrayal-of-the-league-of-nations.htm>; Internet; accessed August 9, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> John Mendelsohn, ed., *The Holocaust*, vol. 5 (NY: Garland Publishing, 1982), 250-251.

<sup>18</sup> *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science*, vol. 15, 1974, 351. U.K delegation included Edward Turnour, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Winterton, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; Sir Charles Michael Palairot; Sir John Shuckburgh, Colonial Office Under-Secretary of State; J.G. Hibbert, Director at Colonial Office; E.N. Cooper, Director at Home office and R.M. Makins. This special group consisted of the 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Sherfield Roger Mellor Makins (Foreign Office Assistant Advisor on League of Nations Questions) for the UK, Pierre Bressy (Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Director of the International Unions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) for France and Robert T. Pell (Division of European Affairs, State Department) for the U.S.

working group. Consequently, they were dropped from consideration of formal membership on the soon-to-be established committee. Winterton and Bérenger then advised Taylor that he bore the primary responsibility to negotiate with the various delegations due to his role of Chairman and the “American initiative” that prompted the convening of the Conference.<sup>19</sup> U.S. Ambassador to Britain, Joseph Kennedy, was, however, skeptical of Taylor’s diplomatic qualifications and believed that he “not only [lacked] knowledge of the problem, but was making no attempt to get it up.”<sup>20</sup>

Despite rather inauspicious beginnings the Evian Conference formally convened on July 6, 1938 in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Royal with 140 representatives from thirty two countries. The meeting was scheduled to adjourn by July 17 to allow enough time for the delegates to reach Paris by July 19 when the King of England paid an official visit. The Conference would resume in Paris if necessary.<sup>21</sup> A telegram, read into the official record, was sent on behalf of the members of the Evian Conference to the American President by Myron Taylor. The committee offered FDR it’s “gratitude” for his attempt to devise a “practical solution” to the problem of forced emigration and was hopeful that a general “collaboration” of all parties would produce “successful results.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>“Report of Myron C. Taylor to the Secretary of State in Washington about the Evian Conference, July 20, 1938,” Mendelsohn, *The Holocaust*, 249-64.

<sup>20</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 104.

<sup>21</sup>Telegram from Ambassador Bullitt in France to Hull regarding discussions of Taylor with Bérenger. 840.48 Refugees/413, June 27, 1938, *FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938, 751. Beginning on May 30, 1938 a number of police raids in Germany were carried out on restaurants, cafes and other locales frequented by Jews. 397 Jews were arrested in Berlin “on political grounds” facing accusations of illegally removing possessions and finances out of the country. Similar raids occurred several weeks later in other cities in Germany as well as within Vienna. Some sources postulated that 2,000 arrests were made, timed to influence the upcoming proceedings at the Evian Conference. Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 200-201.

<sup>22</sup> “Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee,” Second Meeting, July 7, 1938, 17.

Senator Henri Bérenger, head of the French delegation, chairman of the French Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs and former member of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees, served as temporary chairman, and welcomed the delegates.<sup>23</sup> He described France as a nation of "refuge" and thus was certain that the Conference would achieve something "new and practical" to resolve the refugee crisis. While "heartily welcome[ing]" the attending private organizations he described the meeting as a simple "body" created by Roosevelt which would not serve as a "platform for declarations." The American President's goal was not to create any "innovations" but to bring together a committee composed of countries which would include non-members of the League.<sup>24</sup>

Myron C. Taylor, head of the American mission, next approached the podium. He began by describing the "millions" of people who had been or were at potential risk of being forcibly expelled from their country without consideration of the potential consequences. The fact that the world was in the grips of an economic depression with high unemployment, social unrest, a rising population and declining standards of living greatly complicated the search for a solution to the refugee problem. The calamity could no longer be considered a "purely private concern" but required international cooperation and action. A "major forced migration" was underway, affecting all races and creeds, professions and trades, forcing the nations of temporary and permanent refuge to rapidly

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<sup>23</sup>Henri Bérenger (April 22, 1867-May 18, 1952) served as Ambassador to the U.S. from 1926-1927 and had held the post of Chairman of the *Comité Général du Pétrol*.

<sup>24</sup> "Proceedings, First Public Meeting, July 6, 1938, 11.

devise a “long-range program of [a] comprehensive scale” that would solve the problem of “political refugees.”<sup>25</sup>

The “urgency” of the present situation led President Roosevelt to convene the Evian Conference. Taylor believed that the current humanitarian problem differed from earlier migrations.<sup>26</sup> Instead, the modern world faced an “artificially stimulated” exodus generated by the policies of “some countries” (Germany was not specifically) that resulted in the creation of “great bodies of reluctant migrants who must be absorbed in abnormal circumstances at a time of stress.” The scope of the problem was so “vast and complex” that only international cooperation could create a mechanism that would lead to a “practicable amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate human beings with whom we are concerned.” The only realistic goal of the initial Evian Conference, therefore, would be to establish the groundwork for the “machinery” of an intergovernmental body, preferably based in Paris that would over time devise a practical solution. While ideally all international refugee situations should be under the auspices of the League Assembly necessity required focusing on the “most pressing” issue of “political refugees” stemming from Germany and Austria. Therefore, the subjects of the committee would be limited to migrants who sought to leave the Reich because of “their political opinions, religious beliefs or racial origins” and those who had already left and were residing in temporary havens. Significantly, Taylor never used the word “Jew.” Age would play a role in the

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<sup>25</sup> “Text of Taylor’s Address at Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1938, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Taylor categorized earlier periods of mass migration: the “hostile movement of whole peoples advancing as military or political waves” into regions that were already developed; “colonization movements” under the auspices of organized governments; the migrations of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries involving individuals and families as a consequences of “unsatisfactory economic and living conditions” in their nation of origin and the hope for a better life.

ability of a Jew to leave Germany and the demographics and a breakdown by age in provide in table 6.

**Table 6: Demographics of Jewish Population in Germany as of January 1, 1938**

Age Group	Number	Percent
All ages	350,000	100.0
Under 20	54,300	16.0
20-44	106,700	30.0
45-50	37,100	11.0
Over 50	151,900	43.0

Statistics based on information supplied to the Evian Conference by the Central Organization of German Jewry. The predominance of older versus younger Jews was due to emigration and falling birthrates. Ariele Tartakower, "The Jewish Refugees," 324.

Taylor acknowledged the work of the League's High Commission for Refugees from Germany (HCR) and the Nansen Office but it was the official American view that these organizations should serve a complementary role to a new body that would be created by the Conference to deal with specific groups of refugees. Unlike the British who wanted any permanent Intergovernmental Committee to be subsumed by the League, the Americans wanted the new organization to be independent, noting that the League had not demonstrated any "great interest" in the German and Austrian refugee problem prior to the Roosevelt invitation and that it tended to limit "refugee work to juridical protection." The United States believed that Germany would cooperate to a greater degree with a committee located outside of Geneva and membership on the committee could more easily be restricted to receiving States.

Taylor also called for a confidential exchange of information between the delegations regarding the "number and type" of refugees that would be acceptable to each nation based on its current immigration and policies as well as identification of the



territories on to which resettlement could occur. The issue of appropriate travel documents and finance would also have to be faced. Taylor emphasized the “liberality” of existing American immigration laws and highlighted the consolidation of the annual German and Austrian quotas allowing 27,370 to enter per year; an annual quota that had not been completely filled since 1915.<sup>27</sup>

Significantly, the merging of the two quotas, which marked the extent of American rescue efforts at the meeting, allayed the fears of the other delegations that they would be subjected to American pressure to modify their respective immigration policies. Harold Troper and Irving Abella noted that the representatives were “stunned; the nations of the world had been mobilized for this?” The council members issued a “collective sigh” but for the population at risk Taylor’s announcement denoted a “cruel letdown; for everyone [else] at Evian it was a reprieve.”<sup>28</sup>

The American Chairman concluded by stating that the “forced and chaotic dumping of unfortunate people in large numbers” would exacerbate existing global

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<sup>27</sup>“Proceedings,” July 6, 1938, 11-13. A group of prominent Englishmen, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Noel-Buxton, Lord Cecil and Sir Wyndham Deeds, recommended on July 27, 1937, that the British Foreign Office propose the creation of a permanent inter-governmental organization to deal with the problem of the German refugee that would replace the League’s High Commission for German Refugees and the Nansen Office that were officially slated to close by the end of 1938. Support was offered by the High Commissioner Sir Neill Malcolm during September 1937 when he noted that “no appreciable progress has been made in the emigration and settlement of refugees.” Consequently, following the approval of the League Assembly in October 1937, an inter-governmental conference approved the February 1938 Convention concerning the Status of Refugees coming from Germany; a measure that would grant refugees papers similar to the Nansen Passport. The refugee would also be granted the right to work (*permis de travail*) within the signatory nations of the U.K., France, Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, provided they had maintained residence within the respective nation for at least three years, married a national or had a child who had been granted citizenship of that country. The League Council called for the consolidation, on May 15, of the Nansen Office and High Commission for German Refugees under a single High Commissioner. However, the refugees generated by the *Anschluss* in March were not placed under the terms of this new convention until June 12. Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year* 5698, 343-345.

<sup>28</sup>Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (NY: 1982), 31.

“racial and religious problems” stimulating “economic retaliation” against those nations responsible for involuntary emigration. The resultant “international mistrust and suspicion...and fear” would harm the policy of appeasement. The world faced “anarchy” and the risk of war unless a workable solution was found to avert “catastrophic human suffering.”<sup>29</sup>

The delegates spent two days deliberating the selection of the president of the conference. The United States preferred a French representative.<sup>30</sup> However, France reflecting the British and French view of the need for the United States to assume the leading role, insisted upon an American and ultimately Myron C. Taylor, “who represented that very eminent personality, President Roosevelt,” was chosen.<sup>31</sup> Twenty-five official delegates spoke during the Evian Conference and, with few exceptions, each resonated a common theme: each nation felt sympathetic to the plight of the refugees *but* domestic economic, cultural, racial and ideological factors limited or prevented the acceptance of forced emigrants.

Lord Winterton acknowledged that the United Kingdom was anxious to find a workable solution to the refugee crisis *but* high levels of local unemployment and overpopulation precluded it from continuing its “traditional policy of offering asylum.” Safe haven could now only be granted “within narrow limits.” While attempts would be made to assimilate many of the Austrian and German refugees who had already gained entry into Britain His Majesty’s Government would study the prospects of admission into

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<sup>29</sup>“Text of Taylor’s Address at Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1938, 9.

<sup>30</sup>Clarence K. Streit, “Taylor Made Head of Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1938, 1.

<sup>31</sup>“Proceedings,” July 7, 1938, 23.

the Colonies and especially the East African territories. However, such projects could only benefit a restricted number of families as regional socioeconomic concerns, overpopulation, climate, racial and political differences imposed barriers to mass immigration. He reassured the conference delegates that “His Majesty’s Government does not despair that some of its colonial territories might provide a solution of the problem.”

Winterton predicted that the task facing the international conference would be “immeasurably complicated” or potentially “insoluble” unless the Reich allowed refugees to maintain assets sufficient enough to facilitate immigration and resettlement “with some prospects of success.” It was unrealistic, he believed, to expect any “thickly populated” nation to accept individuals robbed of the “means of subsistence” prior to entry nor could private organizations be expected to bear the financial burden. He also warned that “false expectations” would be raised by the belief that “pressure on minorities of race and religion” could compel other nations to admit refugees.<sup>32</sup> Winterton carefully avoided any reference to Palestine in his opening remarks.

Although Jews represented the majority of the involuntary refugees Winterton informed the Jewish representatives attending the Conference that they would not be considered as active participants in the meeting. Arthur Ruppin of the Jewish Agency for Palestine described Winterton as “a notorious opponent of Zionism and a friend of the Arabs.” Ruppin noted that Winterton received the Jewish representatives “exceedingly coldly” and was dismissive of their opinions regarding the issue of Jewish migration from Central and Eastern Europe. The meeting, lasting only fifteen minutes, was a “slap on

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<sup>32</sup>“Proceedings,” July 6, 1938, 13-15.

the face” and Winterton emphasized that it “was not a conference...but an *intergovernmental* committee’s consultation [with] his intention being to make it clear to us that in fact we had no business to be here at all.”<sup>33</sup> MP Miss Eleanor Rathbone, during a House of Commons debate, also referred to the “pro-Arab sympathies of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.”<sup>34</sup>

Winterton served as Chairman of the Unofficial Committee to Defend Arab Interests in the House of Commons and was a friend of Iraqi Foreign Minister Nuri Said. Winterton believed (along with others) in the necessity of Jews remaining a minority group, limited to forty percent of the total population, within Palestine coupled with a strict limitation or outright banning of land sales to Jews. Such a process, it was hoped, would allay Muslim fears, put an end to the Arab Revolt and pave the way for self-government. Said, however, would not accede to this plan. He envisaged the creation of an Arab confederation, linking Palestine, Transjordan, Iraq and possibly Syria. Restrictions on Jewish immigration into the Mandate would continue in order to maintain the ratio of seven Arabs to four Jews, ensuring a permanent Muslim majority in Palestine. Thus, Palestinian Arab fears of Jewish economic and political domination would be eliminated.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Arthur Ruppin, *Pirkei Hayyai: be-vinyan ha-arez ve-ha'am*, iii (Tel Aviv, 1968), 302-303 cited in Vital, *A People Apart*, 881-889.

<sup>34</sup>“Oral Answers to Questions—Refugees” House of Common Debates, June 27, 1938, House of Commons Debates, June 27, 1938, vol. 337, cc1516-7, available from <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1938-06-27a.1516.8&s=%22Evian+Conference%22#g1516.9>; Internet; accessed August 7, 2010. Eleanor Rathbone (May 12, 1872-January 2, 1946) was the Member of Parliament for the Combined English Universities and one of the first women to serve in the House. She was a social activist for feminine issues, independence of the British Colonies and became one of the most outspoken MP’s offering support for Jewish refugees.

<sup>35</sup> Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 439; Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate, The Making of British Policy 1936-45* (London: Paul Elek, 1978), 27, 197, fn101; Yehoshua Porath, “Nuri al-Sa’id’s

Unlimited Jewish migration into Palestine, however, was an entirely “untenable” proposition due its territorial size, “special considerations” arising out of the British Mandate, “as well as the local situation [the Arabs], which cannot be ignored.”<sup>36</sup> The Arabs feared that the refusal of the democracies to accept a “relatively small number of refugees” could translate into a drastic demographic shift in Palestine should the Mandatory Power allow the entry of thousands of Jews; a move, of course, favored by the Zionists as the “only answer to Hitler.”<sup>37</sup> 61,000 Jewish refugees had entered Palestine in 1935 but the Royal or Peel Commission of 1937, investigating the possibilities of partitioning the Mandate, recommended that Jewish immigration be capped at 12,000 per annum. However, in that year only 10,500 actually landed. The admittance level rose in 1939 to 16,400 but following the direction of the Woodhead Commission and the issuance of the White Paper of May 1939 British policy would only allow the resettlement of 75,000 over the next five years after which further Jewish immigration would be terminated. By October 1936 the population of Palestine consisted of seven hundred thousand Arabs and four hundred thousand Jews.<sup>38</sup>

Henri Bérenger began his formal presentation by lauding France’s long history and tradition of offering asylum to refugees. He acknowledged, however, that current

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Arab Unity Programme,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 4 (October 1984):79-80. Echoing similar sentiments was Sheik Hafiz Wahba, the Saudi Minister to London, who warned Jews that peace in Palestine was dependent upon Jewish concessions to maintain permanent minority status. *The Sentinel*, July 7, 1938, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 442.

<sup>37</sup>Thomas Baylis, *How Israel Was Won: A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999), 32.

<sup>38</sup>Geoffrey Wheatcroft, *The Controversy of Zion: Jewish Nationalism, the Jewish State, and the Unresolved Jewish Dilemma* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1997), 209; Porath, “Nuri al-Said,” 79.

domestic, economic, social and political considerations (the *Anschluss*, increasing persecution of Austrian Jews and concerns about forced emigration of Eastern European Jews as well as national security—perceived threats of a resurrected and powerful Germany and fears of admitting enemy aliens) had forced the French Government, under Premier Edouard Daladier, to adopt a policy of restricted immigration. The Third Republic had “already reached, if not already passed, the extreme point of saturation.” Since the end of the Great War approximately two hundred thousand refugees (Nansen, Italian, Spanish and Central European) had already been admitted onto French soil of which twenty percent were Jewish. France, Bérenger believed, was no longer capable of accepting further refugees. The nation also faced the difficulties of assimilating the three million aliens already resident within a country that had a population exceeding forty million.<sup>39</sup> [See Appendix A for figures on Jews admitted into different countries, 1933-1945, as noted by different authors and Appendix B for number of officially recorded unassimilated political refugees within France 1922-1939.]

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<sup>39</sup>During the period between 1918-1933 France’s willingness to accept refugees was motivated not only by humanitarian concerns but also as a means of replacing the laborers who had become the dead, missing and wounded of the Great War. Both immigrants and displaced refugees would serve to restore and widen the scope of the nation’s economic, agricultural and economic base as well as provide potential manpower for the French armed services. A number of agreements were initialed during the Inter-War period to import and employ foreign workers and included Poland, June 27, 1920; Czechoslovakia, January 15, 1921; Italy, May 21, 1921; Luxembourg, January 4, 1923; Belgium, December 27, 1923; Austria, July 31, 1928; Greece, March 11, 1929 and Rumania, February 3, 1930. Gary S. Cross, “Toward Social Peace and Prosperity: The Politics of Immigration in France during the Era of World War I,” *French Historical Studies* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 610, 622. A clear differentiation was not made between the status of refugee and immigrant as a variety of factors motivated transnational movements and included domestic political instability or perceived threats to life and property. There was the belief that political refugees would conflate their own security with that of France as compared with the motivations of immigrants who entered the country for different reasons. Refugees were granted citizenship, identity papers and permits to work in France but were excluded from voting. The French public remained supported of the entry of refugees until the domestic and international political crisis shifted in the mid to late 1930s. The French Government claimed that during 1933-1936 180,000-250,000 refugees had been accepted but late 1930s sources maintain that the figure was as high as 400,000-600,000. Raymond Millet, *Trois millions d’étrangers en France Les indésirables Les bienvenus* (Paris: 1938) and Simpson, *The Refugee Problem*, 333-334 cited in Maga “Closing the Door,” 425-426.

The Evian Conference was not an “international conference,” Bérenger advised, but an “Intergovernmental Committee...not a forum for eloquent speeches... [but serving as] a center for the coordinated work of practical experts.” While pledging his country’s cooperation he warned that France had “already almost exhausted her own resources” which, unfortunately, did not exceed “her zeal to serve the cause of humanity.” The French nation could not be expected to allow further entry of “homeless German wanderers.”<sup>40</sup> He, like the other European and United States delegates, expected that the “new countries” of Latin America should bear the brunt of resettlement.<sup>41</sup> Bérenger, while acting as France’s representative to the League of Nations’ High Commission for Refugees (HCR), had already declared in December 1933 that France must function as a nation of transit or “way station” rather than serve the role of final destination.<sup>42</sup>

The Chief of the *Sûreté*, Jean Berthoin, argued that the economic depression had forced France to accept only those refugees who possessed transit visas for other states, proper documentation, sufficient funds or the requisite skills that would benefit the national economy or augment the “intellectual patrimony of our country.” “The present state of saturation” prevented continuation of an open door immigration policy. France could no longer accept the “waste products of the entire Austrian or German immigration.” The Minister of the Interior Albert Sarraut and Berthoin ordered the border security forces to carry out the policy of “*refouler* without mercy.” The unwanted would

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<sup>40</sup>“Proceedings,” July 6, 1938, 15-16.

<sup>41</sup>*St. Petersburg Times*, July 6 and 8, 1938.

<sup>42</sup> Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 15.

be returned to Germany and Austria.<sup>43</sup> Such a policy represented, according to Vicki Caron, a “virtual death sentence to the right of asylum in France” and became the basis upon which French policy was framed at the Evian Conference.<sup>44</sup>

Bérenger’s views reverberated in moderate newspapers such as *Le Temps* which likewise declared that France was “saturated” with aliens and could only serve as a point of transit. France needed to ensure that its “physical, moral and intellectual equilibrium [was] not abruptly disrupted by a pronounced influx of elements too different and sometimes unassimilable.”<sup>45</sup> Such refugees were a threat to domestic employment, a potential source of crime, a burden to social services and “at times [they would] mar the physical appearance of our cities.” Therefore, a strategy of highly judicious immigration would need to be followed in view of “the numerical [dis]proportion between natives and foreigners,” while remaining cognizant of the declining birth rates among the French. “The unfortunate fact is that, alas, it is not the elites of Europe...who are flocking to us.”<sup>46</sup>

Following the adoption of the Nuremberg Race Laws France enacted an official policy of impeding the entry of refugees and attempted to utilize the League High Commissioner as a means of removing those who had already found temporary sanctuary on French soil.<sup>47</sup> Minister of the Interior Sarraut announced in the Decree law of May 2,

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<sup>43</sup> “Note: a/s réfugiés austrichiens. Réunion du Comité d’Evian,” June 13, 1938, *Ministère des Affaires Etrangères* (MAE), Paris, *Société des Nations* (SDN), 1 M 1815, 156-161. Ibid., 184.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 184

<sup>45</sup> “*Le Problème des réfugiés*,” editorial, *Le Temps*, July 8, 1938, 1. Ibid., 278.

<sup>46</sup> “*Les Etrangers en France*,” editorial, *Le Temps*, May 16, 1938, 1. Ibid., 279.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 39.



1938 that the stability of the nation was threatened by the “ever-growing” number of aliens residing on French soil. While claiming that the Republic would continue to honor its “traditional rules of French hospitality” the current situation mandated enactment of a careful screening process to separate “foreigner[s] of good faith” from the “clandestine foreigners, irregular guests...unworthy of living on our soil.” Those selected for entry would be welcomed but the “undesirables” would be forcibly expelled.<sup>48</sup> Edouard Daladier, at various times Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, and General Maurice Gamelin of the General Staff, called for enactment of stricter entry criteria and the possible elimination of refugee admission altogether. Such aliens posed a threat to domestic labor and could represent a “Trojan Horse of spies and subversives” that abused France’s tradition of the “open door” while serving Nazi plans to destabilize the French society and economy.<sup>49</sup>

The Foreign Ministry declared that it was impossible to admit refugees in a “permanent capacity” but potentially could agree to allow resettlement in the French colonies.<sup>50</sup> Emile Roche, an influential spokesman for the Radical Party, stated in an editorial published in *La République*, that high unemployment and oversaturation prohibited France from accepting any more aliens. He called upon the Government to promote emigration to French overseas holdings provided the project was infused with

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<sup>48</sup>*Le Temps*, May 5, 1938. Ibid., 174. Aliens would have to be in possession of valid visas or identity cards or face fines or imprisonment and special powers of expulsion were granted to the prefects and police.

<sup>49</sup>Daladier comments to the Second Session of the Inter-ministerial Commission for German Refugees, October 16, 1933 and November 13, 1933, *Serie Z-Europe 1930-1940, Allemagne (Questions religieuses)*, *Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*, no. 711 cited in Maga, “Closing the Door,” 428.

<sup>50</sup> Foreign Ministry (Europe) to the Ministry of Colonies (*Direction politique*), June 17, 1938, MAE, SDN, I M 1815, 153-154. Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 183.

sufficient capital to “create employment opportunities, new markets or new trade possibilities.”<sup>51</sup> The conservative paper, *L’Ordre*, urged the French authorities to follow the British lead of offering refuge in their Empire. The daily suggested that a sizeable number of Jewish families could be relocated to Madagascar and such settlers “would soon discover the joy of living through work and love of a new country.”<sup>52</sup>

However, the Minister of Colonies George Mandel, a Jew, warned on June 21 that any “Jewish colonization in our overseas domains” would result in “more numerous dangers than advantages.”<sup>53</sup> The spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior Bureau of Algerian Affairs ruled out re-settlement in this North African Colony due to Arab hostilities coupled with the urban background of the refugees who may have become tainted with socialist or communist ideologies. In addition, the poor local economy and lack of employment would undoubtedly place the new arrivals on the public dole.<sup>54</sup> The right wing group *L’Action française* opposed any resettlement of Jews in the colonies. “It would be inadmissible to deliver up merchants, French colonists, as well as natives of

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<sup>51</sup> Emile Roche, “*Pour une négociation*,” *La République*, August 3, 1938, 1. Ibid., 219.

<sup>52</sup> “La France doit faire un geste de solidarité en faveur des juifs chassés d’Allemagne,” *L’Ordre*, November 19, 1938. Ibid., 220.

<sup>53</sup> Minister of Colonies to the Foreign Ministry (Europe), June 21, 1938, MAE, SDN, I M 1815, 220-221. Ibid., 183. Mandel warned George Bonnet on May 25, 1938 that the Madagascar “affair” posed “ticklish political problems” for the Government. Transfer of Jews to another territory would give credence to the belief in the existence of a “Jewish question.” France risked appearing to be in agreement with certain foreign views that Jews were not “citizens but...outsiders properly subject to a special statute” and dependent upon the forbearance of the host nation. Such acquiescence on the part of the French Government to such a view risked “encouraging the very persecutions and harsh measures that have helped provoke the exodus of Jewish populations.” In addition, Mandel argued, could not the country of origin of the refugees (implying Germany) lay claim to any future “large and prosperous communities” successfully established by “Jewish colonists”? Mandel to Bonnet, May 25, 1938, French Foreign Ministry Archives cited in Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 62.

<sup>54</sup> Minister of the Interior (*Direction du contrôle de la comptabilité des affaires algériennes*), 4<sup>ème</sup> bureau, to the Foreign Ministry (Europe), July 2, 1938, MAE, SDN, I M 1816, 25-26. Ibid., 183.

Indochina or Madagascar, to the claws of German Jewish usurers.”<sup>55</sup> Roosevelt, however, had wanted the issue of colonial resettlement discussed at Evian and during June 1938 the State Department encouraged France to consider the possibilities of Madagascar. The U.S. agreed not to raise this issue on the Evian Conference agenda due to Western European fears that such action would stimulate the forced emigration of Eastern European Jews.<sup>56</sup>

American pressure to open up colonial holdings for refugees was, however, exerted upon the United Kingdom and France following the end of the conference. Taylor suggested, during September 1938, that France resettle thirty thousand refugees from Central Europe in its overseas Empire over a period of five years. The French Government was expected to provide the land but the costs were to be borne by Jewish organizations. Undersecretary of State Welles continued to press this issue from mid-October, especially highlighting the prospects of Madagascar.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, following *Kristallnacht*, Prime Minister Daladier pledged to Welles that France would accept forty thousand Jewish refugees in Madagascar while Foreign Minister George Bonnet promised that France would accept a limited number of Jewish refugees in its colonies as long as America and Britain acted in a similar manner.<sup>58</sup>

Similar concerns and conditions affected other European nations who expected the nations of the Americas to accept the majority of the refugees due to their smaller

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<sup>55</sup> “Va-t-on ressusciter le projet d’émigration juive aux colonies françaises?” *Action française*, November 27, 1948, Archives, *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU), ms. 650, box 14 (47). Ibid., 220.

<sup>56</sup> Roosevelt to Myron Taylor, January 14, 1939, 840.48 Refugees/1290B, FRUS, 1939,66-69

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 221.

populations and the availability of undeveloped lands.<sup>59</sup> The Dutch delegate, the Head of the Directorate of Legal Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, M.W.C. Beucker-Andreae, expressed his sympathy and acknowledged The Netherlands' "age-old tradition [of] granting generous hospitality," *but*, he declared, the small nation had reached the saturation point and could no longer accept additional refugees except in extraordinary circumstances. 24,000-25,000 had already been admitted into a country with a population of nine million. The enactment of more stringent entrance policies was mandated, it was believed, by unfavorable economic conditions, fears of offending the Hitler regime and concerns of jeopardizing its policy of neutrality in the event of war. The nation could only serve as a temporary way station on the route to other sites of permanent resettlement. Four hundred thousand Dutch citizens were unemployed leading the authorities to encourage the emigration of its own nationals as a means of decreasing population density and joblessness. The Government would cooperate in the establishment of training centers for Jewish refugees to facilitate transmigration. In addition, its overseas colonial possessions were deemed unsuitable for the resettlement of European Whites due to unfavorable climate.<sup>60</sup> Dutch borders were closed to German Jewish refugees by November 1938 and any refugees who had managed to gain entry would be arrested and interned in isolated special work camps.<sup>61</sup>

The Belgian delegate, Robert de Foy, the director of the Belgian *Sûreté de l'Etat*, highlighted Belgium's role in admitting and assimilating Russian and Armenian

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<sup>59</sup>Report of Norman Bentwich, cited in Marrus, *Unwanted*, 147; *St. Petersburg Times*, July 7, 1938.

<sup>60</sup>"Proceedings of the Evian Conference," July 7, 1938, 22.

<sup>61</sup> "Jews on Knees Beg Netherlands Entry," *New York Times*, November 14, 1938, 7; "Escaped Germans Turned Back by Dutch," *The Times*, November 25, 1938, 13.

refugees. Belgium had been a signatory to the Convention relating to the International Status of refugees (Geneva, October 18, 1933), The Provisional Arrangement Concerning the Status of Refugees Coming from Germany (Geneva, July 4, 1936) and had participated in (but not yet ratified) the creation of the Geneva Convention of February 10, 1938 that was to supplant the 1936 Arrangement. As a consequence, the Belgian Nation had received 8,800 Russian and assimilated refugees: 2,000 Germans, 800 Austrians, 3,000 Spanish children and 120 adults, 250 Italians and 80 Stateless refugees—totaling 15,050. The country was geographically small in size with a dense population of 7,800,000 of whom 319,230 were aliens. Approximately 250,000 were unemployed. Although it was obvious that Belgium had responded in the “most loyal and generous manner” to the international agreements on refugees current conditions (German anti-Jewish policies, the need to maintain friendly relations with the Reich and threats of mass expulsions from Eastern European countries) prevented, “to her great regret,” the possibility of assuming “fresh international obligations” entailing unknown consequences which might overwhelm “her practical possibilities.” Belgian actions were based on the proportionate responses of the other nations and the “hope that, with patience, openings may be found in overseas territories...”<sup>62</sup>

Lt. Colonel Thomas Walter White, the head of the Australian delegation and chair of the Conference’s second sub-committee, acknowledged that Australia had

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<sup>62</sup>“Proceedings,” July 7, 1938, 18-19. Robert de Foy collaborated with the Germans before and during the Belgian occupation. General Eggert Reeder, the chief of the *Wehrmacht* in Brussels had informed Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RHSA) or German State Security, in 1943 that “De Foy had in the months preceding the invasion closely collaborated with the RHSA and with Heydrich himself, to whom he had provided important material.” Paul Belien “Belgian Authorities Destroy Holocaust Records,” August 31, 2006, *The Brussels Journal* available from <http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/1287>; Internet; accessed August 15, 2010.

already accepted hundreds of Jewish refugees but his country could do no more. It would be unreasonable, he asserted, for a young nation such as his, with its majority roots derived from England, to accept an influx “of non-British subjects” that would be difficult to assimilate into the dominant culture. Significantly, he uttered a refrain that resonated with many of the other delegations: It should be readily apparent that as Australia does not have a “real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one” by supporting “any scheme of large-scale foreign migration.” Entry would be limited to asylum seekers who would work within certain restricted livelihoods and trades that would not threaten the employment of Australian citizens.<sup>63</sup> Admission of large numbers of Jews, it was feared, would produce “enclaves” that would not be “easily assimilable” into the national body and risked creation of local anti-Semitism.<sup>64</sup> The *Sydney Truth*, an anti-Jewish immigration Labor newspaper, regarded the entry of “unwanted and unabsorbable Hebrews” as a threat to Australian “race, blood, and ideals.”<sup>65</sup> Alternatively, one editorialist regarded such an “undue suggestion of racial intolerance” as a “betrayal of our cherished traditions.” Acceptance of German and Austrian refugees would greatly benefit Australia by the infusion of “some of the best stock and finest minds of Europe.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>“Proceedings,” July 7, 1938, 19-20. Thomas W. White (1887-1957) had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during the Great War and served as a Federal Parliamentarian and Australian High Commissioner to Britain (1951-1956) and was knighted in 1952. He was the Australian Federal Minister for Trade and Customs and was in London when the invitation for the Evian Conference was issued. The Australian population in 1938 was approximately seven million. The nation occupied three million square miles of land.

<sup>64</sup>“Jews Seeking to Enter Australia: 4,000 Applications,” *The Times*, July 5, 1938, 13.

<sup>65</sup>*Sydney Truth*, October 16, 1938 cited in Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 134.

<sup>66</sup>*Western Mail and South Wales News* July 11, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 108.

White, however, enjoyed the backing of the Conservative Prime Minister Joseph Lyons who had stated that the Dominion had not yet reached the point of becoming overwhelmed by immigrants from the United Kingdom. Those “foreigners who were enterprising enough” and possessed assets that would assure self sufficiency as well as create jobs for Australian citizens “would be welcomed.” Nevertheless, the Government would not grant any “special concessions” or join any “scheme” of mass resettlement that would threaten domestic employment. Australia was sympathetic to the plight of the Jewish refugees *but* the Government could not allow a “large influx of aliens.” “Preference” would be granted to “suitable migrants of British stock.”<sup>67</sup>

Minister of the Interior John McEwen believed that Jews represented a “highly intelligent” and successful class but their parochialism, religious and marital beliefs and separatist tendencies would interfere with successful integration. “Difficulties” would undoubtedly arise wherever they constituted a significant percentage of the population. However, if a limited number of Jewish refugees was to be admitted preference should be given to those in “greater need” from Germany and Austria rather than émigrés from Eastern Europe who had “practically formed a state within a state.”

The Cabinet adopted a quota system during June 1938 that divided prospective refugees into the categories of “Jews,” “Christian non-Aryans” and “Aryans.”<sup>68</sup> Such a program was extremely cumbersome as it required refugee applications to be sent to Canberra for review and approval before a response was sent back to Europe; a process

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<sup>67</sup>Schneiderman, *Review of the Year* 5698, 179.

<sup>68</sup>Andrew Markus, “Jewish Migration to Australia 1938-49,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 13, (November 1983): 19.

that would take a number of months.<sup>69</sup> This restrictive arrangement limited the number of landing permits granted German and Austrian Jews to three hundred per month. Paul Bartrop has argued that such restraint originated in an “anti-foreign and anti-Semitic bias prevalent among some key personnel in the government departments.”<sup>70</sup> Blakeney, on the other hand, claimed that opposition to Jewish immigration, primarily those from Central and Eastern Europe, was not primarily driven by anti-Semitic sentiments but rather by fears of its effect on unemployment, salaries, standards of living and working conditions.<sup>71</sup> Australia did agree during December 1938 to accept 15,000 immigrants or in the language of the day, “reffos” (refugees), over a period of three years but only 9,000 actually landed during 1933-1943.<sup>72</sup>

Interestingly, some Australian Jewish leaders viewed their foreign co-religionists with considerable narrow-mindedness and opposed the immigration of their German and Austrian brethren. Sir Samuel Cohen, the president of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, stated during August 1938, that the thoughts of Australian Jews were

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<sup>69</sup> Samuel Pietsch, “Not ‘desirable’: Government Scapegoating of Jewish Refugees,” Jubilee Conference of the Australasian Political Studies Association Australian National University, Canberra, October 2002, 2 available from <http://arts.anu.edu.au/ss/apsa/Papers/pietsch.pdf>; Internet; accessed October 3, 2010.

<sup>70</sup>Paul Bartrop. *Australia and the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (Kew, Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 129-130, 245.

<sup>71</sup>Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 63.

<sup>72</sup> Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 147, 159; Caroline Moorehead, *Human Cargo: A Journey Among Refugees* (NY: Picador, 2006), 117. Prejudice against Jews extended into the war years. Facing fears of a German invasion of Palestine and Cyprus the British Government sought agreement with the Australian Prime Minister to accept 5,500 British subjects who faced possible evacuation. In response, the Department of the Prime Minister queried the number of Jews that would be included and the percentage that spoke English. By September 1941 the Australian Government agreed to accept until the end of the war 2,000 British evacuees from the Palestine Mandate provided they spoke English, were family members of British police officers or other governmental officials (especially if of the female gender) and were non-Jewish. Peter Y. Medding, ed., *Values, Interests and Identity: Jews and Politics in a Changing World Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 187.



“British through and through.” The admission of “hordes” of European Jews would endanger the “freedom and civilization we are all privileged to enjoy...”<sup>73</sup> The Society sought to influence the Government to decrease the visa allotment by one-third. Superior airs and fears of inciting domestic anti-Semitism led the local Jewish community to caution new arrivals on their public behavior:

Above all, do not speak German in the streets and in the trams. Modulate your voices. Do not make yourself conspicuous anywhere by walking with a group of persons, all of whom are loudly speaking a foreign language. Remember that the welfare of the old-established Jewish communities in Australia, as well as of every migrant, depends upon your personal behavior. Jews collectively are judged as individuals. You, personally, have a very grave responsibility.<sup>74</sup>

The strategy of the Canadian Government was to prevent the entrance of foreign Jews. Immigration laws and guidelines would need to be suspended or revised to make special allowance for stateless refugees. Farmers and other agricultural workers could be

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<sup>73</sup>*Truth* (Sydney), August 7, 1938 cited in B. Hooper, “Australian Reaction to German Persecution of the Jews and Refugee Assimilation” (M.A. thesis, Department of History, Australian National University, 1972), 78.

<sup>74</sup>“Jews’ Advice to Refugee: “Go to Country,”” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 13, 1938, 17. During 1930 the Australian Government would allow the entry of immigrants who possessed £500 or were dependents of aliens currently residing in the country. Following the enactment of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws prominent Australian Jews petitioned the Government under Prime Minister Lyons to decrease the requiring landing fee to £50 if guaranteed by family or friends. The Australian Jewish Welfare Service (AJWS) was also created to facilitate and coordinate the immigration process. The London based Australia House received 120 applications per day for immigration visas during March 1938 and the AJWS received 1,200 applications in the first week following the *Anschluss*. An opinion poll taken at the time of the Evian Conference demonstrated that only seventeen percent of the population favored mass immigration of Jews. Those resisting or opposed to enhanced entry were concerned about the limited assimilability of Jews into Australian society or the threat of Jewish control of certain aspects of the economy or professions. Strict limitations were placed on the number of Jewish refugee physicians allowed to practice in the country. Although the Lyons Government announced a policy of accepting 15,000 refugees over three years the nation was already accepting 5,100 per year (prior to December 1938); consequently, such a policy actually decreased the absolute number of refugees accepted. During the period of 1933-1939 only 7,000 Jews were resettled in Australia of which only 100 were Jewish children and adolescents. 570 British children, on the other hand, gained entry during 1940. Paul Bartrop, “Safe Haven: 2. Immigration and Settlement—Government Policy” available from [http://www.naa.gov.au/naaresources/publications/research\\_guides/guides/haven/pages/chapter2.htm](http://www.naa.gov.au/naaresources/publications/research_guides/guides/haven/pages/chapter2.htm) ; Internet; accessed June 27, 2010.

granted preferential treatment in the admission process.<sup>75</sup> The Prime Minister, William L. Mackenzie King, reacting to the U.S. announcement of the Evian Conference, feared that alien Jews would contaminate Canada's "bloodstream," adversely affect national unity and embolden the anti-Semitic separatists of the *Quebecois*. Why create, he asked, an "internal problem" in the process of solving an "international one." Canada had to be protected from the "unrest" of the Continent and avoid the "intermixture of foreign strains of blood." Admission of stateless Jews would lead to "riots" and to strife between the central Government and the provinces.<sup>76</sup> The paper *Le Devoir* asked why Canada should admit Jewish refugees. "The Jewish shopkeeper on St Lawrence Boulevard does nothing to increase our natural resources." French-Canadian Members of Parliament opposed Jewish immigration. H.E. Brunelle, for example, accused Jews of creating "great difficulties" wherever they settled. Members of the St. Jean Baptiste Society, with the support of MP Wilfrid La Croix, presented a petition to Parliament vigorously objecting to "all immigration" and particularly the admittance of Jewish refugees. Such opposition represented the "instinct of self preservation [of the Christian religion and French culture]."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>The Canadian population in 1938 was approximately 10,000,000 in an area exceeding the size of the United States.

<sup>76</sup> Mackenzie King Diary, March 29, 1938, 256.

<sup>77</sup>Irving Abella & Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen, 1982), 18. St. Jean Baptiste Society (*Société Saint-Jean Baptiste*) was a French Canadian patriotic society founded on June 24, 1834 by Ludger Duvernay who sought to instill Franchophonic nationalism among the French speaking population. "St-Jean-Baptiste Society" The Canadian Encyclopedia 2010 available from <http://thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0007080>; Internet; accessed August 15, 2010. Brunelle opposed Jewish immigration because of the "deplorable" state of "thousands of [his] fellow citizens." He believed that "charity begins at home." While having "no brief against the Hebrew race [and] deep sympathy" for those facing persecution at the hands of the Nazis Jews had been the "cause, justly or unjustly of great difficulties in various countries" and since "history repeats itself" Canada must avoid creating its own Jewish problem. Hamerow, *Why We Watched*, 157.

The Nationalist Socialist Christian Party (*Parti National Social Chrétien*), led by Adrien Arcand, the publisher of Montreal's Fascist paper *Le Combat National* and other anti-Semitic publications such as *Le Miroir*, *Le Goglu*, *Le Fasciste Canadien*, *L'Unité Nationale* and *Serviam*, joined with 1,500 blue shirted Fascists from eight Canadian provinces in Toronto's Massey Hall on July 4 and created a new National Unity Party whose official slogan was "Canada for Canadians" and "King, country, Christianity." Fascism appeared to take root among the Quebecois due to lower economic standards of living when compared with the rest of the Nation.<sup>78</sup> Jews, Arcand maintained, were the root of "all the evils in the world" through the tentacles of their economic control.<sup>79</sup> He, like his German counterparts, called for an economic boycott of Jewish businesses and establishments in order for French Canadians to regain control over the "commercial [activities] of their own nation." It was essential for French Canadians to "prosper in their own land rather than the Jews."<sup>80</sup>

André Laurendeau, of the paper *L'Action nationale* and *Le Devoir*, warned, during a 1933 demonstration of the separatist and nationalist organization *Jeune-Canada*, that Jews were on a "Messianic mission" to control the world; a claim reminiscent of the oft cited and standard anti-Semitic fare, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>81</sup> Pierre

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<sup>78</sup>Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives-Collection Guide available from [http://www.cjccc.ca/national\\_archives/archives/arcguideA.htm](http://www.cjccc.ca/national_archives/archives/arcguideA.htm); Internet; accessed August 15, 2010; *Life*, July 18, 1938, 9; *Time*, July 18, 1938, 19.

<sup>79</sup>*Ottawa Citizen*, March 2, 1938, 13.

<sup>80</sup>Jacques Langlais and David Rome, *Jews & French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), 98.

<sup>81</sup>Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 305. *Jeune-Canada* was founded in Montreal in 1932 and supported French Canadian nationalism. Initially composed of university students, such as André Laurendeau, Pierre Danserau and Gérard Filion, its

Dagenais, the chief spokesman of *Jeune-Canada*, declared that the soul of Canada was threatened by the “Jewish element,” an entity more “powerful than the voice of blood.” The Jewish “plutocracy” was influential enough to elicit “condolences” from Government officials against the Nazi treatment of German and Austrian Jews but these same bureaucrats remained silent at the discriminatory treatment of French Canadians within their own country or the persecution of Catholics in Mexico, Spain and the Soviet Union. Similarly, Gilbert Manseau of *Jeune-Canada* claimed that Jews sought “special treatment” in Canada, seeking the status of an ethnic minority awarded the same national rights as other Canadians. Jews, he believed, could not be accorded such a status as the Constitution recognized only two national identities: British and French.<sup>82</sup>

Charles Frederick Blair, the Director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, was convinced that the European refugee crisis would inundate Canada with stateless Jews destined to become permanent public charges. Citing the Government’s post-Great War policy of excluding homeless refugees who were likely to “go on the rocks” and become dependent on government support Blair increased the landing fees from \$5,000 to \$15,000 and attached the stipulation that the émigrés be farmers.<sup>83</sup> He advised the Prime Minister that Jewish pressure to enter Canada had reached new heights but he was proud to admit that after “thirty five years of

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platform supported the rights of French speaking Canadians and the preservation of Quebec’s Catholic, rural, agricultural and Francophile roots. “Jeune-Canada” The Canadian Encyclopedia available from <http://www.canadianencyclopedia.ca/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0004127>; Internet, accessed August 15, 2010.

<sup>82</sup>“‘Nefarious Power’ of Jewry Attacked,” *The Montreal Gazette*, April 21, 1933, 10.

<sup>83</sup> Blair to T.A. Crerar, March 28, 1938 cited in Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada’s Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1977), 56. See also Abella, *None is Too Many*, 35.

experience” Jewish immigration had never “been so carefully controlled.”<sup>84</sup> However, Blair predicted that a successful Evian Conference would in essence reward the Germans by solving their Jewish Question and would undoubtedly encourage other Powers to follow similar policies which represented the “greatest danger” to Canada. Encouraging the resettlement of refugees was “akin in a sense to the paying of ransom to Chinese bandits.”<sup>85</sup>

Blair offered what he considered to be constructive criticism to the Jewish community. It “might be a very good thing,” he believed, if Jewry engaged in a period of “humiliation and prayer” during which they would come to terms with the “question of why they are so unpopular almost everywhere.” Christians should “frankly” explain the reasons for their disapproval instead of engaging in anti-Semitism. Blair did not doubt that the Jews would be as readily as accepted as “our Scandinavian friends” if they successfully divested themselves of their negative “habits.”<sup>86</sup>

Although Nazi anti-Semitic policies placed Jews at risk of “extinction” in Europe he did not imagine that admission to Canada would resolve the ubiquitous Jewish dilemma.<sup>87</sup> The Immigration Minister later opposed the landing of Jewish refugees from the ill-fated *S.S. St. Louis* during May 1939, believing that the granting of asylum would

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<sup>84</sup>Abella, *None is Too Many*, 8.

<sup>85</sup>Blair memorandum, April 19, 1938. Ibid. 20.

<sup>86</sup>Blair to F.N. Sclanders, September 13, 1938. Ibid., 9.

<sup>87</sup>Blair to Judd, October, 1938. Ibid., 35.

be followed by “shiploads” of other refugees. No nation could accept the number of real or potential forced émigrés and the “line must be drawn somewhere.”<sup>88</sup>

Likewise, Under-Secretary of State Dr. Oscar Douglas Skelton feared pressures from the Evian Conference would subject Canada to internal demands for the country to do something “for the Jews,” risk the generation of domestic anti-Semitism and influence other nations (primarily Eastern Europe) to solve their own Jewish Question by forcibly exiling Jews.<sup>89</sup> The ultimate and oftentimes pre-determined position of Canada and other nations was reflected in an undated and unsigned document filed among the records of the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa:

We don't want to take too many Jews, but, in the present circumstances particularly, we don't want to say so. Certainly, we don't want to legitimize the Aryan mythology by introducing any formal distinction for immigration purposes between Jews and non-Jews. The practical distinction, however, has to be drawn and should be drawn with discretion and sympathy by the competent Department without laying down any formal minute of policy on the matter.<sup>90</sup>

Hume Wrong, the Canadian Envoy to the League of Nations, was selected by King to represent Canada at the Conference; an assignment he did not relish. Wrong advised Skelton that he expected the meeting to be a “most unpleasant affair” as it sprung from one of Roosevelt's “sudden generous impulses” and was not a “well thought out”

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<sup>88</sup>Blair to Skelton, June 8 and June 16, 1939 cited in Irving Abella and Harold Troper, “‘The Line Must Be Drawn Somewhere’: Canada and Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939,” Paula Draper, Franca Iacovetta, Robert Ventres, eds., *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers and Communities in Canadian History* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 413.

<sup>89</sup>Skelton to Mackenzie King, March 25, 1938 cited in Abella, *None Is Too Many*, 17. Skelton was Undersecretary of State for External Affairs (appointed April 1, 1925 by King; anti-imperial and isolationist worldview) and former Professor of Political and Economic Science and Dean of Arts at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

<sup>90</sup>Public Archives of Canada RG 25 D1, vol. 779, file 382, External Affairs memorandum cited in Paul R. Bartrop “Drawing the Line Somewhere: The Dominions and Refugee Immigration in the 1930s,” presented at ACSANA Canadian Studies Conference '88 Canberra, Australia, June 22-24, 1988, 9.

concept. His participation represented, on the whole, an “unwelcome duty.”<sup>91</sup> He was instructed only to “listen, make notes and say as little as possible” while opposing any concrete solutions, “without seeming to be obstructionist.”<sup>92</sup>

The Canadian delegate informed the members of the Evian Conference that his Government felt “sympathy and concern...for the victims of changes of regime and of racial and class conflict.” Canada had generously admitted more than ten thousand political refugees following the conclusion of the Great War *but* economic problems had severely impacted Canada’s capacity to absorb “considerable number[s]” of additional émigrés. As a result, the Government was compelled to initiate a more restrictive immigration policy. There were, however, “special administrative exemptions” that the Dominion would, in concert with the other Powers, consider in the “most sympathetic and friendly manner which may be practicable in the circumstances.” Success of such a project depended upon Germany allowing retention of sufficient personal assets to facilitate and fund resettlement. Jews possessing sufficient capital to establish successful farms could be prioritized for admission.<sup>93</sup>

Overall, Wrong viewed the preparations of the Committee as being “very amateurish” and warned the Prime Minister that prospects for a meaningful outcome were “gloomy... [as] there seems to have been no effective diplomatic or technical

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<sup>91</sup>Public Archives of Canada RG 25 G1, vol. 1870, file 327c, part 1, Hume Wrong (Geneva) to Dr. O.D. Skelton (Ottawa), June 21, 1938 cited in Bartrop, “Drawing the Line,” 6.

<sup>92</sup> King to Wrong, Jun3 30, 1938 cited in Irving Abella, and Franklin Bialystok, “Canada,” in David S. Wyman and Charles H. Rosenzweig, eds., *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1996), 756

<sup>93</sup>“Proceedings,” July 7, 1938, 20-21.

preparations. I think the meeting should be as short as possible.”<sup>94</sup> He later advised King that there was “little chance” that “any clear conclusions” would result from the Conference.<sup>95</sup>

Following the conclusion of the conference King remarked that the admission of Jews posed a greater national threat to the internal harmony of Canada than did the Nazi or Fascist regimes. The Fuehrer and Il Duce, the Prime Minister believed, sought to provide “the masses of the people some opportunity for enjoyment, taste of art and the like.” “Dictatorial methods” were necessary to suppress those “privileged interests (presumably Jewish) that have previously monopolized it.”<sup>96</sup> Such a world view of Jewry was of course, in keeping with the widely held anti-Semitic belief in Jewish domination of society.

Following *Kristallnacht* King expressed the opinion in his diary that the nation “must do her part” in offering refuge to “some” of the Jewish émigrés; an act that would be “difficult politically.” King pledged to “fight for it as right and just, and Christian.”<sup>97</sup> In reality, however, Canada accepted only five thousand refugees, during 1933-1939, of which 3,500 were Jews. Most of these Jewish refugees were relocated from British internment camps as part of Canada's war effort to help house Austrian and German

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<sup>94</sup>Public Archives of Canada RG 76, vol. 432, file 644452, part 1, Hume Wrong to W.L. Mackenzie King, July 9, 1938 and June 29, 1938 cited in Bartrop, “Drawing the Line,” 6.

<sup>95</sup>Public Archives of Canada RG 76, vol. 432, file 644452, part 1, Wrong to King, July 9, 1938. Ibid., 8.

<sup>96</sup>Mackenzie King Diary, May 10, 1938.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., November 13, 1938.



“enemy aliens” that remained incarcerated until December 1943 when the camps were formally closed.<sup>98</sup>

Citing his nation’s “traditional policy” towards immigration,” Tomas Le Breton, the Argentine delegate (concerned that the United States and Great Britain were attempting to pressure Latin America into becoming the dumping ground for the refugees), acknowledged that his country had received the greatest number of Jews, second only to the United States. However, if the factors of geographic size and native population were inserted into the equation then Argentina had accepted a far greater proportion of the forced émigrés than did its North American counterpart. During 1935 for every forty eight Jewish refugees admitted into the U.S thirty two entered Argentina; considering the fact that the American population was ten times that of his country Breton deemed the Argentine contribution to the refugee crisis to be particularly “striking.” Taking into account South America as a whole Argentina had accepted more refugees than any other nation on the continent. Consequently, Le Breton believed that Argentina had satisfied its “duty of solidarity and collaboration” in the present humanitarian crisis. Agricultural entrepreneurs and workers possessing certain technical skills were preferred candidates for entry but care had to be taken to avoid overwhelming the domestic labor market. Argentina would carefully safeguard its national rights “in all matters relating to the manner in which, and the means by which, immigrants will be allowed to enter and establish themselves in our country...”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Paula Jean Draper, “Muses Behind Barbed Wire,” in *The Muses*, 272-81 cited in Donna F. Ryan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1996) , 135-137.

<sup>99</sup>“Proceedings,” July 7, 1938, 21-22.

However, by the time of the July conference the Argentine Government had enacted a variety of immigration barriers such as the requirement of a special landing permit issued by the Central Immigration Department located in Buenos Aires. This prerequisite was designed to guarantee the selected entry of refugees with agricultural backgrounds who possessed sufficient financial assets to re-establish themselves in a new location despite the fact that the majority of the immigrants were middle-class Jews from urban areas. 5,178 Jews were admitted during 1937 but only 1,050 in 1938.<sup>100</sup>

The Argentine reaction to the plight of Jewish refugees had been foretold by popular and national reaction to the *Anschluss*. The Catholic press in Argentina denounced the German annexation of Austria. *El Pueblo*, the Catholic newspaper of Buenos Aires, had viewed the earlier Dollfuss Government as the epitome of social dogma as espoused by Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI and viewed the *Anschluss* as an “Austrian tragedy” facilitated by international “collaboration” with the Reich. Little attention or sympathy was focused on the plight and potential fate of Austrian Jews or on German anti-Semitism. In fact, in January 1938, Gustavo Franceschi, the editor of *Criterio*, expressed his support for an Ecuadoran edict that ordered the expulsion of all Jews from that country. The Jewish Question in Central Europe was, many Argentine Catholics and nationalists believed, the result of Jewish perfidy rather than anti-Semitic governmental policies. The mass arrests of “the financiers of Vienna” were described, of whom the majority were highlighted as “Jews.” Jewish press attempts to counter Nazi anti-Semitism were portrayed by Church spokesmen in Argentina as “an expression of

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<sup>100</sup>Haim Avni, *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1991) 143; William F. Perl, *The Holocaust Conspiracy: An International Policy of Genocide* (NY: Shapolsky Publishers, Inc., 1989), 44. Each landing permit would have to be studied and approved by representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Relations, Agriculture and Interior.

hatred” comparable to German “propaganda itself” and Franceschi made no distinctions between the actions and reactions of the Nazis and Jews. Both groups, in his eyes, stood outside the blessings and protections of the Catholic Church.<sup>101</sup>

The Foreign Minister, José María Cantilo, issued Directive 11 on July 12, 1938; a decree publicly taking effect on October 1 (but secretly invoked immediately), which specified that all immigration applications were to be examined by an advisory committee composed of officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Agriculture. “Priority” was to be given to refugees “with the greatest capacity for assimilation in order to meet our social, cultural and economic needs.” Consuls would furnish the committee with detailed personal information, such as the reason for seeking entrance into Argentina. The board, upon approval of an application, would send the consul a landing permit. Persons submitting requests for relatives were required to provide proof of Argentine residency for two years and bear the cost of all processing fees. Tourists entering the country would be obliged to turn over their passports to immigration authorities and would be granted temporary tourist certificates of three months duration.<sup>102</sup> An addendum to the new immigration policy, Directive 8972, ended the landing exemptions previously granted first-class passengers arriving via steamship. Previously it had been assumed that immigrants traveled only in second and third class. These additional requirements would have the net effect of further decreasing the number

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<sup>101</sup>Graciela Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church and the Jews: Argentina, 1933-1945* (Jerusalem, Israel: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism, 2008), 138-139.

<sup>102</sup> Avni, *Argentina and the Jews*, 143, 144.

of refugees admitted into the country.<sup>103</sup> Security along the borders was to be enhanced to prevent the illegal entry of refugees.<sup>104</sup>

Franceschi described the new enactment as a “fine immigration policy...for such a worthy government.” He argued in an article, “Once again the Jewish Problem,” that German anti-Semitism was an expression of loathing and arrogance; attitudes banned by the doctrine of the Church. Argentine anti-Semitism, on the other hand, was a matter of “self-defense” and despite domestic generosity a “Jewish problem” did exist within the Republic that would inevitably occur “wherever the Jews [became] a sizeable section of the population.” A significant Jewish presence risked the creation of a more hostile domestic anti-Semitism as well as calls for mass expulsion reminiscent of Germany and Eastern Europe. He warned against international refugee conferences. In his opinion the Jewish issue represented a “national” as well as “a religious, social and economic question.” Refusal to accede to the goals of the Evian Conference represented “no more than a justified demand to seek a more just solution to this problem.”<sup>105</sup> Ultimately, between 1933 and 1945 approximately 40-45,000 Jewish refugees were allowed into Argentina.<sup>106</sup> Thirty five refugee ships were denied landing permits during 1938-1943

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>104</sup>Ronald C. Newton, *The “Nazi Menace” in Argentina, 1931-1947* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 150-151.

<sup>105</sup>Ben-Dror, *The Catholic Church*, 140-141.

<sup>106</sup>Ryan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseilles*, 136.

but approximately 39,400 Jews entered Argentina during the war years primarily illegally via Paraguay and Bolivia.<sup>107</sup>

Helio Lobo, the delegate from Brazil, indicated that Brazil had long held an “open door” immigration policy seeking the labor that would develop the country’s natural resources. During the period 1820-1930 more than four and a half million immigrants had been admitted primarily from Europe accounting for ten percent of the total population *but* current economic conditions mandated immigration restrictions to protect domestic employment. The ability of non-Latin refugees to assimilate into the dominant culture and potential alterations in the racial composition of the nation were additional concerns. The Immigration Law of 1934 established a two percent yearly quota based on each nationality that had settled in Brazil over the previous fifty years and amounted to 42,000 per year; most of whom resided in the countryside working in the agricultural sector. Germans comprised the fourth largest migrant group prior to World War I. The German and Austrian quotas respectively accounted for 3,099 and 1,655 immigrants annually.

The Immigration Law of 1938 continued the two percent benchmark but allocated unused quotas to other nationalities whose yearly allotment had been exhausted. A similar recommendation would be made by the British to the U.S. but the State Department would decline. In addition, eighty percent of each quota had to be reserved for “agricultural immigrants or technical experts in agriculture.” Brazil was, according to Lobo, ready to “respond to the noble appeal of the American Government” and would cooperate to the “limits of her immigration policy...for the sake of the lofty ideal which

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<sup>107</sup>“Argentina in World War II Timeline” available from <http://history.sandiego.edu/GEN/st/~tpace/Timeline.html>; Internet; accessed December 26, 2009.

all of us here have in mind.”<sup>108</sup> Taylor regarded Lobo as being “extraordinarily helpful” in influencing other Latin American nations to adopt a “reasonable point of view.”<sup>109</sup>

It was pointed out, however, that the majority of German and Austrian refugees were urbanites and not farmers. During 1937 Brazil had admitted 2,003 stateless Jews but only 530 in 1938. The Brazilian Government had agreed to the admission of nine thousand refugees over a three year period but with strict entry requirements: in addition to being true agriculturalists they had to possess \$2,400 over and beyond the amount covering travel and resettlement expenses.<sup>110</sup> Approximately twenty five thousand Jews were granted legal admission into the country during 1933-1942.<sup>111</sup>

The July 7 session ended on a common theme. Citing economic, social, political, religious, and ethnic concerns each delegate expressed sympathy but offered a host of reasons why their respective nations could not provide refuge to stateless immigrants. Oftentimes their home governments were secretly working behind the scenes to construct obstacles that would limit or block entry altogether. The Europeans and Americans expected the nations of Latin America to receive the bulk of the émigrés. Equally, these nations were resistant to accepting the role of dumping ground for a people that was considered less than desirable. Such rhetoric, gamesmanship and plotting would continue throughout and color the course of the remainder of the Evian Conference. The inherent

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<sup>108</sup>“Proceeding,” July 7, 1938, 17-18.

<sup>109</sup>Telegram from Taylor to Cordell Hull, July 14, 1938, 840.48 Refugees/513, *FRUS* 1938, vol. 1, 754.

<sup>110</sup>Proceedings of the Evian Conference, July 7, 1938; “Political Refugee Problem Puzzles World Diplomats,” *Meridian Record*, July 8, 1938, 3; *New York Times*, August 6, 1938; Perl, *The Holocaust Conspiracy*, 44; Gurlock, *America, American Jews*, 236.

<sup>111</sup>Benjamin Moser, *Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 86-87.

hypocrisy would become readily apparent to the victims, observers, the representatives and the Nazis but such knowledge would not alter the journey and eventual outcome of a meeting that, from its inception, was destined to fail.

## Chapter 6

### Day Four

#### **“Humanity Now Plunged into Despair”**

“I am my brother’s keeper and we are to be the benefactors of mankind and brothers to them all.”<sup>1</sup>

The Chairman, Myron C. Taylor, expressed during the third public session on July 9, 1938 his “pleasure” over the initial delegation statements to the conference.

Acknowledging the “economic and other difficulties” faced by the presenting nations their efforts had already provided “substantial contributions” to the work of the meeting. He was greatly encouraged by the “offers of cooperation so generously and unanimously extended” and was heartened by their profound “earnestness.”<sup>2</sup> A telegram was received from FDR in which he wished “for all success to the committee in its work, which is of such importance, for a large part of humanity now plunged into despair.”<sup>3</sup>

Cyril Blake Burdekin, a low-ranking diplomat in the New Zealand High Commissioners’ Office in London and delegate to the conference, expressed his nation’s “sincere sympathy” with the lot of the involuntary refugees *but* suggested that any intimation that the island nation could accept more than a limited number of refugees

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<sup>1</sup> “Our Refugee Stand is Praised at Camp,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1938, 15. Lt. Col. B.A. Tinter, Rabbi of Mt. Zion Congregation of New York City during Jewish services at the Citizens Military Training Camp at Plattsburg.

<sup>2</sup> “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.



would “only be raising false hopes.” The decision to admit any alien would be based on the likelihood of becoming a public charge and the demonstrable ability to prove that they would become a “useful citizen.”<sup>4</sup> Immigrants from Britain or of British origin were preferred and Jews were viewed as particularly unwelcome aliens. Jews who were allowed admittance faced bigotry and mistrust due to their differing culture. Although thousands (perhaps as high as fifty thousand) of Jews filed visa applications only 1,100 were accepted. Jews were not officially regarded as refugees but as émigrés subject to the requirements and limitations of the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of 1931.<sup>5</sup>

The Ministry of Customs was authorized to determine eligibility for entry based upon guarantees of employment, finances and the possession of such “knowledge and skills” which would facilitate absorption, promote the national economy and not pose any risk to the native population. Jewish refugees were advised by the New Zealand High Commissioner’s Office in London that officially the Government was not “encouraging immigration” of those lacking “British birth [or] parentage” and visas would be granted only in “very special cases.” The mid-1930’s Comptroller of Customs, Edwin Dudley Good, had declared that non-Jews represented the “more suitable type of immigrant.”

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>5</sup> Following an economic downturn in 1920 the New Zealand Government adopted a “White New Zealand” immigration policy which restricted entry to those who possessed a British background. Sanderson Beck, “New Zealand to 1950” available from <http://www.san.beck.org/20-13-NewZealandto1950.html> ; Internet; accessed August 22, 2010; Ann Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay: Refugees from Hitler in New Zealand, 1936-1946* (Wellington, Allen & Unwin, 1988), 15. The policy would allow entry of immigrants who were born in the United Kingdom or of British parentage and barred those who were naturalized British subjects, the offspring of naturalized parents or who were an “aboriginal Native or the descendent of an aboriginal Native from any Protectorate, Colony or Dominion who lacked British birth or parentage. Overall, non-whites were tacitly targeted for exclusion. Such categorization was extended to Jews and other non-British Europeans as well. “1920 White New Zealand Policy Introduced” available from <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/timeline/9/11>; Internet; accessed August 22, 2010.

Walter Nash, Labor Party Minister of Customs, warned that the assimilation of Jews into New Zealander society posed a “major difficulty” and risked generating domestic hostility. He feared that the urban, professional and trade backgrounds of these would-be immigrants would “beat us at our own game, especially the game of money making” and thus foster anti-Semitism. On other occasions, Nash stated Jews lacked the requisite aptitude needed to survive on the island nation. European Jews represented too much of the “clerical type” rather than the “building operative type” that his country required. However, local trade unions objected to the admission of Jewish skilled and unskilled laborers who, they believed, would potentially compete for employment. The Federation of Labor called for preference to be given for non-Jewish forced émigrés such as fellow unionists from the annexed Sudetenland and Austria.<sup>6</sup>

The local Jewish community attempted to persuade the National Government to admit Jewish refugees on the basis of individuality and not “mass migration.” The “life history and capabilities” of each applicant would be “known and vouched for.”<sup>7</sup> A writer in the liberal publication *Tomorrow* called on the Government to admit German and Austrian refugees. Such an act, it was argued, to accept a finite but liberal number of victims of persecution would alter the entire mood of the Evian Conference.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Beaglehole, *A Small Price to Pay*, 8-10, 14-17.

<sup>7</sup> Statement by Rabbi Solomon Katz, Chairman, Wellington Jewish Refugee Committee, *New Zealand Jewish Review*, (October 1938): 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Tomorrow*, January 18, 1939, 170 cited in “The Response of the New Zealand Government to Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939” available from [www.holocaustcentre.org.nz/oldsite/jewish%20refugees%20website.doc](http://www.holocaustcentre.org.nz/oldsite/jewish%20refugees%20website.doc); Internet; accessed June 11, 2010; “Refugees from Nazism” *Explore Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand* available from <http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealanders/NewZealandPeoples/HistoryOfImmigration/13/ENZ-Resources/Standard/1/en> ; Internet; accessed February 25, 2008. The Immigration Act was initially passed in 1920 and amended in 1931.

Jésus Maria Yepes of Columbia asserted that the Evian Conference faced two major issues: the “question of principle” and the “question of fact.” The former raised the concern as to whether any nation can “arbitrarily withdraw” citizenship from an entire group of people and create a “stateless” class dependent upon the charity and beneficence of other nations. Such a process represented an “evil internal policy” that reduced the Evian Conference to the role of a “modern *Wailing Wall*.” As long as this action was not confronted by the international community then “who knows how many” other groups faced oppression because of their religious or political beliefs. Unsolved and ignored the “bad example of the Old World” would be emulated globally creating a world that would “become uninhabitable.” Solution of this dilemma would require confronting the “causes of the evil” and extirpation at its “roots.”

Yepes suggested the creation of an investigative “legal sub-committee” that would analyze the “duty” of a sovereign government towards its own nationals and judge whether such people could be deprived of their citizenship without the automatic granting of another. The issue of suitable travel documents needed to be resolved and stateless political refugees would have to be granted a form of legal status. The mutual cooperation and participation of the League of Nations, International Labor Office and the Academies and Institutes of International Law were critical to such a process and the creation of a “draft resolution” that would reflect the opinion of the international community. Any State that failed to follow the precepts of such an opinion would risk exclusion from the “civilized world” and would be deemed to have become an “international outlaw.”

The Columbian delegate cited the “Declaration of the International Rights of Man” which, with the Covenant of the League of Nations” and the “great principles of modern international law,” affirmed that every State bore an obligation to preserve and protect the rights of personal liberty, property and life without regard to race, religion, gender or language. Article 5 avowed that a government could not arbitrarily withdraw citizenship from its nationals on the basis of religion, language or race. Such ideals were reiterated in Article 28 of the “Declaration of the Great Principles of International Law,” written by the Chilean jurist, Alejandro Alvarez.<sup>9</sup>

Despite lauding the nobility and loftiness of such idealism Yepes argued that the modern state needed to face the “question of fact.” Although a particular group of people confronted a potentially catastrophic humanitarian crisis each nation needed to remain cognizant of its own “particular circumstances” affecting its potential contribution to solving the problem of forced emigration. Despite Columbia's democratic traditions and “humanitarian feelings” the immigration of European aliens would have to be restricted to “respectable agricultural workers who are prepared to come and work on the land” and the nation would not “accept [or] tolerate” refugees who entered under false pretenses.

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<sup>9</sup>*L'Institut de Droit International* adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man on October 12, 1929. The Declaration was drafted by Andre Mandelstam, a Russian jurist and former director of the legal office of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1917. Following the Bolshevik Revolution he fled to Paris where, while teaching international law, he founded the International Diplomatic Academy with Antoine Frangulis. During November 1928 they composed a resolution, adopted by the Academy that listed state obligations to its minorities. During 1929 the International Law Institute in New York City promulgated the Declaration that was outlined by Mandelstam and influenced by the policies of the Soviet Government. Non-Governmental Organizations and academics supported the Declaration during the 1930's and called for the international application of its principles. Judge Alejandro Alvarez (born February 9, 1868) was a diplomat and law professor. Alvarez and Dr. James Brown Scott founded the American Institute of International Law in 1912 and served as its first Secretary General. He later served on the International Court of Justice after WWII.

“Intellectuals or traders, middlemen of all kinds” could not be admitted as they would pose competition against native businesses, industries, commerce and the professions.

Yepes concluded with a mild diplomatic rebuke to Béranger’s appeal to Latin America to admit the bulk of the refugees. The United Kingdom, France and The Netherlands could not claim that their abilities to absorb further refugees had reached the saturation point while they possessed territories in the New World. Béranger’s appeal must also be applied to the nations of Western Europe. He concluded by stating: “*Messieurs les français, Messieurs les anglais, Messieurs les hollandaise*, it is for you to act first: it is to you that this appeal is addressed.”<sup>10</sup>

Columbia required immigrants to convert to Roman Catholicism and by 1938 Columbia refused visas to any applicant who lacked a valid passport or who could not guarantee the ability to return home. Overall, during 1938 Columbia denied the entry of ten thousand German refugees although half had family or connections with friends within the country.<sup>11</sup>

Fernando Garcia Oldini, the Chilean representative lauded the “humanitarian motive” underlying the American convening of the Evian Conference. He believed, however, that it would be a futile and “risky” exercise to attempt to achieve an “immediate and complete solution” for the current refugee crisis due to its complexity and the diversity of its multifaceted components involving issues of territories allotted for resettlement, transportation, financial support and social constructions. Unless the

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<sup>10</sup> “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 25-27. Yepes served as Legal Adviser to the Permanent Delegation to the League of Nations with the rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

<sup>11</sup> Judith Liken Elkin, “The Reception of the Muses in the Circum-Caribbean,” *The Muses*, 291-302 cited in Ryan, *The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseilles*, 135-137.

conference remained cognizant of its inherent limitations there was a danger of creating “false hopes” and eventually “cruel disillusion.” Referring to the Conference of Migration for Colonizing Purposes convoked by the International Labor Office in Geneva Oldini warned that any potential emigration was intimately bound up with the issues of “production and unemployment” and the exportation of “surplus production” which would result from the rapid expansion of the labor pool. Bearing in mind the domestic effects of the Great Depression he warned that Chile would cooperate in this “noble effort...to alleviate human suffering” as long as it did not compromise native productivity and employment. The admission of any aliens would be based upon the “framework of existing legislation and regulations,” as outlined in the initial American invitation. Each potential immigrant would be viewed as an individual case and consequently, Chile could not bind itself to any “formal obligations” or to “broad, general solutions” but would remain open to and provide the “most cordial consideration” to any plan outlined by the Committee and would study with the “utmost goodwill” any reasonable project that would diminish the suffering of a group of people that “evokes the anxiety and sympathy of mankind.”<sup>12</sup> The Foreign Office did, however, enact new regulations limiting permanent residency to immigrants who were “farmers, capitalists, agricultural colonists or industrialist...”<sup>13</sup> Dissenting domestic voices, such as Senate Deputy José Irarrazaval, called for “keeping the Chilean traditional door open to all political refugees.” He

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<sup>12</sup> “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 27-28. Garcia served as the Chilean Minister in Switzerland and as its representative to the International Labor Organization with rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.

<sup>13</sup> *The Southern Israelite*, May 13, 1938, 1.

believed that Jews should not be excluded from the country for “racial reasons” and that Chile would establish an “example” by receiving stateless Jews.<sup>14</sup>

The Cuban representative, Dr. Juan Antiga Escobar, stated Cuba would not accept additional refugees beyond the quota allowed in its immigration laws but would agree to the “eventual admittance of capitalists who might contribute to the improvement of our nation’s economy.”<sup>15</sup> Tirso Dominguez, the House of Representatives delegate from the province of Santa Clara, introduced the Cuban Exclusion Act which barred immigrants from a variety of Eastern and Central European nations, Africa, the Middle East and China. Refugees from Austria possessing German passports would be admitted. Exceptions would be made for those emigrants who had been diplomatic representatives, lived previously in Cuba and owned local property, or aliens who possessed at least \$25,000 to invest in the domestic economy provided they did not threaten native employment. Tourists would be required to post a \$5,000 bond for a six month visa.<sup>16</sup> Cuba did, however, admit 12,000-20,000 German Jews between 1933-1944 due to a Government policy of engaging in the “lucrative business [of] selling travel documents” and maintaining its consulates in Nazi-dominated Europe following the closure of U.S. Consular offices.<sup>17</sup> The episode of the S.S. *St. Louis* in 1939 dampened the Jewish demand for visas.

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<sup>14</sup>“Urges Chilean Open Door,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1938, 12.

<sup>15</sup> “Cuba Seeks Capitalists,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1938, 23. Escobar served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Switzerland and permanent Delegate to the League of Nations.

<sup>16</sup>“For Cuban Exclusion Act,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1938, 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ryan, *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille*, 136.

The Ecuadoran envoy, Alejandro Gastelù Concha, stated that his Government was “keenly interested” in taking part in Roosevelt’s “generous initiative” and would play its role within the confines of its immigration laws and domestic potential. He cited the 1935 admission and successful integration of displaced European professors *but* acknowledged that Ecuador was primarily an agricultural country and therefore, could not allow the entry of “too great an influx of intellectual workers.” Jewish refugees could potentially be admitted but only if they agreed to enter industry and agriculture and not commerce and the liberal professions. Nevertheless, the Ecuadoran Government was prepared to do its part in this “humanitarian task” and give “favorable consideration” to any resolution adopted by the conference.<sup>18</sup>

A number of projects to resettle refugee Jews within remote areas of Ecuador were proposed during the 1930’s but failed due to lack of Jewish enthusiasm and Ecuadoran public support. For example, in 1935 the Freeland League of Jewish Colonization established in Paris the *Comité pour l’Etude de l’agriculture, l’Industrie de l’Immigration dans la République de l’Equateur* (Committee for the Study of Agriculture, Industry and Immigration for the Republic of Ecuador) which reached an agreement with the Government to allot 1,250,000 acres of land in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands for the colonization of fifty thousand families that would be managed by the Committee for a term of thirty years. Settlers were granted exemption of taxes for three years, citizenship in one year, and release from custom duties and free rail transportation from the coast to the interior. President Federico Páez and his

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<sup>18</sup> “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 28. Concha served as Secretary of the Permanent Delegation to the League of Nations and Consul-General in Geneva. Ecuador’s population in 1938 was approximately three million.



Administration required the presentation of a detailed operations plan by May 1937 and the commitment of \$8,000 and the settlement of a minimum of one hundred families. Analysis by resettlement experts confirmed the viability of such a plan and estimated that \$360-465 per family would be required. However, Jewish relief organizations such as HICEM argued that the settlement sites were too remote and of inferior quality with a climate that was inhospitable for Central Europeans. HICEM also warned that the potential for resettlement within Ecuador was “practically nil” due to a low level of national economical development and salaries, limited opportunities for craftsmen and other artisans and professionals and a general state of political volatility. The International Committee of Immigration in Ecuador responded to the criticisms of HICEM by noting that the objections raised reflected conditions throughout all of the South American Republics. Consequently, this project was abandoned.<sup>19</sup>

The American Joint Distribution Committee and HICEM engaged in other agricultural resettlement projects within Ecuador and sixty Jewish families were

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<sup>19</sup>*Daily Herald*, July 18, 1935 cited in Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book Review of the Year 5696*, 241-242; Werner Loyal, *We Were Europeans: A Personal History of a Turbulent Century* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen Publishing House, Ltd., 2010), 225; Michael Palomino, “Jews in Ecuador: Jewish Immigration in the National Socialist Period,” 2008 available from [http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/am-S/ecuador/EncJud\\_juden-in-Ecuador-ENGL.html](http://www.geschichteinchronologie.ch/am-S/ecuador/EncJud_juden-in-Ecuador-ENGL.html); Internet; accessed September 4, 2010; “Ecuador,” Jewish Virtual Library available from [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0006\\_0\\_05541.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0006_0_05541.html); Internet; accessed September 4, 2010. HICEM was founded in 1927 and resulting from the merger of HIAS (United States Hebrew Sheltering & Immigrant Aid Society, ICA (Jewish Colonization Association based in Paris and functioning as a British charity), and EMIG-Direct (a refugee relocation program located in Berlin). The primary function of HICEM was to aid and facilitate the migration of Jews from Europe. Following the Nazi takeover in 1933 EMIG-Direct was closed. During the Second World War the British Government restricted the use of ICA funds outside of the country resulting in HIAS assuming the primary role. In 1945 HICEM was ended and its programs were assumed by HIAS. “Aid and Rescue,” 2006, available from [http://www.edwardvictor.com/Holocaust/2006/Aid\\_and\\_rescue.htm](http://www.edwardvictor.com/Holocaust/2006/Aid_and_rescue.htm); Internet; accessed August 23, 2010. The President, Dr. José María Velasco Ibarra proposed a plan in July 1935 to admit fifty thousand families of Jewish technicians and scientists forced out of Germany but the offer was revoked due to the reticence of Jews to leave the Reich at that time as well as problems with organization and documentation. Loyal, *We Were Europeans*, 225.

established on chicken farms in remote areas. However, local circumstances and the backgrounds of the colonists precluded success. Most of the settlers were non-farmers of middle class origin from urban environments and consequently, many sought to re-enter their pre-emigration professions and businesses.<sup>20</sup> This prompted the Government under Provisional President General Gil Alberto Enríquez Gallo to decree on January 19, 1938 that “hundreds” of refugee Jews who had entered under the guise of being agriculturalists but who had in reality intended to engage in business would be forcibly expelled.<sup>21</sup> “All alien Jewish traders” were given thirty days to commence farming or face deportation.<sup>22</sup> This decree, however, was later repealed following negotiations between the Austrian Jew Julius Rosenstock (selected by the Ecuadorian Government to manage the construction of the Sibambe-Quito railway) and Gallo. Overall, only 3,500-4,000 Jews, primarily of German origin, entered Ecuador by 1945.<sup>23</sup>

Francisco García Calderón Rey, the Peruvian delegate, pledged his nation’s cooperation and agreement to admit German refugees to the “extent of its possibilities” as defined by its immigration laws. Peru had received a number of Jewish scientists and academics who were “like leaven or ferment...of value to all nations.” The nation was ready to accept agricultural workers and industrial technicians but could not admit “traders or workmen” who potentially could disrupt domestic equilibrium and generate

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<sup>20</sup>Jacqueline, Shields, “The Virtual Jewish History Tour Ecuador,” 1998 available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/vjw/Ecuador.html>; Internet; accessed September 4, 2010; Loyal, *We Were Europeans*, 225.

<sup>21</sup> *The U.S. News*, January 24, 1938.

<sup>22</sup> *Newsweek*, January 31, 1938, 21.

<sup>23</sup>“Ecuador,” Jewish Virtual Library; Maria-Luise Kreuter, *Wo liegt Ecuador? Exil in einem unbekannten Land 1938 bis zum Ende der fünfziger Jahre* (Berlin: Metropol-Verl., 1995), 89.

problems “similar to those which other countries have had to tackle.” Likewise, limitations on the entry of physicians and lawyers were necessary to prevent the creation of an “intellectual proletariat” that would threaten the “unbridled power of [the Peruvian] upper class.”<sup>24</sup>

The national essence, based on a “Spanish nucleus” with its Latin and Catholic traditions, must be preserved. “An unorganized influx [of non-Catholic and non-Latin immigrants] would be dangerous” but the Government was willing to consider admission of aliens on an individual, case-by-case basis. Calderón recalled the changes in the immigration statutes of the United States. Prior to 1890 an open door admissions policy was followed but since that time the American Government adopted “farsighted” legislative changes in 1921 and 1924 which severely restricted the entry of aliens. The primary motivation for such limitations was the preservation of the “Nordic heritage and [the] Anglo-Saxon race” against the invasion and contamination of other peoples. Calderón cited *The Passing of the Great Race* by Madison Grant as supportive of such restrictions.<sup>25</sup> The peace of the Americas could only be guaranteed by avoiding the

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<sup>24</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 28. Calderon (April 8, 1883-July 1, 1953) was a Peruvian writer who later served as Minister to Belgium. Gerhard Schoenberger, *The Yellow Star: The Persecution of the Jews in Europe, 1933-1945* (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>25</sup>Madison Grant was a prominent eugenicist of the early Twentieth Century who postulated that biological differences separated the races into an inherent hierarchy. The interbreeding of the different races would result in “racial suicide” that would lead to the demise of the superior white Anglo-Saxon culture and civilization. He warned that the offspring of miscegenation would “belong to the lower type [of race and]” and predicted the “importance of transmitting in unimpaired purity the blood inheritance of ages will be appreciated at its full value.” Grant’s views and those of his co-travelers such as Charles Davenport and Harry Laughlin would lay the groundwork for the restrictive National Origins Act which established the annual immigration quota system which allocated visas on the basis of position in the hierarchy of the races. Calvin Coolidge, while Vice President, noted that “biological laws tell us that certain divergent people will not mix or blend.” “Eugenic Laws against Race Mixing,” Image Archive on the American Eugenics Movement Dolan DNA Learning Center Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory available from <http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/html/eugenics/essay7text.html>; Internet; accessed September 4, 2010.

creation of minorities of dissimilar origins which would promote “future conflicts.” Peru, like other nations faced with the potential role of providing haven to political refugees, must shun a “too hasty mingling of elements” inimical to national “traditions and ambitions” that posed a danger to national and ethnic stability. He concluded by positing that a “Europe which is so disturbed must have at least one continent which is free from hatred and hysteria.”<sup>26</sup> One Peruvian newspaper viewed Jewish émigrés as a threat to the “solid basis of our Ibero-American identity [and] our Catholic tradition” that must be avoided.<sup>27</sup> The delegation from Peru had also noted sarcastically that the United States had established the model to follow regarding its immigration policies: with “caution and wisdom.”<sup>28</sup> By 1939 approximately 600-2,500 refugee Jews had been admitted into Peru.<sup>29</sup>

The Mexican delegate, Primo Villa Michel, declared that his Government was “deeply” appreciative of the “generous initiative” of FDR. Mexico had a long tradition of offering “hospitality” and asylum to political refugees, especially those who were “afraid for their lives.” The Government was prepared to offer “full freedom and security” and would render assistance and provide the opportunity to work to involuntary emigrants within the bounds of Mexican “legal, social and economic possibilities.” Such

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<sup>26</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 31-32.

<sup>27</sup> David Michael Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 414.

<sup>28</sup>Roy H. Schoeman, *Salvation is from the Jews (John 4:22): the Role of Judaism in Salvation History from Abraham to the Second Coming* (Ignatius Press: 2003), 244.

<sup>29</sup> “Peru” Jewish Virtual Library 2008 available from [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0015\\_0\\_15634.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0015_0_15634.html) ; Internet; accessed September 4, 2010; William D. Rubenstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (NY: Rutledge, 1977), 38.

action would occur at a “rate appropriate” to the “special conditions” existing within its borders in order to avoid “undesirable results” for the State and aliens. The ongoing reforms within Mexican society and the economy necessarily placed limits on the numbers of immigrants that would be allowed entry or who could be successfully assimilated. Nevertheless, the Mexican Government was offering its cooperation, “goodwill and sympathy.” The refugees, however, would have to possess sufficient finances to support themselves and avoid becoming public charges. It was understood that Jews not meeting these requirements would be barred from entry.<sup>30</sup>

The Mexican Government, following negotiations with Jewish leaders, did agree to consider the legalization of all Jews who had entered Mexico over the previous five years and to allow entry of refugees from Germany and Austria who had relatives or friends already resident within the country, provided the new arrivals possessed sufficient assets to support themselves. There were, however, a number of obstacles including anti-Semitic diatribes in the local papers and a bill introduced into the Mexican Congress by Senator Loayza calling for the creation Jewish ghettos. In addition, there were economic conflicts between the Jewish owners of large textile concerns and native operators of smaller enterprises who feared bankruptcy by their bigger competitors.<sup>31</sup> By November

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<sup>30</sup> “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 28-29.

<sup>31</sup> “Mexico and Jews in Tentative Accord,” *New York Times*, July 10, 1938, 22. Primo Villa Michel served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in the Netherlands and in the same capacity in the U.K and Northern Ireland in 1937. The Yiddish newspaper, *Der Weg*, reported that the Mexican Ministry of the Interior issued a decree on June 7 establishing criteria for the admission of Austrian Jews: 1. Refugees could not reside in Mexico City or any provincial capital unless they demonstrated possession at least one hundred thousand pesos for the national capital or twenty thousand pesos for the provincial capitals; 2. Exclusion from working as hired labor; limited to establishing industrial, agricultural or exporting enterprises; 3. Residency permits limited to one year with provision that the refugee must return to Austria when favorable conditions return. *Der Weg* did, however, report that unofficial assurances had been made that refugees would be allowed entry into the country if they possessed 2,000-3,000 pesos and supplied an affidavit certifying that they would not seek positions in the Mexican labor force. Permanent

1938 the Mexican Government enacted additional and more restrictive entry requirements. The Secretary of the Interior, Ignacio Garcia Tellez, decreed the Republic would admit stateless refugees “only in exceptional cases of notorious benefit for the country...” Such “petitioners for admittance must affirm categorically that they have no racial prejudices and that they are prepared to form Mexican *mestizo* families [by marrying Indians]” and thus, facilitate the process of assimilation. Preferential treatment would be granted to single males less than twenty five years of age.<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Alfredo Carbonell Debali, the Uruguayan delegate, stated that his Government had given the “most sympathetic consideration to the generous [American] initiative” and like the other delegates, cited his nation’s humanitarian traditions towards immigrants *but* any consideration to admit refugees was contingent on Uruguay’s economy and the “urgent necessity for populating rural areas.” The country’s developmental priorities lay in the agricultural and stock-breeding sector and consequently a background in these areas was a prerequisite for admission. The ability of the national government to provide for immigration and assimilation was limited and any necessary finances must be provided by private organizations in other countries. The Government was, however, “favorable to the realization of this generous and humanitarian work of international cooperation.”<sup>33</sup>

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residency would be awarded if they did not violate any immigration laws and remained within the country for five years. “Mexico Will Admit Austrian Refugees,” *The Southern Israelite*, June 17, 1938, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Frank L. Kluckhohn, “Mexico Sends Back Germany Refugees,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1938, 13.

<sup>33</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 29-30. Carbonelli later served as Ambassador to the Holy See.

The delegate from Paraguay, Garcia Calderon, said that his nation had “far too few inhabitants” in relation to its “vast territory of extraordinary fertility.” However, immigration would be limited solely to agriculturists. He also stated that his country would welcome farmers but would “place strict restrictions on lawyers, doctors and other professional emigrants.”<sup>34</sup>

The Venezuelan delegate, Carlos Aristimuño Coll, likewise expressed his Government’s appreciation of the “humanitarian motives” of Roosevelt and highlighted its national tradition of “hospitality.” Although it “eagerly accepted” the invitation to participate in the Conference the Venezuelan Government recognized that it was hindered by “certain restrictions” that limited its ability to admit German and Austrian political refugees. The nation’s absorptive capacity was constrained by immigration laws and the need to select the proper type of immigrant; i.e. agricultural laborers, who would not disturb the “demographic equilibrium essential to racial diversity.” Therefore, refugees could only be admitted via a “rigorously selective” process.<sup>35</sup> Eventually, the requirement of converting to Catholicism would be added to the list of immigration requirements.

Virgilio Trujillo Molina, representative of the Dominican Republic and brother of the dictator Rafaël Leonidas Trujillo y Molina, described FDR’s invitation as a “happy idea” that deserved the “most sympathetic” reception by all of the “thoughtful and feeling” peoples of the world. The Conference was faced with the most “urgent and harrowing problem” which warranted a humane and just solution. Stateless and innocent

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<sup>34</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 31-32.

<sup>35</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 30. Cull served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in France.

“modern nomads” deserved rescue and if the meeting was successful the name of Franklin Roosevelt would be “blessed by present and future generations.” The Dominican Republic (with a population of 1.5 million) was ready and willing to make its contribution by the awarding of especially “advantageous concessions” to German and Austrian refugees provided they were “agriculturists with an unimpeachable record” that met the requirements of national immigration laws. The Republic possessed ample and productive land, social stability and the Department of Agriculture would provide settlers land, seed and technical support. “Recognized scientists,” who through their teaching skills rendered “valuable service” to the country, would also be considered as special exceptions to immigration rules and regulations. Molina concluded with the hope that the Evian Conference would be “like a peaceful, limpid lake, whose health giving waters assuage the thirst and add to the fertility of the lands that border it.”<sup>36</sup>

Generalissimo Trujillo viewed the Evian Conference as an opportunity to refurbish his reputation following an October 1937 conflict with Haiti in which 8,000-12,000 Haitians residing in the northwestern region of the Dominican Republic were massacred in order to “obliterate Haitian ethnicity” within its borders.<sup>36</sup> The dictator announced, during May 1938, that he had been the only one of his countrymen possessing the “inflexibility of will” to deal with the “Haitian question.”<sup>37</sup> By July Trujillo attempted to create a new international image by wrapping himself in the

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<sup>36</sup> “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 32.

<sup>36</sup> A number of studies from 1937 to 1987 have suggested that the Haitian death toll was 500-37,000.

<sup>37</sup> Legation report, May 19, 1938, 839.51/4604, RG 59, NA cited in Eric Paul Roorda, *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 142.



humanitarian sentiments of the Evian Conference and dispatched Virgilio Molina to represent the Republic and to announce that their country was willing and ready to admit Jewish refugees. Such an offer was described as representing “one of the boldest masterstrokes of modern press agency.”<sup>38</sup> Trujillo had earlier been approached during 1937 by the American Jewish Congress for the same purpose. The Congress’ representative, Dr. Howard Blake, described the potential benefits that would accrue to the Dominican leader: “Trujillo, the Emancipator! Trujillo, the Liberator!...Who would be the first to buy your tobacco? The Jews! Your coffee? The Jews! Everything that you can export? The everlastingly grateful Jew!”<sup>39</sup>

Additional considerations drove Trujillo to offer refuge to German and Austrian refugees. The introduction of lighter skinned Central European immigrants and Spanish Civil War refugees would allow the replacement of Haitian and West Indian workers and transform the racial demographics of his island nation while introducing outside capital

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<sup>38</sup> Marion A. Kaplan, “A Very Modest Experiment—The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosua, 1940-1945,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 53 no. 1 (2008): 132.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. Howard Blake to Trujillo, January 5, 1937, 839.52 Jewish Colonization/1, RG 59, NA cited in Roorda, *Dictator Next Door*, 143. Dominican General Gregorio Luperon (1839-1897), cabinet minister and provisional president (1879-1880) promoted immigration from Cuba and Puerto Rico and during 1882 unsuccessfully sought the resettlement of Russian Jews suffering Czarist pogroms. Letter to the central committee of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*: “I have heard of the persecutions of the Jews in several European states and I venture to inform you that there is a country, the Dominican Republic, a vast and fertile country which has every prospect for the future. There your co-religionists will be received with open arms. It is not merely hospitality which I take the liberty to offer in the name of my government and people but also a secure citizenship (nationality) and land for farming purposes, land, which immediately after possession has been taken, will become the property of the settlers...I know...the people in Santo Domingo...will rejoice in the arrival in their midst of brethren prepared to share their fate with them.” Mark Wischnitzer “The Historical Background of the Settlement of Jewish Refugees in Santo Domingo,” *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 1 (January 1942): 48-50. Converted Jews had first come to the island of Hispaniola during the Spanish Inquisition but the first Sephardic Jews arrived in the Dominican Republic during the first twenty-five years of the Nineteenth Century and helped to develop a successful merchant class that benefited the local economy. Overall the Republic had a long tradition of social and religious tolerance towards its Jewish minority.

and technology into the economy.<sup>40</sup> The Roosevelt Administration was approached for aid in enacting laws that would, according to Cordell Hull, ease the entry of readily assimilable “neo-white” settlers.<sup>41</sup> Cooperation at the Evian council was also seen as a possible inducement to end United States control of Dominican customs and perhaps represented a form of penance for potentially jeopardizing Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy (and American regional hegemony) towards the nations of Latin America.<sup>42</sup> Trujillo was, after all, a dictator who obtained the reins of power in 1930 as the consequence of an eight year U.S. Marine Corps occupation of the island from 1916-1924.<sup>43</sup> Rumors of clandestine bribes and a desire to develop unpopulated land have also been suggested as motives for Trujillo’s willingness to admit Jewish refugees.<sup>44</sup> The Secretary of Legation Robert Mills McClintock clearly recognized that the Dominican agreement to participate in the Evian Conference was primarily to “make a show of cooperating in a policy” initiated by Roosevelt and supported by the American Government.<sup>45</sup> Despite such pretenses the President agreed to pursue the possibility that the Dominican Republic would provide a “supplemental Jewish homeland.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Laurence Duggan, Chief of the State Department Latin American Division, analysis of Dominican immigration policy, 29 January 1938, 839-51/4570, RG 59, NA. Ibid., 144; Kaplan, “A Very Modest Experiment,” 132.

<sup>41</sup> Chief of Visa Division Avra Warren to Norweb, April 29 and October 12, 1938, 839.55/75 and 87, RG 59, NA. Ibid., 144. See also Memo by Hull, July 27, 1938, 939. SS/85, Re 59, NA and Memo by Warren, May 2, 1939, 839.55/85, RG 59, NA.

<sup>42</sup> A treaty was adopted between the Dominican Republic and the U.S. in 1907 in which the War Department Bureau of Insular Affairs established and controlled the General Receivership of Dominican Customs in which 55 percent of import duties were utilized to finance the island’s national debt. Ibid., 14.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>45</sup>“Outline of the Eighth Year, “November 7, 1938, 840.48 Refugees/1046, RG 59, NA. Ibid., 144.

Years later, Luis Hess, a German refugee who settled in Sosua and became the first Jew to marry a native Dominican and whose sister perished during the years of the Holocaust, did not comprehend the reasons for Trujillo's offer of refuge. Jews were caught, he believed between the regime of Hitler, "the German racist [who] persecuted...and wanted to murder us" and Trujillo, "the Dominican racist" who offered salvation. The Jews of Sosua were placed in the "awkward position of having to be thankful to a dictator."<sup>47</sup> Such principled reasoning for Hess in the end did not matter and he was grateful for his deliverance. In the end "if a murderer saves your life you still have to be grateful to the murderer."<sup>48</sup>

The project was studied by the Refugee Economic Corporation of New York with the assistance of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. Johns Hopkins University President Isaiah Bowman selected agricultural experts to make an on-site survey and a positive report was published during early 1939. Financing was provided by the Agro- Joint (composed of the American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; agreement signed on September 29, 1939).<sup>49</sup> FDR issued his official endorsement describing the project as a

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<sup>46</sup> Welles to Roosevelt, January 12, 1939, OF 3186, FDRL. Ibid., 144.

<sup>47</sup> *Spiegel* interview with Luis Hess on his 98th birthday, *Spiegel Online*, Panorama, 26 December 2006. <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/zeitgeschichte/0,1518,456564,00.html> cited in Kaplan, "A Very Modest Experiment," 133. Hess acted as interpreter for DORSA during its negotiations with the Dominican Government and later directed a small school within Sosua.

<sup>48</sup> Interview by Marion Kaplan with Luis Hess, May 25, 2006, Sosúa. Ibid., 133.

<sup>49</sup> Welles to Roosevelt, February 27, 1939, OF 3186, FDRL cited in Roorda, *Dictator Next Door*, 144. The American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) provided funding for the support of overseas Jews. James Rosenberg headed the Agro-Joint which had earlier resettled 250,000 Russian Jews in the Crimea and southern portions of the Ukraine. He established DORSA with an Agro-Joint colleague, Dr. Joseph Rosen. See also Wischnitzer, "The Historical Background," 46.

“turning point” in Jewish refugee affairs.<sup>50</sup> During the initial meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees in London in August 1938 the figure of one hundred thousand potential immigrants was raised by the Dominican Government but a later Brookings Institute study in 1942 concluded that resettlement of such a large number of refugees was not possible but by “proceeding gradually” a more realistic number was 3,000-5,000.<sup>51</sup>

A large contribution of Jewish money was required to ensure that the refugees would not become public charges. The Dominican Republic Subsidiary Association or Dorsa, a subsidiary of Agro-Joint established in the U.S., signed a contract with the Trujillo Government in January 1940 in which one hundred refugees would be accepted. The first immigrant community was established in the district of Sosúa in the northern province of Puerto Plata on a former United Fruit Company banana plantation which incorporated a 26,685 acre tract of land containing 4,950 acres of pasture, more than twenty buildings with limited electricity, water and roads and a large reserve of virgin forest. Its settler population (granted inalienable rights on January 30, 1940) numbered around five hundred Jewish and non-Jewish settlers by 1942. The American Joint Distribution Committee raised \$1.423 million by the end of 1944. However, only limited numbers of refugees, totaling 640, who had to agree to become agricultural workers, were allowed into the country. Trujillo granted each Jew eighty acres of land, ten cows, one

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<sup>50</sup> Wischnitzer, “The Historical Background,” 47.

<sup>51</sup>“Refugee Settlements in the Dominican Republic. A Survey Conducted under the Auspices of the Brookings Institution”, Washington, 1942, 341, cited in Esco Foundation for Palestine, Inc., *Palestine: A Study of Jewish, Arab, and British Policies*, vol. 1. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1947), 950. Molina served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in France and Belgium and was the brother of Rafael Trujillo.

mule and a horse. When Trujillo later demanded ten times the amount originally paid in 1940 the JDC refused further payments.<sup>52</sup>

Léon Laleau, the Foreign Minister of Haiti, made a similar offer in 1938 to admit fifty thousand refugees but was turned down by Sumner Welles and the American Government. Haitian diplomats, however, did provide entry visas during 1937 to several hundred Jews before the onset of the war, saving the lives of approximately 100-300. Haitian President Sténio Vincent issued an edict on May 29, 1939 granting Haitian citizenship to refugees in abstentia (reminiscent of an earlier British proposal to grant Palestinian citizenship to Jews in abstentia). One historic source had suggested that until 1938 the only requirement needed to enter Haiti was \$100; later increased to \$1,000-5,000 plus a government permit. Others claim, however, that the cost was much higher and the admittance of refugees was merely a scheme to generate foreign exchange for the national government.<sup>53</sup>

Latin-American countries faced pressure from Germany not to allow entry of German and Austrian Jews or risk economic retaliation. Brazil was already having domestic difficulties dealing with a large German minority in her territory. Profitable

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<sup>52</sup>“Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 38-39; Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: the American Joint Distribution Committee 1939-1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 200-201; “Sosua’s Beginnings: A Haven for Jews Fleeing Hitler,” November 5, 2008 available from <http://popreport.com/edition/2008/11/sosua-a-dominican-haven-for-jews-fleeing-hitler/>; Internet; accessed May 28, 2010; Wischnitzer “Historical Background,” 47-48.

<sup>53</sup>Daniel Smajovits, “Jews and Haitians: A Forgotten History,” March 16, 2010, *Jewish Tribune* available from <http://www.jewishtribune.ca/TribuneV2/index.php/201003162781/Jews-and-Haitians-A-forgotten-history.html>; Internet; accessed June 26, 2010; Ariel Scheib, “The Virtual Jewish History Tour Haiti” available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/vjw/haiti.html>; Internet; accessed June 25, 2010; “Port-au-Prince—Haiti A Nation that Saved Jews during Nazi Era,” March 26, 2010 available from <http://www.vosizneias.com/52134/2010/03/26/port-au-prince-haiti-a-nation-that-saved-jews-during-nazi-era>; Internet; accessed June 26, 2010; Janice Arnold, “Exhibit Highlights Haiti’s Heroism in Holocaust,” Canadian Jewish Congress, available from <http://www.cjc.ca/2010/03/17/exhibit-highlights-haiti%E2%80%99s-heroism-in-holocaust/>; Internet; accessed June 26, 2010.

barter agreements between the Latin American Republics and Germany would be potentially at jeopardy despite the Reich's needs for foreign raw materials and other commodities. Thus, these nations opposed any overt criticism of the anti-Semitic policies of Germany. The demographic composition of the refugees themselves served to put a brake on the willingness of Latin American to accept displaced aliens. Agricultural workers and entrepreneurs were needed more than professionals, merchants or intellectuals.<sup>54</sup>

Gustav Rasmussen, the Danish representative and member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, affirmed that despite the "best of good will" the nations of Europe could not solve the German and Austrian refugee crisis without the aid of "other continents." Denmark, like the other states bordering Germany, already had to "bear their heavy part of the burden thrown on them by circumstances." His nation was afflicted by widespread unemployment and had served primarily as a country of "emigration." Prior to the outbreak of the Great War over eight thousand Danes left for the Western Hemisphere per year with the number falling to six thousand per year after peace was concluded. However, during the most recent time period emigration had "virtually ceased entirely." Nonetheless, the Danish Government had admitted "very large numbers" of political refugees from Germany but was still willing to collaborate in finding a workable and realistic solution to a refugee problem which was "immense, difficult and complicated but [not] insoluble."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 32.

<sup>55</sup> "Proceedings," July 9, 1938, 30.

## Chapter 7

### “Great Human Tragedy”

Once they had left their homeland they remained homeless; once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth. Nothing which was being done, no matter how stupid, no matter how many people knew and foretold the consequences, could be undone or prevented. Every event had the finality of a last judgment, a judgment that was passed neither by God nor by the devil, but looked rather like the expression of some unredeemably stupid finality.<sup>1</sup>

#### The “Report of the Sub-Committee for the Reception of Organizations

Concerned with the Relief of Political Refugees Coming from Germany (including Austria)”, chaired by the Australian T.W. White, was submitted on July 9 and adopted on July 14, 1938. This panel held only one session commencing on July 8 at 2:30 p.m. Statements were heard from the League High Commissioner for Refugees, Sir Neill Malcolm, and representatives from a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish relief organizations such as the International Christian Committee for Non-Aryans, Jewish Colonization Association and the American Joint Distribution Committee.<sup>2</sup> These groups, listed in their entirety in Appendix C, were allowed to offer limited testimony, restricted

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1967), 267.

<sup>2</sup>Speakers included: Sir Neill Malcolm [League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany], Professor Norman Bentwich of the Council for German Jewry, Lord Marley of the World Or Union, Edouard Oungre of the Jewish Colonization Association, Mrs. Ormerod, the Rev. Father Odo, Walter Adams, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, Dr. Arthur Rupp of the Jewish Agency, Dr. Steinberg, Mr. Georg Bernhard, Raoul Evrard, Rabbi Jonah Wise of the Joint Distribution Committee, Mr. Eppstein, Mr. Goodman, Mr. Brotman, Leo Lambert, Mr. Gourevitch, Mr. Marcovici, Benjamin Akzin, Dr. Brutzkus, Dr. Oskar Grun, Mr. Forcht and Madame Irene Harand.

initially to ten minutes but later cut down to five minutes. Consequently, the advocates “all left the room disheartened and disillusioned.”<sup>3</sup>

Catholic spokesmen claimed that five hundred thousand of their non-Aryan Christian brethren resided within the confines of Greater Germany and that ten thousand refugees were “dependent on the charity” of their co-religionists. Catholic committees in the United States, headed by Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans, and similar groups from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland introduced a joint memorandum calling upon the Evian delegations to persuade Germany to end its policy of forced emigration or at a minimum to allow retention of sufficient monies to provide re-training, transportation and resettlement. “[A] clear reassertion of the fundamental rights” of mankind was essential for it was the denial and denigration of such rights that fostered the “tragic problem” of involuntary refugees.<sup>4</sup>

The British League of Nations Union introduced a statement acknowledging its prior attempts to unify projects of rescue under the auspices of the Geneva based body. It did agree, however, that an organization independent of the League would be required to negotiate with the German Government and to persuade the United States and Brazil to assume greater responsibility in reaching a solution; i.e., accept a greater percentage of stateless refugees. The British League called upon the Germans to establish a fund, whether by “barter, exchange or other methods” to broker the costs of resettlement. A

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<sup>3</sup>Rudel-Adler, *The Evian Conference*, 255.

<sup>4</sup> Charles K. Streit, “Catholics Appeal to Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1938, 1. Monsignor Michael Ready, the General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), attended the Evian Conference as the surrogate of Archbishop Rummel.



“planned” mass migration was preferable to a policy of infiltration which would encompass only small groups of migrants over a protracted time frame.<sup>5</sup>

New York Rabbi Jonah B. Wise pledged the cooperation and financial support of the American Joint Distribution Committee and noted that millions of dollars had already been expended in Central Europe for refugee work. Dr. Arthur Ruppin of the Jewish Agency remarked that forty thousand Jewish refugees had been admitted into Palestine by the time of the Conference. Norman Bentwich of the London Council for German Jewry and Nahum Goldmann representing the World Jewish Congress called for inclusion in the workings of the meeting the Jews of Poland, Rumania and Hungary. Goldmann anticipated the eventual migration of at least two hundred thousand Jews from Greater Germany in the near future. Mrs. Mary Ormerod, a London Quaker and secretary of the Coordinating Committee, reminded the delegates that the refugee crisis was not solely a Jewish issue but included German Christians who were unable to support Nazi policies and consequently became “refugees for conscience sake.”<sup>6</sup>

“Short” analyses of the memoranda and public statements of these groups were constructed by the Conference Secretariat and submitted to the delegations as a whole. The sub-committee members heard “moving stories [of a] great human tragedy” that

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1. The British League of Nations Union’s first chairman was Lord Cecil and Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey served as honorary presidents.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 4. Reform Rabbi Jonah Bondi Wise (1881-1959) established a weekly radio program in 1934, the “Message of Israel,” and served as the national chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee from 1931-1938. He became national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal in 1939 although he did not support Zionism. Bentwich (1883-1971) was an English Zionist who served in 1920 as Attorney General in Palestine and chair of international relations at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. During 1933 he assumed the post of deputy to the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany. Nahum Goldmann (1905-1982) was a Zionist and Jewish leader who had served in the Jewish affairs section of the German Foreign Ministry during WWI. During the interwar period he belonged to a more radical Zionist faction opposed to the leadership of Chaim Weizmann but following the assumption of power of Hitler in 1933 he became a Weizmann supporter. Ruppin (1876-1943), a Prussian born Jew and attorney, became a sociologist and director of agricultural projects within Palestine.

necessitated a rapid solution and mutual cooperation. Representations were made by Jewish, Catholic and other non-Aryan groups and were thematically divided into “four main trends of thought.” The first called for an increase in Jewish immigration into Palestine by “substantially” increasing the annual quota allowed by the Mandate Power and noted that 45,000 German Jews had entered Palestine since the Nazi takeover of government in 1933.

A second approach called for aid to refugees that would facilitate their assimilation into the dominant society of the nation “into which they are transplanted.” Article 15 of the Geneva Convention of February 10, 1938, concerning the status of German refugees, called for the “contracting parties” involved in resettlement to provide the structure and facilities for vocational training. In addition, the new immigrants would be dispersed throughout the country of reception to avoid urban concentrations that could generate “hostility” among the native population.<sup>7</sup> This Convention was applied to stateless German and Austrian refugees who were unable to obtain a Nansen passport and consequently were granted “certain privileges of sojourn and residence in signatory states,” suitable identification and travel documentation and protection against involuntary repatriation to Germany. Several organizations called for an immediate ratification of this Convention by its signatories and the widest degree of application.

The third opinion called for resettlement in isolated and underdeveloped regions to avoid “mingling with indigenous ethnical elements” and presumably avoid the risk of generating local anti-Semitism. The fourth suggestion requested the granting of all rights protecting minorities to refugees in “their present country of residence.” In addition,

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<sup>7</sup>As with the future planning of the agenda of the Evian Conference Latin American countries did not participate in the construction and drafting of these League Conventions on Refugees.

there were political views which called upon the countries of temporary haven to grant refugee Jews the rights of citizens while awaiting their ultimate emigration to a place of permanent abode. The degree of “wealth and social status” should not be used in a discriminatory fashion against refugees and priority of entry ought to be granted to those “political prisoners or individuals who had suffered because of their opinions.” The sub-committee concluded that the enactment of such diverse points of view would entail the transfer of “whole populations” and the allocation of “large sums of money” to relief organizations. It was believed, however, that Germany, should be approached to “make its contribution” for financing by allowing refugees to retain sufficient levels of personal assets to make resettlement possible; an approach consistent with the original Evian Conference invitation that stated that any costs would not be borne by the nations receiving refugees.<sup>8</sup>

Solomon Adler-Rudel, one of the representatives testifying before the White sub-committee, was critical of the improvised nature of these hearings:

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<sup>8</sup>“Appendix to the Report of the Sub-Committee for the Reception of Organizations Concerned with the Relief of Political Refugees Coming from Germany (including Austria) cited in “Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 59. See also John A. Scanlan, “A View from the United States-Social, Economic, and Legal Change, the Persistence of the State, and Immigration Policy in the Coming Century,” available from [http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/law\\_reviews/018global\\_legal\\_studies/vol2/scanlan.html](http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/law_reviews/018global_legal_studies/vol2/scanlan.html); Internet; accessed May 31, 2010. Article 15 of the February 10, 1938 Geneva Convention concerning the Status of Refugees coming from Germany, 4461 L.N.T.S. stated: “With a view to facilitating the emigration of refugees to overseas countries, each facility shall be granted to the refugees and to the organizations which deal with them for the establishment of schools for professional re-adaptation and technical training.” Shauna Labman, “Looking Back, Moving Forward: The History and Future of Refugee Protection” available from [http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=shauna\\_labman](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=shauna_labman); Internet; accessed May 31, 2010. This Convention utilized the same definition of “refugees coming from Germany” as defined in the Provisional Arrangement of 1936. However, there was a very important qualifier amended to this definition: “Persons who leave Germany for reasons of purely personal convenience are not included in this definition.” Therefore, any individual who left the Reich for other reasons would be defined as refugees provided they had become disenfranchised from the nation of origin and had essentially become stateless. Ivor C. Jackson, *The Refugee Concept in Group Situations* (Cambridge, MA: Kluwer Law International, 1999), 21.

Nobody was prepared for it, neither the members of the Committee, nor the representatives of the various organizations who had to queue up at the door of the meeting room to be called in, one after the others, and to face the 11 members of the Subcommittee, [to] whom they were supposed to tell their tale within ten minutes at the most.<sup>9</sup>

The second technical sub-committee, chaired by Norwegian Judge Hansson, the director of the Nansen Office, began closed door hearings on the immigration laws and practices of participating nations, the qualifications and numbers of refugees that could be accepted and the issue of travel documentation and identification papers. The U.S. was represented by George Brandt and together with E.N. Cooper of the British Home Office did the bulk of the work and prepared the final report. During Brandt's July 8 presentation of American immigration policies he was "roundly attacked" by Sir Neill Malcolm who complained that if the United States was not prepared to modify its immigration laws rather than merely merging the annual German and Austrian quotas then the President should not have initiated an international refugee conference. Taylor viewed Malcolm's attitude throughout the Conference as one of "open hostility" and described the High Commissioner as a "semi-invalid" who performed his office for the League only when he could "spare time from his duties as head of the North Borneo Company." Instead, he credited Malcolm's Turkish assistant, Mr. Tevfik Erim (a member of the Political Section of the League Secretariat) and Lord Duncannon with the majority of the High Commission's refugee work. Malcolm's chief attribute, Taylor believed, lay in his blind obedience to the dictates of the British Foreign Office and the League

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<sup>9</sup>Adler-Rudel, "Evian Conference," 255. Solomon Adler-Rudel was born in Czernowitz, Austria-Hungary on June 23, 1894 and worked as a social worker in Vienna and Berlin. During 1933-1936 he served as executive secretary of the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* and was an executive committee member of the *Zionistische Vereinigung fuer Deutschland*. He immigrated to the United Kingdom in 1936 and to Israel in 1949. He served in a variety of posts including the association of Jewish Refugees, the World Zionist Organization and the Leo Baeck Institute and died on November 14, 1975.

Secretariat and his avoidance of independent action. Most private organizations, he went on, viewed Sir Neill as “pleasant but of little real value.” Judge Hansson likewise was an “agreeable, pleasant spoken man” who was “completely ineffective” as Chairman of the technical sub-committee.<sup>10</sup>

The White Commission, with its abbreviated sessions and constrained testimonies clearly demonstrated that the central figures of the performance, the German and Austrian Jews, merely played marginalized roles on the world’s diplomatic stage. Britain would not modify its stance on Palestine. Most nations that had received refugees preferred to be points of transit to other countries that were themselves resistant to Jewish immigration. In an age of rising ethnic nationalism and economic stress it was unlikely that alien Jews would be granted equal rights. Consequently, it became clearly evident that the strategy of mass resettlement was an unachievable goal especially when coupled with official German intransigence regarding release of seized funds. Projects of resettlement in out of the way, less developed and underpopulated locales were increasingly considered by the Europeans and the Roosevelt Administration as suitable destinations for Jews. Such isolation, it was believed, would prevent the development of domestic anti-Semitism. These plans, however, would have to be subsidized by non-governmental sources, would take years to develop and could incorporate only small numbers of individuals and families, leaving the remainder to face the whirlwind.

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<sup>10</sup> “Report of Myron C. Taylor to the Secretary of State in Washington about the Evian Conference, July 20, 1938” cited in Mendelsohn, *The Holocaust*, vol. 5, 249-264.

**Chapter 8**  
**Day Six**  
**“Greatest Sympathy”**

The fourth public meeting began July 11 with statements from the remaining delegates which thematically resembled those of their predecessors. Gösta Engzell, the Swedish representative and director of the legal department in the Foreign Ministry, acknowledged his nation’s “most liberal” admissions policy *but* noted that Sweden was not a state of immigration. As a consequence of local conditions the Government would have to deal with each refugee as an individual subject to vigorous screening criteria. Engzell believed that success of the Evian Conference was dependent upon relocation outside the bounds of Europe. Although the majority of costs would have to be borne by private organizations governments needed to be prepared to make the necessary contributions to ensure success. He warned that the broader European Jewish Question posed the greatest danger and it is in this context that a more definitive solution must be found. Sweden shared the concern over the “unhappy and often tragic fate” of the refugees and hoped that the Conference would result in “positive and lasting results.”<sup>1</sup> However, despite the expression of such humanitarian concerns Sweden (along with Switzerland and the United Kingdom) introduced visa controls during 1938 as a means of restricting the entry of Jews. “Political refugees” were viewed as a separate group from

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<sup>1</sup> “Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 35.

“racial persecutees” who were primarily Jewish and as a result Jews were denied “political sanctuary.”<sup>2</sup>

A joint declaration was introduced by Dr. Constantino Herdocia (Nicaraguan Minister to Great Britain and France), Professor Luis Dobles Segreda (Costa Rican Chargé d’Affairs in Paris), Dr. Mauricio Rosal (Honduran Consul in Paris) and Dr. Ernesto Hoffman (Panamanian Consul-General in Geneva and Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations) on behalf of their respective governments. They expressed their fullest cooperation and “moral support for the generous initiative” of FDR and the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees *but* their willingness to accept involuntary expatriates was dependent on similar action in the other states based on a percentage proportional to the “territorial extent” of each nation. Although “saturated with foreign elements” the absorption of aliens, they believed, provided positive benefits to the development of these small countries. Limitations on national resources, however, tempered their “power of assimilation” and refugees would not be accepted beyond a reasonable quota. Any cost for resettlement must be borne by the refugees themselves as official funds were inadequate to meet the need. In addition, any refugee “engaged in trade or intellectual work” would be barred from entry due to concerns about competition with the local community.<sup>3</sup>

Gustavo A. Wiengreen, the Paraguayan delegate and Minister to Hungary, expressed the deepest pleasure and the “keenest sympathy” of his Government that led to

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<sup>2</sup> David Cesarani and Paul A. Levine eds., *Bystanders to the Holocaust: a Re-Evaluation* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 19. Gösta Engzell has been credited with saving more Jewish lives during WWII than his compatriot, Raoul Wallenberg. “Teaching the Hero in Holocaust History: The Cases of Raoul Wallenberg and Gösta Engzell” by Paul Levine, October 14, 1999, available from <http://www1.yadvashem.org/download/education/conf/Levine.pdf>; Internet; accessed May 31, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> “Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 35-36.

its willingness to participate in the Evian Conference. Paraguay possessed an “immense territory of extraordinary fertility” but was “too thinly populated” and needed the absorption of “industrious individuals” that could develop and exploit its natural resources. Nevertheless, the Decree-Law of March 20, 1937, limited admission to agriculturists and related crafts; a restriction that essentially eliminated from consideration the bulk of Jewish refugees who were urban based and middle-class.<sup>4</sup>

The Irish envoy and Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations, Francis Thomas Cremins, expressed the gratitude of his Government for being able to officially offer its heartfelt compassion for the refugees and hoped that significant outcomes would be achieved. Cremins and the Irish mission had been directed to avoid any financial obligation without the express approval of the Minister of External Affairs Eamon de Valera. Consequently, Cremins declared that the Irish were content to have been invited but were not able to make a bona fide contribution to the problem at hand due to its small geographic size, a population numbering less than three million and an economy primarily based on agriculture. Since it was necessary for so many young Irish people to emigrate each year in search of employment (due to the lack of available land to settle and the slow expansion of domestic manufacturing) it was not possible to absorb stateless, unemployed and often destitute refugees. In addition, there was an overabundance of medical and other professionals which barred entry of aliens with similar intellectual and professional backgrounds. Cremins also believed that barely a fraction of the stateless refugees could be assimilated into the more highly industrialized nations. Thus, he argued, only sparsely settled and underdeveloped territories were

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<sup>4</sup> “Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 36.



suitable for mass migration. Since Ireland lacked colonies it was reluctant to recommend that other nations assume a burden that Eire could not share. The Irish Government did have the sincere faith that a feasible solution for the “mass of human suffering” could be found but he warned that “the greater the hopes” offered by potential sites of resettlement the “greater may be the pressure” exerted upon “these unfortunate creatures” by those nations that sought to expel unwanted minorities.<sup>5</sup>

Léon R. Thébaud, the Haitian Commercial Attaché to France (with rank of Minister), declared that his country had limited ability to admit refugees and would give preference to agriculturists or specialized technicians “of thoroughly healthy stock,” who were easily absorbable into the local community and who possessed sufficient assets.<sup>6</sup>

The Swiss representative to the Evian Conference was the Chief of the Federal Police for Foreigners (*Eidgenössische Fremdenpolizei*), Heinrich Rothmund, who also held the position of Chief of Immigration from 1919-1954. He epitomized the insincerity and the duplicitous nature of the congress. Rothmund expressed the “greatest sympathy” for those forced to flee their homeland and acknowledged that the refugee crisis as a whole was of “particular interest” to his Government. Switzerland was a desirable destination for refugees (along with France and Holland) due to its proximity to Germany and Austria, its tradition of granting asylum, liberal constitutionalism and political neutrality. He noted that aliens already comprised nine percent of the total population in a country faced with high levels of unemployment. Domestic fears of being overrun by stateless foreigners forced Switzerland to serve only as a nation of transit. Jews were not

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<sup>5</sup> “Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 36. See also Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland: Refugees; Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University, 1998), 119-120.

<sup>6</sup> “Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 38-39.

regarded by the Swiss Government as being “political refugees,” i.e., a group at risk of persecution due to political beliefs or activities. All other refugees would be granted a “temporary residence permit or a tolerance permit” which would allow sufficient time to plan for and carry out a move to a more permanent haven.<sup>7</sup>

Following the end of the Great War the Swiss Government introduced a “system of control” over the admission of aliens especially the *Ostjuden*, the Eastern European and Russian Jews, who were viewed as a leftist threat to Swiss culture, ethnicity and native employment. Such immigrants were deemed to be unassimilable into the dominant culture and posed a risk of Judaization. The *Westjuden* or Western Jews were viewed as being more easily absorbed but this attitude changed with the events in Germany and Austria. The 1930 census demonstrated that nine percent of the population (355,000 out of 4 million) were aliens of which three hundred thousand possessed residency permits which granted the right to work and change occupation or place of residence. However, contemporary events mandated “very stringent control” over the entry of future refugees. Rothmund acknowledged, during the period of April-September 1933, that ten thousand Jewish and non-Aryan refugees had been offered temporary asylum within the Swiss Cantons. This number later diminished following the return of some Jews to Germany or resettlement in other countries. By December 1933 approximately 2,500 Jewish and non-Jewish refugees were residing within Switzerland, decreasing to 1,500 by June 1935, following which the number increased to 3,400 on March 31, 1936 and 9,000 on December 31, 1937.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>“Proceedings,” July 11, 1938, 37-38.

<sup>8</sup>Tenenbaum, “The Crucial Year 1938,” 55-53.

After the *Anschluss* the number of refugees rose to greater than ten thousand prompting the Swiss Government to increase border security and deportations. Between March 12 and April 1 3,000-4,000 refugees from Austria entered Switzerland. Reportedly, one thousand refugees came into the the country illegally over a three week period in August of whom some were interned in a camp at Dupulsau and others forcibly returned to Germany. Increased security was enacted in the mountain passes and on the Austrian border. Consequently, the total number of refugees declined but again spiked in 1940 following the German occupation of France. Switzerland could continue to honor its tradition of political asylum to refugees, Rothmund asserted, *but* current conditions mandated that the nation serve as a point of transit to other destinations rather than a site of permanent resettlement.<sup>9</sup>

The closure of frontiers abutting Austria forced Switzerland to introduce a system of visas for Austrian passports in order “to secure some control over immigration.” The Swiss Federal Council declared on March 28, 1938 that all Austrians seeking entry into Switzerland would require a travel permit. All refugees lacking proper documentation were barred admission on August 18 and from October 4 onwards all German non-Aryans required authorization as well.<sup>10</sup> By August an additional one thousand illegal refugees had crossed the Swiss frontier prompting Canton Chiefs of Police to warn that future undocumented aliens faced deportation, stricter police controls

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>10</sup>Circular of the Swiss Police Department September 7, 1938, Yad Vashem Archive, M 63/20 Federal Police and Justice Department, Department of Police Bern available from [http://yad-vashem.org.il/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203273.pdf](http://yad-vashem.org.il/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203273.pdf); Internet; accessed April 15, 2007.

and a ban on “lucrative” employment due to the high Swiss unemployment rate.<sup>11</sup>

Following *Kristallnacht* the Swiss Government, however, honored the appeal of the Swiss Committee for Aid to Children of Germany to admit a limited number of Jewish children on a temporary basis.<sup>12</sup>

While ostensibly seeking an international solution to the refugee crisis Rothmund and the Swiss Government was secretly conspiring to stem the influx of Jewish refugees. He sought official German cooperation in halting Jewish immigration because of governmental fears that the Swiss population would fall victim to *Überfremdung* (ethnic contamination) or *Verjüdung* (Judaization). Germany had begun a policy of granting German passports to all former Austrian citizens as a means of ridding itself of its Jews. The specter of ever widening involuntary migration arose with the Italian Government’s decision to deport all foreign Jews who had arrived after 1919 coupled with the closure of the French frontier to further refugees. In the background, of course, lay the countries of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary and Poland who also sought to solve their “Jewish Question” by forced emigration.<sup>13</sup>

On June 24 Rothmund advised the German Legation in Bern that unrestricted admission of Austrian Jews would overwhelm Switzerland which had no more use for Jews than had Germany. Fearing that Switzerland would be inundated by Jews with the

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<sup>11</sup>“Swiss Explain Move in Curbing Refugees,” *New York Times*, August 25, 1938, 8

<sup>12</sup>“Swiss to Let 1,000 from Austria Stay,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1938, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Regula Ludi, “What is So Special about Switzerland? Wartime Memory as a National Ideology in the Cold War Era,” in Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu, *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 235; Shaul Ferrero, “Switzerland and the Refugees Fleeing Nazism: Documents on the German Jews Turned Back at the Basel Border in 1938-1939,” 3 available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203212.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203212.pdf); Internet; accessed January 27, 2011.

collusion of the Viennese police and aware of the probable ineffectualness of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees, Rothmund filed a complaint on August 10, 1938 with Under State Secretary Ernst Woermann, Director of the Political Department of the German Foreign Ministry. He claimed that the entry of Jews into the country has reached critical levels. Therefore, all Austrians seeking entry into Switzerland would require a special visa. Otherwise, Switzerland would enact draconian measures to prevent the continued dumping of Jewish refugees. Unless positive actions were undertaken by the German authorities the Swiss Government would abrogate the Swiss-German visa agreement. Rothmund agreed to limit any visa requirements to Jews coming from Austria or Germany provided their passports unmistakably identified the traveler as being Jewish. The Germans, in turn, called for similar designations to be applied to Swiss passports. The end result was the cancellation of all Jewish passports and their replacement by special documents marked by a red “J” [*Jude*], 3 cm. in height affixed to the upper left-hand corner of the first page, allowing Swiss border officials to more readily recognize the ethnicity of refugees. This policy went into effect approximately two weeks prior to *Kristallnacht*.<sup>14</sup> Rothmund was described by Adler-

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<sup>14</sup>Tenenbaum, “The Crucial Year 1938,” 53-56; “Law on Passports of Jews October 5, 1938, 1938 *Reichsgesetzblatt*, Part 1, 1342; Document 2120-PS, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. IV (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946,) 754-755; “The 1998 Wiesenthal Reports on Switzerland” available from <http://www.alanschom.com/theReport.htm>; Internet; accessed April 6, 2010; “The Politics of ‘Transmigration’: Why Jewish Refugees had to Leave Switzerland from 1944-1954” by Simon Erlanger. *Jewish Political Studies Review* 18: 1-2 (Spring 2006) available from <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-erlanger-s06.htm>; Internet; accessed June 30, 2010; Perl, *The Holocaust Conspiracy*, 77-78; Doc. 5 on *German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Washington 1963, Series D, Vol. V, in Adler-Rudel, *The Evian Conference*,” 251; “Very Important and Strictly Confidential Circular to the Swiss Border Police” September 7, 1938, available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203273.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203273.pdf) ; accessed June 19, 2010. The negotiations between the Swiss and German Governments remained a state secret until 1953 when captured German archives were released with the publication of the “Documents on German Foreign Policy” (*Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik*). There is evidence that during the Great War the files of Jews seeking Swiss citizenship were specially marked to identify the applicant as being Jewish and a stamp

Rudel as the “prime example of the kind of man” to which the destiny of the refugees was consigned.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, while the Evian Conference was ostensibly convoked to aid the rescue of the victims of German persecution and potentially save lives, some members were actively moving to cut off all routes of escape. The road to salvation would, as time will reveal, become a possible route to extinction. The report of the Technical Sub-Committee and the closing comments of the delegations themselves would clearly demonstrate the ineffectualness and, perhaps, the detachment from reality of the Conference itself.

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configured as a Star of David was utilized by the Federal Government in 1919. Furthermore, there are examples of documentation antedating Rothmund’s negotiations with the Germans (1936-1938 and continuing into 1940) that were marked by officials (on the Federal and Canton level) by two forms of the “J” stamp. Commercial traveler identity cards for foreigners and Jewish Swiss citizens were stamped with a red “Jew” next to the column for citizenship. Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland—Second World War, eds. “Switzerland and Refugees in the Nazi Era” (Bern, Switzerland: 1999), 73, 74.

<sup>15</sup> Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 250.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Days Nine and Ten**

#### **“Serious Spirit of Cooperation”**

The report of the Technical Sub-Committee under Judge Michael Hansson of Norway was submitted in private session on July 14. The committee was charged to hear confidential disclosures of the immigration laws and policies of the participating governments and the number and category of refugees that were considered eligible for admission. A solution was needed to deal with the issue of “documentation” for stateless immigrants. Meetings were held on July 8, 11 and 13. The representatives arrived at a general consensus in which all of the governments acknowledged the “serious nature” of the refugee crisis and the “urgent necessity for a solution.” The limits of cooperation of each country, however, were framed by “their laws and individual situation” and the background and qualifications of the prospective immigrant [and I would include, the terms of the official invitation]. The Hansson committee believed “prospects for increased reception of refugees” were reasonably good dependent upon the relevant entry requirements. In addition, resettlement in overseas territories was being considered by certain powers but required detailed analysis and long-range planning. Countries bordering Germany and Austria could not be expected to admit more refugees until those who were granted temporary haven had moved on to other destinations. These nations of transit “may continue to make an important contribution” towards solving the crisis by

providing training facilities geared for the “re-adaptation of life” abroad. The impoverishment of many of the refugees posed a “major obstacle” to successful immigration and resettlement. The issue of utilizing Nansen or Nansen-like passports was also considered.<sup>1</sup>

The closing session of the Evian Conference convened on July 15. The Columbian representative, Jesus Yepes, introduced into the record a memorandum which reiterated that his country’s willingness to assist German and Austrian refugees represented a “humanitarian effort inspired by lofty sentiments of international fraternity.” He disavowed any Columbian attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Reich and any immigrants allowed entry into his nation would have to meet the legal migration requirements.<sup>2</sup>

The Evian Conference Chairman, Myron C. Taylor, returned to the podium to offer his concluding remarks. He announced that the “serious spirit of cooperation” among the delegations had created the “machinery” that would lead to the long-term resolution of the international refugee crisis affecting Central Europe; an operation and on-going project that would require uninterrupted effort so that the hope of an anguished mankind would not be “dispelled and their suffering embittered.” The Evian Conference was only the beginning of a process that would be continued by a permanent body, the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees from Germany. He warned that lack of resolve would result in “catastrophic human suffering” which could potentially provoke “far-reaching consequences in international unrest and strain.” An orderly

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<sup>1</sup> “Annex II. Report of the Technical Sub-Committee,” “Proceedings,” July 14, 1938, 51-52.

<sup>2</sup> J.M. Yepes, “Draft of the Resolution with which it Proposed to Conclude the Present Session of the Intergovernmental Committee at Evian,” “Proceedings, July 14, 1938, 39-40.



system of emigration, temporary transit and permanent resettlement would replace a “disorderly exodus” provided “the country of origin” [note that Germany is not specifically named] allowed the emigrants to retain a sufficient percentage (at least 25%) of their property and financial assets. Such cooperation from Germany was “imperative” if other nations were to open their borders to stateless refugees.<sup>3</sup> Appendix D contains the official memorandum issued at the end of the conference in which the construction of a permanent committee in London is announced. As can be seen by the text the Evian Conference failed to reach any concrete plan and continued to talk in generalities and in terms of long-range goals, although the situation for Jews in Central Europe was rapidly worsening.

Some observers, however, noted that the seizure of Jewish assets and property represented more than “mere race hatred by Nazi leaders” but was driven largely by domestic “economic pressure”—trade deficits, lack of foreign exchange and high levels of national debt due to rearmament. The Reich, “feeling the pinch of lack took a convenient opportunity” to improve its financial condition and support for its “Hitlerite program.”<sup>4</sup> The Government seized and Aryanized one-third of the Jewish owned businesses in Austria and especially Vienna estimated to be worth £114,000,000 to £307,000,000. The confiscation program was scheduled to be completed by 1941.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>“Taylor’s Evian Speech,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1938, 4. See also Taylor speech October 3, 1938 to the Foreign Policy Association; believed the value of Jewish property within the Reich was between \$2,000,000-6,000,000. “Even the lower figure would be more than enough to re-establish the half-million persons elsewhere, were it possible to use it.” The accelerated rate of Aryanization and the events of *Kristallnacht* drastically decreased the assets available to be utilized for resettlement. Department of State Releases, XX, Nr. 47 (October 1938), 245-255 cited in Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 39.

<sup>4</sup>*St. Petersburg Times*, July 13, 1938.

<sup>5</sup>“Jewish Businesses in Austria: Transference to Aryans,” *The Times*, July 23, 1938, 11.

British Ambassador to Berlin Neville Henderson believed that Jewish emigration from the Reich must necessarily be contingent upon the amount of capital and property the Jews could retain to aid their establishment of a new life abroad. He believed that such a connection would pressure the Germans into liberalizing their financial policies if they truly wanted to rid themselves of the Jews. Henderson, however, did ask Foreign Minister Ribbentrop if Germany would cooperate in an orderly resettlement of German and Austrian Jews by allowing retention of adequate funds but was given a negative response.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the American Ambassador, Hugh Wilson, queried State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry Weizsäcker and was informed that “he should not entertain any hopes in that direction.”<sup>7</sup> The Earl of Plymouth, Parliamentary Undersecretary to the Foreign Office, and Lord Halifax had called upon Germany to allow refugees to retain enough assets to allow resettlement. Otherwise, the entire German and Austrian refugee problem would become inordinately complicated and potentially “insoluble.”<sup>8</sup> Lord Winterton opposed such a plan out of fear of antagonizing the Germans and jeopardizing any potential for Nazi cooperation as the Conference was dealing with “questions of world-wide importance.”<sup>9</sup> FDR requested that the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain personally approach Hitler for greater “flexibility”

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<sup>6</sup> DGFP, D, v. July 8, 1938, no. 640, 894-95 and no. 641, 895 July 27, 1938 cited in Vital, *A People Apart*, 884; Henderson to Halifax, July 4, 1938, FO 371/22529, W 8887/104/98 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 113.

<sup>7</sup> DGFP, D, v. July 8, 1938, no. 640, 894-895 cited in Vital, *A People Apart*, 884.

<sup>8</sup> Ferdinand Kuhn, “New Reich Talks in London Likely,” *New York Times*, July 28, 1938, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Winterton to Halifax, July 8, 1938, FO 371/22530, W 9531/104/98 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 113.

on the refugee problem but was turned down by Chamberlain who believed that “formal diplomatic channels” represented the proper approach.<sup>10</sup>

Winterton, head of the British delegation, believed that the Conference had achieved “positive progress in the direction of enlarging the opportunities” for immigration that would be benefited by the future work of the IGCR. The results were “unanimous” and “most satisfactory” and represented the “first fruits of the wise and courageous initiative” of FDR. The delegations had demonstrated “good will and a disposition” to liberalize their respective immigration policies allowing entry of a “great number” of refugees.<sup>11</sup> There were also signs, he believed, of a forthcoming willingness on the part of Germany to reach an accord on the issue of retained assets.

Palestine, Winterton believed, was a “wholly untenable” solution to the refugee crisis due to its limited geographic size and “special considerations” that derived from the Mandate granted to the United Kingdom by the League of Nations. The Peel or Royal Commission, calling for the partition of Palestine, was rejected as indefensible and impracticable by the follow-up Woodhouse Commission. Jewish immigration could only be facilitated under “suitable conditions” which at present were limited by local events [the Arab revolt which began in 1936]. Thus, the British need to secure the good will of the Middle Eastern Arab States, along with other factors, forced the United Kingdom to

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<sup>10</sup>*Public Papers of FDR*, vol. 11, 173, October 5, 1938 cited in Feingold *Politics*, 240. Goering ordered the registration of all Jewish property as a means of expediting the process of Aryanization which represented the final action against Jewish-owned businesses and other enterprises. Jews at that time were only allowed to remove 3-5% of their possessions and were subject to the pre-Nazi era Flight Tax. Other members of Parliament made similar appeals to Germany to release sufficient refugee funds and included the Bishop of Chichester, Viscount Samuel, Lord Allen, Marquess of Reading, Lord Winterton and Lord Marley. *The Times*, July 28, 1938, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Statement prepared at F.O. for Lord Winterton's report, July 19, 1938, FO371/22531, W 9747/104/98 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 120.

avoid discussion of Palestine during the Evian Conference. A definitive solution to the question of the Mandate awaited the outcome of the forthcoming London Conference regarding the potential division of Palestine into an Arab and Jewish State.

Consequently, it was necessary to place “certain restrictions of a purely *temporary* [author’s italics] and exceptional character” on Jewish immigration in order to maintain the relative size of the two populations.<sup>12</sup> Since the Arabs refused to directly negotiate with Palestinian Jewry it is likely that the London Conference was viewed by His Majesty’s Government as a delaying tactic with little chance of success.

These restrictions eventually became formalized in the White Paper of 1939 in which Jewish immigration was to be limited for five years and then ended. In order to minimize the expected opposition from Palestinian and American Jews Britain did increase Jewish immigration into the United Kingdom until the beginning of the war. During this period fifty thousand Jewish refugees were admitted while the U.S. allowed entry to 57,000.<sup>13</sup> Winterton did warn, however, that other governments should not become involved in the internal affairs of Palestine for which Britain “as the mandatory power bore sole responsibility.”<sup>14</sup> He was prepared, on the other hand, to offer some degree of consolation to the increasingly desperate German and Austrian Jews: Kenya (and possibly Northern Rhodesia) could offer opportunities for “small-scale settlement”

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<sup>12</sup> “Proceedings,” July 15, 1938, 42.

<sup>13</sup> Arie J. Kochavi *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States & Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>14</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 116.

but only gradually and without utilizing land that had been set aside for the native population.<sup>15</sup>

Winterton hoped that the Evian Conference and the creation of the IGCR would alleviate the “sufferings” of the refugees and he complimented the “willingness” of the delegations and their respective governments to “contribute, as far as their circumstances permit, to this result.”<sup>16</sup> To some this tentative offer of East Africa as a place of refuge had an “excellent effect” and provided a “bright afterglow” to a meeting that had not been “notable for its optimism.” It represented the most “concrete” proposal to come out of the meeting as most delegations were more concerned about reasons why assistance could not be offered rather than the consideration of ways in which immigration could be facilitated.<sup>17</sup> The British Colonial Office, however, informed the Foreign Office that Kenya could only accommodate one hundred fifty refugees and the prospects for the remainder of the Colonies were limited. Taylor tried to obtain a full accounting of the Colonies’ potential for resettlement but to no avail. He received assurances that the Colonial Secretary was devoting his “constant attention” to the issue and that “certain projects” besides Kenya were under review. The Dominions were equally evasive.<sup>18</sup>

A Jewish periodical skeptically viewed any plans for resettling Jews in distant lands:

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<sup>15</sup> “Proceedings,” July 15, 1938, 42.

<sup>16</sup> “Proceedings,” July 15, 1938, 43.

<sup>17</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 120; “Home for Refugees,” *The Glasgow Herald*, July 15, 1938, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 131-132. An appendix was attached to the official record detailing the budget for and the relative national financial contributions to the support of the IGCR. As can be seen in Appendix A the amounts offered were limited considering the scale of the work that was to be undertaken by the permanent body.

Powerful nations, enjoying sovereignty and freedom, have only their own countries to fall back upon. But Jewish refugees have a choice of many lands to pick from. If one prefers the humid heat of the jungles of Guiana, he is welcome to it. If someone else's taste runs to tsetse flies and similar blessings of East Africa, they are at his disposal. Verily, it is good to be a refugee.<sup>19</sup>

Similar passionate sentiments were expressed by Ottawa merchant and President of the Canadian Zionist Organization Archibald J. Freiman on December 13, 1938 in response to the "Madagascar Plan," espoused by a number of European nations and more recently by Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the S.S. Security Service:

We don't want the jungles of Africa—we are people, we are human beings. We don't want to hurt anybody, but we have a right as human beings to be on this earth. We are not any better but certainly not any worse and you cannot show me a time in history when Jews acted towards nations as an alleged civilized nation is treating the Jews in Germany. We don't want the jungles of Africa, we want Palestine.<sup>20</sup>

Henri Bérenger concluded his remarks by expressing French contentment at hosting the Conference in such a "harmonious atmosphere" that Evian and its environs were able to provide. He also praised France's long democratic and republican traditions which infused the "moral and material tranquility" necessary for serious deliberations that sought to maintain international peace and the "freedom of all citizens of the world."<sup>21</sup> Despite Bérenger's public optimism Daladier recognized that the Evian Conference was an exercise in futility and concluded that stricter controls on immigration needed to be instituted. He advised the Chamber of Deputies that the more recent

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<sup>19</sup>Alan Dowty, *Closed Borders: The Contemporary Assault on Freedom of Movement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 93.

<sup>20</sup>Valerie Knowles, *First Person: A Biography of Cairine Wilson, Canada's First Woman Senator* (Toronto, Canada: Dunburn Press, LTD., 1988), 209.

<sup>21</sup> "Proceedings," July 15, 1938, 44-45.

refugees whose residency permits had expired would face deportation back to Germany or arrest and imprisonment. Also, refugees who failed to obtain gainful employment faced similar consequences. Following *Kristallnacht* the Daladier Government issued a decree calling for the establishment of detention camps for illegal refugees and for those who failed to meet the terms of the May 1938 decree. An additional edict, issued on April 12, 1939, called for obligatory labor and military service for political refugees who had resided within France for more than two months. The border security police were empowered to block the entry of any refugee that was considered unfit for military service or hard labor.<sup>22</sup>

Following the closing of the Evian Conference the U.S. Government dispatched officials to ascertain the current situation of “potential refugees” within Greater Germany. State Department Counsel George Brandt visited Vienna, Berlin, Stuttgart and Hamburg. The purpose of the “Brandt Mission” was to obtain data from “American sources” regarding the nature and number of people seeking to leave Germany under the auspices of the IGCR and a report was to be submitted in London by August 7.<sup>23</sup> By July 18 the American Consul General in Berlin announced that further applications for visas into the U.S. would no longer be accepted due to heavy demand. Ten thousand files involving fifteen thousand refugees were already under review. More than sixty thousand requests had already been submitted for an annual quota of approximately 27,370. The State

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<sup>22</sup>Taylor to FDR report “The Tragic Position of the Jewish Refugees in France,” December 1938 and the new decree-laws April-August 1939 cited in Maga, “Closing the Door,” 438-439.

<sup>23</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, July 16, 1938. Brandt served as a Turkish language officer for the State Department in Constantinople and Cairo and had a number of consular assignments. He served as the Assistant Chief of the Visa Office from 1924-1928 and aided the House Committee on Immigration in the writing of the Immigration Act of 1924. He served as a technical advisor to the Evian Conference and IGCR and in 1938-39 served as an immigration advisor in the Philippine Islands.

Department allocated the majority of the allotment to the four Consulates in Germany: Stuttgart, 11,000; Vienna, 6,000; and 3,000 respectively for Berlin and Hamburg. The remaining four thousand were released to worldwide U.S. Consulates.<sup>24</sup> Desperate German Jews, in the meantime, searched through the New York City and Chicago phone books searching for possible American relatives. “They copy the names and addresses of American Jews to whom they hope they are related.”<sup>25</sup>

The State Department announced that an immense amount of red tape preparatory work dealing with the financial and political aspects of immigration into the U. S. would be necessary before German and Austrian Jews could embark on the “exodus” to America and other destinations and might require five to ten years before the project could be completed.<sup>26</sup> The Protestant writer Jochen Klemmer perceptively observed in his diary on August 23, 1938 that the failure of the Evian Conference placed the German Jews in a “far more tragic” position in the hands of their Nazi tormentors.<sup>27</sup>

Once again, the immediacy of the human tragedy that was playing out within Greater Germany and its implications was lost on the delegations and their respective governments. Rescue required prompt and bold action rather than a contemplative, limited and drawn out affair. Failure to resolve the Jewish Question reinforced the hardliners. Palestine represented the best, although imperfect, solution but British resistance and Jewish disunity barred the Wandering Jew from the Promised Land.

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<sup>24</sup> “US Stops Jews in Reich from Seeking Visas: Over 60,000 Have Sought to Emigrate on Quota of 27,000,” *Washington Post*, July 19, 1938, 3.

<sup>25</sup> “Reich Jews Hunt Kinfolk in American Directories,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1938, 29.

<sup>26</sup> “Red Tape Slows Up German Refugees Movement to U.S.,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 25, 1938, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Semelin. *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 130.



## **Chapter 10**

### **Palestine**

#### **“Waste of Time”**

Arthur Ruppin, a prominent economist and sociologist, met with other Zionist immigration experts to discuss the implications of the Evian Conference. He noted that Palestine had a limited potential to absorb refugees. Since the British opposed increasing Jewish colonization he recommended that Jews move to other areas first in order to expedite their flight from Germany and Austria. Jewish resettlement, Ruppin believed, should be viewed in a “more general perspective” with Palestine serving in a “central” but not exclusive role. He urged Zionists, who would be attending the conference, to present an appearance of solidarity and work towards such a goal while offering the delegates “sound economic and political solutions.”<sup>1</sup>

Yitzhak Gruenbaum took a contrary view during a session of the Jewish Agency Executive and stated that if other territories were deemed acceptable then Palestine would lose its centrality in the Zionist paradigm. Consequently, Zionists needed to uphold the dogma that only Palestine was suitable for Jewish resettlement. David Ben-Gurion agreed with Gruenbaum and felt that acceptance of Ruppin’s idea would diminish

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<sup>1</sup>Beit-Zvi, *Post-Uganda Zionism*, 180f. (Hebrew) cited in Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable*, 89-92; Menachem Mor, ed. *Eretz, Israel, Israel and the Jewish Diaspora: Mutual Relations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1988), 182, 183. The Palestinian newspaper *Ha’aretz* reported in June 1938 that an estimated eight to nine thousand Jews were unemployed within the Mandate. Broken down by locale three to four thousand were jobless in Tel Aviv, 1,500-2,000 in Haifa, six hundred in Jerusalem and in the agricultural settlements more than 2,500. *The Sentinel*, June 23, 1938, 3.

pressure on the British to open up the Mandate for migration while potentially interfering with Zionism's assertion to a historic right to the land of Palestine. Although Ben-Gurion knew the territory was not ready to accept large numbers of refugees, he continued to demand a linkage of refugee relocation to Palestine. He anticipated, however, that the on-going Arab Revolt and its continuing unrest and violence would lessen the prospects for mass Jewish immigration. Consequently, the future Israeli Prime Minister argued that the primary goal of the Zionist representatives should be to diminish the harm the Conference might create to the prospect of a future Jewish Homeland. Only the preeminent leaders, such as Ruppin, Weizmann and Menachem Ussishkin, should be sent to Evian, to defend against potential adversity.<sup>2</sup> Ben-Gurion warned that the "more we say about the terrible distress of the Jewish masses in Germany, Poland, and Rumania the more damage we shall inflict [on our own position] in the current negotiations [on the future of Palestine]."<sup>3</sup> Ussishkin demanded that the Zionist delegation focus solely on Palestine as the site of refuge as "all the other countries of immigration are of no interest to us."<sup>4</sup>

The realization that the issue of Palestine would be excluded from discussion dissuaded many of the leading Zionist leaders, with the exception of Ruppin, from

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<sup>2</sup> Mor, *Eretz Israel*, 183. Gruenbaum was active in the Polish *Al Hamishmar* radical Zionist faction but immigrated to Palestine in 1933. He was appointed a member of the Jewish Agency Board of Directors and the World Zionist Organization. Ruppin, the Chairman of the Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews Mr. Kurt Blumenfeld, Dr. Siegfried Moses and Dr. Max Kreutzberger for the Organization of Jewish Settlers from Germany based in Tel-Aviv, Mr. Zalman Rubashov representing the Hebrew paper *Davar*, Tel-Aviv, and Golda Meier attended as an unofficial Palestinian delegation.

<sup>3</sup> Jewish Agency Executive session in Jerusalem, June 26, 1938, Ben-Gurion in the chair. Central Zionist Archives, *Hahanhala ha-zionit, Protokol*, no. 55, vol. xxviii, fos. 6053-61, cited in Vital, *A People Apart*, 89-92.

<sup>4</sup> Shulamit Olko, *Germans, Jews and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 60.

attending the meeting. Chaim Weizmann believed that under such circumstances his presence would have been a “waste of time.” He advised Rabbi Stephan Wise that the “scope of the Conference was so narrowed down that it would have been out of place for me to swell the numbers of the Jewish representatives already filling the corridors” of the Hotel Royal. In addition, other prominent international Jewish leaders stayed away from the Conference.<sup>5</sup>

The Pro-Palestinian Federation of American in a vain attempt wired Myron C. Taylor imploring him to influence the British to allow an “open-door” policy of Jewish immigration into Palestine as “clearly stipulated” in the Mandate awarded the United Kingdom. Signatories of the cable included the president of the organization, Rev. Charles Edward Russell, President of the AFL William Green, President of City College Frederick B. Robinson, New York Senator Robert F. Wagner and John Haynes Holmes of the Community Church of New York City.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand there were voices opposed to any role of Palestine as a sanctuary for Jewish refugees. The British Delegate to the League of Nations’ Mandate Commission testified that British policy “was, and must be, wholly unaffected by the

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<sup>5</sup> Mor, *Eretz Israel*, 183. See also Weizmann to Jacobus Kann, July 3, 1938, no. 357, 409 in Weizmann, *Letters*, xviii cited in Vital, *A People Apart*, 890; Chaim Weizmann and Barnet Mitvinoff, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann: December 1931-April 1952*, series B, vol. 2 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 314; The Jewish leaders who decided not to attend the Evian Conference included the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, the Grand Rabbin of France, Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress, Cyrus Adler of the American Jewish Committee, members of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and prominent individuals such as Einstein, Louis Brandeis and the Baron de Rothschild

<sup>6</sup>“Palestine Open Door Urged,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1938, 7. Reverend Charles Edward Russell founded the Pro-Palestine Federation of America in Chicago in January 1930 as a means of promoting cordial Christian-Jewish relations and combating prejudice and included many leading Christian theologians.

situation of the German Jews.”<sup>7</sup> Palestinian Christian churches favored restraining Jewish immigration due to a desire to appease the Arabs in their congregations, to avert any “decline in the importance of Christian influence and institutions in the Holy Land” and to continue “missionary work” and other projects. They believed partition would interfere with their proselytizing and other Christian Church activities. The Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem and other clerics believed that the Mandate could not accommodate further Jewish immigration as a means of solving the refugee crisis and blamed the entry of Jews during 1935 as the cause of the Arab Revolt. Since that time, the Bishop claimed, “Palestine had known no peace.”<sup>8</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church was opposed both to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and any Jewish immigration into the Holy Land. Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, a special representative of Pope Pius XI to Washington, informed Myron C. Taylor (June 22, 1943), during his role of special American Emissary to the Vatican, that while it was historically true that the land had at one time been occupied by Jews, there were no historical precedents for the resettlement of a people to an area they had departed 1,900 years earlier. If the goal was the creation of a “Hebrew Home” then there were

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<sup>7</sup>*Daily Telegraph*, October 31, 1933 cited in Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 183.

<sup>8</sup> Consul General in Jerusalem George Wadsworth to Hull, October 26, 1938, 867.01/1295, *FRUS* vol.11, Britain, The Commonwealth, Europe, Near East and Africa, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), 969-974. The dispatch included an “open letter” published in *The Times*, September 22, 1938, which was signed by Christian clergy in Jerusalem calling for protection of the Churches’ interests in Palestine as well opposition to partition and continued Jewish immigration. There arguments centered upon four basic themes: 1. Palestine is too small of an area to “solve the European Jewish problem” and any solution should not be at the “expense” of Christians or the “Arabs of Palestine.” 2. The Jewish (and Zionist) “claim to Palestine on the basis of prophecy is declared in the New Testament to have been abrogated.” 3. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 made conflicting promises and was too “vague in its form of expression.” 4. Palestine is the seat of three major religions; not just Jewish and Muslim. This dispatch also included demographic information regarding the Christian population of Palestine and made reference to fears of anti-Christian repercussions should Jewish immigration increase or partition occur.

more “fitting” locations which would avert “grave [and] new territorial problems.” An editorialist had written in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht* that the issue of Jewish suffering and Palestine was purely “sentimental and coincidental.” Despite the needs of humanitarianism British commitments in Palestine could not remain open ended or be “influenced by the malefactions of certain European States” towards their Jewish population.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>*Jerusalem Post* July 6, 1999, 6.

**PART III**  
**HOPES DASHED**

**Chapter 11**

**“Unique Opportunity to Study Jewish Question”**

World appeasement...was obviously the great objective towards which the great powers of the world today must strive.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the Evian Conference failed to generate any positive, significant and concrete results. It afforded a “unique opportunity to discuss the Jewish Question” on an international stage and was the only conference held prior to the onset of World War II to assist the targets of “racialist persecution.”<sup>2</sup> Its ineffectualness led to marked increases in the global barriers to immigration and the sympathetic but shallow rhetoric expressed by the Conference’s delegates emboldened the Nazis, accelerating the decline of the status of Jews and non-Aryans within Greater Germany and culminated in the pogrom of November 1938. Although the meeting was the result of a Presidential initiative it was apparent to some observers that the United States’ approach involved the provision of “helpfulness rather than direction.” Although American officials endeavored to facilitate the construction of plans “we do not intend to be the final judges of whatever may be done.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles to Italian Ambassador February 1, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Katz, “Public Opinion,” 105.

<sup>3</sup> “Want to Quit Austria,” *The Pueblo Indicator*, July 16, 1938, 2.

Many governments recognized early on that the “existing legislation” acknowledged by Secretary of State Cordell Hull in the American invitation placed stringent limitations on the numbers of Jews that would ultimately be allowed entry from Germany and Austria. Taylor warned during his opening address that “some millions of people....are actually or potentially without a country.”<sup>4</sup> The problem was greatly compounded by the efforts of certain Eastern European nations that sought to rid themselves of their own Jewish populations. In addition, the failure to formulate specific details and proposals prior to the American announcement and official invitation imbued the Evian Conference with an air of superficiality, haste and insincerity. Nations bordering Germany and Austria feared inundation with refugees and claimed that they had already become oversaturated with unwanted aliens. Some States granted transit visas to refugees hoping to pass them on to another country while others used the local police or military to seal the borders to prevent further migration. The sheer magnitude of the European refugee problem may have overwhelmed the abilities of the delegates and their respective governments to act in a positive and effectual manner. One European expert observed that “every Jew east, north and south of Switzerland” was potentially a refugee, numbering 5,000,000-6,000,000, exclusive of the USSR. The League’s Nansen Office was still confronted with refugees stemming from the Great War and had “500,000 homeless on its hands.” In addition, there was the problem of non-fascist Italians and displaced Spaniards.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ruth Gay, *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 270.

<sup>5</sup> “Refugee Parley at Evian,” *St. Petersburg Times*, July 13, 1938, 4.

The refugee problem became more complex on July 14 when the Benito Mussolini Government issued a ten point racial doctrine, constructed by Fascist university professors in the report “Fascism and the Problems of Race,” that was similar in content to the Nazi Aryan world view. The new Italian canon proclaimed the biologic superiority of Aryans and claimed the right to declare that the Italian non-Jewish “race” was itself Aryan. A “pure Italian race now exists” and the “conception of racialism in Italy must be essentially Italian and Aryan-Nordic in trend.” It was time, the authors believed, for the Italian people to proclaim their racial consciousness.<sup>6</sup> *Il Duce* asserted that it was necessary for the Fascist Party to deal with the “racial problem” confronting the nation that threatened the “health of the race that will make history.” The press called for stricter legislation which would avoid the “catastrophic plague of the crossbred, the creation...of a hybrid race” that would promote “disintegration and revolt,” Communism and Masonry. For Italy to assume its rightful place in the sun the people needed to have a “strong pride [and] a clear omnipresent knowledge of the race.” However, unlike their German Aryan brethren Fascists believed that “to discriminate is not to persecute” but the proportion of Jews to true Italians would have to be strictly controlled.<sup>7</sup> The Jewish or half-Jewish population in 1933 was estimated to be 57,000 out of a total population of 45,000,000.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Committee Annual Report 1939-1940*, 629.

<sup>7</sup> *Tampa Daily Times*, July 14, 1938, 5; “To Discriminate Is Not to Persecute,” *Corriere Della Sera* (Milan), August 5, 1938 available from [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/defendrace\\_italy.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/defendrace_italy.html); Internet; accessed June 18, 2010;

<sup>8</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Committee Annual Report 1939-1940*, 629-630..



Some sources suggested that this racial doctrine was issued at that particular time as a means of deflecting German and Austrian Jews away from seeking refuge in Italy, increasing ties of solidarity with the Reich and minimizing the influence of Palestinian Jews in the Mediterranean while currying favor with the Arab world.<sup>9</sup> The anti-Semitic wing of the Fascist Party demanded the exclusion of Jews from the arts and sciences, education and other occupations “influencing national thought,” the abolition of intermarriage and discharge from the military; a policy move mimicking that of its German ally.<sup>10</sup> Pope Pius XI publically contested this new racial dogma. Although he did not mention the Jews specifically the Pontiff stated the Church did not want to “separate anything in the human family” and asked why Italy now felt compelled to emulate Nazi Germany.<sup>11</sup> Mussolini responded to the Papal criticism by asserting that on the “question of race also we will march straight ahead. To say that Fascism has imitated anyone or anything is simply absurd.”<sup>12</sup>

The convening of the Evian Conference was considered a “laudable” exercise but “informed quarters” did not have “high hopes” for any positive outcomes. Despite an abundance of “high sounding resolutions” there were “too many concrete obstacles” lying in the way of practical solutions. The agreement of the various democracies to attend the meeting was viewed as a “tribute” to the prestige of the American President; a convocation at which the “democracies could not well afford to absent themselves.”

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<sup>9</sup> *Time*, July 18, 1938, 22.

<sup>10</sup>“Italian Press Campaigns for Anti-Jew Move,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 27, 1938, 13.

<sup>11</sup> “Pope Attacks Italian Trend against Jews,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 30, 1938, 18.

<sup>12</sup>“Pope Scorned by Mussolini on Race,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 31, 1938, 1.

Consequently, the United States was expected to absorb the majority of the refugees although Congressional opposition was expected.<sup>13</sup>

Various observers noted that “even when the Government representatives had already gathered at Evian there was very little information forthcoming” regarding the planned agenda, its scope and its specific goals.<sup>14</sup> *The Times* correspondents reported none of the delegations had brought to the table any “tangible contribution” to the problem of mass resettlement but would only deal with individual cases within the context of their national immigration laws and policies.<sup>15</sup> However, at the conclusion of the meeting the paper’s opinion had changed. The assembly had performed its tasks “admirably” and the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees would convert a “haphazard flight” of impoverished Jews (assuming German cooperation) into an “orderly exodus.” Each delegation offered the “prospect” that a greater degree of flexibility would be applied towards immigration and, as a consequence, it was anticipated that “200,000” refugees could be resettled.<sup>16</sup>

Although Roosevelt had ordered, following the *Anschluss*, the consolidation of the annual German and Austrian immigration quotas the “excessive formalism” of the State Department and strict consular interpretations of the Likely to become a Public Charge clause (LPC) significantly restricted the admission of refugees from the Reich. As a result, during 1933-1938 no more than 27,000 German refugees or 20% of the

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<sup>13</sup>*The Evening Independent* (Alan Barth) July 12, 1938, 4, 5.

<sup>14</sup>Board of Deputies of British Jews Archives, file E3/282/1, “Inter-Governmental Conference on Refugees Held at Evian, 6 July, 1938,” unsigned report cited in Bartrop “Drawing the Line,” 5.

<sup>15</sup>“The Refugee Problem: Discussions at Evian,” *The Times*, July 8, 1938, 15.

<sup>16</sup>“Results at Evian,” *The Times*, July 16, 1938, 13.

130,000 slots allocated to the German quota actually entered the United States.<sup>17</sup> The German allotment for was 25,957 but only 12,532 visas were issued and 13,425 remained unused (51%). The annual Austrian quota in the same year was 1,413 with 424 issued and 989 unused (62%). The amalgamation of both groups generated 27,370 annual visas but merely 12,956 were issued and 14,414 remained unused (52%). Appendix E provides a global breakdown of the 1937 Jewish population and Tables 2 and 5 provide information regarding Jewish emigration from Greater Germany and Austria.

The number of potential refugees, however, surpassed the quantity of annual visas available for a number of years. By June 30, 1937 applications submitted to American Consulates in Germany and Austria had exceeded one hundred thousand and was expected to rise following the *Anschluss*. Many candidates were excluded due to bureaucratic technicalities that would require amending the immigration law. Potential immigrants had to provide proof of employment or an attestation that they would not become public charges. Confirmation of good conduct had to be provided by the Gestapo in addition to all of the necessary documents needed to leave Germany by a specified

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<sup>17</sup>Adler-Rudel, "The Evian Conference," 237. The LPC clause, enacted by Herbert Hoover's Executive Order of September 8, 1930, barred immigrants who were expected to end up on the public dole. The American immigration service assignment of quota numbers was based on the émigrés place of birth. It was estimated that only twenty or thirty percent of the two hundred thousand Jews residing in Austria at the time of the *Anschluss* were actually born within the territorial bounds of post-WWI and pre-Anschluss Austria. Consequently, under a strict interpretation of birthplace by the State Department it was estimated that seventy to eighty percent of refugees (although born within the Austrian part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, would be considered non-Austrian and hence, barred from inclusion in the combined German and Austrian quotas. "Merged Quota Hits Exodus of Austrians," *The Southern Israelite*, April 15, 1938, 1; "Post-War Map Changes May Block Exodus of Austrian Jews to America," *The Sentinel*, April 14, 1938, 43. The number of Jewish refugees was also affected by an unwillingness or inability of many German Jews to leave their homeland due to an underestimation of the risks posed by Hitler and his regime and a desire to retain their identity as Germans. The Racial Laws of 1935 and a steadily declining status within the Reich brought many Jews to face the reality of the situation and the need to flee the country.

date (sponsor, visa, exit permit, proof of payment of the Flight Tax and after the pogrom of November 1938 the Atonement Tax, and train or boat tickets.)<sup>18</sup>

Dennis Laffer has argued that the summit's sole function was to serve as a "politically expedient means of avoiding action to assist the Jews." This project was constructed in such a manner as to guarantee ultimate failure.<sup>19</sup> It has also been categorized as a "public relations exercise" designed to express a sense of civilized outrage or moral duty to those individuals rendered stateless and penniless while sidestepping any changes in American immigration quotas or laws.<sup>20</sup> The hollow oratory of the delegations and their respective governments demonstrated that the "universe of obligation" was fulfilled only in words and not in deeds.<sup>21</sup> Guy S. Goodwin-Gill has argued that the "processes of appeasement in international relations" would have been harmed if the conference had not ended in inaction.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Robert Michael claimed that FDR's primary motivation was to "assuage" the American Jewish

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<sup>18</sup>*Foreign Policy Bulletin*, April 1, 1938, vol. XVII, no. 23, 3; Eve Nussbaum Soumerai and Carol D. Schulz, *A Voice from the Holocaust* (West Haven, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 48.

<sup>19</sup>Dennis R. Laffer, "Evian Conference," *History in Dispute: The Holocaust 1933-1945*, vol. 11 (Farmington Hills, MI: St. James Press, 2003), 56.

<sup>20</sup>Howard Adelman, "From Refugees to Forced Migration: the UNHCR and Human Security," *The International Migration Review* 35, no. 1 (2001):7. Similar sentiments were echoed by Naomi Shepherd, *A Refugee from Darkness: Wilfrid Israel and the Rescue of the Jews* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 133.

<sup>21</sup>Helen Fein, "Genocide and Other State Murders in the Twentieth Century," October 24, 1995, 14 available from <http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/analysis/details/1995-10-24-02/fein.pdf>; Internet; accessed October 4, 2010.

<sup>22</sup>Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, "Different Types of Forced Migration Movements as an International and National Problem," 19 in Goran Rystad, ed., *In the Uprooted: Forced Migration as an International Problem in the Post-War Era*, (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1990), 15-45 cited in David F. Good and Ruth Wodad, eds., *From World War to Waldheim: Culture and Politics in Austria and the United States* (NY: Berghan Books, 1999), 93.

community's call for aid to their European co-religionists while simultaneously guaranteeing that "no effective help" would be provided.<sup>23</sup>

The invitation to attend the meeting specified that participating nations would not have to modify their respective immigration laws and quotas and any financial cost would have to be borne by private relief organizations, although it was clear that only governments possessed sufficient monies to facilitate resettlement. The refusal of the United Kingdom and the United States to alter their immigration laws led "interested and disinterested spectators alike" to view the conference as an "exercise in Anglo-American collaborative hypocrisy."<sup>24</sup> Louise London asserted that the United Kingdom chose the path of "caution and pragmatism, subordinating humanitarianism to Britain's national interest." Solution of the refugee crisis posed greater risks than benefits to British interests, especially in the Middle East.<sup>25</sup>

Henri Bérenger, the head of the French delegation, concluded that the Evian Conference did not serve any significant purpose. It was not an international assembly, a legislature or a "platform for declarations." The delegates were "simply a body" which Roosevelt "desired to create between America and the other continents."<sup>26</sup> The French Premier, Edouard Daladier, confided in Neville Chamberlain that FDR was acting merely

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<sup>23</sup>Robert Michael, *A Concise History of American Anti-Semitism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 181.

<sup>24</sup>Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, (London: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1994), 138.

<sup>25</sup>London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, 1.

<sup>26</sup>"Proceedings," July 6, 1938, 11.

to appease American public opinion.<sup>27</sup> Italian Fascist editor Virginio Gayda, writing for the *Giornale d'Italia*, concluded that the Evian Conference “failed to deliver any tangible results” and despite the many declarations of “good intentions...nobody...want[ed] the Jews.” He criticized the American President for “never overlook[ing] an occasion for filling the world with some resounding verbal gesture.” Since each country preferred some other nation to accept the refugees “the merry game of passing responsibility along continues uninterrupted.”<sup>28</sup> The British weekly paper, *Observer*, warned that the “further accretion of, say 100,000” Jews into the country risked the “danger” of fomenting “anti-Jewish feeling...” The refugee problem would be insoluble “unless every great country [took] her proportionate share.”<sup>29</sup>

Sir Neill Malcolm succeeded James G. McDonald as the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany in February 1936.<sup>30</sup> Although he was authorized “to undertake consultations by the most suitable method” with nations of potential resettlement he soon realized [an analysis supported by many private

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<sup>27</sup> *British Documents*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, III, pp. 294-296, November 24, 1938, Neville Chamberlain-Edouard Daladier conversations cited in Feingold *Politics of Rescue*, 29.

<sup>28</sup> “Concern for Jews in Held Insincere,” *New York Times*, November 22, 1938, 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Observer*, July 31, 1938 cited in Hamerow, *Why We Watched*, 103, 104.

<sup>30</sup> The High Commissioner for Political Refugees from Germany was established by the League in 1933 with James G. McDonald as its first commissioner; a post he held from 1933-1935. Due to official German protests the Commissioner was based in Lausanne rather than at the League itself in Geneva. McDonald sought to extend the term of the Nansen Passport system but was blocked by the French and British as they pursued a policy of appeasement with Germany. McDonald, during his tenure as High Commissioner, successfully found refuge for approximately 60,000 refugees. Under Sir Neill Malcolm the League adopted an “Arrangement” in July 1936 allowing member states to issue travel documents to Germans and other stateless refugees leaving the Reich. Jews represented the greatest percentage following the enactment of the Nuremberg Racial Laws of 1935. Consequently, the Convention on the Status of Refugees Coming from Germany” was formally adopted in February 1938 and was eventually extended to Austria and Czechoslovakia. John C. Torpey *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 138.

organizations] that there was “very little chance” for mass resettlement abroad; a view reinforced by the statements of the delegations at Evian. Consequently, Malcolm concluded that any “large-scale scheme of migration” [Jew or Christian non-Aryan] attempted during a time of high unemployment “could only arouse hostility” by creating an “alien element inside the State concerned.” Therefore, any relocation of refugees must be made on an individual basis via a “process of infiltration” that would foster assimilation aided by the appropriate private organizations. Successful resettlement, in turn, depended upon the provision of land, specialized training and sufficient financing. Private organizations, however, lacked sufficient funds to carry out such work singlehandedly and required governmental contributions. Although the High Commissioner believed that the Evian Conference offered “a very great opportunity” backed by the “enormous prestige” of Roosevelt and European nations he believed that the project was doomed to failure unless suitable places of resettlement were provided.<sup>31</sup> Such reticence, German Nazis noted, provided “courage” to lesser nations to voice “their reluctance to permit new Jewish emigration.”<sup>32</sup> Erika Mann and Eric Estorick observed that the most “outstanding” consequence of the Conference was a general consensus that “something *should* be done” but in the absence of an official and government willing to “assume the burden of action, nothing *was* done.”<sup>33</sup>

FDR selected Myron C. Taylor, a personal friend, Quaker and a retired Chairman of U.S. Steel, to head the American delegation. Despite his lofty title of

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<sup>31</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 32-35.

<sup>32</sup> “No One Wants to Have Them,” *Voelkischer Beobachter*, July 13, 1938.

<sup>33</sup>Mann and Estorick, “Political Refugees,” 151.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary the appointment of a non-diplomat implied a lack of seriousness about the conference and its potential work.<sup>34</sup> Taylor and his British counterparts agreed in advance that Palestine would be excluded from consideration as a possible haven.<sup>35</sup> The issue of forced Jewish emigration from Poland, Rumania and Hungary was avoided by limiting discussion to refugees from Germany and Austria. Prospects for resettlement in British African holdings were also downplayed. Lord Winterton, in his opening speech on July 6, 1938, noted that the tropical climate with its adverse effects on whites, population densities and local political considerations would limit immigration to a relative handful; mass re-settlement was a futile undertaking.<sup>36</sup>

The Roosevelt administration, despite its call for a refugee conference, did not attempt to garner public or political support for opening the gates. He avoided open discussion of the issue knowing that the Great Depression, unemployment, fear of aliens, nativism, isolationism and anti-Semitism were significant factors that promoted anti-immigrant attitudes. Roosevelt was not willing to expend political capital in promoting this issue.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Welles had recommended to FDR and Hull that the U.S. delegation be led by Hull, accompanied by Sec. of Labor Francis Perkins, George Messersmith, the head of the Foreign Service Personnel Board and himself; FDR chose Myron C. Taylor, James G. McDonald, presidential advisor on refugee affairs, George L. Warren, executive secretary of the Committee on Political Refugees, plus State Department technical assistants Robert Pell (Divisional Assistant in the Department of State) and George Brandt (Foreign Service Officer, Class III) who were familiar with immigration issues—however, none of these delegates were particularly influential politically.

<sup>35</sup>Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to Consul General Wadsworth in Jerusalem, 867N.01/1106, July 2, 1938, *FRUS*, vol. 1, 752.

<sup>36</sup>“Problem of Refugees,” *The Times*, July 7, 1938, 15.

<sup>37</sup>Laffer. “Evian Conference”, 57.



Jewish groups themselves could not agree on a cohesive policy towards immigration and instead offered a variety of proposals calling for increased or decreased admissions into Palestine, vocational and retraining programs to facilitate assimilation into the population of a new country and establishment of Jewish settlements in out of the way and undeveloped regions. Those opposed to forced immigration sought the preservation of their minority rights in the country of origin.<sup>38</sup> In addition the Zionist and non-Zionist leadership failed to send a unified high-level representation to the conference. Such discord, in the opinion of Nahum Goldman, would ultimately harm the Jewish cause and represented a source of disgrace and derision.<sup>39</sup> Goldmann wanted Rabbi Stephen Wise to attend in his capacity as president of the World Jewish Congress, along with Chaim Weizmann, arguing that they could “authoritatively command the best hearing for the general Jewish case.”<sup>40</sup>

There were some within the American Jewish community who decried the lack of a strong Jewish leadership. Acknowledging the past efforts of Louis D. Brandeis and

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<sup>38</sup> Such disharmony among the various Jewish factions was not lost on the German National Socialists. “It was proven also that the Jewish organizations represented at Evian were not of one opinion regarding the goals. For example, the so-called World Jewish Congress is mostly interested in protesting against the German racial laws that have stimulated interest all over the world. In contrast, the Zionists wish to exploit the departure of the Jewish masses from European countries as an argument to have more enter Palestine. The development of the Evian Conference so far is very embarrassing for the Marxists, because according to them, it leads to an international legalization of German anti-Semitic policy.” “No One Wants to Have Them,” *Voelkischer Beobachter*, July 13, 1938.

<sup>39</sup> Meyer W. Weisgal, ed., *Chaim Weizmann: Statesman, Scientist, Builder of the Jewish Commonwealth* (NY, Dial Press, 1944), 304-328; Vital. *A People Apart*, 886; Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 103. The Jewish Agency Executive (JAE) had proposed a delegation consisting of Menahem M. Ussishkin and Arthur Ruppin representing the JAE; Nahum Goldmann representing the London Executive and American Zionist interests and Georg Landauer or Henrietta Szold representing Youth Aliya. Goldmann became a member of the London JAE in 1935 although based in Geneva and his work with the World Jewish Congress led to his involvement with American Zionist leaders and organizations.

<sup>40</sup> Cable from Nahum Goldmann to Sumner Welles, May 27, 1938 and from Welles to James G. McDonald, May 29, 1938; in Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke*, 305.

Julian Mack critic Ludwig Lewisohn argued that the “disease of the assimilatory theory of emancipation” had hindered Jewish attempts at self-preservation. As a consequence, “our ablest men are alienated even in this disastrous age” and behave as if they “were not Jews.” Those “few able and well-known Jews who have identified themselves with their people” were absent when decisive and practical leadership was needed. Jewish survival, he claimed, depended upon an end to the “ravages” of this affliction.<sup>41</sup>

Jews came before the Conference representing divergent interests and groups; Zionists versus anti-Zionists, Orthodox versus Reformed. The *Congress Bulletin* of the American Jewish Congress described the situation as a “spectacle of Jewish discord and disruption.”<sup>42</sup> Some of the Jewish leaders, especially those of German background in the United States and Great Britain, deliberately avoided an outspoken stance against Jewish persecution out of “fear of stirring up an anti-Semitic backlash” within Germany and preferred to negotiate out of the limelight.<sup>43</sup> The American Jewish Committee, a group

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<sup>41</sup>Ludwig Lewisohn, “The World’s Window,” *The Sentinel*, July 7, 1938, 5. Ludwig Lewisohn, a German-born literary and drama critic, novelist and Zionist, derided the Jewish lack of unity, the internecine conflict between pro-Zionists and anti-Zionists and the seeming lack of awareness of reality. “Everyone is awake. Everyone is determined to defend with his very blood his life, his way of life, his freedom, his people, the future of posterity. Everyone except the Jews...That people stands as it were dazed, stupefied, arguing, arguing, proliferating dull edgeless words...” British resistance to Jewish immigration into Palestine could be surmounted by the “moral pressure of world-Jewry,” especially those of America. The Jewish communities of the United States, however, were fragmented, “disgracefully divided into factions [American Jewish Committee versus the American Jewish Congress, for example], disgracefully hindered by die-hards in high places, by snobs, by self-opinionated men with ugly, hard, vain little minds...” Such disharmony prevented Jews from “ris[ing] as one people inspired by one faith and one hope and one goal, intent upon one eternally liberating act...” The British Colonial Office would not be influenced by a “people divided against itself, a group shot through and through with slavishness of spirit, a group in which treachery is rampant—treachery out of small phantastic fears and unworthy self-seeking and a detestable desire not to lose an argument...” Ludwig Lewisohn, “What is Wrong?” *The Sentinel*, March 31, 1938, 5.

<sup>42</sup>Bryan Mark Rigg, *Rescued from the Reich: How One of Hitler’s Soldiers Saved the Lubavitcher Rebbe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 63.

<sup>43</sup>Naomi Shepherd, *Wilfrid Israel: German Jewry’s Secret Ambassador*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984), 133-34 cited in Breitman, *American Refugee Policy*, 60

that was “old, elitist [and] given to private persuasion,” was engaged in a running “feud” with the more confrontational American Jewish Congress.<sup>44</sup> Chaim Weizmann believed that behind the scenes actions, performed “privately and separately” with the various delegations in their respective capitals, would be more likely to lead to positive results than an international congress at Evian. The exclusion of Palestine from the agenda convinced him as well that he would not be granted a “serious hearing,” thus constituting “‘a waste of time.’”<sup>45</sup>

To Zionist historians the “appearance of the Jews at the Evian Conference was that of paupers.” Jews did not come as a “united nation but [as] a homeless group of lobbyists.” The leadership of the London-based Jewish Agency suggested that the British Council for German Jews [and possibly other organizations] formulate a joint delegation; a project dismissed by the Council, in part out of fear of creating in actuality “an international Jewry.”<sup>46</sup> There was also concern among the assorted Jewish leaderships that any testimony or evidence presented to the Conference sub-committees would be “heard [but] would not be seriously listened to.”<sup>47</sup> The American Jewish Congress reported that the “disintegration and rivalry” between the various Jewish factions

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<sup>44</sup>Jessie H Stiller, *George S. Messersmith, Diplomat of Democracy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 123.

<sup>45</sup>Vital, *A People Apart*, 890.

<sup>46</sup>Second report of Nahum Goldmann from Evian, CZA, File S25/978 and Rosenblitt’s letter to Ruppin, CZA, File S7/693, Goldman letter from Evian, CVA, File S25/978 and Rosenblitt’s letter to Ruppin, CZA, File S7/93 cited in Beit-zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism*, 147-48. The belief that a secret Jewish cabal controlled governments and the economy was long the mainstay of anti-Semitic beliefs and found, perhaps, its greatest expression in the infamous “Protocols of the Elders of Zion.”

<sup>47</sup> Vital, *A People Apart*, 894.

provided “a spectacle of Jewish discord and disruption.” The New York Jewish paper regarded the entire state of affairs as a “disgrace.”<sup>48</sup>

A number of major Jewish organizations did, however, make an attempt to present a unified front at Evian. The Council for German Jewry, HICEM, Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jewry, Anglo-Jewish Association, German Aid Committee, and Agudas Israel World Organization submitted a collective memorandum (composed by Solomon Adler-Rudel serving on the Zionist Actions Committee) to the Conference. The communication was endorsed by the Jewish Agency of Palestine which chose to submit a separate note dealing specifically with Mandate affairs. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee also expressed its support but directed its delegate to the conference, Dr. Jonah B. Wise, to offer a separate memo.

The collaborative text addressed the technical issues of resettlement organization and financing and was non-ideologically based. It was estimated that two hundred million dollars were required to remove five hundred thousand Jews from Germany, with additional funding needed for relocation in agricultural colonies. Eighty million dollars were needed for the evacuation and retraining of Jews younger than forty years of age. The associated groups concluded that German cooperation, coupled with the release of a sufficient level of Jewish assets, was essential for a methodical and structured emigration system. However, a special clause (XII) specifically dealt with Palestine as a site of resettlement. The rate of immigration would be dependent upon the

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<sup>48</sup>“David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 49.

economic absorptive capacity of the Mandate. Such a focus on Palestine gained the support of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Joint Distribution Committee.

The principal figures of the larger organizations attempted to prevent the appearance of smaller Jewish groups before the Conference as a means of creating the façade of joint action. Professor Benjamin Akzin criticized the leadership of some of the more prominent Jewish associations, especially Norman Bentwich, for acting as if they were the official spokesmen of the collective Jewish people. Such individuals, Akzin believed, were “extremely displeased” with the attendance of the lesser blocs at the Conference who were regarded as interlopers or “minor leaguers” and did not warrant time to present their case before the technical sub-committee. The self elected elite believed that only one, two or three representatives should appear before the conference “in the name of all the Jewish federations” prompting Akzin and others to protest in the “name of democracy” The subsequent internecine conflict led the directorate of the Evian Conference to permit all representatives of Jewish organizations to speak but “what took place was a tragicomedy, with plenty of the comedy element.” Each organization was allotted only five to ten minutes; a clear sign that “the committee did not take it seriously.”<sup>48</sup> The decision of the White sub-committee to significantly curtail presentation time essentially negated the efforts of the attendant organizations. Twenty four groups who had hoped to offer evidence in support of their cause were limited to minutes resulting in confusion and disarray.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Recorded interview between Prof. Benjamin Akzin and Beit-Zvi, September 7, 1972 cited in Beit-Zvi, “Post-Ugandan Zionism,” 149.

<sup>49</sup> Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 239; “Nations Gathered at Evian for First Refugee Parley,” *The Southern Israelite*, July 8, 1938, 8. Adler-Rudel’s description of the event captures the tenor of the

The private organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, presented five major suggestions to resolve the refugee crisis: 1. Application of pressure upon His Majesty's Government to open the gates of Palestine to Jewish settlement. 2. Negotiations with the Reich to increase the amount of personal finances and assets that could be removed by the émigrés which at that time was limited to five percent of their holdings. 3. Establishment of an international loan to subsidize resettlement of forced refugees. 4. Negotiate with governments to liberalize immigration without revision of current "quotas and regulations." 5. Grant permanent residency status and work permits to refugees in countries of temporary haven. As demonstrated, all of these suggested measures were either ineffectual or ignored.<sup>50</sup>

Solomon Adler-Rudel recalled that standing before the White sub-Committee was an entirely "humiliating experience" due to lack of preparation on the part of the Evian Conference representatives themselves as well as the witnesses appearing before the panel, "none of whom were accustomed to "any kind of interrogation procedure in front of a Committee." The speakers felt themselves to be "on trial" and were decidedly handicapped with the lack of time to adequately and clearly make their case. Consequently, "all left the room disheartened and disillusioned."<sup>51</sup> Years later, Dr. Nahum Goldmann laid some of the blame on "too many organizations [that] applied and

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conference: "The reception of the delegation representatives was a truly melancholy affair. The delegation spokesmen stood by the door of the meeting room. Everyone who entered was given 3-4 minutes to make his presentation. No questions were asked. The first few had their remarks translated into English or French; for those who followed even this gesture of courtesy was omitted. Spokesmen found themselves back in the waiting room before they even grasped that they had already appeared before the committee. Adler-Rudel correspondence, 194 cited in Beit-Zvi, "Post-Ugandan Zionism," 149.

<sup>50</sup>"Nations Gathered at Evian for First Refugee Parley," *The Southern Israelite*, July 8, 1938, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Adler-Rudel, "The Evian Conference," 255.

wanted to be heard, so there was no united front, and the *goyim* said, ‘To hell with all of them!’”<sup>52</sup> Ernst Marcus observed that the Jewish representatives lacked the requisite economic “knowledge nor knew the means for the realization of projects.”

Consequently, the “undue haste” with which Jews had to present their case, constrained by a limited time frame and practical experience, heralded the “tragedy... [that] was nearing its clear peak, the annihilation. The gates had already been closed before us.”<sup>53</sup>

The Jewish leadership in the United Kingdom, Central and Eastern Europe and the Americas was divided over Zionism and the issue of Palestine. The non-Zionists argued that Jews did not represent a specific nationality and consequently should not be granted the status of a State but rather a protectorate. They believed the Mandate, however, should not place any limitations upon Jewish immigration. The Zionists, such as Chaim Weizmann, opposed the diversion of Diaspora resources from Palestine despite progressive British restrictions on Jewish immigration. David Ben-Gurion maintained that Palestine must remain the central focus of Jewish rescue. Advising the Zionist Executive in a December 11, 1938 letter he asserted that:

...if the Jews are faced with a choice between the refugee problem and rescuing Jews from concentration camps on the one hand, and aid for the national museum in Palestine on the other, the Jewish sense of pity will prevail and our people’s entire strength will be directed at aid for the refugees in the various countries. Zionism will vanish from the agenda and ... also from Jewish public opinion. We are risking Zionism’s very existence if we allow the refugee problem to be separated from the Palestine problem.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Beit-Zvi, “Post-Ugandan Zionism,” 150.

<sup>53</sup> Ernst Marcus, “The German Foreign Office and the Palestine Question, 1933-1939,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 2 (1958), 194.

<sup>54</sup> Yigal Elam, *Introduction to Zionist History* (Tel Aviv: 1972), 125-127; Tony Greenstein, “Zionism and the Holocaust,” (June 2006) available from <http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/mideast/greenstein/zionism2.htm#n46>; Internet; accessed May 14, 2010.

Christopher Sykes has argued that the Zionists viewed the Evian Conference with “hostile indifference” and that any success would have lessened the pressure to grant Jews a National Homeland and diminished the “heightened enthusiasm of Jews with Palestine. This was the last thing the Zionist leaders wished for...”<sup>55</sup> Noah Lucas agreed that the failure of the Evian Conference was not a setback for the Zionist movement. Rather, its success would “have eased the pressure in Palestine.”<sup>56</sup> Zionists, according to Henry Mentor, executive vice-president of the United Jewish Appeal, did not envision the rescue and *Aliyah* [emigration of Jews to Palestine] of all Central European Jews but called for “selectivity.” Young men and women, with training in agriculture or other beneficial industries and who were prepared for the rigors of life in a developing Palestine, were the ideal candidates for resettlement. Mentor warned that “there could be no more deadly ammunition provided to the enemies of Zionism” than the inundation of Palestine with “very old people or with undesirables.” Until Palestine had reached a suitable level of development only 30,000-60,000 Jews could be admitted per year.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel 1917-1948* (London: 1973), 188-191.

<sup>56</sup>Noah Lucas, *The Modern History of Israel* (Praeger: NY, 1975), 458fn.

<sup>57</sup>Ben Hecht, *Perfidy*, (NY: Julian Messner, 1961), fn 7, 255 cited in Greenstein, “Zionism”. Ben Hecht (February 28, 1894-April 18, 1964) was a noted playwright, novelist, screenwriter, director and producer who became an active Zionist. Hecht described the bitterness and frustration of Jews unable to escape the Reich in a rhyme included in an ad in the September 14, 1943 *New York Times* entitled the “Ballad of the Doomed Jews of Europe”: “Four Million Jews waiting for death./ Oh hang and burn, but--quiet, Jews/ Don’t be bothersome; save your breath/ The world is busy with other news/ Four Million murders are quite a smear/ Even our State Department views/ The slaughter with much disfavor here/ But then—it’s busy with other news. “Oh World be patient—it will take / Some time before the murder crews / Are done. By Christmas you can make / Your Peace on Earth without the Jews.” Ted Gottfried, *Displaced Persons: The Liberation and Abuse of Holocaust Survivors* (Brookfield, CT: Twenty-First Century Books, 2001), 58; “A Child of the Century” by Ben Hecht available from <http://www.saveisrael.com/others/hecht/hechtchild.htm>; Internet; accessed August 4, 2010; “Christmas Without Jews: A Holocaust Controversy” by Rafael Medoff ( December 2003) available from <http://www.wymaninstitute.org/articles/2003-12-christmas.php>; Internet; accessed August 4, 2010.



Various members of the Anglo-British Jewish elite, such as Anthony de Rothschild, Neville Laski, Robert Waley-Cohen, Lord Bearsted and others were more concerned about maintaining their social positions within British society and especially to avoid the proverbial charges of dual loyalties.<sup>58</sup> Otto Schiff (1875-1952), was a banker of German background, who became president of the Jews' Temporary Shelter, a major communal organization providing services to refugees. Schiff had received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his work with Belgian refugees during the Great War. He founded the Jewish Refugees Committee (later renamed the German Jewish Aid Committee in 1938).

Schiff, along with Lionel Cohen, Neville Laski and Leonard Montefiore presented to the British Cabinet, during April 1933, a personal financial pledge that guaranteed German Jewish refugees admitted into the U.K. would not become public charges. Consequently, the Cabinet authorized a very liberal interpretation of the immigration requirements while viewing Britain as a way station on the road to overseas resettlement. As a result, approximately thirty thousand Jews entered the island nation by the end of 1938. By December 1939 these guarantors and other members of the local Jewish community had contributed £3,000,000.

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<sup>58</sup> Weizmann opposed any fund raising program that diverted funds away from Palestine and hoped to see 500,000 Jews resettled in the Mandate before his death. Conservative non-Zionist Jewish leaders in the UK and France, such as Lionel and Anthony de Rothschild, Sir Robert Waley-Cohen and Baron Robert de Rothschild tended, according to James G. McDonald, League High Commissioner for Political Refugees from 1933-1935 and later chair of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, gave limited support to resettlement of German Jews and underestimated the plight of the German Jewish community. The Baron viewed German Jews as more German than Jewish and was concerned about the number of refugees already admitted into France. Laski was president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and official spokesman on foreign affairs of the British Jewish community.

The fiscal backers of the pledge were concerned not only about the number of the refugees but also their class, background, age and national origin. Immigrants older than forty five years were excluded as their prospects of overseas relocation were considered limited. Following the *Anschluss* Schiff encouraged the Home Office to require visas for German and Austrian refugees in order to control the quantity and quality of the Jewish immigrants entering Britain. The visa was necessary, according to a delegation of the British Jews Board of Deputies (of which Schiff was a member), because of the difficulties entailed in removing a refugee once they had successfully landed in Britain. Sir Samuel Hoare of the Home Office concurred and warned that a deluge of the inappropriate type of migrant would pose a significant risk of inciting anti-Semitism among the British natives and the creation of a domestic Jewish Question; a position in which the Board of Deputies delegation stood in full agreement.<sup>59</sup>

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, who attended the Evian Conference with Dr. Arthur Ruppin, was a member of the unofficial Zionist delegation. Commenting in 1972 and a year later in his memoirs he described the meeting as a “shame and scandal for the entire progressive world.”<sup>60</sup> The Conference was a “wretched and tragicomic spectacle” and from the outset it was clear that the democratic nations would fail to provide meaningful and substantive aid to the refugees while substituting warm words of sympathy for

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<sup>59</sup>Vivian David Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain Since 1858* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1990), 196; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 82; Norman Bentwich, *Wanderer between Two Worlds* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner: 1941), 175; PRO HO 213/42: Minutes of meeting, April 1, 1938, 3 cited in Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 275-278.

<sup>61</sup>Nahum Goldmann radio broadcast on Israeli Army Radio on January 16, 1972, “Friends Talk about Arthur Ruppin” in Beit-Zvi, *Post-Uganda Zionism*, 139.

tangible humanitarian actions.<sup>61</sup> Ruppin noted that it was clearly obvious that the gates would be closed to all but a few refugees. However, to the press Ruppin described the Evian Conference as the “first silver lining in the dark clouds” that hovered over the Jewish world and he anticipated that the IGCR would play a “big role in the emigration problem.”<sup>62</sup> Bentwich described the Conference’s final report as “flat, like the mineral water of the place” and the exclusion of Palestine from consideration was “stultifying.”<sup>63</sup> *The American Hebrew* concluded that the “hopes” and aspirations of the real and potential forced émigrés was “rapidly sinking” due to the failure of the Conference to achieve meaningful results.<sup>64</sup>

Professor Arye Tartakower, historian and sociologist and a senior member of the World Jewish Congress, attended the Evian Conference as the representative of a Polish emigration society and described the results as a “dismal failure.”<sup>65</sup> The “insulting episode of the civilized world’s reaction” to German “criminal atrocities” would forever be a stain on the collective memory of mankind.<sup>66</sup> Historian Joseph Tenenbaum attributed the “gloomy failure” of the refugee conference to the plain reality that “no country wanted to open its gates to Jews.” He observed that the “flow of oratory and the hustling and bustling at special committee meetings did not obscure the paucity of

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<sup>61</sup>Nahum Goldmann, *Memoirs* (Jerusalem: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 158.

<sup>62</sup>Arthur Ruppin, *Chapters of My Life in the Building of the Land and the Nation, 1920-1942* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1968), 301.

<sup>63</sup> Bentwich, *My Seventy Seven Years*, 148.

<sup>64</sup> *Contemporary Jewish Record*, vol. 1 (July 1938), 22 cited in Gurlock, *America, American Jews*, 229.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Dr. Tartakower, Department for Oral Documentation, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University, Tape No. 1820 in Beit-Zvi, *Post-Uganda Zionism*, 139.

<sup>66</sup>Arye Tartakower, *Jewish Settlement in the Diaspora* (Tel Aviv: M. Newman, 1958), 268. *Ibid.*, 139.

concrete proposals...”<sup>67</sup> *Haganah* historian Dr. Yehuda Slutsky described the “high-sounding, emotional declarations” of the conference delegates but noted that when faced with the need to create a rational and workable plan to resettle refugees the representatives became universally “evasive.”<sup>68</sup> Solomon Adler-Rudel concluded that the sole accomplishment of the international meeting was the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees based in London that ultimately proved to be totally ineffectual. “It offered small comfort to the refugees, the potential refugees and the Jews in general, and was a cruel disappointment to the Jewish representatives who came to Evian.”<sup>69</sup>

One Jewish delegate summed up the sense of futility represented by the Conference:

“When the old trees of Evian cast their evening shadows over Lake Geneva and the bright lights of the Casino shone across the serene waters, I was overcome with grief and despair over the situation....All our work would soon be ended by a policy of *sauf-qui-peut* [“Every man for himself”]. The course which the Evian Conference was taking...was a tragedy whose certain end was destruction. The gates had been closed before us.”<sup>70</sup>

Editorialist William Zukerman observed (two weeks prior to the opening session) that the fate of the Jewish people appeared to hang in the balance at Evian but reports emanating from the Jewish European press were, for a variety of reasons, “almost [too] pathetic” to read and were the potential harbinger of possible failure. The Evian

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<sup>67</sup>Tenenbaum, “The Crucial Year,” 46.

<sup>68</sup>Yehuda Slutsky, *History of the Haganah*, vol. 2, 283 cited in Beit-Zvi, *Post-Uganda Zionism*, 139.

<sup>69</sup>Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 259.

<sup>70</sup>Nora Levin. *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry, 1933-1945* (NY: The Schocken Books, 1973), 77.

Conference represented the first international conclave of governments to confront a predominantly Jewish refugee crisis which acquired the veneer of a “matter of great importance.” Secondly, to Eastern and Western European Jews the United States maintained its image as the “golden land of hope, freedom and equal opportunities...” America was the “embodiment of the conscience of humanity...actuated by pity and true idealism” and endowed with faithfulness and morality. Such sentiments infused a “peculiar luster” on the Evian Conference. The writer warned that the “great hopes” held by Jews for a positive outcome, guided by the wise counsel of the United States, would end in a disappointment reminiscent of the weaknesses of President Wilson and the Paris Peace Conference. Thirdly, the refugee Jews of Europe were being influenced not by logic or practicality but by emotion which was destined to end in “disillusionment.” Fourth, little was known about the planned agenda for the Conference or its “terms of reference,” scope or possible solutions. It was clear that Jews represented the crux of the refugee problem but preliminary discussions appeared to ignore such a connection. The necessary planning and preparatory work did not appear to “well-informed circles” to have been “efficiently done.” Practical groundwork and action was called for rather than the issuance of “mere appeals” for assistance. Fifth, would those nations who were responsible for creating the refugee crisis be confronted? If agreements were made with Germany to facilitate the removal of its unwanted Jews would it stimulate pogroms and similar actions in Hungary, Poland and Rumania? Finally, it appeared that many of the attendees were lacking the “good-will which [such a] gigantic task requires” and were motivated by the fact that it was the United States that had issued the invitations for the Conference. Many European Governments viewed the American plan with great

skepticism as a shallow expression of an “idealistic gesture.” The appointment of Lord Winterton, an “outspoken anti-Semite” to represent the British delegation represented the “best illustration of [the] lack of sympathy with the spirit of the conference...” Zukerman concluded that the Evian Conference would “open auspiciously” but “complete failure” could only be averted by the application of “American courage, youth and sincerity...”<sup>71</sup>

Overall, the Evian Conference provided little comfort to the involuntary refugees and represented a “cruel” disillusionment to Jewish representatives and their sympathizers who attended the meeting.<sup>72</sup> Hannah Rosen, a young German Jewish woman widowed at an early age, managed to acquire a visa admitting her into the United States. She noted in her diary, following the conclusion of the conference on July 16 that Jewish hopes had been raised by the President “making it seem as if something would be done. However, nothing was accomplished. Was it all for show?” After the equally ineffectual Bermuda Conference in April 1943 Rosen observed that, as with its Evian predecessor, the American Government had once again chosen the path of “all words and no action.”<sup>73</sup> Beit-zvi regarded the conferences failure as symbolic of the Christian world’s “indifference” and “hypocrisy” to the fate of the Jewish people.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>William Zukermam, “Is the Evian Conference Doomed to Failure? Hopes and Fears for the Refugee Parley,” *The Jewish Criterion*, July 15, 1938, 12, 16, 17 available from [http://pjn.library.cmu.edu/books/pages.cgi?call=CRI\\_1938\\_092\\_010\\_07151938&layout=vol0/part0/copy0&file=0012](http://pjn.library.cmu.edu/books/pages.cgi?call=CRI_1938_092_010_07151938&layout=vol0/part0/copy0&file=0012); Internet; accessed July 15, 2010.

<sup>72</sup>Walter Laqueur and Judith Tydor Baumel, *The Holocaust Encyclopedia* (Willard, Ohio: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 2001), 174.

<sup>73</sup>Elizabeth S. Rothschild, “The Diary of Hannah Rosen: Europe’s Jews and America’s Response, 1937-1945” available from <http://remember.org/educate/hrdiary.html>; Internet; accessed June 26, 2010.

<sup>74</sup>Beit-Zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism*, 138.

A Belgian paper described the conclusion of the Evian Conference as a “gloomy experience” for the many real and potential refugees who looked towards Lake Geneva for solace and rescue. Despite the eloquent oratory and lofty idealism and the adoption of some “proposals devoid of all merit” nothing of “practical” significance to alleviate the sufferings and uncertainties of unwilling refugees was enacted. The participating nations were driven and guided by their “foreign policy needs” and not the requirements of a persecuted people. The only true success of the meeting, the paper believed, was the cooperation of the United States with the European democratic States.<sup>75</sup>

Alan Dowty concluded that the Evian Conference clearly demonstrated that the “final lifeline—the right to flee—no longer existed” while Ya’acov Liberman believed that the failure of the democracies to allow the Jews to be “immediately resettled” (an unlikely possibility considering the domestic economic, social and political conditions of the time) would culminate in Jews of Central Europe being exterminated.<sup>76</sup> Dr. Oscar Jászi asserted that the problem of German and Austrian political refugees (inclusive of Jews) represented a microcosm within the greater global problem of real and potential refugees who had or may be forced to flee from the “intolerance of the Franco dictatorship” and the expansion of Nazi influence over the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. Any new mass migration, he believed, would create “a problem of such magnitude” that it would defy resolution by the “normal methods of statecraft [that had

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<sup>75</sup>*Le Peuple* (Brussels), July 16, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinions,” 124.

<sup>76</sup> Dowty, *Closed Borders*, 94; Ya’acov Liberman, *My China: Jewish Life in the Orient, 1900-1950* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 1998), 99.

proven to be] pathetically inadequate.” Ominously and presciently he warned, “Only the catastrophic techniques of war and civil war would remain.”<sup>77</sup>

Robert Gellately maintained that Germany could not be swayed by issues of morality and “far from shaming the Nazis into relenting” the Evian Conference and its evident impotency merely encouraged the regime to adopt more radical approaches to solving the Jewish Question.<sup>78</sup> Norman Neimark described the Conference as a “tragic failure” and concluded that any “protestations” regarding the difficulties or undesirability of accepting stateless refugees was underpinned by a global anti-Semitism that “played a central role” in the ultimate failure of the Conference.<sup>79</sup>

Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, the National Chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee and private observer at the proceedings of the Evian Conference, however, lauded the actions of Myron C. Taylor. Despite the reticence of the various delegations to agree to modification of their respective immigration laws and policies Wise opposed any lessening of American immigration requirements for German and Austrian refugees. If the aid provided by the JDC and other relief organizations for those “escaping oppression...interfere[d] with helping Americans, then we wouldn’t do it.” He noted that the JDC provided more aid funding for use within the United States than for foreign relief.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Oscar Jászi, “Political Refugees” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 203, Refugees (May 1939): 93.

<sup>78</sup>Robert Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe* (NY: Vintage Books, 2008), 323.

<sup>79</sup>Norman M. Neimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 68.

<sup>80</sup>“Our Needy First, J.B. Wise Asserts,” *New York Times*, July 21, 1938, 10.



The American Jewish Committee (AJC) viewed the Evian Conference as the “most important step” taken towards solving the refugee crisis. Both the President and Myron C. Taylor were owed the “gratitude of all lovers of humanity for their efforts to make the conference a success.” Although the sole accomplishment of the Conference was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees the discussions between the delegates was “heartening” as an “expression of human principles.” While expressing gratitude for the conflation of the German and Austrian quotas by the American Government the *American Jewish Year Book* (AJYB) criticized the “disinclination of other countries” to accept increased numbers of refugees. The AJC observed that the number of emigrants leaving the United States during 1931-1937 exceeded the number of immigrants by eighty thousand and cited a speech given by Lord Winterton on January 26, 1939 that German and Austrian refugees had created new industries employing 15,000 out of work Britons.<sup>81</sup> By 1941, however, during the early years of the European War, the AJC had to admit that the IGCR had accomplished little of note.<sup>82</sup>

The Evian Conference also avoided any direct criticism of Nazi “policy towards the Jews, however uncivilized and deplorable.”<sup>83</sup> There were a number of reasons for

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<sup>81</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *The American Jewish Committee Thirty-Second Annual Report 1939*, 635-636, available from [http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC\\_DATA/Files/1939\\_1940\\_9\\_AJCAnnualReport.pdf](http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1939_1940_9_AJCAnnualReport.pdf); Internet; accessed June 11, 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Schneiderman, ed., *The American Jewish Committee Thirty-Fourth Annual Report 1941*, 744, available from [http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC\\_DATA/Files/1941\\_1942\\_10\\_AJCAnnualReport.pdf](http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1941_1942_10_AJCAnnualReport.pdf); Internet; accessed June 11, 2010; *American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 61 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960), 194.

<sup>83</sup> Henderson to Halifax, July 4, 1938, FO 371/22549, W 8887/104/98 cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, 113.

this reticence to chastise the Reich including complicated business and economic relationships (especially in Latin America) and fears of jeopardizing the sought after policy of continental appeasement. Many Latin American Governments were “dubious on the basic principle” that regimes engaged in forced emigration were “obliged” to allow refugees the retention of personal assets. Such a principle represented “undue interference” in the internal affairs of a State and might result in an undesirable precedent that could be utilized against Latin American countries in the future.<sup>5384</sup> Taylor informed Secretary of State Hull that many of the Latin American nations, especially Columbia, Venezuela, Central American Republics, Uruguay and Chile, threatened to vote against the final resolution of the Conference if it adopted any overt criticism of Germany. Taylor was told with “great frankness” that threats by Germany against joint commercial and compensation agreements precluded taking such a moral stand. Consequently, the text of the final resolution avoided any censure of the Reich or calls upon Germany to allow refugees to retain sufficient assets for resettlement.<sup>85</sup>

In addition, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop had warned that if the Evian Conference engaged in any anti-German propaganda then the Reich would be forced to retaliate against its German Jewish population.<sup>86</sup> Despite such dire threats Chaim Weizmann recalled the “elegant parties” held by Ribbentrop in the German

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<sup>84</sup>“Reich Power Felt at Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1938, 15.

<sup>85</sup>840.48 Refugees/513: Telegram Taylor to Hull Evian, July 14, 1938, 840.48 Refugees/513, *FRUS*, vol. 1, 754-757. Von Ribbentrop was German Ambassador to Britain from 1936 to 1938. In February 1938 he became Germany's Foreign Minister. The American Government was also concerned that overt criticism of the Nazi regime and its anti-Jewish policies could prompt Germany to default on its financial obligations to the Dawes and Young Plan. Spear, “The United States and the Persecution of the Jews,” 215.

<sup>86</sup>Shepherd, *Wilfrid Israel*, 133-134.

Embassy and how the elite of “British society was falling over itself to attend.” An invitation to such a fête was a mark of “social distinction” and despite the spilling of “Jewish blood which stained the hands of the hosts” the guests chose to ignore the victims’ lamentations “to heaven.” Weizmann warned Anthony Eden that the “fire from the synagogues” could easily spread from Germany and ignite Westminster Abbey and other Anglican churches. If a State was able to decimate an innocent minority purely on the basis of its religion and ethnicity, without any repercussions from the other Powers, then Europe as a whole faced the “beginning of anarchy” and the ultimate collapse of human civilization. Nations that chose the role of bystanders would eventually “be visited by severe punishment.”<sup>87</sup> Adler-Rudel noted that no matter how egregious Nazi behavior became foreign leaders were not prevented from “shaking hands or dining with Nazi leaders.” Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, however, writing from Berlin, judged the Germans to be “unfit for decent international society” for their harsh treatment of Jews, non-Aryans and political prisoners.<sup>88</sup>

Lord Winteron believed that vilification of the Reich would jeopardize any chance of German cooperation and noted that the British had successfully blocked an American attempt to formulate some “clause of a denunciatory character towards the German Government.”<sup>89</sup> Correspondent William Shirer doubted that the Evian Conference would achieve any positive results as the Americans, British and French

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<sup>87</sup>Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, 498.

<sup>88</sup>Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 235.

<sup>89</sup>Landau, *Nazi Holocaust*, 138.

appeared “anxious not to do anything to offend Hitler...the man who was responsible for their problem.”<sup>90</sup>

David Vital concluded that reticence to discuss the underlying causes of involuntary emigration, that is, German anti-Semitic policies, essentially provided “an offer of assistance” to the Hitler regime in its ongoing efforts to render Germany *jüdenrein*.<sup>91</sup> There were governments within and outside of Europe, it was believed, who placed greater import on the preservation of “proper” diplomatic relations with Germany than on the “lives of individual refugees, however numerous...” The protection of human rights was subservient to the needs and interests of the State.<sup>92</sup> A Swiss paper argued that the international delegates were dealing “purely and simply [with] a human problem...of secondary importance—and on no account” should the quest for a solution to the refugee crisis harm “normal international relationships.” It would be quite “unfortunate,” another Swiss paper believed, if the proceedings of the Evian Conference were perceived to be “directed against Germany.” The sole focus of the meeting had to be the resolution of the refugee problem and the abatement of the difficulties of the countries bordering Germany. Since the Reich and its policies were the genesis of the refugee issue overt censure needed to be avoided to facilitate “behind the scenes” [German] cooperation.<sup>93</sup> Harry Schneiderman, editor of the *American Jewish Yearbook* (1920-1949), however, alleged that the Evian Conference had brought Germany and its

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<sup>90</sup>William Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent 1934-1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1941), 101, 119-120.

<sup>91</sup>Vital. *A People Apart*, 884.

<sup>92</sup>*L'Impartial*, (La Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland) July 11, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 117.

<sup>93</sup>*L'Impartial* July 11, 1938, *Journal de Genève* July 8, 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 114, 115.

anti-Semitic policies before the “bar of civilized world opinion, but although condemnation was decisive and unqualified” it failed to stop or reduce the depredations of a criminal government which appears to have neither conscience nor regard for world opinion.”<sup>94</sup>

Representatives to the conference “manipulated the Intergovernmental Committee largely for their own ends, especially to deflect humanitarian pressure” from their respective countries.<sup>95</sup> Simultaneously they expressed “warm words of idealism” awhile offering “few encouraging practical suggestions.”<sup>96</sup> Country after country expressed their “platonic sympathies” for the plight of the refugees but presented a variety of explanations as to why they could not provide any meaningful refuge.<sup>97</sup> Most of the Evian delegates were drawn from embassy staff or were foreign ministry senior officials; no heads of state attended—representative selections that prevented the immediate enactment of any decisive policy measures. In addition, each delegation avoided “precise commitments” to accept specified numbers of refugees. The French representatives sidestepped any consideration of resettlement in colonial possessions and along with the British prevented inclusion of the Eastern European Jewish Question in the conference agenda.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Schneiderman, ed., *Review of the Year 1938-1939*, American Jewish Committee, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Tommie Sjoberg, *The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1991), 5 cited in London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, 5.

<sup>96</sup>*St. Petersburg Times*, July 8, 1938.

<sup>97</sup>S.D. Waley to Sir Frederick Phillips, memorandum, Evian Conference, June 17, 1938 cited in London, *Whitehall and the Jews*, 88.

<sup>98</sup>Foreign Ministry, “*Note de la sous-direction des Affaires Administratives et des Unions Internationales: Le comité d’Evian et la question des réfugiés israélites allemands*,” November 21, 1938, DDF, 2ème séries, tome XIII, doc. no. 348, 680-88 cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 185.

The unwillingness of the participating nations to commit to accept meaningful numbers of involuntary émigrés posed the greatest “stumbling block” in the search for a workable solution. The representatives’ speech-making “left little doubt” that most countries would not open their doors to immigration.<sup>99</sup> One paper editorialized that “if this is coming to the help of refugees, then what would the nations do if they meant to desert them?”<sup>100</sup> *Time* noted that the site of the conference, Evian, was the source of “still and unexciting table water [but] after a week of many warm words of idealism [and] few practical suggestions” the meeting “took on some of the same characteristics.”<sup>101</sup> The correspondent for *Newsweek* observed that during his opening remarks Taylor acknowledged the refugee situation had reached a critical stage in which governments “must act and act promptly” and did so by “promptly...slamming their doors against Jewish refugees.”<sup>102</sup> A reporter for *Life* magazine offered a critical opinion of the Conference. “Diplomatic gatherings are notable for their inhuman superiority to reality” and the current assembly is no exception. Lord Winterton’s “hypocritical maunderings widened the eyes even of the other delegates.”<sup>103</sup>

Charles Streit, correspondent for the *New York Times*, described the atmosphere at Evian as a “none too trustful poker game”, especially between the U.S., U.K. and France, in which each party opposed increasing its own level of immigration and wanted

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<sup>99</sup>*St. Petersburg Times*, July 8, 1938.

<sup>100</sup>*Daily Herald*, August 26, 1938 cited in Sharf, *The British Press*, 171.

<sup>101</sup>*Time*, July 18, 1938, 16.

<sup>102</sup>*Newsweek* July 18, 1938, 13.

<sup>103</sup>*Life*, August 8, 1938, 22.

to pass on the burden to the other. The United States represented the “chief motive power” while the “chief brake” was provided by the United Kingdom. Consequently, an “air of inhospitality” pervaded the conference. The Conference was a call for democratic societies to stand up for and protect “the individual against being punished for his opinions or [the Jewish blood of] his parents.” It was obvious early on that the delegates “lost sight” of this purpose from the “start. These poor people and these great principles seem so far away from the Hotel Royal tonight.”<sup>104</sup> The *New York Herald Tribune* commented that the Conference was “not exactly a pretty spectacle” that got “nowhere with great dignity but a high rate of speed.”<sup>105</sup> The *New Republic* observed that the delegates were annoyed with the Nazis not only because of the humanitarian concerns but because their respective countries were faced with an “awkward problem of absorption.”<sup>106</sup> The *Richmond News Leader* predicted that the American response to the refugee crisis would be muted with the Government content to issue “friendly gestures and kind words.”<sup>107</sup> Deborah Lipstadt noted that while many American papers criticized the lack of an adequate response during the Conference (both from the U.S. and other nations) they favored the “idea of a conference because it guaranteed no increase in immigration.” Thus, the “failure of Evian was the failure of the rest of the world to

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<sup>104</sup>Clarence K. Streit, “32 Nations Gather to Help Refugees,” *New York Times*, July 6, 1938, 1; *Montreal Gazette*, July 6, 1938, 1, 9.

<sup>105</sup> *New York Herald Tribune*, July 12, 1938 cited in Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press & the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945* (NY: The Free Press, 1986), 95.

<sup>106</sup> *New Republic*, July 20, 1938, 291-292. Ibid., 95.

<sup>107</sup> *Richmond News Leader*, July 13, 1938. Ibid., 96.

shoulder its share of the problem.”<sup>108</sup> “Humanitarianism,” according to the *Philadelphia Record*, sustained a “new blow” as the conference failed to rescue the “unhappy exiles” of Europe.<sup>109</sup> Gerald Gross described the German and Austrian Jews and non-Aryans as “pathetic pawns” for whom the Evian Conference was convened. The meeting had been a “disappointment if not altogether a surprise” to the refugees and their supporters for no sooner had the opening session begun delegates arose to say “We feel sorry for the refugees and potential refugees but...”<sup>110</sup> *The Daily Herald* asked “if this is coming to the help of the refugees, then what would the nations do if they meant to desert them?”<sup>111</sup>

Former High Commissioner and chair of the President’s Committee for Political Refugees James G. McDonald claimed in 1944 that the “international organizations have almost never faced the realities of the tragedy” of the refugee crisis but instead engaged in “face saving maneuvers while millions of innocent men and women have been needlessly sacrificed.”<sup>112</sup> Sumner Welles himself noted, following World War II, that the Evian Conference could have resulted in an “outstanding humanitarian achievement” had not the American Government “permitted the committee to become a nullity.”<sup>113</sup> Cordell Hull, with convenient hindsight, forgot the terms of the invitation which placed

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>110</sup> Gerald Gross, “Yes, But Attitude Perils Progress at World Refugee Conference,” *Washington Post*, July 10, 1938, B7.

<sup>111</sup> *Daily Herald*, August 26, 1938 cited in Scharf, *British Press*, 171.

<sup>112</sup> James G. McDonald to Ben Cohen, November 30, 1944, McDonald MSS cited in Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

<sup>113</sup> Sumner Welles, *Where Are We Headed?* (NY, Harper and Brothers, 1946) cited in David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 51.



significant obstacles in the paths of the refugees and claimed that the Administration had called for the conference “lest these victims of persecution be exterminated.”<sup>114</sup>

Theodore C. Achilles, a State Department official and member of the U.S. delegation, attributed the failure of the meeting to the simple fact that “nobody wants any more Jews.”<sup>115</sup> Yepes, the Columbian delegate, compared the character of the Evian Conference to that of a “modern wailing wall.”<sup>116</sup> New York department store Ira Hirschmann, who attended the conference as an observer, left early after becoming convinced that the senselessness and indolence of the meeting was a “façade behind which the civilized governments could hide their inability to act.”<sup>117</sup>

A German plan to ransom forty thousand Jews (\$200-400/head and evacuated by August 1) as a means of raising foreign capital was conveyed unofficially by an eminent Jewish Viennese physician, Dr. Heinrich von Neumann, but failed due to moral objections to “head money” and resistance of potential countries of refuge to allocate the necessary funds.<sup>118</sup> Bérenger met with Neumann and would take his plan “under

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<sup>114</sup>Cordell Hull, *Memoirs* (NY: Macmillan Company, 1948), vol. 1, 578 cited in Arnold A. Offner, *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 88.

<sup>115</sup>Peter Wyden, *Stella* (NY: Anchor Books, 1992), 63.

<sup>116</sup>“Proceedings,” July 9, 1938, 25.

<sup>117</sup>Ira Hirschman, *Lifeline to a Promised Land* (NY: Vanguard Press, 1946), 102 cited in Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 33.

<sup>118</sup>Wyden, *Stella*, 63. Dr. Neumann gained prominence after treating the Duke of Windsor for an ear problem and later served as the central figure of a novel about the conference, *The Mission*, written by Hans Habe in 1966. Von Neumann’s professional relationship with FDR advisor Bernard Baruch resulted in the granting of an entry visa outside of the annual quota to the doctor and his family as well as a possible meeting with Myron Taylor at the Evian Conference. The rescue of Von Neumann represented the system of *Protektion* in which the elite would act to rescue individuals of note. The famous Viennese psychiatrist, Dr. Sigmund Freud, represented another example of such salvation, aided by British Dr. Ernest Jones, the British Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare and U.S. Ambassador to France William C. Bullitt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull and FDR himself. Wyden, *Stella*, 64.

advisement” while Taylor promised but never scheduled an appointment.<sup>119</sup> He did have a discussion with Lord Winterton regarding the situation of Jews in Vienna and afterwards informed the press that he was “morally sure” that if havens were found for a significant number of Jews then the German Government would allow the migrants to retain twenty percent of their assets.<sup>120</sup> The doctor was not allowed to testify before the White sub-committee and remarked that his personal position was extremely precarious as he must return to Germany “with a definite number to be evacuated, not promises of investigation by commissions, committees or officers.”<sup>121</sup> Neumann reportedly had informed Taylor that he had been instructed by the Nazis to relay the warning that if a ransom plan was not agreed upon forty thousand Austrian Jews would be sent to concentration camps. Taylor, according to one investigator, established a sub-committee to investigate the proposal, chaired by the Columbian delegate, which failed to achieve any concrete results. The role of Neumann, if any, remains unclear and controversial although reports of his efforts were reported in the *New York Times* of July 7-9 and the *London Daily Express* on July 12.<sup>122</sup> The *Times* considered it “noteworthy” that Neumann and Loewenherz were in attendance at the Conference and it appeared that they were “authorized to obtain specific proposals for a more widely open door on the part of

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<sup>119</sup> “Taylor Made Head of Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1938, 7.

<sup>120</sup> Charles K. Streit, “Catholics Appeal to Refugee Parley,” *New York Times* July 9, 1938, 1.

<sup>121</sup> “Taylor Made Head of Refugee Parley,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1938, 7.

<sup>122</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale?: Nazi-Jewish Negotiations 1933-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 32.

the receiving countries” but it was anticipated that their efforts would prove to be unsuccessful.<sup>123</sup>

Golda (Myerson) Meir, an unofficial Jewish observer of the meeting for the *Histadrut* labor union, was not allowed to address the delegates and regarded the event as a “terrible experience” as delegate after delegate rose to express sympathy while offering reasons why their respective governments could not aid the refugees. She did not believe that “anyone who didn’t live through it can understand what I felt at Evian—a mixture of sorrow, rage, frustration and horror.” Meir wanted to chastise the representatives: “Don’t you know these so-called numbers are human beings” who were destined to become prisoners of concentration camps or condemned to wander the “world like lepers” unless rescue was provided.<sup>124</sup> Perhaps more importantly she concluded that even “a world which was not...anti-Semitic” could tolerate a situation in which Jewry was “victimized.”<sup>125</sup> Norman Bentwich commented that the convocation of the Evian Conference aroused “exaggerated hope” but its accomplishments resulted in “exaggerated disappointment.”<sup>126</sup>

Pincus Rutenberg warned James MacDonald that the failure of the Evian Conference to achieve meaningful results, coupled with the growing Jewish Question within Eastern Europe, Italy and Czechoslovakia, proved that Palestine represented the

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<sup>123</sup> “Help for the Refugees: Proposals at Evian,” *The Times*, July 7, 1938, 16.

<sup>124</sup> Golda Meir, *My Life* (NY: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1975), 127, 158; Born Golda Mabovitch (May 3, 1898-December 8, 1978) and known as Golda Meyerson from 1917-1956, she later served as the fourth Prime Minister of Israel.

<sup>125</sup> Julie Nixon Eisenhower, *Special People* (NY: Ballantine, 1977), 10.

<sup>126</sup> Norman Bentwich, “The Destruction of the Jewish Community, 1938-1942,” cited in Josef Frankel, *The Jews of Austria*, 430.

only place of refuge for displaced Jews. It might be necessary to “sacrifice the old[er] generation” in order to rescue the “still remaining two to three million of young...and they can be brought only to Palestine.”<sup>127</sup>

Some observers did view the Evian Conference in a positive light. One *Times* correspondent concluded that the meeting had “done its work admirably” creating “machinery” that would convert disorderly migration into an methodical process provided the German Government would demonstrate liberality in the release of blocked *Reichsmarks*. The writer also optimistically believed that each delegation “held out the prospect” of relaxing their respective immigration laws allowing the entry and resettlement of two hundred thousand forced émigrés.<sup>128</sup> The Evian Conference represented a “bulwark against despair” for “800,000 to 1,000,000” Austrians and Germans endangered by German policies. It offered hope to the “potential migrants and political refugees” facing displacement in Eastern Europe, Spain, Italy, the Soviet Union and the Near East.<sup>129</sup> Although the human tragedy that was playing out within Central Europe and other regions reflected the “moral deterioration of an era” the Evian Conference “projected a swift gleam on light across a desolate continent.” The establishment of the IGCR, with the support and leadership of the American Government, symbolized hope as it represented the “first organizational united front of the democracies.” Success, however, in the long-term required German agreement to allow

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<sup>127</sup>Minutes of Pincus Rutenberg and Ramsay MacDonald conversations, October 5, 1938, Robert Szold Papers, Box 25, File 16, Zionist Archives, New York in Druks, *The Uncertain Friendship*, 26. Rutenberg was a Russian who had served in the Tsarist army and later was Chief of Police in the Kerensky Government.

<sup>128</sup>*The Times*, July 16, 1938, 13.

<sup>129</sup>*Foreign Policy Bulletin*, 37, July 22, 1938, 1-2.

refugees to retain sufficient resources to aid their resettlement. The Conference marked the beginning of “active aid” to the stateless refugees; assistance that was expected to continue and grow.<sup>130</sup>

Henri Bérenger, the French representative to Evian and the IGCR foresaw a “happy augury for the future,” claiming that the United States had agreed to participate for the first time in “intergovernmental action” outside of its own borders.<sup>131</sup> He ignored previous American involvement in the Washington Naval Conferences, Kellogg-Briand Pact and cooperation with the International Red Cross and the International Labor Organization. British Viscount Samuel believed that the primary importance of the Evian Conference had been its demonstration that the problem of Central European refugees was not merely an internal domestic problem for Germany but posed a threat to all countries that would be impacted by an impoverished “flood of humanity.” The creation of the IGCR was a “wise conclusion” of the Conference but its success depended upon adequate funding for resettlement; monies that had to be released by the German

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<sup>130</sup>*The Nation*, July 23, 1938, 79.

<sup>131</sup>*Time*, July 25, 1938. Although later redacted from the official record Bérenger stated: “Perhaps I ought to whisper it but it is a fact that for the first time, the United States of America has agreed to participate in intergovernmental action for a work which reaches beyond the confines of its own country. I see in this a happy augury for the future.” The *Time* article took a more pessimistic view of the Evian Conference: “At Evian last week the British slammed the door of Palestine against any larger admissions of Jewish refugees, intimated cautiously that a few might be welcomed in Kenya, ‘but no mass migration.’ Definitely the Evian Conference failed to discover any lands willing at this moment to accept the bulk of Europe’s frantic, hard-pressed political refugees, although Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Mexico and Canada opened the door to refugee agricultural workers. The face-saving Refugee Organization created last week seemed destined to engage in endless bickering with Germany, chiefly on the issue of whether or not expelled Jews ought to be permitted to take most of their property with them when forced to emigrate. At present, under various pretexts, they are plucked practically as clean as dress fowl before they are let out of the Reich.”

Government.<sup>132</sup> [See Appendix C for the formal statement released at end of the Evian Conference.]

One Jewish editorialist commented that although the Evian Conference appeared to be “doomed to failure” he optimistically believed that the “significance of the parley itself and the broader picture obtained of the refugee problem [was] of inestimable value. From this beginning (even though it may amount to a baby-step along a road which calls for giant strides) will of necessity come drastic changes in immigration regulations.”<sup>133</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle* was bolstered by Taylor’s belief that the Conference represented only the beginning of a long process that would eventually provide positive results. The meeting got off to a “dismal start,” the paper believed, but ended with a “mood of qualified optimism.”<sup>134</sup> The *National Zeitung* declared that “active aid to the refugees has only just begun and will go ahead steadily” in close harmony with the “central theme of the energetic speeches with which the French and British representatives closed the conference sessions.”<sup>135</sup>

Rabbi Jonah B. Wise praised the initiative of Roosevelt and the chairmanship of Taylor for averting the “failure” that was predicted by “cynical observers.” The Conference marked the ascendancy of the world’s democracies away from their policies of offering “humiliating deference to world tyrants.” The meeting was a “historic” occasion in which the threat against human rights by the “brutalitarian theory of

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<sup>132</sup>*The Times*, July 28, 1938, 8.

<sup>133</sup>“Are Refugees People?” *The Southern Israelite*, July 15, 1938, 2.

<sup>134</sup> “The Refugees: Evian ‘Only A Beginning,’” *The Jewish Chronicle*, July 22, 1938 available from [http://www.morasha.it/tesi/dlc/dlc\\_n\\_a06.html](http://www.morasha.it/tesi/dlc/dlc_n_a06.html) ; accessed October 10, 2009.

<sup>135</sup>*National Zeitung* (Basel), 1938 cited in Katz, “Public Opinion,” 123.

government” was faced with the United States offering “manna from heaven” to the global democracies. The conference, Wise believed, “served principally to sound a note of humanity and protest” against the political and racial policies of dictatorial regimes. “It was remarkable” that thirty two countries “practically agreed that the [refugee] problem was one of humanity and not the concern of a few groups of people.”<sup>136</sup>

The Rabbi’s optimistic opinion was not shared, however, by all in the Jewish press who recognized that Central European Jewry had been effectively abandoned by those who walked the halls of power. The Evian Conference effectively

buried the hopes of thousands upon thousands of unhappy victims of totalitarianism. There was no obituary for the ill-fated parley, no taps sounded at dusk. The press for the most part maintained a stoical silence. Only the refugees who for a day saw the bright bubble of hope in intergovernmental action mourned the death of democracy’s first significant effort in behalf of disfranchised humanity. Their heads bowed in despair, they marched in spirit behind the somber bier of the conference. A world that had failed to hear their cries of pain could not bear their funeral lamentations...

...The fact remains that the Evian Conference was a crashing failure, as final in its failure as the Disarmament Conference, the Conference to end Japan’s dismemberment of China...and most other international parleys. Thirty-two nations came together, it is true, but how many could have refused the invitation of a democracy as powerful as America? That these nations were for the most part more interested in running the gamut of amenities with other countries than in opening their doors to refugees was demonstrated clearly enough during the sessions at Evian. The presence of delegates from countries anxious to dump surplus Jewish populations upon the Conference’s lap scarcely gave the proceedings an air of success....

Sifted down, there is little left that is valid but the moral tone of the Conference and the fact that machinery has been set in order for a permanent refugee committee.

It is all very well for Dr. Wise to wax optimistic over the Conference but to call it a success is like putting rouge on a corpse. It is small comfort to the thousands whose hopes were dashed by the Conference to be told that is moral tone was important. Nor will the totalitarian states be greatly moved by the moral implications or be greatly alarmed by the proposed August session in London...

There are times which call for more realistic approaches to world problems than Dr. Wise’s Pollyanna utterances in regard to the Evian Conference. Better to look the failure boldly in the face in order to

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<sup>136</sup>“Evian Conference Hailed by J.B. Wise,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1938, 19.

determine a course of action than to confuse the vital problem of refugee settlement with saccharine sentiment.<sup>137</sup>

The futility and hypocrisy of the Evian *Conference* was, however, readily recognized by the German Government and press and would play a significant role in future events. Failure of the Evian Conference and the reluctance of countries of potential refuge to accept increased numbers of refugees reinforced Germany's belief that international pressure would not be applied to force changes in Nazi policies. Dr. Alfred Rosenberg warned that the Jewish Question was not limited to the confines of Greater Germany "for what broke out in Germany stands before the doors of a few other countries and whether *the solution* can be restrained as it was in Germany is very questionable." He believed that Madagascar represented a suitable destination due to its size, climate and French suzerainty since it was France that had begun "the emancipation of the Jews and still does everything for them today."<sup>138</sup> The major result of the Evian Conference, Rosenberg believed, was the creation of a "mammoth executive" based in London that had "failed to make any positive proposition." The supposedly sympathetic democracies had "shed many tears over Jewish misery" in Greater Germany but had failed to offer any "radical cure" for the problem. Consequently, an area large and isolated enough to house all of the world's Jewish population, subsidized by "Jewish millionaires and billionaires" and placed under the authority of "administrators trained in police work," would provide a solution to the international dilemma rather than engaging

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<sup>137</sup>"Lament for the Dead," *The Southern Israelite*, July 29, 1938, 2.

<sup>138</sup>"Nazi Leader Warns Nation," *New York Times*, July 8, 1938, 7.



in the “political baiting and economic boycott against Germany.”<sup>139</sup> Jews should be resettled not in their own State, such as Palestine, but rather in a “Jewish Reserve.”<sup>140</sup>

Hitler remarked that he expected and hoped that the Western democracies that held “such deep sympathy for these criminals will at least be generous enough to convert this sympathy into practical aid” and offered to place “all these criminals at the disposal of other countries...even on luxury ships.”<sup>141</sup> He criticized the West for its complaint of the “boundless cruelty” of German anti-Jewish policies and noted their failure to offer “helpful activity...[O]n the contrary, these countries with icy coldness assured us that obviously there was no place for Jews in their territory...So no help is given, but morality is saved.”<sup>142</sup> *Das Schwarze Korps*, the official organ of the S.S., noted that the Reich offered to the world a “well assorted stock of Jewish lawyers, well-preserved and well rested women doctors, specialists for skin and social disease” and a “considerable rebate” for Jewish business owners, wholesalers and salesmen.<sup>143</sup>

The S. D. analyzed the events and accomplishments of the Evian Conference. The text of the final resolution establishing the London based committee demonstrated that a “practical and concrete” solution to the Jewish Question was “not possible” at that time. The statements and qualifications offered by the various delegates confirmed that

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<sup>139</sup> *International Military Tribunal* vol. XLI (Exhibit Streicher-8), 545-7 cited in Tenenbaum, *Race and Reich*, 240-241.

<sup>140</sup> Gerard Reitlinger, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945* (NY: Beechhurst Press, 1953), 21-22.

<sup>141</sup> “Hitler is Pleased to Get Rid of Foes,” *New York Times*, March 27, 1938, 25.

<sup>142</sup> Lyn H. Harper, ed. *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler April 1922-August 1939* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1942), 719-720.

<sup>143</sup> *Time*, April 4, 1938, 11-12.

German “initiative” no longer determined foreign emigration policies because there existed among the attendees an “extensive aversion” to admit Jewish refugees, either due to “social considerations” or reflective of an “unexpressed racial abhorrence.” Future German emigration policies were now greatly influenced by the actions of the IGCR but since the Reich rejected any outside interference in domestic internal affairs and had already refused to allow Jews to increase the amount of capital removed from the country it was to be expected that over time the rate and numbers of Jews emigrating from Germany would progressively diminish. Thus, until the IGCR was operative it was “urgent” for the Government to persuade “as many Jews to emigrate under existing conditions.” However, it was crucial that sufficient foreign currency be provided to facilitate this migration.<sup>144</sup>

Germany could not believe and mocked FDR’s “appeal to the nature of the world as long as the United States maintains racial quotas for immigrants.”<sup>145</sup> “We see that one likes to pity the Jews as long as one can use this pity for a wicked agitation against Germany, but that no state is prepared to fight the cultural disgrace of central Europe by accepting a few thousand Jews. Thus, the conference serves to justify Germany’s policy against Jewry.”<sup>146</sup> “It appears astounding that these countries seem in no way particularly anxious to make use of this element themselves, now that the

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<sup>144</sup>“The SD on the Outcome of the Evian Conference Report of SD II 112” *Yad Vashem* Archive, 0.51/OSO/37 Berlin, July 29, 1938 available from [http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203528.pdf](http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203528.pdf); accessed June 5, 2010.

<sup>145</sup>*Völkischer Beobachter*, April 26, 1938.

<sup>146</sup>*Danziger Vorposten* cited in Perl, *Holocaust Conspiracy*, 41.

opportunity offers.”<sup>147</sup> “Aside from the purely administrative creation of a committee that will maintain contact between the interested governments...the results of this conference are very meager.”<sup>148</sup> “If the Jews of Germany are so dear to their hearts, they can certainly have them.”<sup>149</sup> It was considered remarkable that the Australian delegate, Minister for Trade and Customs, Thomas White, feared that Jewish immigration would “endanger his own race.”<sup>150</sup> The Conference’s primary purpose was to garner votes for Roosevelt in the upcoming national elections and to generate “anti-Fascist currents” and anti-German propaganda.<sup>151</sup> The Berlin *Der Weltkampf* noted in 1939 that Germany openly admitted that it did not want any Jews to reside within its borders while the democratic nations continued to maintain that they were “willing to receive them—then leave the guest out in the cold. Aren’t we savages better men after all?”<sup>152</sup>

Ominously and reflective of a hardening Nazi policy towards its Jews, *Das Schwarze Korps* called for the economic dislocation and ghettoization of Jews within Germany. Destitute Jews, confined to limited living space, would consequently pose a

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<sup>147</sup>*Diplomatische Politische Korrespondenz* cited in “Germans Belittle Results,” *New York Times*, July 13, 1938, 12.

<sup>148</sup>“No One Wants to Have Them,” *Voelkischer Beobachter*, July 13, 1938 available from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/evian2.html>; Internet; accessed June 24, 2008.

<sup>149</sup>*Muncher Nachrichten* in Alfred A. Häslar, *The Lifeboat is Full* (NY: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969), 28-29 cited in Abraham J. and Hershel Edelheit, *History of the Holocaust: A Handbook and Dictionary* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 129.

<sup>150</sup>Heinz Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1938-1945*, vol. 2 (Herrsching, 1984), 23 cited in Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, vol. 1, 219.

<sup>151</sup>*Der Angriff* cited in the *Washington Post*, July 15, 1938, 16. *Der Angriff* (*The Attack*) was a NSDAP Berlin newspaper established by the future Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, in 1927.

<sup>152</sup>*Der Weltkampf* cited in Ninette Kelly and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (London, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 252.

risk of bolshevism or of becoming an underworld of “politico-criminal subhumans”; a possibility that the Reich would not tolerate. Thus, the Government would be forced to deal with the Jewish criminal element in the same manner in which “we exterminate criminals generally—by fire and sword.”<sup>153</sup> The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed its diplomats abroad that the emigration of one hundred thousand Jews had fostered anti-Jewish sentiments in other countries. Continued forced deportations, especially of impoverished Jews, would increase the resistance of the citizens of receiving nations to further acceptance of Jews and would, therefore, provide sympathy and support for official German anti-Semitic actions.<sup>154</sup>

The failure of the Evian Conference thus marked a significant turning point in the fate of Central European Jewry. Following the closure of the Conference Yugoslavia and Hungary closed its borders to Jewish refugees and Italy announced its own program of anti-Semitic decrees. Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium also bolstered security along its borders as well.<sup>155</sup>

Yitzhak Arad maintained that the failure of the Conference placed the fate of German and Austrian Jews “completely in the hands” of the Nazi regime; a failure that was fully utilized for the use of anti-Jewish and anti-democratic propaganda and justification for more radical measures. It was not a coincidence, Arad and others believed that *Kristallnacht* (and the tragedy of the *S.S. St. Louis*) occurred a few months

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<sup>153</sup>Otto D. Tolischus, “Fire and Sword New Nazi Threat,” *New York Times*, November 23, 1938, 1, 8.

<sup>154</sup>*Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946) Vol. 6, 87ff in Ervin Straub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 155-156.

<sup>155</sup>Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 169.

later.<sup>156</sup> Skran asserted that the *Anschluss*, coupled with the failure of the Evian Conference and the November 1938 pogrom transformed a “manageable refugee flow into an uncontrollable flood”; a situation worsened by the expropriatory practices of the Nazis conjoined with rising nationalism and increasingly restrictive immigration policies within many Continental powers.<sup>157</sup> Expressions of international sympathy without meaningful actions demonstrated to the Nazi leadership that Western rhetoric would not interfere with the German handling of the Jewish Question. Prior to Evian Jews faced increasing levels of discrimination and economic and civil disenfranchisements but the post-Evian period was marked by mass deportations, forced relocations and wide-ranging pogroms on a nationwide scale. The Nazis realized that little interference could be expected from the democratic nations in their drive to make Greater Germany *jüdenrein*.

The Reich Government was determined to become free of its internal Jewish menace but its conflicting policies of forced emigration coupled with economic marginalization raised formidable and often insurmountable obstacles to overseas resettlement. Lack of meaningful cooperation with the newly created Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees aggravated the situation. Thus, the *Sicherheitsdienst* or Security Service noted that the current rate of Jewish emigration would prevent rapid resolution of the Jewish Question.<sup>158</sup> Consequently, a more radical and aggressive policy

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<sup>156</sup>Yitzhak Arad, Reuven Dafni, Gideon Greif and Yehudit Levin, eds., *The Pictorial History of the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990), 314.

<sup>157</sup>Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, 53.

<sup>158</sup>Karl A. Schleues, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933-1939* (Urbana, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1970), 65.

would be required. Following Evian greater legal and social proscriptions were enacted against the Jews coupled with increasingly dire threats.

Hitler advised the Czech Foreign Minister on January 21, 1939, that the “Jews among us will be annihilated. “The Jews had not carried out 9<sup>th</sup> November 1938 [assassination of a German diplomat in Paris that precipitated *Kristallnacht*] in vain; this day will be avenged.”<sup>159</sup> Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, in “The Jewish Question as a Factor of Foreign Policy in 1938,” declared that a more radical approach must be taken against German Jews. The greater the destitution the “more burdensome” forced migrants will become to a host country. Consequently, domestic anti-Semitism will be promoted; a measure that would benefit the “propaganda interests” of the Reich. Germany recognized that “the emigration problem is...for all practical purposes insoluble.” Nevertheless, the German Government would “take the initiative” and utilize whatever “measures” were necessary to resolve the problem and rid itself of the unwanted Jews. However, and most importantly, “for Germany, the Jewish question will not have found its *final solution* [author’s italics] even when the last Jews will have left Germany.”<sup>160</sup>

The Fuehrer expanded on these threats, raising the specter of extermination in an address to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939; a speech that was widely carried in the international press that offered both the carrot and the stick:

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<sup>159</sup>“Aufzeichnung des Legationstats Hewel,” January 21, 1939 in James Marshall-Cornwell et al, eds., *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Amtes*, (Baden-Baden, 1051-95), Series D. IV, 167-71 cited in Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power 1933-1939* (NY: Penguin Press, 2005), 604.

<sup>160</sup>Circular letter of the German Foreign Office to German representatives abroad, dated January 25, 1939 cited in Tenenbaum, *Race and Reich*, 224.

...Should not the outside world be most grateful to us for setting free these glorious bearers of culture and placing them at its disposal? In accordance with its own statements, how is the outside world to justify its refusal to grant refuge in its various countries to these most valuable members of the human race?

For how will it rationalize imposing the members of this race on the Germans of all people? How will the states so infatuated with these “splendid people” explain why they are suddenly taking refuge in all sorts of pretenses just in order to deny asylum to these people?

I believe the earlier this problem is resolved, the better. For Europe cannot find peace before it has dealt properly with the Jewish question.

It is possible that the necessity of resolving this problem sooner or later should bring about agreement in Europe...There is more than enough room for settlement on this earth....

I have a prophet very often in my lifetime, and this earned me mostly ridicule. In the time of my struggle for power, it was primarily the Jewish people who mocked by prophecy that one day I would assume leadership of this Germany, of this state, and of the entire Volk, and that I would press for a resolution of the Jewish question. The resounding laughter of the Jews in Germany then may well stick in their throats today, I suspect.

Once again I will be a prophet: should the international Jewry of finance succeed, both within and beyond Europe, in plunging mankind into yet another world war, then the result will not be a Bolshevization of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation (*Vernichtung*) of the Jewish race in Europe.<sup>161</sup>

Following confirmation of the reports of mass murder coming out of occupied Europe Freda Kirchey, editor and publisher of *The Nation*, criticized the inaction of the democracies that had led to such destruction. “If we had behaved like humane and generous people instead of complacent, cowardly ones,” she claimed, “the two million Jews living today in the earth of Poland and Hitler’s other crowded graveyards would be alive and safe...We had it in our power to rescue this doomed people and we did not lift a hand to do it—or perhaps would be fairer to say that we lifted just one cautious hand,

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<sup>161</sup>Max Domarus, Patrick Romane, ed., *The Essential Hitler Speeches and Commentary* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2007), 398-399.

encased in a tight-fitting glove of quotas and visas and affidavits, and a thick layer of prejudice.” Immigration quotas could have been suspended for the duration of the Hitler regime. Enough funds could have been raised to provide for the destitute refugee carried by foreign ships to distant shores. The solemn “resolutions” of the Evian Conference could have become a “reality instead of a hollow gesture.” International accords could have been reached enabling the absorption of forced émigrés based on the respective “size and wealth” of recipient nations. If the United States had shown the way then it was highly likely that “no nation would have refused its cooperation. But nothing was done...”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Freda Kirchey, “While the Jews Die,” *The Nation*, March 13, 1943, 366-367.



**Chapter 12**  
**Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees**  
**“Face Saving Organization”**

The sole accomplishment of the Evian Conference was the creation of the London-based Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees Coming from Germany. The IGCR differed from earlier refugee organizations in that it enjoyed greater support from the United States Government and it represented the “first all-democracy world body ever established.” Its full time director was to be an “eminent American” endowed with a greater range of authority and a “freer hand” than had been granted the League’s High Commissioner for Refugees. Countries that created refugees were excluded from membership. Additionally, at least in the American view, it would offer the opportunity to deal with other groups of refugees. It would consist of a chairman, four vice-chairmen and a director (Winterton as chairman; Taylor as vice-chair). The IGCR, like its League predecessor, pursued a limited mission: to persuade nations to offer realistic opportunities for permanent resettlement and to negotiate with and convince the German Government involuntary refugees should be allowed to retain sufficient financial assets to reestablish themselves in a new life.<sup>1</sup> Committee members would be drawn from the United States, United Kingdom, France, Argentina and Brazil

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<sup>1</sup> Marrus. *The Unwanted*, 171, 182. The League never engaged in negotiations with the Reich leadership.

coupled with the possibility of establishing satellite offices in European capitals.<sup>2</sup> The chosen director was seventy-year old attorney George Rublee, a Roosevelt friend and former classmate at Groton Academy. However, with little funding and authority its list of accomplishments by the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939 was minimal.<sup>3</sup> [Appendix F demonstrates the limited finances available to the IGCR and the allocation of expenses among member nations.] Its first meeting was scheduled for August 3.

The Americans preferred that this permanent committee be based in Paris but official French opposition led to its location in the United Kingdom. The French Foreign Ministry feared that the committee's refugee operations, based in the capital, would result in the proliferation of "every ethnic, religious, or political organization that concerns itself with every minority and political opposition group." Governmental attempts to eradicate the "activities of irresponsible foreign bodies" within France would "thus be annihilated." Furthermore, involvement with the problem of German and Austrian refugees would complicate French foreign affairs and policies. The Ministry asked if it was in the interest of the Republic to assume the role of refuge for "all the misfits" and people whom "Germany considers its natural enemy." Such humanitarianism could permanently create an air of "cultural and racial antagonism" between the two neighbors.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Clarence K. Streit, "Refugee Meeting Adopts Resolution," *New York Times*, July 15, 1938, 7; *St. Petersburg Times*, July 9, 1938.

<sup>3</sup> By August 1939, on the brink of the Polish-German war, the IGCR possessed a total bank balance of \$9,672. Sean Malloy and Doug Lorimer, eds., *The Palestinian Struggle, Zionism and Anti-Semitism* (Chippendale, NSW, Australia: Resistance Books, 2002), 42.

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Ministry Report, "Programme de la reunion du Comité Intergouvernemental d'Evian," June 24, 1938, MAE SDN I M 1815, 211-218, Foreign Ministry, "Note pour le Ministre," June 29, 1938, MAE SDN I M 1815, 253-58 cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 186.

This committee was to operate separately from the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees from Germany with which the German Government refused to cooperate and did not recognize. Both the Nansen Office headed by Judge Michael Hansson and the League Commission for Refugees led by Sir Neill Malcolm were due to be closed in December 1938 and it was anticipated that the League Assembly, scheduled to meet in September, would combine the two offices under a new High Commissioner.<sup>5</sup>

The French Foreign Minister, George Bonnet, held a meeting with his German counterpart, Joachim von Ribbentrop [duly reported to Hitler] on December 7, 1938, in which Bonnet stated that France did not want to receive any more German Jews. He called upon the Reich to “take some sort of measures” to prevent further entry of involuntary émigrés into the Third Republic. Additionally, the Government sought to ship ten thousand Jews already residing within France to other locations such as the island of Madagascar off the east coast of Africa. Ribbentrop replied to Bonnet that Germany also desired to be rid of its Jews but the problem “lay in the fact that no country wished to receive them.”<sup>6</sup> Bonnet assured Ribbentrop that France had no desire to interfere with the internal affairs of Germany but the forced expulsion of Jews and non-Aryans, stripped of sufficient financial assets to reestablish themselves, was adversely affecting the willingness of countries of potential resettlement to accept refugees who most likely would become public charges. The Reich Foreign Minister did agree, however, that a German knowledgeable about the Jewish Question in Germany could

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<sup>5</sup> *The Times*, July 14, 1938, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1951), Series D, IV, 451-452.

meet in an unofficial capacity with a representative of the IGCR to study the issue of Jewish resettlement.<sup>7</sup>

Critics of the IGCR viewed it as a “face-saving refugee organization” that would be relegated to “endless bickering” with member States and with the German Government, especially over the issue of the retention of personal property and assets. Currently, the forced émigrés were “plucked practically as clean as dressed fowl” before being allowed to leave Greater Germany.<sup>8</sup>

Following the conclusion of the Evian Conference Taylor did suggest to Secretary Hull that the United States openly proclaim its willingness to accept a significant proportion of the six hundred thousand Germans and Austrians who were expected to become involuntary migrants within the next five years. Without such a declaration, Taylor warned, the “other countries of settlement will claim that they are not obligated to commit themselves and we shall have no plan to present to the German Government.” Hull was faced with two possible dilemmas: such an American invitation could prove too successful and incur the wrath of an increasingly restrictionist Congress that could interfere with other items on FDR’s political agenda. In addition, relaxation of immigration barriers could incite large-scale forced emigration from the East. Hull

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<sup>7</sup> “Memorandum by the Foreign Minister” to Hitler, RM 266, Paris, doc. 372, December 9, 1938, DGFP, series D, vol. 4, 481-482 cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 487. Ribbentrop did express to Bonnet that German Jews were “without exception pickpockets, murderers and thieves. The property they possessed had been acquired illegally. The German Government had therefore decided to assimilate them with the criminal elements of the population.” Their “illegally” obtained property would be seized by the State and Jews would be isolated in ghettos “frequented by the criminal classes” and be subject to “police-observation like other criminals.” The Reich could not prevent “these criminals [from escaping] to other countries which seemed so anxious to have them.” However, they would be prevented from retaining “the property which had resulted from their illegal operations...” Documents on German Foreign Policy (DGFP) D/IV, No. 372 cited in Michael Bloch, *Ribbentrop* (NY: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1992), 206.

<sup>8</sup> *Time* July 25, 1938.

advised the U.S. Ambassador to Poland that American “efforts on behalf of German refugees” must not promote the persecution and expulsion of the “unwanted sections” of other national groups and the “dumping of these people into the hands of international charity.”<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Nahum Goldmann viewed this new standing committee as potentially useful if the British would allow increased immigration into Palestine. Therefore, he concluded, the continuity of a close working relationship was a critical task for Jewish organizations.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Dr. Arthur Ruppin believed that the creation of the IGCR was a “positive” step provided the London-based international committee was “blessed with a gifted director.”<sup>11</sup> Zalman Rubashov, a correspondent for *Davar* attending the Evian Conference, commended both the United States and France for creating a “third way” that would permit negotiations between the Reich and Jews that would ultimately benefit Zionist goals.<sup>12</sup> The Zionist leadership, however, was not interested in rescuing Jewish refugees if it was not tied to increased immigration into Palestine. Without such a connection “all Zionists wanted was to shrug off the entire matter with all possible speed.”<sup>13</sup> The French under Béranger, during the August 3, 1938 meeting in London, continued to maintain that France had “reached the saturation point” vis-à-vis

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), 708 cited in Frank W. Brecher, *Reluctant Ally: United States Foreign Policy toward the Jews from Wilson to Roosevelt* (NY: Greenwood Press, 1991), 63.

<sup>10</sup> CZA, File S25/9778 cited in Beit-Zvi, “Post-Holocaust Zionism,” 151.

<sup>11</sup> A. Ruppin, *Chapters of My Life*, 303. Ibid., 152.

<sup>12</sup> “Listener,” *Davar*, July 22, 1938. Ibid., 152.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 152.

immigration and any further admittance of refugees would result in a “rupture to the equilibrium of her social body...The absorptive capabilities of every people has a limit. This limit has long been exceeded in France. She said so at Evian; she repeats it in London.”<sup>14</sup>

Two years prior to the accession of Hitler to power the Weimar Government enacted an emigration tax in an attempt to limit removal of foreign currency. In 1933 emigrants from Germany retained seventy five percent of the value of their assets. This percentage was later decreased to fifteen percent and by 1938 it was reduced to five percent; a policy that severely impacted on the willingness of potential receiving nations to accept penniless refugees. German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop warned that the refugee problem was an “internal German problem that was not subject to discussion.” The release of adequate amounts of Jewish monies “could not be expected of Germany” and any cooperation with the Evian conferees “was out of the question for Germany.” Permanent Foreign Secretary Baron Ernst von Weizsäcker informed Ribbentrop that both the American and British Ambassadors were seeking a meeting of George Rublee with German officials. Such an appointment was necessary if the IGCR was to “prove its worth.” Germany would undoubtedly be requested to release increased amounts of foreign currency and personal assets; an action that “for obvious reasons” the Reich cannot provide. Such a refusal on the German side would provide an opportunity for adverse Western propaganda, namely, that it was “German obstinacy”

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<sup>14</sup> “*Au Comité Intergouvernemental des réfugiés*,” *Le Temps*, August 4, 1938, 5 cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, 186.

that was the genesis of the “misery of the Jews.” Thus, Rublee could not be allowed to travel to Berlin merely for the prospect of “making Germany the scapegoat.”<sup>15</sup>

Eventually it was the foreign economic concerns arising in the wake of *Kristallnacht* that led Hermann Goering, the director of the Four Year Plan, to convince Hitler to authorize Hjalmar Schacht, the President of the *Reichsbank*, to meet in London with Rublee, Lord Bearsted and Lord Winterton. The plan offered by Schacht called for the freezing of Jewish assets within Germany as security for an international loan that would be called due in twenty to twenty five years. Jewish monies would be held in blocked accounts within Germany out of which twenty five percent would be recoverable by Jews via the purchase and foreign sale of German export goods (with the balance seized by the German Government). The plan favored one hundred fifty thousand men and women, between fifteen and forty five years of age, who were able to work to support themselves and two hundred fifty thousand dependents. The two hundred thousand elderly (those over forty five) and those too infirm to migrate would be maintained by communal funds and would live undisturbed unless another assassination of a Nazi was carried out by a Jew.<sup>16</sup> Jewish holdings were estimated to have a value of at least 1.5 billion *Reichmarks* that could be utilized to generate enough foreign currency to fund an orderly migration over the course of three to five years. Emigration of wage earners would be diffused over three to five years and dependents would be allowed to emigrate when assured of support abroad. A German official would coordinate

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<sup>15</sup>*Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, 3496/EO19935-36, Circular of the State Secretary Berlin, July 8, 1938, 83-29 8/7 No. 640; Case XI, NG 1522-23 cited in Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, 19.

<sup>16</sup>See Table 6 for breakdown of Jewish population demographics as of January 1, 1938.

resettlement with Jewish relief and communal organizations aided by refugee experts. Passport and identity papers would be provided, training facilities would be established within Germany and concentration camp inmates would be released once emigration began.

Schacht, on his return to Germany met with Hitler on January 2, 1939, and was appointed special representative for Jewish emigration. The Foreign Office was ordered to end its opposition to the IGCR and negotiations were transferred to Berlin. The IGCR still faced the difficulties of finding places of final resettlement and private sources for the short term costs of migration. Schacht's discharge from his post, following an argument with Hitler on January 20, temporarily ended any possibility of negotiations but contact with Rublee was resumed by Helmuth Wohlthat, the director of Foreign Credits Control Office. Negotiations foundered, however, on the issue of Jewish assets. Hitler ultimately allowed resumption of talks which resulted in an economic arrangement similar in many respects to the earlier *Ha'avarah* plan which coupled German exports with sufficient assets to facilitate emigration to Palestine.

Although the Rublee-Schacht and Rublee-Wohlthat plans were viewed by some as a form of blackmail that would lead to the impoverishment of German Jewry (and perhaps similar demands and actions on the part of Poland, Rumanian and Hungary) the IGCR feared outright refusal would convince the German Government that solution of the Jewish Question could not be solved via international agreement but would require more stringent solutions.<sup>17</sup> Under-Secretary Sumner Welles criticized the plan as a form

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<sup>17</sup>Eric Estorick, "The Evian Conference and the Intergovernmental Committee," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 203, Refugees (May, 1939): 139-141.



of extortion: Germany expected “the world to pay a ransom for the release of hostages” while trading “human misery for increased exports.”<sup>18</sup> Rublee was advised by the State Department that such an agreement could threaten American foreign trade and markets and it was averse to any linkage of the financing of Jewish resettlement with increased sales of German products. Welles warned, however, that rejection of the deal could provoke further anti-Jewish violence. He favored the creation of a private economic foundation under the rubric of the London based IGCR. The frozen assets of the émigrés would be used to purchase German goods needed to foster and support resettlement as well as for the care and maintenance of Jews who had to remain in the Reich. The Under-Secretary believed that this arrangement would be more beneficial to Germany than the Rublee-Schacht plan.<sup>19</sup> George Messersmith opposed the linkage of population transfer and German trade. Acceptance of such an “insidious doctrine” of a “limited trade agreement” with the Reich would not “help the conservative elements [or] improve the prospects for a more reasonable regime.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>*FRUS*, vol. 1, 1938, 876-877 cited in Spear, “The United States and the Persecution of Jews,” 234. Some of the Jewish press supported the payment of ransom regardless of its questionable morality. “There is little doubt [based on earlier arrangements with and proposals from the Reich] that today a ransom of sufficient financial persuasion” would result in Jews being allowed to retain a greater percentage of their assets. “We favor such a ransom scheme, though we are aware that world opinion is strongly against it. That opinion holds that to ransom the refugees by granting Germany monetary or trade favors is to endorse her totalitarian policy.” However, in reality, the positions adopted by the Democracies vis-à-vis Germany had “from the beginning of National Socialism...been an endorsement and that as long as ‘human dumping’ remains Germany’s policy and as long as other nations are compelled to give haven to the homeless and disfranchised, that endorsement continues to be articulated...” “The Kidnapper Wants Ransom,” *The Southern Israelite*, August 12, 1938, 6.

<sup>19</sup>Spear, “The United States and the Persecution of German Jews,” 234.

<sup>20</sup>Hull to Joseph P. Kennedy (Messersmith to Rublee), September 19, 1938, *FRUS*, vol. 1 (1938), 788-90; Messersmith to Daniel N. Heineman, November 7, 1938, Messersmith Papers, 1938, box 1, folder E cited in Shlomo Shafir, “George S. Messersmith: An Anti-Nazi Diplomat’s View of the German-Jewish Crisis,” *Jewish Social Studies* 35 no. 1 (January, 1973): 40.

The IGCR accepted the Schacht plan on December 28, 1938 as a starting point for further negotiations by Rublee in Berlin. The Committee announced on February 14 that an agreement had been reached based on Schacht's scheme but it eliminated the conflation of a Jewish loan and increased German export trade. Instead, twenty five percent of Jewish wealth within Germany would be utilized to create a trust to fund transportation and the purchase of necessary supplies and equipment from Germany. The expense of ultimate resettlement would be provided by a private foundation as envisioned by Welles. The German Government agreed to establish training centers for the first wave of emigrants and to grant the right to work to those remaining behind. The implementation of this plan was, from the Reich's view, contingent on the agreement of other nations to provide havens of resettlement. The IGCR officially signed off on Germany's demands on March 1, 1939.<sup>21</sup>

In the end, resistance of the harder line Nazis and the reluctance of the democratic nations to open their borders to involuntary refugees prevented implementation of such a project and helped to set the stage for the November 1938 pogrom, *Kristallnacht*. The advent of war effectively ended any chance of large-scale migration. Schacht did claim during the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg that if his plan had been adopted by December 1938 (while it had Hitler's support) then "not a single German Jew would have lost his life."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Spear, "The U.S. and the Persecution of German Jews," 234-235; Ferdinand Kuhn, "Orderly Migration of Germany's Jews Envisaged in Plan," *New York Times*, February 14, 1939, 1, 12.

<sup>22</sup>International Military Tribunal, XXII, 395 (Final Speech, Schacht) cited in Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, 20.

Ultimately, the activities of the IGCR and its two directors, Rublee and his successor Sir Herbert Emerson, were relegated to the realm of “diplomatic representations” dealing with the permanent placement of refugees residing in temporary havens. Limited public awareness of the “gravity” of the Jewish situation within territories controlled by Germany (before and after the start of hostilities) and the outbreak of the war itself essentially ended any chance of achieving a realistic solution to the German and Austrian (and Czech) refugee crisis.<sup>23</sup>

A fundamental question remains: was there any chance for success of the Evian Conference and its offspring, the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees from Germany? Lord Winterton succinctly summarized the basic flaws of the meeting during a Parliamentary debate on April 6, 1939, but continued to avoid any linkage with Palestine:

The whole Evian Committee without exception [was] not prepared to admit the principle that they are either under a moral obligation or that it is practically possible from the point of public support in their respective countries to admit financial liability for the transfer and upkeep in the countries or for the permanent settlement of refugees. Every one of these 32 Governments [was] faced with unemployment difficulties. Every one of them is frightened of the possible growth of an anti-Semitic and anti-foreign feeling if it is felt that more is being done for foreigners than for their own people. There [was] no chance of getting an alteration in that principle. The last thing that would induce the Reich Government to be reasonable about the amount of property taken by Jews out of Germany would be for the Evian Governments to assume liability for the transfer and maintenance of these people...<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), 27.

<sup>24</sup> Great Britain, *Parliamentary Debates*, 345: 3082, 3084 cited in Hamerow, *Why We Watched*, 110.

**PART IV**  
**APPRAISALS**  
**Chapter 13**  
**“No Confidence in the Idea”**

“Strife and desolation and destruction are in their paths. They violate the boundaries of nations, and the way of peace they know not. They assault religion and set at naught ancient covenants of justice and right. Human brotherhood is become a mockery, and there is neither truth, pity, nor freedom in the land.”<sup>1</sup>

Conflicting appraisals of the response of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, his Administration, Congress, the American people and their foreign democratic counterparts to the great European humanitarian crises of the 1930s and early 1940s have arisen in the historiography of the Holocaust era. Director of the IGCR, George Rublee, remained highly skeptical of the Evian Conference’s chances for success. The meeting was called for too quickly by Roosevelt with inadequate planning and most attendees “came reluctantly and with no confidence in the idea.” Taylor competently kept the delegations “together” while obtaining agreement to create a permanent body “but that is all.” Rublee complained that the American Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Joseph P. Kennedy, appeared disinterested in the workings of the permanent committee and never offered “me any real support or assistance” while the President “was not seriously [personally] interested.” Rublee advised Hull that he believed Germany was willing to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, July 18, 1938, 9. Special prayer offered by the Chief Rabbi of Britain, Dr. J. H. Hertz, describing the “spirit of perverseness” which had overtaken Germany and its leadership.

negotiate but the British and French, fearful of the IGCR's success, were "reluctant" for him to hold discussions with the Germans.<sup>2</sup>

The Conference did not get off to a "good start" due to the lack of the "fullest and most adequate preparation." To enter into an international congress with the "hope" of achieving positive results represented the "best way of courting failure." If the United States had presented concrete proposals, rather than highlighting an already existing immigration quota, then "some result might have been easily achieved." It was the economic concerns and the fear of creating "anti-Jewish centers" among their respective populations that led the delegations and their governments to "hedge" their proposals while seeking the "absolute minimum of practical measures."<sup>3</sup> The British consideration of Kenya and the establishment of the IGCR were viewed by some as insignificant accomplishments when viewed in the context of an international conference in which the "greater part of the non-Fascist world" was seated. Proper planning and consultation might have led the various powers to ponder the issue with greater clarity creating the potential for collective action. The Evian Conference was convened "too precipitously" and demonstrated that "good intentions are no substitute for well-laid plans."<sup>4</sup> R.A. Butler, Parliamentary Undersecretary for the British Foreign Office, warned an interdepartmental meeting prior to the Conference that the "whole scheme would fall

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<sup>2</sup> George Rublee to Hand, August 29, 1938, HLS-Hand, box 107, folder 6; Rublee, "Reminiscences of George Rublee," (NY: Columbia University Oral History Research Office, 1972) 284 cited in McClure, *Earnest Endeavors*, 254; *FRUS*, vol.11, 796-798.

<sup>3</sup> "Evian Refugee Conference: Proposed London Commission," *The Times*, July 9, 1938, 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Home for Refugees," *The Glasgow Herald*, July 15, 1938, 32.

through” due to lack of adequate funding.<sup>5</sup> Helen Fein had argued that the limitation of American action to the consolidation of the German and Austrian annual quotas implied that the Conference was a simple “exercise in Anglo-American collaborative hypocrisy.”<sup>6</sup>

Harold Ginsburg, the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee noted, during a June 27, 1938 meeting of the Council for German Jewry, that conversations held with members of the American delegation to the Evian Conference led him to believe that the conferees themselves would determine both the goals of and the methodologies adopted by the meeting. The U.S. delegation preferred that sessions be held in private, while seeking “unofficial agreements” that would avoid contentious subjects such as the Jewish problem in Eastern Europe. Dr. Jonas Wise noted that the Presidential Advisory Committee for Political Refugees, established by Roosevelt, was constituted without a dialogue with relevant Jewish organizations. In addition, with the exception of Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau and Bernard Baruch, all of the original selectees were Christians. Consequently, to those who were monitoring the progress of the Conference it became readily apparent that “no constructive plan” had been formulated prior to the convening of the meeting and therefore, it represented “little more than a feeble improvisation.”<sup>7</sup>

Ismar Elbogen and Moses Hadas viewed the Evian Conference as symbolic of the “complete hopelessness” of the democratic nations of Europe whose representatives

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<sup>5</sup> “Record of Interdepartmental Meeting on June 30, 1938,” PRO FO 371/22538, W8713/104/98, f. 281 cited in London, *Whitehall*, 90.

<sup>6</sup>Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide* (NY: The Free Press, 1979), 167.

<sup>7</sup>Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference,” 240.

were limited to “handsome speeches” but unable to devise any “constructive measures” providing the Nazis and their Fascist counterparts the opportunity to “gloat...over their fecklessness.”<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt concluded that it was “obvious” to the delegates at Evian that the entirety of German and Austrian Jewry were “potentially stateless”; a conclusion that would be shared and acted upon by other nations seeking to “rid” themselves of unwanted minorities.<sup>9</sup> James MacGregor Burns perceived Roosevelt as a flawed individual afflicted by a “derangement of ends and means,” struggling to follow the proper moral course while seeking to retain and acquire pure political power.<sup>10</sup> Arthur Morse, David Wyman, Henry Feingold and Saul Friedman have argued that America, influenced by anti-Semitism, economic and social nativism, anti-alien and anti-immigrant prejudices, fear of the introduction of dangerous foreign ideologies, isolationism resulting from the Great War and the effects of the Depression, had offered little more than public expressions of sympathy to the victims of Nazi persecution while maintaining barriers to immigration. The downward spiral of these persecuted minorities’ existence could potentially have been altered, they claimed, if the democratic nations of the world had reacted in a more positive, forceful and charitable manner. Instead the response was muted, generally ineffectual and often contradictory.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ismar Elbogen and Moses Hadas, *A Century of Jewish Life* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 662.

<sup>9</sup>Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, seventh edition (NY: Meridian Books, 1962), 282.

<sup>10</sup>James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 609.

<sup>11</sup>Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died A Chronicle of American Apathy* (NY: The Overlook Press, 1967); David Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press); Saul Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Towards Jewish Refugees, 1938-1945* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1973).

Henry Feingold accused the Roosevelt Administration of “indifference and even complicity in the Final Solution.”<sup>12</sup> The State Department’s approach, Feingold claimed, was one of waiting while all would-be refugees “clamoring to come to the U.S. would be converted into silent corpses,” while at the same time rescue of European Jews was not a priority of their American co-religionists.<sup>13</sup> He also was critical of the American Jewish leadership believing that they operated under a critical delusion that there existed in the Gentile world “a spirit of civilization whose moral concern could be mobilized to save the Jews.”<sup>14</sup> However, it was important, he believed, to remain cognizant of the world view held by many Americans at the time; to evaluate Americans “as they were” rather than “how they should have been.”<sup>15</sup> Saul Friedman has condemned the Western Democracies for its “complicity” during the Holocaust while “perfidy” and the “yoke of shame” have stained the accomplishments of FDR and his subordinates.<sup>16</sup>

Herbert Druks accused both Roosevelt Administration and the British of engaging in policies that prevented rescue of endangered Jews and facilitated their “slaughter” by the Germans and their accomplices.<sup>17</sup> Konnilyn Feig theorized that if the United States and the other democracies had maintained a “passive” attitude towards German anti-Jewish policies then a greater number of Jews would have been rescued for

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<sup>12</sup>Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, x.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 61, 166, 299, 300.

<sup>14</sup>Henry L. Feingold, “Who Shall Bear Guilt for the Holocaust: The Human Dilemma,” *American Jewish History* vol. 68 no. 3 (March: 1979): 279.

<sup>14</sup> Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 273.

<sup>16</sup>Friedman, *No Haven*, 7, 14, 231, 234.

<sup>17</sup>Herbert Druks, *The Failure to Rescue* (NY: Robert Speller & Sons, 1977), 98.



it was the formal discussion of altering national immigration quotas at Evian that doomed the conference to failure.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Gil Loescher alleged that the discussion of the Jewish Question at the international level “reflected and subsequently strengthened the restrictive attitudes and policies” of government and the public.<sup>19</sup> Morty Penkower argued that nations outside of the German sphere of influence “abdicated [their] moral responsibility” and became “accomplices” to ultimate genocide.<sup>20</sup> Michael Marrus believed that most of the representatives agreed with the “mean spirited” Canadian Minister Frederick Blair that a line in the sand had to be drawn against any weakening of national immigration restrictions. Such resilience would compel the Reich to “solve their Jewish question internally.”<sup>21</sup>

Jonathan D. Sarna portrayed the Roosevelt initiative as a “politics of gestures” introduced with an invitation that was designed to be “carefully hedged.” The overt refusal of the United States to expand its immigration allowance for Germany and Austria forecast the meeting’s failure. FDR and his Administration’s great interest in colonization schemes in remote and underdeveloped sites (Philippine Islands, British Guiana, Alaska, Lower California, Angola, Ethiopia, Australia and the Dominican Republic) represented a hidden “form of group dissolution”; a project that was unlikely to generate much Jewish support or enthusiasm. Such proposals “served as psychological compensation for the inhospitality of the United States” and did receive support from

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<sup>18</sup>Konnilyn G. Feig, *Hitler’s Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness* (NY: Holmes & Meier, 1981), 412.

<sup>19</sup> Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR*, 32.

<sup>20</sup>Monty Noam Penkower, *The Jews Were Expendable: Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1988), vii.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted*, 172.

groups of middle-class Jews such as the American Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith. B'nai B'rith in 1935, for example, had suggested Birobidzhan as a potential haven for Polish Jews.<sup>22</sup> The Jewish Labor Committee and the Workmen's Circle, however, opposed such plans recognizing the intrinsic difficulties that stood in the way of the fruition of these schemes. Philosophically they believed in the inherent rights of Jews to remain within the bounds of their native country and the right of free emigration to any destination including Palestine; rights that obviated the need for colonization. The *Yiddishe Welt*, published in Cleveland on February 4, 1937, commented that many plans were being conceived for Jewish colonization. "All they amount to is a finger pointed to a spot on the map. When, however, we say Palestine, that has a meaning and a certainty."<sup>23</sup>

British historian Martin Gilbert criticized the Evian Conference for adopting a non-hostile "neutral stance" that, due to its ultimate failure, would "cost a multitude of lives."<sup>24</sup> Rafael Medoff highlighted the failure of the American Jewish leadership, who were on "vacation" or "lunching at the regular hour at their favorite restaurant," instead of assuming a more proactive role.<sup>25</sup> He also believed that Roosevelt conceived the

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<sup>22</sup>Birobidzhan was an attempt to establish a semi-autonomous socialist Jewish settlement in the Far East of the U.S.S.R. Henry Srebrnik, "Red Star over Birobidzhan: Canadian Jewish Communists and the 'Jewish Autonomous Region' in the Soviet Union," *Labour* 44 (Fall 1999): 129-147.

<sup>23</sup>Jonathan D. Sarna, *The American Jewish Experience* (NY: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 245.

<sup>24</sup>Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*,<sub>2</sub> (London: Collins, 1986), 65.

<sup>25</sup>Rafael Medoff, *The Deafening Silence* (NY: Shapolsky Publishers, 1988), 11, 12, 13, 154.

summit as a means of deflecting any domestic call for action by preemptively taking the “wind out of his critic’s sails.”<sup>26</sup>

Yehuda Bauer contended that the President wanted to aid the refugees but at minimal cost to the United States: no financial expenditures and maintenance of the current quota system. He believed that an “alliance system,” composed of the democratic nations, could successfully negotiate with Germany enabling refugees to retain sufficient capital to facilitate their immigration and integration into new countries with more than eighty percent heading for destinations other than America. If successful in this endeavor the President would “score” points with domestic liberals, placate American Jews and create a “united front” against the Reich on an issue that was very “sensitive.” The achievement of such a goal required the construction of a new international refugee organization that was distinct from the ineffectual League of Nations.<sup>27</sup>

Patrick Maney concluded that the chief characteristic of Roosevelt lay in his “extraordinary sunny disposition and abiding sense that all was right with the world.” His positive outlook helped to maintain the morale of his fellow Americans and the persecuted and dispossessed of humanity. However, he viewed such a character trait as a “relatively unimportant leadership quality” out of touch with the gravity of global problems. Luck played a role as seen in the consequences of the Pearl Harbor attack which provided the means for the United States to enter the war while simultaneously dealing the isolationist movement a decisive blow. Among the Presidents, Maney

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<sup>26</sup>Rafael Medoff, *Jewish Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2002), 112.

<sup>27</sup>Bauer, *Jews for Sale?* 30.

concluded, FDR was not a “man for all seasons.”<sup>28</sup> Herbert Druks observed that Roosevelt had expressed his support for Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish State within Palestine but did not actively proceed to achieve such a goal and failed to adequately aid and abet the resettlement of Jewish refugees “in Palestine or anywhere else.” His primary focus remained on “geopolitical” concerns rather than on “humanity.”<sup>29</sup>

William Lasser regarded the Evian Conference as a mere “gesture” on the part of the Roosevelt Administration due to the nature of the terms framing the official invitation. The exclusion of German attendance prevented the development of an opportunity to conduct negotiations with the Nazi Government.<sup>30</sup> Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt contended the Evian Conference was a political and public relations scheme designed to preserve America’s reputation as the refuge for the hopeless and persecuted but without taking any constructive actions or bearing any cost. The refusal of FDR to call for changes in global immigration laws and the allocation of adequate funds to facilitate emigration and resettlement doomed the conference to becoming a “dismal failure and a grave disappointment” that provided “tacit international approval” to keep the gates closed.<sup>31</sup> Michael Marrus claimed that the sympathetic but empty rhetoric expressed at the Evian Conference “simply underscored” the reluctance or outright refusal of the Western democracies to accept stateless Jews. While delegate after

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<sup>28</sup>Patrick Maney, *The Roosevelt Presence* (New York: Twayne, 1992), 1, 139, 203.

<sup>29</sup>Druks, *The Uncertain Friendship*, vii

<sup>30</sup>William Lasser. *Benjamin V. Cohen: Architect of the New Deal* (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2002), 203.

<sup>31</sup>Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History*, 124.

delegate rationalized why his nation could not act they simultaneously “congratula[ted] themselves on how much had already been accomplished for refugees.”<sup>32</sup>

Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson regarded it as “astonishing” that Roosevelt called for a refugee conference as legislative limits made the Administration “virtually powerless to act.” The United States’ sole contribution was to combine the annual German and Austrian quotas while framing the official invitation in a manner that did not require the invitees to liberalize their own domestic regulations. Consequently, Taylor and the American delegation lacked any “bargaining power.” The ultimate letdown of the meeting was a “foregone conclusion.”<sup>33</sup> Francis Nicosia claimed that the inherent “contradictions in the policies” of the attendees predicted failure. Countries of potential refuge called for German collaboration in the “speedy and orderly emigration” of German and Austrian Jews coupled with retention of sufficient personal assets to facilitate resettlement while simultaneously maintaining or increasing national barriers to immigration.<sup>34</sup>

Caroline Moorehead regarded the Evian Conference as a “shameful milestone in the history of refugee affairs.” Its sole success was the establishment of a “feeble intergovernmental committee on refugees” that could not engage in successful negotiations with the German Government. Nor could pressure be brought to bear on Great Britain (the Mandatory Power) over Palestine, to allow increased levels of Jewish

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<sup>32</sup>Marrus. *The Unwanted*, 170-172.

<sup>33</sup>Thomas C. Howard and William D. Pederson, eds., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Formation of the Modern World* (NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 196.

<sup>34</sup>Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich & the Palestine Question* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 157.

immigration. The net result of the “world’s evident indifference” to the fate of stateless refugees was to encourage the Reich to adopt a harsher and more extreme anti-Jewish policy that would culminate in the pogrom of November 1938 and other acts of violence.<sup>35</sup>

Alan Dowty maintained that the agreement of international representations to attend the meeting was accomplished “only by promising” that participating nations would not have to permit the admission of refugees. The primary goal of the United States in calling for the conference in the first place was “precisely to head off” any pressure that would require America to liberalize its immigration policies.<sup>36</sup> David Tichenor and John Hippel claimed that the Evian Conference was predestined to fail from the outset due to terms of the official invitation that participating nations were not expected to accept involuntary religious and political refugees.<sup>37</sup> Abraham Edelheit regarded the meeting as an “empty gesture” of a “half-hearted” effort on the part of Roosevelt that demonstrated that a “policy of doing nothing was counterproductive.”<sup>38</sup>

David Vital deemed the assembly a “singularly futile, dishonest and to some extent [a] cruel exercise” that resulted in two major accomplishments: the open expression of “the universal refusal” to permit mass Jewish migration as a form of rescue and secondly, the confirmation of the “now general disposition” to exclude Jews from the “international political arena,” marking a reversal of Jewish Emancipation and integration

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<sup>35</sup>Moorehead, *Human Cargo*, 34

<sup>36</sup>Dowty, *Closed Borders*, 89.

<sup>37</sup>Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*, 161; Dippel, *Bound Upon a Wheel*, 225.

<sup>38</sup>Edleheit, *The Yishuv*, 186, 190.

into Christian society.<sup>39</sup> Shlomo Katz described the Evian Conference as the “Jewish Munich” in which the human rights of Jews as individuals and as a collective were sacrificed by the League of Nations and by the world’s democracies. It was the “weakness of public opinion,” he believed, that helped to pave the way for the ultimate Nazi policy for the “solution of the Jewish problem.”<sup>40</sup> The gains of the Jewish Emancipation of the Nineteenth Century in Central Europe were reversed and German and Austrian Jews were cast adrift, subject to the whims and policies of an openly hostile government and ideology. David Cesarani and Sarah Kavanaugh argued that the failure of the American Administration to alter its immigration policies set off a “chain reaction” in which the other nations either refused to liberalize or adopted a more restrictive policy on immigration. Thus, from the viewpoint of the stateless refugees it would have been better if the “conference had not been held at all.”<sup>41</sup>

Rafael Medoff observed that Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, in fact, had frequently and unsuccessfully implored FDR to publicly criticize the Reich and its anti-Jewish policies. Wise acknowledged, on October 18, 1933, that “we have had nothing but indifference and unconcern [from the Administration] up to this time.” James D. McDonald had expressed to the President during early 1933 that “it would be very desirable” if the Chief Executive engaged in “frank speaking” with Hitler. In response, Roosevelt claimed that “he had a plan in mind to appeal over the head of Hitler to the German people.” FDR also advised Henry Morgenthau, Jr. and the brother of the New York State Governor,

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<sup>39</sup>Vital, *A People Apart*, 890-891.

<sup>40</sup>Katz, “Public Opinion,” 105, 126.

<sup>41</sup>David Cesarani and Sarah Kavanaugh, *Holocaust: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 3, (NY: Routledge, 2004), 19.

Judge Irving Lehman (September 14, 1933), that he intended to address the general topic of human rights violations within the Reich while excluding specific references to the Jews. The U.S. Ambassador in Berlin, William E. Dodd, questioned the President about official American policy regarding German anti-Semitism and was advised that the Nazi treatment of Jews was an internal “affair” outside the purview of the United States Government except when it impacted upon the Jewish-Americans “who happen to be made victims.”<sup>42</sup>

FDR utilized the media as a means of disseminating “stories, nearly always favorable,” that were assured of nationwide front page coverage that would overpower the “adverse editorials” in many newspapers and dominate the front pages to the “exasperation of his many enemies.”<sup>43</sup> The President skillfully utilized the proverbial bloody pulpit, provided by his Presidential News Conferences and his fire side chats, to generate a “supply of news” that would overshadow other press stories.<sup>44</sup> He could also utilize reporters’ questions as a means of promoting and framing the policies of the

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<sup>42</sup>Rafael Medoff, *Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. Dubois, Jr., and the Struggle for a U.S. Response to the Holocaust* (W. Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009), 5, 6. Roosevelt was criticized, following the call for the Evian Conference, for his failure to openly chastise Hitler and his policies. Oswald Garrison Villard, the treasurer of the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom, praised the Administration for its “noble action” for leading the way to rescuing the refugees of Germany and Austria. However, it has “not spoken out strongly enough.” While FDR discussed the quarantining of those nations that threatened international peace and issued “other veiled references or generalizations in regard to the dictators [still he] has not called the devil by his right name, as did John Hay when Secretary of State and Theodore Roosevelt when President...in inviting a delegation of American Jews to the White House at the time of the Russian pogroms at Kishinev and telling the world just what the two highest officials in our Government felt about those horrors. Those pogroms were merciful compared to the horribly slow, cruel tortures of the concentration camps of today and of the robbing, maltreating and degrading of hundreds of thousands of people.” “Thomas Mann Advocates Reich Refugee Exhibit,” *The Sentinel*, May 19, 1938, 34.

<sup>43</sup>John Williams Tebell and Sarah Miles Watts, *The Press and the Presidency: From George Washington to Ronald Reagan* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 438, 444.

<sup>44</sup>Graham White. *FDR and the Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 23-24.



Administration and was not averse to providing journalists with questions on topics he wished to discuss.<sup>45</sup> Roosevelt also realized that he possessed the power to promote, divert or suppress the reaction of the media and the public to a daily event or public policy.<sup>46</sup>

Steven Casey maintained that FDR was particularly influenced by the “shifting attitudes of opinion makers,” especially those of “journalists, editors and commentators” who opposed liberalization of the quota laws or immigration in general.<sup>47</sup> A correspondent of the time observed that the President had the ability to quickly ascertain the “mood of the country” and the relative importance of “current events, trends [and] problems” from the manner in which in which press questions were framed and the “tone” used in their construction.<sup>48</sup> Roosevelt also utilized the Division of Press Intelligence during 1933-1939. This agency monitored and analyzed the reporting and editorializing of approximately four hundred newspapers, providing the White House with a daily “intelligence report.”<sup>49</sup> A 1995 analysis of the themes of the President’s first

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<sup>45</sup>Elmer Cornwell, Jr., *Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1966), 156-157.

<sup>46</sup>White, *FDR and the Press*, 22; Richard W. Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 37; Betty H. Winfield, *FDR and the News Media* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 237.

<sup>47</sup>Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69.

<sup>48</sup>White, *FDR and the Press*, 22.

<sup>49</sup>Laurel Leff, “News of the Holocaust: Why FDR Didn’t Tell and the Press Didn’t Ask,” *Hakirah: A Journal of Jewish and Ethnic Studies*, 2006, 11 available from <http://wymaninstitute.org/articles/News%20of%20the%20Holocaust-%20Why%20FDR%20Didn't%20Tell%20and%20the%20Press%20Didn't%20Ask.pdf>; Internet; accessed October 3, 2010. The Office of Press Intelligence was established in August 1933 and on July 10, 1935 it was placed under the authority of the National Emergency Council. The Reorganization Plan No. 11 transferred the agency to the Office of Government Reports where it remained in operation until Executive Order 9182 of June 13, 1942 moved it to the Bureau of Special Services in the Office of War Information.

seven State of the Union addresses concluded that Roosevelt responded to past “coverage in the newspapers more than he influenced subsequent coverage”; a trend that continued during the wartime years.<sup>50</sup>

Overall, the President maintained a significant level of public silence over the fate of Jews in Central Europe. During 1933 eight-two press conferences were held in which the subject of Jews arose on only one occasion when a reporter inquired if Roosevelt had been asked by Jewish and other refugee organizations to develop policies opposing the persecution of minorities within the Reich. FDR noted that a “good many of these [entreaties] have come in” but were all transmitted to the State Department. The next reference to the Jews in a Presidential news conference would only take place five years and 348 conferences later on September 2, 1938 when he was asked if he had an opinion on the Italian plan to deport 22,000 foreign Jews; FDR responded “no.” During *Kristallnacht* and its aftermath the President was questioned during seven press conferences about the situation of the Jews within Greater Germany. He offered only one definitive statement: the Labor Department had been instructed to extend the duration of 15,000 German and Austrian tourist visas but he qualified this action by noting that they were “not all Jews by any means.”<sup>51</sup> Roosevelt’s awareness of domestic isolationism and

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The Office of War Information was closed by Executive Order 9608 of August 31, 1945 and the Bureau of Special Services was once again transferred to the Bureau of the Budget. Finally, the Division of Press Intelligence was assigned to the Office of Government Records that was reestablished with Executive Order 9809 of December 12, 1946. National Archives and Records Administration *The United States Government Manual, 2009-2010* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), 662.

<sup>50</sup>Thomas J. Johnson, Wayne Wanta, John T. Byrd and Cindy Lee, “Exploring FDR’s Relationship with the Press: A Historical Agenda-Setting Study,” *Political Communication* 12 (1995): 196.

<sup>51</sup>*Complete Presidential Press Conferences*, vol. 20, 52-7; vol. 11, 248-9; vol. 12, 41, 69, 224, 228-9, 238-41, 247, 257, 280-1, 286.

anti-Semitic undercurrents may have led him to avoid explicit references to Jews. During the 998 press conferences held over the course of his multiple terms in office FDR failed to deliver the “appeal to the German people” that he had earlier promised to McDonald in 1933.<sup>52</sup>

Henry Feingold has argued that Roosevelt’s decision to call for the Evian Conference was puzzling as the Administration was “virtually powerless to act” in view of the restrictions placed on immigration then in effect and the possibility of further limitations being enacted by Congress. In addition, FDR had appeared “content” to place the refugee issue solely under the purview of the State Department. He sought to “remain above” any political discord generated by the immigration problem while “occasionally [making] an inquiry or a suggestion.” Thus, Foggy Bottom would absorb “much of the pressure and ire” that would and should have aimed directly at the President. Utilizing such a strategy Roosevelt was able to preserve his “benevolent image” especially among Jewish Americans.<sup>53</sup>

New York Governor Herbert H. Lehman called upon FDR to alter immigration policies during 1936 but Roosevelt replied that officials of the State Department and its Consulates abroad were doing everything in their power to “carry out the immigration duties placed upon them in a considerate and humane manner.”<sup>54</sup> Although the President directed the American Consular Service to interpret the LPC clause as liberally as possible Immigration and Naturalization officials were instructed to consider such

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<sup>52</sup>Medoff, *Blowing the Whistle*, 5-6.

<sup>53</sup>Feingold, *Politics of Rescue*, 18, 75.

<sup>54</sup>FDR to Herbert Lehman, July 2, 1936 cited in Edgar B. Nixon, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs*, vol. III: September 1935-January 1937 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 342.

refugees “dispassionately, in spite of the tragic circumstances surrounding their plight.” Visitors’ visas would be granted only if the alien had a permanent residence in their country of origin (an impossibility in Nazi Germany when the policy of forced emigration was adopted) and documentation of the means to return home as well as a certificate of good character and behavior to be obtained from the local German and Austrian police.<sup>55</sup>

Having achieved “almost nothing of substance” Frank Brecher has argued that the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees from Germany merely served to extend the longevity of the Evian Conference “under a new name” that would serve as a “face-saving device” for the Roosevelt Administration. None of the participating countries was committed to any particular plan of action and the official financing of the IGCR would be limited with the bulk provided by private Jewish and non-Jewish sources.<sup>56</sup>

Jewish Congressmen also lacked the will to pursue modification of the immigration laws. Representatives Emanuel Celler (NY), Adolph Sabath (Illinois) and four others approached George Messersmith on April 17, 1938 regarding the facilitation of refugee immigration and the consolidation of unused national quotas. They were warned that such actions could prompt a nativist reaction and a call for more restrictive

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<sup>55</sup>Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, *History of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 96<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Committee Print, December 1980, 43; Frances Perkins to Cornelia Bryce Pinchot, December 21, 1939, Frances Perkins papers, 1939 Correspondence File, General Records of the Labor Department, Record Group 174, National Archives, Washington, D.C. cited in Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*, 161-162.

<sup>56</sup>Brecher, *Reluctant Ally*, 63.

laws from the House and Senate by inciting the “temper of Congress.”<sup>57</sup> Consequently, the Congressmen agreed and pledged themselves to discourage any such new legislation. Messersmith himself was pessimistic over the prospects of the Evian Conference believing that Germany intended to utilize the refugee crisis as a means of pressuring the United States into bilateral trade talks or provide other forms of assistance to aid the German economy. Any financial aid, he believed, would be diverted into German rearmament. Consequently, he opposed the creation of the IGCR due to its goal of entering into negotiations with the Reich and would have “counseled against its formation.”<sup>58</sup> Along with Assistant Secretary of State Robert Walton Moore and the Chief of the European Division of the State Department Jay Pierrepont Moffat he believed that more could be accomplished via the League’s International Labor Organization rather than the establishment of a new committee.<sup>59</sup>

Messersmith was also concerned about overtures from Poland regarding the emigration of its own Jewish population and he concluded that “humanitarianism was encouraging brutality.” He opposed any alteration of the annual immigration quotas, viewing the Jewish refugees “less as innocent victims” than the unknowing means of introducing “Nazi subversion” that would threaten domestic social and economic stability. The diplomat did fear that if the Conference was successful then America faced a potential inundation of refugees which he strove to prevent. He complained that Jewish professors, academics and other professionals seeking entry visas were sending him the

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<sup>57</sup> Stiller, *George S. Messersmith*, 123.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>59</sup> March 18, 23, and 25, 1938, Moffat Diary, Moffat Papers cited in Shafir, “George S. Messersmith,” 39.

“most extraordinary letters” that inflicted upon him the “rude[st] shocks.” The writers, he claimed, were resentful that the U.S was not providing “on a golden platter a position which native-born Americans would be glad to get at the end of a long and hard fought career.” America, Messersmith believed, would still belong to the “native-born...”<sup>60</sup>

Myron Taylor, acting as the American representative to the Inter-governmental Committee for Political Refugees, reassured a radio listening audience following *Kristallnacht* that America would not be flooded by refugees. “On the contrary, our entire program is based on the existing immigration laws of all the countries concerned, and I am confident that within that framework our problems can be solved.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, once again as with the Evian Conference, the United States would not, despite its expressed sympathies, willingly offer refuge to the victims of Nazi persecution, providing a basis upon which foreign governments could maintain their own restrictive immigration policies. The pogrom, however, had led Taylor to believe that an orderly plan of emigration carried out over a number of years was now a more difficult and perhaps impossible goal. The humanitarian situation had assumed a greater degree of urgency but its solution remained constrained by the problem of finding havens for 400,000-500,000 refugees, a lack of sufficient funds for resettlement and the need for the cooperation of the German Government. Representative Hamilton Fish, in an address on “America’s Answer to Religious and Racial Hatred” broadcast following Taylor’s speech, stated he would support a motion in Congress to appropriate \$10,000,000-20,000,000 to transport

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 124. See also Messersmith (GSM) to Hull, March 31, 1938, 840.48/84 ½; Messersmith to Welles, April 7, 1938, 150.01/34; Hull to Messersmith, April 17, 1938 cited in Wyman, *Paper Walls*.

<sup>61</sup> “U.S. Will Not Be ‘Flooded’ With Jews, Myron Taylor Says,” *Tampa Tribune*, November 26, 1938, 2.

and resettle the refugees but with the caveat that Palestine, rather than other locations such as the former German African colonies, British Guiana or Alaska, would be the best locale.<sup>62</sup> A variety of geographic regions around the world were proposed as potential sites of resettlement, in some cases generating surveys and schemes that were limited in scope and slow to develop. The Alaskan Plan, for example, was proposed by the Alaska Development Committee in 1938 to create semi-autonomous Jewish colonies of unspecified size but met local political and popular resistance.<sup>63</sup>

David Wyman claimed that Roosevelt, during the critical years of 1938-1945, displayed “a pattern of decreasing sensitivity towards the plight of the European Jews” due to domestic and foreign priorities that were of greater significance to American interests.<sup>64</sup> Presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin has argued that FDR was sympathetic to the situation of the German Jews but was unwilling to expend political capital by confronting the anti-immigration and anti-Semitic sentiments of the American public or powerful members of Congress.<sup>65</sup> The First Lady, Eleanor, noted in *This I Remember*, “While I often felt strongly on various subjects, Franklin frequently refrained from causes in which he believed, because of political realities.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “Refugee Aid Plans Mapped by Taylor,” *New York Times*, November 26, 1938, 2.

<sup>63</sup> Edelheit, *History of Zionism*, 502-507. Other proposed sites included: Angola, Argentina, Baja, British Guiana, Ecuador, French Guiana, Madagascar, Kimberly in Australia, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Peru and Surinam.

<sup>64</sup> Wyman, *Paper Wall*, vii-viii.

<sup>65</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 102.

<sup>66</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, *This I Remember* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 161.

The failure of the Administration to speak out in favor of increased entry into the United States and the unwillingness of the various delegations and their respective governments to offer refuge was seen by the Nazis as vindication and support of their anti-Semitic policies. The Evian Conference symbolized the “Jewish Munich” which reflected attempts to both appease and dodge confrontations with Germany.<sup>67</sup> Klaus P. Fischer equated the response of the democracies to the plight of the Jews with the abandonment of Czechoslovakia over the Sudetenland issue. Both events represented “western appeasement of Hitler [with] the western powers [negotiating] over the heads the Czechs, ignoring and selling out their vital interests.” Similarly, they “negotiated over the heads of the Jews by ignoring the deadly threat they faced from the Nazis.” The Evian Conference itself represented, Fischer believed, another example of “western collaborative hypocrisy” that supported Hitler’s image of democratic decadence and weakness.<sup>68</sup>

FDR did not actively support the 1939 Wagner-Rogers bill and opposed settlement in Alaska but, like the British with their eye on British Guiana and Africa, adopted “a strategy that would avoid both political conflict at home and confrontations with London” while proposing “visionary and grandiose resettlement schemes” in Latin

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<sup>67</sup>Leonard Baker, *Days of Sorrow and Pain: Leo Baeck and the Berlin Jews* (NY: Macmillan, 1978), 226-227 cited in Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley A Panorama of the 1930's* (NY: Vintage Books, 2002), 515. Following *Kristallnacht* FDR removed references to Nazi Germany and its leadership from a speech of outspoken Nazi critic, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, in order to avoid incitement of the Germans. *Tampa Tribune*, November 15, 1938, 1, 2 In contrast, Fiorello La Guardia, Mayor of New York City, ordered the police to provide a detail composed primarily of Jews led by Police Captain Max Finklestein to protect the German Consulate. *Tampa Tribune*, November 17, 1938, 1.

<sup>68</sup> Klaus P. Fischer, *The History of an Obsession: German Judeophobia and the Holocaust* ((NY: Continuum, 2001), 276-277.



America and Africa.<sup>69</sup> Others have argued that the failure of the Evian Conference was a blow to the concept of universal human rights and “sanctioned the belief in the inequality of humankind.”<sup>70</sup>

Some authors have speculated that the Jewish background of Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s wife, Frances Witz, influenced his decision to limit aid to Jews seeking to escape from the Reich and not to pressure the British to allow greater Jewish immigration into Palestine. Although Frances was an Episcopalian her father, Irwin Witz, was an Austrian Jewish immigrant. Soon after Hull’s appointment to the State Department anti-Semitic magazine articles claimed that this represented another example of a Jewish conspiracy to take over control of the Federal Government. Irwin Gellman, a Hull biographer, claimed that the Secretary hid his wife’s Jewish roots in order to avoid any controversy that would threaten a potential bid for the Presidency. He “feared that [his wife’s] Jewish connection” opened him to criticism from American anti-Semites that he was favoring Jewish “causes” which could translate into the loss of potential votes. Prior to his decision to run for a third term Roosevelt was supportive of a Hull run for the White House. However, in August 1939 he informed Democratic Senator Burton Wheeler (Montana) that the issue of the Frances’ heritage “would be raised” by the opposition against Hull.<sup>71</sup> Such sentiments were echoed by the notorious German anti-Semite Julius Streicher in his magazine *Der Sturmer*, #23/1944, in which the Secretary of

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<sup>69</sup> Feingold, *Bearing Witness*, 178.

<sup>70</sup> Naomi Kramer and Ronald Headland, *The Fallacy of Race and the Shoah* (Ottawa, Ont.: University of Ottawa Press, 1998), xvi.

<sup>71</sup> “Senator Allen’s ‘Jewish Problem,’” The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, March 3, 2010 available from <http://www.wymaninstitute.org/articles/2006-10-senator-allen.php>; Internet; accessed March 3, 2010.

State was accused of being one of the leading “Jewish lackeys” in America who controlled U.S. foreign policy. He believed that Hull harbored “concealed Jewish blood that enabled him to overcome his horror when he married the baptized full Jewess Frances Witz” who was utilizing the “protocols of the 1897 World Jewish Congress in Basel” to enable Jewish “world domination.”<sup>72</sup>

Others have provided the counterargument that Roosevelt and his Administration did everything that was possible within the context and constraints of their time. The President faced criticism over the recession of 1937 and rising unemployment (15% of the workforce), the high level appointments of a small number of Jews (which led to his economic plans being labeled the “Jew Deal”), his failed attempt to pack the Supreme Court with additional Justices, the need for political support from Congressional Congressmen (especially Southern Democrats) who opposed increasing and preferred further restrictions on immigration, fallout from his Quarantine speech and the lowest popularity rating since taking office in 1933.<sup>73</sup> Faced with an increasingly hostile and recalcitrant legislature FDR “felt obliged to husband his waning influence” on Capitol Hill for higher priorities: Congressional allocations for military rearmament and

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<sup>72</sup>“What is Americanism?” by Julius Streicher, German Propaganda Archive available from <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/ds1.htm>; Internet; accessed March 3, 2010.

<sup>73</sup>U.S. unemployment figures:

1930: 8.9%  
1932: 27%  
1933: 25.2%  
1935: 20.3%  
1937: 14.5%  
1939: 20.1%

“Open Knowledge—Americans Did Not Like Immigrant Jews,” June 16, 2006 available from <http://crasch.livejournal.com/429343.html>; Internet; accessed February 17, 2008; “Deathly Silence Teaching Guide: Bystander Psychology,” The Southern Institute for Education and Research available from [http://www.southerninstitute.info/holocaust\\_education/ds9.html](http://www.southerninstitute.info/holocaust_education/ds9.html); internet; accessed October 4, 2009.

new domestic programs. Emphasis on increased Jewish immigration could precipitate greater confrontations and a potential backlash in Congress from anti-immigrationists, although Roosevelt was not worried about losing Jewish electoral support.<sup>74</sup> John Stoessinger argued that Roosevelt and his Administration had taken “a determined step” to aid the Jews of Germany. However, despite the “prodding” of the President and the Department of State, it was the Congress that was responsible for not liberalizing American immigration laws that ensured the failure of the Evian Conference.<sup>75</sup> Breitman and Kraut asserted that “bureaucratic indifference to moral or humanitarian concerns” was a “more significant obstacle to an active refuge policy” than the anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant sentiments of Government officials. Contradictory national priorities coupled with limited latitude of domestic political action prohibited the Administration from exceeding the restrictions placed on the quota system. The magnitude and the ability to secure rescue of Jews was quite inadequate, they admit, but they concluded that “British and American inaction...represented a fundamental failure of western civilized values.”<sup>76</sup>

Joseph C. Harsch claimed that FDR had recognized international political constraints would prevent the Evian Conference from adopting a program of mass migration over a short time frame. Rather, he envisaged the creation of a permanent international organization that would be mandated to accomplish the limited goals that

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<sup>74</sup>Brecher, *Reluctant Ally*, 61.

<sup>75</sup> Stoessinger, *The Refugee*, 40. Prior to the onset of WWII Stoessinger and his family fled from Austria to Czechoslovakia and eventually received a visa from Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara escaping to Shanghai and Kobe.

<sup>76</sup>Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, 2.

were practicable under the “circumstances of the time”: locating sites for mass resettlement of refugee Jews and constructive negotiations with the Reich that would culminate in an orderly plan of emigration. Harsch concluded that the Conference “did both.”<sup>77</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein noted that Roosevelt represented during the latter part of the 1930s the “only friend” of the Jewish people among the leaders of the world. Unfortunately for the Jews, however, such friendship occurred during a time in which the “most inhumane anti-Semitic episodes” in global history were occurring with disconcerting and troubling regularity. The President always aware of his political priorities was in “tune with public sentiments” and would avoid taking any pro-active stance on immigration in the face of an “obstructionist Congress.”<sup>78</sup> Jeffrey Gurlock believed the President analyzed the refugee issue in the “context” of domestic politics, an arena which he understood and could potentially manipulate. He recognized that in the setting of national economic distress the majority of the American public could not understand nor support the admission of large numbers of refugees who potentially would be competing for hearth, home and jobs. Selecting carefully the issues upon which he was willing to expend political capital he regarded the question of Jewish refugees more like “the fox than the lion... [settling] for a politics of gesture.” It was this slight of symbolic hand that provided the “key to the mystery” of Evian in which the terms of the invitation were “carefully hedged” ensuring the ultimate failure of the meeting. FDR’s

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<sup>77</sup>Joseph C. Harsch, *At the Hinge of History: A Reporter’s Story* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 26.

<sup>78</sup>Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 104.

enthusiasm for colonization schemes merely represented further attempts at the “politics of gesture.”<sup>79</sup>

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Museum, Hyde Park, New York, had included in its core exhibit a panel describing the President’s response to the Holocaust:

During the 1930s, as many European Jews were looking for a safe haven from official anti-Semitism, members of the State Department enforced the bloodless immigration laws with cold rigidity. Yet even Roosevelt’s bitterest critics concede that nothing he could have done--including bombing the rails leading to Auschwitz in 1944--would have saved significant numbers from annihilation, let alone dissuaded the Nazis from doing what they were so intent on doing.

Twenty-five Holocaust historians have criticized this statement on the grounds that it assigns the primary responsibility for underfilling the annual immigration quota to the State Department, essentially absolving the President of any personal accountability. The actions of Varian Fry and his associates in France (rescued 2,000 Jews in Vichy, 1940-1941), Raoul Wallenberg (Swedish diplomat who saved thousands in Hungary 1944) and the U.S. War Refugee Board (established in January 1944, primarily funded by American Jews and helped to end deportation of Hungarian Jews from Budapest to Auschwitz) and others demonstrated that interventions to save lives, both before and after the onset of hostilities, was potentially possible. Roosevelt’s critics claim he could have offered temporary shelter in the U.S. for the duration of the war, pressured the British to alter their restrictive stance on Jewish immigration into Palestine or could have provided greater funding to the IGCR and the War Refugee Board.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Gurlock, *America, American Jews and the Holocaust*, 267.

<sup>80</sup>“Roosevelt Museum Distorts FDR’s Holocaust Record” by Rafael Medoff, April 2005 available from <http://www.wymaninstitute.org/articles/2005-08-fdr.php>; Internet; accessed June 12, 2010.

Robert Rosen declared the President “never left anyone in doubt about his position” on the German persecution of Jews and non-Aryans but “it is only in retrospect that many have ignored this record.” Roosevelt, according to the author, came out “eloquently and forcefully” against Nazi policies and persecutions and during the late 1930s focused primarily on the Jews.<sup>81</sup> Rosen’s critics, however, maintain the Administration remained “silent” about anti-Jewish actions for most of the decade. During eighty one Presidential Press Conferences held during 1933 the issue of German anti-Semitism was raised only once and not by FDR. It would take five more years and 348 further press conferences before the subject was broached again (on the part of a reporter and not the President). During a September 2, 1938 meeting with reporters the President was asked to comment on the Fascist Italian order to deport 22,000 Jews. FDR’s response: “No.” Rosen also claimed that Roosevelt “provid[ed] as much relief” to Jewish refugees as were permissible under the existing immigration laws. His detractors responded by noting the number of quota spots filled during that period: 5.3% in 1933, 13.7% in 1934, 20.2% in 1935, 24.3% in 1936, 42.1% in 1937 and 65.3% in 1938. If the quotas had been filled to the maximum then a total of 154,220 refugees would have been admitted compared with the actual figure of 46,771 due to Consulate and State Department intransigence.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Robert N. Rosen, *Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust* (NY: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2006), xiv-xv; 440, 450.

<sup>82</sup> Laurel Leff and Rafael Medoff, “Whitewashing FDR’s Holocaust Record: An Analysis of Robert N. Rosen’s *Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust* , New Documents Shed More Light on FDR’s Holocaust Failure,” April 2004, available from <http://www.wymaninstitute.org/articles/2004-04-fdrdocs.php>; Internet; accessed June 12, 2010. By mid-1939 400,000 had emigrated from the Reich of whom 73,322 found permanent residence in the U.S., 70,000 in Palestine, and 50,000 in Latin America and 12,000 within the British Dominions. 200,000 remained in sites of temporary refuge in Europe. 104,098 Germans entered the United States via the quota by the end of the 1941 fiscal year of which 75-85% were

Conrad Black, one of Roosevelt's latest biographers, concluded the President should not be "censored" for not adopting a more outspoken platform against anti-Semitism because his "paramount duty" to the nation was to bolster American economic and military power "in order to exercise a decisive influence on the Manichean struggle between good and evil political forces" then raging in Europe.<sup>83</sup>

William Perl viewed Roosevelt primarily as a "shrewd and ruthless" politician determined not to endanger a "fragile coalition" in Congress by supporting humanitarian causes laden with emotional and political overtones. The President was poised on the brink of launching a campaign for an unprecedented third term and was concerned about issues of American rearmament and isolationism. The convening of an international conference dealing with Jewish and non-Aryan potential and real refugees coupled with a promise not to tamper with American immigration laws appeared to be the safest course to follow and would "divert pressure for a change in legislation."

Myron C. Taylor was chosen by Roosevelt over career diplomats to lead the American delegation because of his "pragmatism" and could not be accused of being on a "fancy love-everybody dream trip." Taylor would demonstrate that matter-of-factness during his opening remarks received by the delegations and public in "hushed silence." He expounded with "blatant bluntness," devoid of any attempt to "veil [his statements] in diplomatic phraseology..." The only humane "trimmings" referred to the perilous situation of the "unfortunate human beings" who were "coming within the scope of this

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Jewish in practice or by ethnicity. *American Jewish Year Book*, XL, 1938, 96-97. See also "Exile Haven Here Rivals Palestine," *New York Times*, October 29, 1939, 26 and Donald Peterson Kent, *The Refugee Intellectual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 12.

<sup>83</sup>Black, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, 496.

conference.” The term “Jews” was substituted by “political emigrants” and Taylor made it absolutely clear that the United States would not pursue any changes in its immigration laws or assume any financial burdens nor did it expect any other nation to do otherwise. The listening audience could not misinterpret the “full impact” of these words and the effect it would undoubtedly have on the other representatives and their respective governments. Lord Winterton expressed similar sentiments and dealt a “second blow” against a successful conference essentially “condemning hundreds of thousands to death.”<sup>84</sup>

William D. Rubinstein concluded that large-scale rescue of Jews during the Holocaust was not possible “given what was actually known...what was *actually proposed* and what was realistically possible” and labeled any criticism of Roosevelt and the Allies as “inaccurate and misleading, their arguments illogical and ahistorical.” He described governmental refugee policies during 1933-1940 as “remarkably generous.”<sup>85</sup>

William J. vanden Heuven, president of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, had written that American Jews at that time “knew that they never had a better friend, a more sympathetic leader in the White House [who] opened the offices of government as never before to Jews.” Roosevelt had to contend with a divided and economically troubled nation, filled with “profound isolationist sentiments” and “disillusion” with involvement in European affairs after the Great War. The President, he maintained, needed to focus on the Hitlerian threat, called for the quarantine of aggressor

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<sup>84</sup>Perl, *The Holocaust Conspiracy*, 38-40, 44, 46.

<sup>85</sup>William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (NY: Rutledge, 1997), X.



nations, and, recognizing that he lacked the ability to order an increase in the immigration quotas, “constantly [sought] havens for refugees in other countries.”<sup>86</sup>

Jonathan Alter concluded that FDR was “not entirely negligent” in the intensity of his efforts to aid European Jews. An isolationist and restrictionist public limited Roosevelt's options but he did sound the clarion of warning about the Nazi threat early on and “sponsored international conferences on refugees (Evian 1938 and the even more ineffectual Bermuda Conference of 1943).<sup>87</sup> Frank Caestecker and Bob Moore regarded the American effort as a historic “landmark” in the search for a workable policy for international refugees. The Evian Conference marked the first attempt of the United States Government to formulate and lead refugee policies outside the efforts of the ineffectual League and its High Commissioner for Refugees. Despite its ultimate failure in identifying sites of resettlement and of concluding successful negotiations with the German Government over the issue of funding these authors regarded the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees as the “only concrete result” of the Conference.<sup>88</sup>

Mark Rozell and William D. Pederson concluded that the President’s success in treading the minefield of politics and achieving his desired goals was due to a “measure

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<sup>86</sup>William J. vanden Heuvel, “America and the Holocaust” available from <http://www.feri.org/common/news/details.cfm?QID=826&clientid=11005>; Internet; accessed April 20, 2008.

<sup>87</sup>Jonathan Alter, *The Defining Moment: FDR’s Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 333-334.

<sup>88</sup>Frank Caestecker and Bob Moore, *Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2010), 35.

of classical Western prudence” artfully co-mingled with “idealism and pragmatism.”<sup>89</sup>

Jack Fischel claimed that Roosevelt did not identify the refugees as Jews due to domestic concerns of stimulating domestic anti-Semitism as heralded by Father Coughlin, Gerald L.K. Smith, Gerald Winrod and the German-American Bund. Any open display of sympathy or support for Jews would open the President to such diatribes as being the father of the “Jew Deal.”<sup>90</sup> Saul Friedman argued that any support for pro-Jewish immigration measures would have caused FDR to suffer “politically” due to his increasing unpopularity in opinion polls.<sup>91</sup>

George L. Warren, former Director of the International Migration Service, member of the President’s Advisory Committee on Political Refugees and later advisor to Myron Taylor at the Evian Conference, believed FDR called for the July 1938 meeting as a means of responding to the *Anschluss* because “he didn’t know what else to do.” Faced with a potentially hostile Congress and restrictive immigration laws Roosevelt was “terribly embarrassed” for having convened the conference. Short of maximizing the existing German and Austrian quota there was little he could do to increase immigration into the country. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, established at Evian to negotiate financial arrangements with Germany that would facilitate emigration and resettlement, was a “futile effort by George Rublee... [t]hat failed completely.” He offered a number of reasons for the Conference’s failure: the Depression with its attendant unemployment; migrations from the countryside into the cities was occurring

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<sup>89</sup>Mark J. Rozell and William D. Pederson, *FDR and the Modern Presidency: Leadership and Legacy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 159-160.

<sup>90</sup>Jack R. Fischel, *The Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 28.

<sup>91</sup>Friedman, *No Haven*, 90.

throughout Latin America; an American Congress increasingly hostile to immigration; the insincere and superficial efforts of Britain to offer land for re-settlement in its colonial holdings and the generalized feeling “that the only thing to do was to colonize [Jews] in agriculture” despite the obvious disconnect between the economic, social and technological backgrounds of Central European middle-class and urbanized Jews.<sup>92</sup>

Following *Kristallnacht*, however, the President did step forward to offer refuge to 12,000-15,000 German and Austrian refugees who were within the United States on six-month visitor visas. The German Government had issued a decree that would annul the visitors’ passports (Jews and non-Jews) on December 30, 1938. Consequently, he directed Secretary of Labor Francis Perkins, to extend the visas in order to avoid the forced deportation of the refugees to the Reich; an act that would be both “cruel and inhuman[e]” due to the likelihood of persecution, arrest and imprisonment in concentration camps. Citing an earlier precedent of allowing Russian refugees to remain in the United States following the Bolshevik Revolution, he believed Congress would not object to the visa extensions and that immigration law did not prevent the President from taking such action.<sup>93</sup> Representative Martin Dies, Chairman of the House Committee Investigating Un-American Activities, objected to the extension of the visitors’ visas,

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<sup>92</sup> “Oral History Interview with George L. Warren,” November 10, 1972 by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library available from <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/warrengl.htm>; Internet; accessed March 6, 2010. See Table 4 which provides an occupational breakdown of the German Jewish population in 1933 cited in Arie Tartakower, “The Jewish Refugees: A Sociological Survey,” *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4 (October 1942), 333.

<sup>93</sup> *Tampa Daily Times*, November 18, 1938, 1, 14; Press Conference #501, November 18, 1938, *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of FDR*, vol. 12 (NY: Da Capo Press, 1972) 239-240.

arguing that it violated the “spirit of the [immigration] law [which stated] visitors’ permits are granted for temporary purposes.”<sup>94</sup>

The President was seeking, according to Robert Dallek, to improve America’s defenses and create a united front against the threat of Nazism. Consequently, “a fight on the later Wagner-Rogers bill [and Jewish immigration in general] would have crippled his main objective.”<sup>95</sup> His strongest supporters in Congress were Southern Democrats who opposed any liberalization of the immigration laws. They had voted 127:0 for the 1924 Immigration Act and 106:3 to revise the Neutrality Act in 1939. After the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Eleanor Roosevelt called on the President to “raise the immigration quotas and persuade the State Department to relax the restrictions on admitting Jews.” He cautioned that any attempt to admit refugees, especially Jews, would cost him the support of Southern Democrats who chaired many important Senate and House committees. They would “bolt the party” and block every piece of legislation needed to keep this country from collapsing.” The President concluded that “preparation for war is my ‘must’ legislation and I would lose that ability if the party were split...Ultimately, we must be prepared to mobilize if we are to survive.” Edwin “Pa” Watson, the Presidential Press Secretary, recollected that FDR’s lack of support for the 1939 Wagner-Rogers bill “doomed the bill and it died in committee.” However, the children under consideration in the 1940 Henning bill were “English and Christians, not

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<sup>94</sup>*Tampa Daily Times*, November 19, 1938, 1, 10;

<sup>95</sup>Verne W. Newton, ed., *FDR and the Holocaust* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 17.

Jews. The patriotic organizations sure won't object to this one. It should make things a hell of a lot easier.”<sup>96</sup>

Finally, Haskel Lookstein has argued that “divisiveness” in the American Jewish community and reticence to respond “to the indifference of America” out of fear of generating increased anti-Semitism and more restrictive immigration laws led many American Jews to assume the role of “bystander” to the inherent dangers of the German anti-Nazi policies. Such hesitancy was evident during the course of the Evian Conference and in later attempts to admit Jewish refugees. A clear division existed between Jews who believed rescue depended upon adopting a more public and vocal stance and strategy and those who maintained that back room diplomacy and political maneuvering was the only realistic tactic for Jews to follow. For example, the American Jewish committee maintained a low profile during the Congressional hearings on the Wagner-Rogers bill. The *Congress Bulletin* of the American Jewish Congress noted that Jews needed to observe “a great deal of necessary caution” while the hearings were underway but this “cautious restraint” could be eased once the bill left committee. However, a forceful campaign was not mounted by the Jewish leaders and community out of fear of inciting calls for greater immigration restrictions. This lack of significant visible Jewish support for their co-religionists was used by nativist adversaries of the bill (and others who were against any increased immigration) as justification for opposition.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Carl L. Steinhouse, *Barred: The Shameful Refusal of FDR's State Department to Save Tens of Thousands of Europe's Jews from Extermination* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2007), 18-20, 69-70

<sup>97</sup>Haskel Lookstein, *Were We Our Brother's Keepers? The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust 1938-1944* (NY: Hartmore House, 1985), 22, 183.

## Chapter 14

### Ominous Tidings

#### Conclusions: The “Unintended Signal”

The Holocaust was certainly a Jewish tragedy. But it was not only a Jewish tragedy. It was also a Christian tragedy, a tragedy for Western civilization, and a tragedy for all humankind.<sup>1</sup>

Although the democracies cannot be blamed for the Holocaust it was evidently clear that the resistance of the Evian Conference attendees and their respective governments to accept the stateless refugees would lead to drastic consequences. The failure of the Talks marked a “turning point” towards a more radical solution in Nazi Jewish policies. It was obvious to contemporaries that Jews could no longer remain within the Reich and that the “need for rescue was painfully clear” but any “opportunity was lost” by October 1941.<sup>2</sup> Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis warned in October 1938 that Jews faced an existential threat and that unless “we do not move mountains” the Jews of Germany were doomed to the same fate as the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire during the Great War.<sup>3</sup>

A memorandum was dispatched from the State Department to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin formally advising the German Government that the Evian Conference had resulted in the creation of the Inter-Governmental Committee whose stated purpose

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<sup>1</sup> Wyman, *Abandonment*, xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, vii-viii.

<sup>3</sup> Yair Auron, *Zionism and the Armenian Genocide: The Banality of Indifference* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 28.

was to facilitate the resettlement of those “individuals emigrating on account of their political opinions, religious beliefs or racial origin.” The purview of this Committee was limited to the enablement of a “practical and orderly solution” to the refugee crisis. Significantly, the IGCR (and by inference, the U.S. Government) would avoid “any criticism or [potential] interference” with Germany’s inherent “entire right” to enact “measures” dealing with the “political opinions, the religious beliefs and the racial organization of its citizens.” However, German internal policies had generated a “wave of immigration” creating “serious problems” for the nations of temporary and permanent resettlement. Consequently, Germany must engage in “consultation” and provide data regarding the “volume and rate of exodus” and the amount of monies that each refugee would retain. Otherwise, it would be impossible to create an “orderly, permanent [plan for] large scale settlement...” The IGCR had embarked on a “survey” of sites of potential resettlement but the “final attitude of the receiving countries” was dependent on the outcome of negotiations between the Committee and the Reich.<sup>4</sup> Martin Gilbert had claimed that this October 1938 memorandum, sent one month before *Kristallnacht*, supplied Hitler with additional “gratuitous support” in that none of the Committee’s democratic members contested the right of the Reich Government to treat the German Jewish Question as anything but an internal affair. Significantly, the “lessons of Evian, as learnt by the Nazi leadership” may have led to a “decisive” change in anti-Jewish policies from forced emigration to physical destruction.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Note by the American Department of State to the German Foreign Ministry on the Evian Conference,” October 26, 1938 cited in Mendelsohn, *The Holocaust* vol. 5, 145-147.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Exile and Return: The Struggle for a Jewish Homeland* (NY: Lippincott, 1978), 203, 214.

John C. Torpey had argued that the reluctance or outright refusal of nations to admit German Jewish refugees, which could have provided a means of resolving the Jewish Question within the Reich, may “ultimately have helped to push the Nazis toward extermination as the ‘final solution’ of the ‘Jewish problem.’”<sup>6</sup> Gerald Sorin observed that the Conference failed to produce any declaratory statement criticizing the Reich for its primary responsibility in creating the refugee problem or its persecutory policies. The adoption of the role of international bystander resulted in an “unintentional signal” to the Nazis that external pressure would not be applied against the methodology utilized by the Reich in solving the “Jewish problem.”<sup>7</sup>

Ernst Marcus asserted that

within Germany the failure of the Evian Conference had the result that the Party and the Gestapo, which had been kept under restraint...until then, gained the upper hand over those who preferred orderly emigration to the outbreak of chaos within the Jewish community. There is an immutable connection between the...Evian Conference and the events of November [1938 which represented] nothing but an attempt by the extremist wing of the Party to solve the Jewish problem in their own way. Auschwitz, Treblinka, etc. were the next stages.<sup>8</sup>

Ernest G. Heppner also had argued that the impotency of the Evian Conference granted license to Hitler to pursue a more radical solution of the Jewish Question. The

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<sup>6</sup>John C. Torpey, *Invention of the Passport*, 135-136.

<sup>7</sup>Gerald Sorin, *Tradition Transformed: The Jewish Experience in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, Press, 1997), 188. Gregory H. Stanton, President, Genocide Watch, has argued that genocides do not arise spontaneously, but develop through a series of stages. Intervention at any one of these levels had the potential to avert or mitigate genocide. These phases included: classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, extermination and denial. The years leading up to and including the Holocaust conform to these stages. Gregory H. Stanton, “The 8 Stages of Genocide” available from <http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/8stagesofgenocide.html>; Internet; accessed June 25, 2009.

<sup>8</sup>Ernst Marcus, “The German Foreign Office and the Palestine Question,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, 194 in Herbert Rosenkranz, “The Anschluss and the Tragedy of Austrian Jewry 1938-1945,” fn. 1, 430 cited in Josef Frankel, *The Jews of Austria, Essays on their Life, History and Destruction* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1967), 531.



reluctance or outright refusal of the invitees to admit refugee Jews demonstrated to the Nazi regime that “political considerations were paramount” in the democracies and that Jews were regarded as a class outside the customary protections offered to political refugees. Thus, the Jewish destiny was foretold by international “politics.”<sup>9</sup> As earlier noted, the November 24, 1938 issue of *Das Schwarze Korps* (“The Black Corps”), the official publication of the SS, described how the progressive impoverishment of Jews would force Jews into a life of crime. “If things were to develop in this way we would be faced with the harsh necessity of having to exterminate the Jewish underground in the same manner as we are used to exterminating criminals in our Order State: with fire and sword. The result would be the actual and definite end of Jewry in Germany-its complete destruction.”<sup>10</sup>

The Polish Government concluded from the limited focus of the Evian Conference (German and Austrian Jews only) that only those nations that utilized force and intimidation would be granted a “measure of international attention.”<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the influential Camp of National Unity (*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego* or OZN) initiated in 1939 a “more aggressive attitude” toward Poland’s Jewish population which was viewed as a dangerous internal foe.<sup>12</sup> While such warnings were clear the

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<sup>9</sup> Ernest G. Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Holocaust*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974), 23, 99, 100.

<sup>11</sup> Edward G. Wynot Jr., ““A Necessary Cruelty”: The Emergence of Official Anti-Semitism in Poland, 1936-1939,” *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (October 1971): 1056-57.

<sup>12</sup> E. Melzer, “Mifleget haShilton OZON veh a Yehudim be-Polin 1937-1939,” 412-13 cited in David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 45.

rescue of Jews was a low priority on the global and American scene. As will be demonstrated in a future monograph the outcomes of the Wagner-Rogers bill of 1939 and the Hennings Bill of 1940 placed greater value on the lives of some children compared to others.

Although Myron C. Taylor asserted that forced migration was creating “catastrophic human suffering” that threatened “general unrest,” the true sentiments or apathy of many towards the Nazi persecution of Jewish and non-Aryan minorities could, perhaps, be best expressed in the recollections of René Richier, the Chief Concierge of the Hotel Royal, site of the conference in Evian:

Very important people were here and all the delegates had a nice time. They took pleasure cruises on the lake. They gambled at night at the casino. They took mineral baths and massages at the *Etablissement Thermal*. Some of them took the excursion to Chamonix to go summer skiing. Some went riding: we have, you know, one of the finest stables in France. But, of course, it is difficult to sit indoors hearing speeches when all the pleasures that Evian offers are outside."<sup>13</sup>

Eventually the echoes of the ill-fated Evian Conference struck a positive but limited chord in international relations and humanitarianism as reflected in the comments of Vice President Walter Mondale when the United States was seeking a solution to the problem of the boat people of Southeast Asia fleeing Communist rule. Mondale stated:

Some tragedies defy the imagination. Some misery so surpasses the grasp of reason that language itself breaks beneath the strain. Instead, we grasp for metaphors. Instead, we speak the inaudible dialect of the human heart. Today we confront such a tragedy. In virtually all the world's languages, desperate new expressions have been born. “A barbed-wire bondage,” “an archipelago of despair,” “a flood tide of human misery”...

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<sup>13</sup> “Text of Taylor’s Address at Refuge Parley,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1938, 9; Peggy Mann, “When the World Passed by on the Other Side,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, May 7, 1978, interview with René Richier.

“The boat people.” “The land people.” The phrases are new, but unfortunately their precedent in the annals of shame is not. Forty-one years ago this very week, another international conference on Lake Geneva concluded its deliberations. Thirty-two “nations of asylum” convened at Evian to save the doomed Jews of Nazi Germany and Austria. On the eve of the conference, Hitler flung the challenge in the world’s face. He said, “I can only hope that the other world, which has such deep sympathy for these criminals, will at least be generous enough to convert the sympathy into practical aid.” We have heard such a similar argument about the plight of the refugees in Indochina. At Evian, they began with high hopes. But they failed the test of civilization.

The civilized world hid in a cloak of legalisms...

As the delegates left Evian, Hitler again goaded “the other world” for “oozing sympathy for the poor, tormented people, but remained hard and obdurate when it comes to helping them.”...

Let us not re-enact their error. Let us not be heirs to their shame.

To alleviate the tragedy in Southeast Asia, we all have a part to play.

The United States is committed to doing its share...[and] have already welcomed over 200,000 Indochinese...[and we] are preparing to welcome another 168,000 refugees in the coming year...But the growing exodus from Indochina still outstrips international efforts. We must all work together, or the suffering will mount... [and] we will inherit the scorn of Evian...Let us renounce that legacy of shame...We face a world problem. Let us fashion a world solution.

History will not forgive us if we fail. History will not forget us if we succeed.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>“The Best Speech I Ever Wrote” by Marty Kaplan, July 30, 2009, available from [http://www.jewishjournal.com/marty\\_kaplan/article/the\\_best\\_speech\\_i\\_ever\\_wrote\\_20090730/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/marty_kaplan/article/the_best_speech_i_ever_wrote_20090730/); Internet; accessed July 30, 2010. Mondale’s speech, “Evian and Geneva,” was read on July 21, 1979

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### **Country-by-country breakdown of Jewish refugee immigration, using widely accepted history texts concerning refugees from Nazism: Reception of Jewish refugees, 1933-1945<sup>1</sup>**

#### United States

Abella: (14) (1933-45) 200,000

Bauer: (15) (1933-39) 85,000

Marrus: (16) (1940-45) 116,000

(Together, the figures of Bauer and Marrus cover the period of 1933-1945 and add up to 201,000.)

Tartakower: (17) (1933-43) 190,000

(Add 10,399 for 1944 and 1945, (18) and the 874 who were brought to Oswego, thus giving a total for 1933-45 of 201,273.)

Wyman: (19) (1933-45) 250,518

(Wyman's figure is given as the maximum possible estimate for all refugees from Nazism. Deduct from that ten percent for the number who were non-Jewish political refugees, and another 15,000 for those who entered by 1941 with visitor visas and by 1945 had been readmitted as permanent quota immigrants and were thus included in the 250,518 figure. Accordingly, the maximum number is 210,466.)

#### Palestine

Bauer: (1933-39) 80,000

Marrus: (1940-45) 58,000

(Together, the figures of Bauer and Marrus cover the entire period of 1933-45 and add up to 138,000.)

Marrus (1933-37) 43,000

Ofer: (20) (1938-39) 40,000

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<sup>1</sup> Alex Grobman, "A Closer Look at the Use of Statistics by Some Critics of the Abandonment of the Jews," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 40, no. 4, 2003, 381.

Marrus (1940-45) 58,000

(Together, the figures of Marrus and Ofer cover the entire period of  
1933-45 and add up to 141,000.)

Tartakower: (1933-43) 120,000

Marrus: (1944) 14,000

(Together, the figures of Tartakower and Marrus add up to 134,000.  
However, Marrus's calculation for 1944 includes only those Jews who  
entered via Turkey and is thus an underestimate; furthermore, he  
does not provide a figure for 1945 alone.)

Abella: (1933-45) 125,000

#### Latin America

Bauer: (1933-39) 85,000

Abella: (1933-45) 77,000

(This figure is based on Argentina and Brazil only.)

Tartakower: (1933-43) 128,000

#### Great Britain

Abella: (1933-45) 70,000

Breitman: (21) (1933-45) 70,000

Tartakower: (1933-43) 65,000

Marrus: (1933-39) 56,000

Sherman: (22) (1933-39) 56,000

#### Canada

Abella: (1933-45) 5,000

Tartakower: (1933-43) 8,000

#### Australia

Abella: (1933-45) 15,000

Tartakower: (1933-43) 9,000

#### Switzerland

Marrus: (1933-45) 22,000

Wyman: (23) (1933-44) 27,000

Tartakower: (1933-43) 16,000

#### Shanghai

Bauer: (1933-39) 18,000  
Wyman: (1938-40) 18,000  
Marrus: (1933-39) 17,000  
Tartakower: (1933-43) 25,000

Sweden  
Wyman: (24) (1943-45) 12,000

Although there are several possible choices for each country, using an approximate average for each, and taking into account that some additional thousands of Jewish refugees were taken into other countries, including South Africa, Japan, Spain, and Portugal, a reasonable summary would conclude that the number of Jewish refugees taken in between 1933 and 1945 by the United States and the rest of the world was as follows:

United States 200,000  
Palestine 138,000  
Latin America 85,000  
Great Britain 70,000  
Canada 5,000  
Australia 15,000  
Switzerland 22,000  
Shanghai [China] 18,000  
Sweden 12,000

TOTAL 565,000

United States: 200,000 (35%)  
Rest of the world: 365,000 (65%)



## APPENDIX B

### ESTIMATED NUMBER OF UNASSIMILATED REFUGEES POLITICAL REFUGEES OFFICIALLY RECORDED IN FRANCE 1922-1939<sup>1</sup>

NATIONALITY	1922	1924	1930	1933-34	1935-38
Russians	67-75,000		150-250,000	50,000	100-120,000
Armenians			35-40,000		
Spaniards					300,000
Germans				46,000	37-40,000
Italians		50,000			10,000

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<sup>1</sup> Sir John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem Report*, Tables LXII, LXIII, LXIV, LXV, LXVI and 119-20, 328-329, 333-334 in Maga, *French Historical Studies* "The French Government and Refugee Policy", p. 427.

## APPENDIX C

### LIST OF JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH RELIEF ORGANIZATION TESTIFYING BEFORE THE EVIAN CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

International Christian Committee for Non-Aryans (London);  
Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews, Chairman Dr. Arthur Ruppin (London);  
Jewish Colonization Association, O.E. d'Avigdor Goldsmid (Paris);  
German Jewish Aid Committee, Otto M. Schiff (London);  
Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (London);  
*Comité d'aide et d'assistance aux victimes de l'anti-sémitisme en Allemagne* (Paris);  
*Comité d'assistance aux réfugiés* (Paris);  
*Comite voor Bijzondere Joodsche Belangen* (Amsterdam);  
*Centre Suisse pour l'aide aux réfugiés* (Basle);  
*Comité central tchécoslovaque pour les réfugiés provenant d'Allemagne* (Prague);  
*Fédération internationale des émigrés d'Allemagne* (Paris);  
International Migration Service (Geneva);  
International Student Service (Geneva);  
*Comité international pour le placement des intellectuels réfugiés* (Geneva);  
The Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, Neville Laski and Leonard G. Montefiore (London);  
*Agudas Israël* World Organization, J. Rosenheim (London);  
American Joint Distribution Committee; endorsed joint memorandum but instructed their representative, Rabbi Jonah B. Wise to submit separate statement (Paris);  
Council for German Jewry, Lord Herbert Samuel (London);  
*HICEM (Association des Emigrés Hias-Ica)*, James Bernstein (Paris);  
*Notgemeinschaft Deutsche der Wissenschaftler im Ausland* (London);  
The Society of Friends (German Emergency Committee) (London);  
*Bureau international pour le respect du droit d'asile et l'aide aux réfugiés politiques* (Paris);  
World Jewish Congress (Paris);  
New Zionist Organization (London);  
Emigration Advisory Committee (London);

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<sup>1</sup>Erika Mann and Eric Estorick, "Private and Governmental Aid of Refugees," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 123, Refugees (May, 1939), 150-151; Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, 49.

*Alliance israélite universelle* (Paris);  
*Comité pour le développement de la grande colonisation juive* (Zurich);  
*Internationale ouvrière et socialiste* (Paris-Brussels);  
*Comité Catholiques Américains, anglais, Belge, Français, Néerlandais et Suisse pour l'aide aux émigrés*;  
 'Freeland' Association (London);  
 'Ort' (Paris);  
*Centre de recherches de solutions au problème juif* (Paris);  
 League of Nations Union (London);  
 Jewish Agency for Palestine; endorsed joint and submitted separate memorandum to White Sub-committee regarding resettlement in Palestine (London);  
*Comité pour la defense des droits des Israélites en Europe centrale et orientale* (Paris);  
*Union des Sociétés 'Osé'* (Paris);  
 Royal Institute of International Affairs (London);  
*Fédération des émigrés d'Autriche* (Paris);  
*Société d'émigration et de colonisation juive 'Emcol'* (Paris);  
*Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, Dr. Otto Hirsch, Dr. Paul Epstein, Michael Traub (Palestine Office) and Dr. Werner Rosenberg (*Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland*)  
*Juedische Kultusgemeinde Wien*, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Neuman, Dr. Joseph Loewenherz and Kommerzialrat B.J. Storfer;  
 Organization of Jewish Settlers from Germany, Mr. Kurt Blumenfeld, Dr. Siegfried Moses and Dr. Max Kreutzberger (Tel Aviv);  
 General Federation of Jewish Labor, Golda Meirson (Tel Aviv);  
 Palestine paper *Davar*, Mr. Zalman Rubashov (Tel Aviv)

## APPENDIX D

### **Decisions taken at the Evian Conference on Jewish Refugees, July 1938<sup>1</sup>**

The Intergovernmental Committee

Adopted by the Committee on July 14th, 1938

"Having met at Evian, France, from July 6th to July 13th, 1938:

1. Considering that the question of involuntary emigration has assumed major proportions and that the fate of the unfortunate people affected has become a problem for intergovernmental deliberation;
2. Aware that the involuntary emigration of large numbers of people, of different creeds, economic conditions, professions and trades, from the country or countries where they have been established, is disturbing to the general economy, since these persons are obliged to seek refuge, either temporarily or permanently, in other countries at a time when there is serious unemployment; that, in consequence, countries of refuge and settlement are faced with problems, not only of an economic and social nature, but also of public order, and that there is a severe strain on the administrative facilities and absorptive capacities of the receiving countries;
3. Aware, moreover, that the involuntary emigration of people in large numbers has become so great that it renders racial and religious problems more acute, increases international unrest, and may hinder seriously the processes of appeasement in international relations;
4. Believing that it is essential that a long-range program should be envisaged, whereby assistance to involuntary emigrants, actual and potential, may be coordinated within the framework of existing migration laws and practices of Governments;
5. Considering that if countries of refuge or settlement are to cooperate in finding an orderly solution of the problem before the Committee they should have the collaboration of the country of origin and are therefore persuaded that it will make its contribution by enabling involuntary emigrants to take with them their property and possessions and emigrate in an orderly manner;

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<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 6th to 15th, 1938...Record of the Plenary Meetings of the Committee. Resolutions and Reports, London, July 1938.

6. Welcoming heartily the initiative taken by the President of the United States of America in calling the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian for the primary purpose of facilitating involuntary emigration from Germany (including Austria), and expressing profound appreciation to the French Government for its courtesy in receiving the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian;

7. Bearing in mind the resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Nations on May 14th, 1938, concerning international assistance to refugees:

Recommends:

8. a) That the persons coming within the scope of the activity of the Intergovernmental Committee shall be 1) persons who have not already left their country of origin (Germany, including Austria), but who must emigrate on account of their political opinion, religious beliefs or racial origin, and 2) persons as defined in 1) who have already left their country of origin and who have not yet established themselves permanently elsewhere;

b) That the Governments participating in the Intergovernmental Committee shall continue to furnish the Committee for its strictly confidential information, with 1) details regarding such immigrants as each Government may be prepared to receive under its existing laws and practices and 2) details of these laws and practices;

c) That in view of the fact that the countries of refuge and settlement are entitled to take into account the economic and social adaptability of immigrants, these should in many cases be required to accept, at least for a time, changed conditions of living in the countries of settlement;

d) That the Governments of the countries of refuge and settlement should not assume any obligations for the financing of involuntary emigration;

e) That, with regard to the documents required by the countries of refuge and settlement, the Governments represented on the Intergovernmental Committee should consider the adoption of the following provision:

In those individual immigration cases in which the usually required documents emanating from foreign official sources are found not to be available, there should be accepted such other documents serving the purpose of the requirements of law as may be available to the immigrant, and that, as regards the document which may be issued to an involuntary emigrant by the country of his foreign residence to serve the purpose of a passport, note be taken of the several international agreements providing for the issue of a travel document serving the purpose of a passport and of the advantage of their wide application;

f) That there should meet at London an Intergovernmental Committee consisting of such representatives as the Governments participating in the Evian Meeting may desire to

designate. This Committee shall continue and develop the work of the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian and shall be constituted and shall function in the following manner: There shall be a Chairman of this Committee and four Vice-Chairmen; there shall be a director of authority, appointed by the Intergovernmental Committee, who shall be guided by it in his actions. He shall undertake negotiations to improve the present conditions of exodus and to replace them by conditions of orderly emigration. He shall approach the Governments of the countries of refuge and settlement with a view to developing opportunities for permanent settlement. The Intergovernmental Committee, recognizing the value of the work of the existing refugee services of the League of Nations and of the studies of migration made by the International Labor Office, shall cooperate fully with these organizations, and the Intergovernmental Committee at London shall consider the means by which the cooperation of the Committee and the director with these organizations shall be established. The Intergovernmental Committee, at its forthcoming meeting at London, will consider the scale on which its expenses shall be apportioned among the participating Governments;

9. That the Intergovernmental Committee in its continued form shall hold a first meeting at London on August 3rd, 1938."

## APPENDIX E

### JEWISH POPULATION OF THE WORLD AT END OF 1937<sup>1</sup> (In thousands)

America	5,375	Germany	365	French Morocco	175
Europe	9,970	Czechoslovakia	360	Algiers	130
Africa	655	Austria	150	South Africa	95
Asia	725	Italy	55	Tunis	70
	-----	Switzerland	20	Egypt	70
Total	16,725		-----	Abyssinia	50
United States	4,800	Central Europe	950	Libya	25
Argentina	170	Poland	3,275	Spanish Morocco	25
Brazil	55	U.S.S.R. (incl.		Other	15
Uruguay	25	Asia)	3,130		-----
Mexico	20	Rumania	800	Africa	655
Cuba	10	Hungary	440	Palestine	420
Chile	10	Lithuania	160	Iraq	100
Other	15	Latvia	95	Iran	50
	-----	Greece	75	Yemen	50
America	5,375	Yugoslavia	75	Australia	25
British Isles	340	Turkey (incl. Asia)	75	India	25
France	270	Bulgaria	50	Japan and China	20
Holland	115		-----	Syria and	
Belgium	70	Eastern Europe	8,175	Lebanon	15
Scandinavia	20	Minor European		New Zealand	5
	-----	Countries	30	Other	15
Western					-----
Europe	815			Asia (and	
				Oceania)	725

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<sup>1</sup> Estimates of Jewish Agency for Palestine, prepared by Dr. Arthur Rupp for the Evian Conference adjusted for U. S. A. and Abyssinia in accord with *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1944-45

## APPENDIX F

### **PROPOSALS BY THE BUREAU REGARDING THE EXPENSES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE AND THEIR ALLOCATION<sup>1</sup>**

Adopted by the Committee on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1938

If, as at present anticipated, the Evian session of the Intergovernmental Committee closes this week, the costs incurred which have been advanced by the French Government can now be estimated to amount altogether to 16,000 Swiss francs. In detail this amount can be roughly subdivided as follows:

Allowances paid to the League of Nations Secretariat for the staff put at the disposal of the Intergovernmental Committee.....	12,000 Swiss francs.		
Paper, stencils and roneo ink.....	1,500	“	“
Miscellaneous expenses (telephone and telegraph communications, liaison by motor-car between Evian and Geneva, etc.).....	500	“	“
Minutes of plenary meetings and reports of the two Sub-Committees...	2,000 Swiss francs		
	Total 16,000	“	“

In the invitation sent by the United States Government to the States attending the Intergovernmental Committee at Evian, it was suggested that these costs should be equitably apportioned. The Secretary-General accordingly suggests the application of the League of Nations scale of allocation of expenditure; thus, each country in the Intergovernmental Committee would assume responsibility for the same number of units of expenditure as that allotted to it at the present time by the League Secretariat at Geneva.

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<sup>1</sup> Proceedings of the Evian Conference



The following table shows in Swiss francs the contribution which each member of the Intergovernmental Committee would thus be asked to make.

	<b>Units</b>	<b>Swiss Francs</b>
USA	108	3,024
Argentine Republic	23	644
Australia	23	644
Belgium	19	532
Bolivia	2	56
United Kingdom	108	3,024
Brazil	23	644
Canada	35	980
Chile	8	224
Columbia	5	140
Costa Rica	1	28
Cuba	5	140
Denmark	12	336
Denmark	12	336
Dominican Republic	1	28
Ecuador	1	28
France	80	2,240
Guatemala	0.5	14
Haiti	1	28
Honduras	0.5	14
Ireland	10	280
Mexico	13	364
Nicaragua	0.5	14
Norway	9	252
New Zealand	8	224
Panama	1	28
Paraguay	0.5	14
Netherlands	24	672
Peru	5	140
Sweden	19	532
Switzerland	17	476
Uruguay	4	112
Venezuela	4	112
Total	571	15,988

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dennis Ross Laffer was born in Detroit, Michigan and attended Michigan State University and was awarded a Bachelor's in Science degree with high honors in 1972. He was a member of the Honor's College and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Eta Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi. He attended the University Of Michigan School Of Medicine and received a Doctor of Medicine Degree in 1976. His internship in General Surgery and residency in Internal Medicine was spent at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. He accepted a gastroenterology fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio and completed his specialty training in 1982 and then relocated to Tampa, Florida where he entered private practice, married and had two daughters. He is a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology, a member of the American College of Physicians and former Chief of Gastroenterology at Tampa General Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital.

Dr. Laffer has had a long interest in history, especially in the area of the Holocaust and genocide. He is a founding member of the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida. His interest in the topic of the Evian Conference was stimulated by his involvement in the museum and resulted in the publication of an article on the topic in 2003 in *History in Dispute, The Holocaust 1933-1945*. An unexpected case of cancer led to his decision to enter the Master's of History Program at the University of South Florida which furthered his concentration on the Holocaust and genocide. He has

had several opportunities to address the Southeast United States chapter of the Western Front Association on the topic of the origins of the Armenian Genocide and has lectured about the Evian Conference, the Wagner-Rogers Bill and the Hennings Bill at the Florida Holocaust Museum. He was inducted into the USF Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and currently travels the State of Florida on behalf of the American Cancer Society discussing colon cancer screening. His illness forced him to close his solo medical practice but he is now employed by a local hospital on an outpatient basis. He plans to pursue a Ph.D. in history.