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OFFICIAL UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD JEWISH REFUGEES
1938–1945

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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1969

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This manuscript represents the final product of ten years of reading and research into the nature of the role of the western democracies in what has popularly been termed the Holocaust, the slaughter of the European Jews in World War II. Several readings of Malcolm Hay's *Europe and the Jews* generated intense discussions on this subject with an elder brother, Norman, while we were both students at Kent State University. Norman's death in 1964 served as the motivation for a short research paper for Foster Rhea Dulles of The Ohio State University on the wartime Anglo-American Conference on Refugees at Bermuda.

In the past three years, my investigations of the Jewish refugee question have been molded and expanded under the direction of Professors Robert Chazan, John Burnham, Harry Coles and Robert Bremner of the Ohio State University. I am, however, most especially indebted to my adviser Professor Marvin Zahniser, who took on an unknown student several years ago and guided him through the difficult days of general examinations, research grants, and the final editorial winnowing. Because of the excellent advice and direction given me by these scholars it is hoped that this paper is a fair synthesis of American social, diplomatic and minority history for the period 1938-1945.

In approaching such a difficult subject, I have also been generously aided by a number of government historians and private archivists, including Mrs. Miriam Leikind of Rabbi Silver's Temple in Cleveland, Mr.
Ezekiel Lipshutz and Mrs. D. Abramowicz of YIVO, Miss Hester Groves of the American Friends Services Committee, Robert Shosteck of the National B'nai B'rith Headquarters in Washington, Richard Ploch, Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections at Brandeis University, Professor Dorothy Brown of Georgetown University, Dr. Arthur G. Kogan, Chief of the Research Guidance and Review Division of the Historical Office of the Department of State, Dr. Dean Allerd of the Office of Naval History, Dr. Thomas Hohmann of the Modern Military Records Division, and numerous unnamed persons in the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College, the Cleveland Public Library, and The Ohio State University who made my travels and studies less trying.

I am, moreover, indebted to those persons, at one time intimately involved in the decision-making processes of refugee questions, who have given freely of their time to answer questions related to this dissertation. Among them, I wish to thank Professor Harold Willis Dodds of Princeton University, who added valuable insight into the Bermuda Conference, Lillie Shultz, Leona Duckler and Richard Cohn of the American Jewish Congress, who broadened my understanding of Rabbi Stephen Wise, former Presidential adviser Benjamin Cohen, I. S. Kenen of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Miss Helen Eckerson, Chief of the Statistical Section of the Department of Immigration and Naturalization.

Most of all, however, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to my wife Nancy, who tolerated the painful seizures of creativity and revision and encouraged me to continue a project which is dedicated to the oppressed children of all races and of all time.
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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1941, when the United States was not yet formally embroiled in World War II, and when it was still possible to effect the rescue of Europe's persecuted Jews from Vichy France, Dr. Isaac Chomski, representing the OSE (Jewish Health Protection Society), the American Joint Distribution Committee, Secours Suisse (Swiss Aid), and HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) was placed in charge of one hundred and eleven child refugees at the local Quaker relief office in Marseilles. All but five of the children, whose ages ranged from eight to fifteen, were Jewish. Each carried a small, untidy bundle or a battered valise which held belongings accrued from wanderings in two or three different lands. Each child also wore a white numbered card about his or her neck, cards which read "Father died in concentration camp at Buchenwald," "Mother died in French internment Camp at Gurs," "Parents sent to Lublin," or simply "Parents unknown."

Throughout the five-hundred mile train ride which carried this group on its way to the Spanish border and its ultimate destination, the S.S. Mouzinho, docked in Lisbon harbor, Dr. Chomski was struck by the solemnity of the children, their stoic acceptance of the meager food provisions, their unlaughing silence, as they watched a host of French university towns--Nimes, Montpellier, Toulouse, Tarbes--sweep by. Only rarely did a child volunteer to speak with the doctor, and this
conversation was generally followed by a tearful breakdown as the young
refugee confided his fears of going to America, where he had "no one."

On Sunday morning, as the train neared the small provincial
town of Oloron, thirty miles from the Spanish border in the department of
Basses-Pyrenees, Dr. Chomski noted a transformation in the children.
Awake even before dawn, they were in a festive mood, for many hoped to
glimpse their parents for one last time this day. The children knew that
close by Oloron lay Gurs, the notorious French concentration camp where
ten thousand Jewish refugees were living under the most primitive of
conditions. Originally constructed to house three thousand Spanish
Loyalist refugees, Gurs had been converted into a detention camp for
German nationals (including Jewish refugees) by the French government in
1939. By 1941 it was serving as a staging center for deportations to the
East. Thirty persons died of hunger, exposure or disease in Gurs each
day, but this did not dampen the enthusiasm of Chomski's charges, who
hoped that the prisoners would be released for a few moments to meet the
train. Klaus, a boy from Germany, showed Chomski a photograph of his
father. Tall, stately, his World War I German officer's uniform bedecked
with medals, the boy's father was one of many such parents still detained
in Gurs.

The train pulled into the Oloron station amid shouts of excited
children and the echo of anxious parents lining the platform. Scenes of
unbelievable tragedy and horror were enacted in the ten minutes that
sympathetic gendarmes permitted the train to sit at the depot. The
children, having saved the bread which constituted their last evening's
meal, forced it upon the adults. Children who had no parents gave their
ration to strangers. Chomski records that even the French guards wept before such human misery.

A man, bearded, unkempt, wearing rags, walked hesitantly up to the son he had not seen in two years, and, with some embarrassment, spoke: "Klaus, my son, don't you recognize me?"

The boy recoiled for a moment. Suddenly, he lunged forward, burying his head in his father's tattered coat. Then he reached up to kiss the begrimed forehead and sobbed, "Papa, Papa, Papa."

Later, in the corridor of the moving train, Klaus stood holding a letter from his father. With German deliberateness, the doomed man, fearful that three minutes might not be sufficient to bid his son farewell, had written: "My dear son, my beloved Klaus, do not forget your father." ¹

Klaus and the other children under Chomski's supervision arrived in the United States in June, 1941. They were the fortunate ones. According to figures compiled by the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Congress more than 1,000,000 of the 6,000,000 Jews exterminated by the Nazis in World War II were children below the age of fifteen. ² Twenty-five years ago, the villains in this drama were relatively easy to denote--Hitler, the Nazis, the German people. They were the

¹Dr. Isaac Chomski, "Children in Exile," Contemporary Jewish Record, IV (October, 1941), pp. 522-23.

ones who pulled the triggers or dropped the cyanide pellets. They were
the ones who were insensitive to the screams from passing cattle cars and
the stench of burning flesh. Others watched with curious fascination,
however, and did little or nothing to stay the crucifixion of European Jewry.

To many people, the death of six million Jews is merely a
statistic, about as meaningful as the population of Upper Volta or the
average annual precipitation in the Hadramaut. For some, though, the
spectre of genocide is still quite real. The animal carcasses of once
human beings, starved, beaten or tortured in the reconcentrado camps of
Cuba, by bashi-bazouks in Armenia, or Nachtigall battalions in the
Ukraine are not easily forgotten in a world which is presently witnessing
a re-enactment of such terrors in Biafra. The memory of these terrors, the
hope that they would not be recreated, is what prompted sometime tele-
vision journalist Arthur D. Morse to author While Six Million Died: A
Chronicle of American Apathy, published by Random House in February,
1968.

Morse's work belongs to a new school or revisionist history
which has prompted much critical comment about the extermination of the
Jews in World War II. Just as a group of historians in this country (John
K. Turner, Sidney Fay, Harry Elmer Barnes, Harold Stearns and Frederick
Bausman) disillusioned by the failure of the Wilsonian Crusade to guar-
antee world peace dissected events leading up to World War I and redis-
tributed the guilt for the war among all the participants, so too in recent
years have several authors imputed partial responsibility for the massacre
of the Jews to the Pope, the western democracies, and the Jews themselves.

The first, and undoubtedly the most celebrated of these works was Rolf Hochhuth's play, The Deputy. Published in Germany in 1964, the play aroused the anger of Catholics around the world because of its portrayal of Pius XII as a latter-day Pontius Pilate, washing his hands of the fate of the Jews. According to Hochhuth, the Papacy could have done more to halt the flow of cattle cars to extermination camps in Poland. Its failure to intervene indicated Vatican acquiescence in the Hitlerian scheme of genocide. ³

Shortly after The Deputy was written, Hans Habe published The Mission, a quasi-historical novel which explored the failure of the western democracies to rescue the Jews of Germany-Austria before World War II erupted. According to Habe, the thirty-two nations meeting at Evian, France, in July, 1938, in a special refugee conference called by President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States, turned a deaf ear to the plans and entreaties of international Jewish organizations and representatives of the German-Jewish community to ransom the 600,000 Jews yet under Nazi control. By so doing, Habe contends, the democracies made it clear that they did not want Hitler's Jews either. ⁴

³Rolf Hochhuth, The Deputy, trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Grove Press, 1964.) For the raging controversy this book aroused see also Storm Over the Deputy, ed. by Eric Bentley (New York: Dell, 1964.)

⁴Hans Habe, The Mission (New York: Coward McIann, 1966.)
More recently, the appearance of Jean-Francois Steiner's book, *Treblinka*, created another wave of excitement. This time a Jewish survivor of what has been popularly termed "the Holocaust" attempted an analysis of the many aspects of World War II genocide. Steiner's parents both died in Nazi concentration camps and through his book runs a strain of bitterness, directed not merely at the murderers, but at their victims as well. Steiner's contention was that the relative success of the Nazis could not have been achieved without the passive submissiveness of the Jews, that some Jews openly collaborated in the extermination scheme to save or prolong their own lives. Because *Treblinka* was so condemnatory of the Jews in some passages in the original French, Steiner was asked to rewrite certain segments before the book made its final appearance in English translation.5

Arthur Morse's volume is the first, and only, work to delve into the role of the American government in the extermination process. The author makes the claim, which shall be examined in this dissertation, that America did not do all it could have or should have done to aid the Jews. At a time when Jews desperately sought haven from Hitlerism before the war, the U.S. rigidly adhered to its discriminatory immigration quota system, repulsed shiploads of refugees from its shores, declined to participate in League of Nations refugee conferences, and refused to advance Jewish claims in Palestine. With the outbreak of worldwide hostilities, Morse continues, American leaders actually tightened up

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immigration admission procedures, fabricated a host of excuses about an inability to trust Hitler in any negotiations over human life, a lack of shipping, lack of funds to purchase or maintain "refugees" (the favorite euphemism used by government officials in dealing with Jews), and a lack of available ports or refuges. Morse also charges that the State Department repeatedly frustrated British efforts to rescue more refugees and that on several occasions the State Department suppressed information concerning the plight of the Jews, thereby preventing such information from reaching American Jewish leaders who might then have mobilized public opinion for some form of action. For Morse, the reason for this was clear—anti-Semitism at the highest levels of the State Department, and he names Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long and his special assistant for refugee affairs R. Borden Reams, Cordell Hull's top advisers on refugee questions, as the principal culprits.

Despite its pre-publication syndication in Look Magazine in the fall of 1967, and despite its obvious appeal to the Jewish segment of the book market, Morse's book has not done well financially, has never come close to making a best-seller list. Perhaps its very lack of commercial appeal best explains why the work is practically unique in its field of scholarship. The classical studies of American immigration policy either relate to a period too early to be of much help in an analysis of the refugee Jew in the Holocaust, or else they refer only tangentially the problem.\(^6\) The many works which have attempted an analysis of the refugee

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\(^6\) There have been some excellent general surveys of American immigration policies published in recent years, including William S. Bernhard's American Immigration Policy (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950), Marion T. Bennett's American Immigration Policies: A History (Washington:
question between 1933 and 1945 similarly have been deficient in that, limited in time by the availability of source materials (State Department records on this period at the National Archives and assorted files at the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park have only been open to researchers since 1965) they have not adequately probed the governmental machinations on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean which created and progenated the refugee problem.

Thus, Mr. Morse has attempted to fill a void by his examination of materials in Washington, London, New York and Stockholm. That he has not succeeded completely is evident from the ambivalent evaluations of his efforts by qualified Jewish historians. Selig Adler of the

6(Cont'd)

University of Buffalo publicly accorded Morse a favorable review in the May, 1968, issue of the Zionist publication Midstream, but has privately indicated that Morse's research methodology left much to be desired. In like manner, Zesa Szajkowski, Archivist of YIVO (the Yiddish Institute for Scientific Research in New York) recently commented that while Morse's work was important ("the story must be told"), he regretted that Morse had not even touched the impressive library at YIVO. And finally, in the September, 1968, issue of the American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Professor Henry I.* Feingold of the City University of New York offered the harshest critique of all. Feingold, like Adler and Szajkowski, found several strong points in the Morse book (including the powerful chapter on the St. Louis Affair, Evian and what Feingold termed "the farcical Bermuda Conference"), but he also lacerated Morse for his shortcomings. Morse's failure to explore many collections related to refugee matters available at Brandeis University, his failure to comment upon the critical division


9Professor Adler criticized Morse's improper techniques of citation, his failure to explore Congressional reports, his absolute reliance upon the editorial columns of the New York Times as demonstrative of the American people's will during this period, and his failure to explore additional library holdings. Selig Adler to Saul Friedman, Buffalo, February 15, 1967.

Szajkowski, who has written extensively on refugee questions, indicated in an interview with Saul S. Friedman, December 30, 1968, that he was planning a manuscript drawn from the more than 500,000 entries of HIAS, catalogued in Hebrew at YIVO. Other valuable papers are open to the researcher, however, including Professor Joseph P. Chamberlain's records of the National Coordinating Committee.
In the Jewish community during this period and Roosevelt’s exploitation of that division, his failure to do more than intimate that Jews in high government positions in the New Deal were reluctant to champion the cause of the refugees for fear that this would provoke talk of "double loyalties," and his failure to appreciate the anti-alien spirit of the 76th and 77th Congresses, preoccupied with America’s economic distress all concerned Feingold.  

To this should be added that while Morse does in fact paint a tragic picture of perfidy at the top ranks of government, rarely, if ever, does he probe beneath the surface of an action to discern motives. Instead, the reader is left with the simplistic impression that rampant anti-Semitism among Washington officials may always serve as the explanation for inaction. Numerous piquant questions, however, are thus left unanswered. What were the internal stresses, the domestic pressure groups arguing for and against immigration reform, with which the government had to contend during this period? What was the impact of the Great Depression in molding public opinion on the immigration question? What were America’s attitudes toward Jews generally before and during the war and what fears played upon these attitudes to stiffen resistance to immigration change during the war? What role did the anomie of the American Jewish community, throughout this period, play in depriving it of effective bargaining power in achieving its hydra-headed goals? What were the realities

of large-scale settlement of emigrant Jews in Latin America or any other region in the world during the time of the Evian Conference in 1938? The Bermuda Conference in 1943? What was the nature of Anglo-American relations on immigration questions in this seven year period? How did the Palestine controversy contribute to America's own immigration woes? How did the government balance military priorities and refugee pleadings during wartime? What were the realities of shipping facilities, the "empty bottoms" which Morse maintains could have been used to transport refugee Jews back to the United States during the war? How practical would proposed negotiations with the Nazis for the release of Jews have been at any time in this period? What resources did the Allies have by way of money, manpower and refuge to accommodate the refugees? And, finally, what was the record of UNRRA and the Allies toward these same refugees when the war ended? This paper shall address itself to these and other questions left unanswered by the Morse volume.
CHAPTER ONE

HAVEN OF THE OPPRESSED

Long before Breckinridge Long or North Carolina Senator Robert R. Reynolds came to Washington, the United States had ceased to be what Thomas Paine had envisioned in January, 1776— "an asylum for mankind."1 Perhaps it had never been such an ideal sanctuary. Despite the platitudes and beatitudes of Presidential addresses,2 Sunday sermons, editorials, and political platforms,3 the immigrant to the United States had often encountered hostility from those persons already here.

As early as 1797, Representative Harrison G. Otis of Massachusetts, a firm Federalist and one who feared a French-type revolution, expressed the dread of American nativists when he said, "When the


2George Washington established this precedent when he said at New York on December 2, 1783: "The bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respectable Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions; whom we shall welcome (sic) to a participation of our rights and privileges (sic), if by decency and propriety of conduct they appear to merit the enjoyment." The Writings of George Washington: from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-99, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938), Vol. XXVII, p. 254. For virtually identical statements from Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, James Polk, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce and U.S. Grant, see Robert Ernst, "Asylum of the Oppressed," South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. XL (January, 1941), pp. 1-10.

country was new, it might have been good policy to admit foreigners, but it is so no longer." Otis' sentiment expressed nativist convictions throughout much of the nineteenth century as well. Reasons for this sentiment, however, evolved over the years. By the late nineteenth century new fears had supplanted the old, fear on the part of the farmer that he would lose his land to coolie labor, fear on the part of the privileged commercial interests that anarchistic Slavs or Italians might destroy the structure of America's free enterprise society, fear on the part of modernist German Jews that they might be embarrassed by their kaftaned brethren who fled Russia, fear on the part of racial eugenicists that the flood of East European immigrants, numbering more than 400,000 per year by 1880 threatened to mongrelize American civilization.

On the third of August, 1882, after its efforts had been frustrated for nearly a decade by Presidents reluctant to disturb sensitive relations with China and Japan, Congress passed the first restrictive immigration law in American History. Directed principally at the Chinese (who were totally excluded), the law also barred lunatics, idiots, and "persons likely to become a public charge" from admission to the United States. In the course of the next twenty years, the forces of the supra-nationalist American Protective Association, Samuel Gompers' American Federation of Labor, and Congressional restrictionists coalesced to force the exclusion.

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of contract laborers, criminals, persons with loathsome diseases, polygamists, and anarchists. The restrictionists in Congress, led by Henry Cabot Lodge Sr., were frustrated in only one venture—their demand for a literacy test for all new immigrants.

At the turn of the century, the restrictionists were further buoyed by the overwhelming support given their efforts by leaders of the American scientific community. Madison Grant of the American Museum of Natural History, Professor Lothrop Stoddard of the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University, Burton Hendrick of Yale, Dr. Charles Conant Josey of Dartmouth, Dr. David Starr Jordon of Stanford, Dr. William Ripley, and Dr. Harry Laughlin, all expressed the commonly held view that there were superior and inferior races of mankind, that "new" immigrants, particularly the Jews, possessed inherently inferior personal qualities, that continued unlimited immigration would be injurious to the economic, social and political life of the United States. Professor Edward

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6 See John Higham's Strangers in the Land, pp. 68-105.

7 In the winter of 1896-7, Lodge made the error calling for such a test in the language of the immigrant's native or resident country. Because this would have prejudiced the entrance possibilities of Russian Jews, whose native language was Yiddish, and because American sympathies at the time were still in favor of succoring these victims of Tsarist persecution, the measure failed. For the heated debate on this subject, see U.S. Congressional Record, 54th Congress, 2nd Session, 1897, Vol. XXIX, Part 2, 1219-1222.

8 A lonely, embittered personality, Grant contended in The Passing of the Great Race (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916) that the Civil War had destroyed the best "unalloyed" stock of Americans and that since 1865 their place in the population was being taken by diseased and mentally deficient aliens and Negroes. Pretending doom to western civilization at the hands of atavist races, the work went through four editions, including one edited during wartime, in which Grant hastily attempted a distinction between Alpine Teutons, who were corrupt barbarians, and pure
A. Ross summed it up when he said:

Ten to twenty percent are hirsute, lowbrowed, big-faced persons of obviously low mentality. I have seen gatherings of foreigners in which narrowed sloping foreheads were the rule. The shortness and smallness of the crania were noticeable. In every face there was something wrong. One might imagine a malicious jinn had amused himself by casting human beings in a set of skew molds discarded by the creator. 9

Over the outraged cries of restrictionists, the United States remained open to more than 900,000 immigrants per year in the decade before World War I. In this new wave of immigration, Jews, who constituted more than ten per cent of the arrivals, were especially visible as they tended to cluster in the urban centers of the East, seventy per cent of them in New York City alone. 10 As a result, much sympathy for the victims of pogroms at Kishinev or Balta was predictably transmuted into overt anti-Semitism.

8 (Cont'd)

Nordics, the backbone of western civilization. Stoddard, in Nietzschean manner, railed against what he termed the "underman" in The Rising Tide of Color, which went through fourteen editions after its publication in 1920, and the Revolt Against Civilization, published in 1922, six editions. He warned that civilization was about to be suffocated by the masses of inferior colored and Asiatic peoples, among whom he included the Jews. In 1940, Stoddard authored Into the Darkness, a volume which praised Nazi sterilization plans.

9 Donald S. Strong, Organized Anti-Semitism in America--The Rise of Group Prejudice During the Decade 1930-1940 (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941), p. 61. The words of Margaret Mead that "all human beings from all groups of people have the same potentialities" are now commonly accepted among legitimate anthropologists and biologists, including Professor Alfred de Grazia, Executive Officer, Committee for Research, School of Social Sciences, Stanford University, Professor Ralph Beals of the University of California, and Sociology Professor Philip Hauser of the University of Chicago. See Whom Shall We Welcome: Report of the President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 92-95.

The *American Jewish Yearbooks* of 1910-1916, published by the American Jewish Committee, take note of this intensification of Judaeophobia in the United States, and it is no small coincidence that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith was founded in 1913 to combat discrimination and libels against the Jews.

It was World War I that convinced American idealists, Woodrow Wilson among them, that the notion of unrestricted immigration should be laid to rest. According to the 1910 census more than 11,000,000 Americans were either natives of, or offspring of natives of European states adhering to the Central Power Alliance. Even before America's entry into the war in April, 1917, fear of German-American disloyalty, accentuated by the inept espionage of Dr. Heinrich Albert, Franz von Papen, Constantin Duma, and Captain Karl Boy-Ed, had resulted in the passage of a comprehensive immigration act on the fifth of February, 1917. Anti-anarchist provisions in the 1903 law were expanded to call for exclusion or deportation of any person who at any time belonged to an organization which preached violence or sabotage. Proponents of a literacy test, foiled in their efforts since 1894, rejoiced at the inclusion of such a clause in the 1917 law. Hindu and East Indian labor were barred, along with "persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority," "vagrants," and "chronic alcoholics." One liberal feature of the law was the special exemption given under section three excusing persons fleeing persecution because of race or religious faith (understood to refer to Jews) from the requirement of the literacy test. 11

According to Professor Higham, "The war virtually swept from American consciousness the old belief in unrestricted immigration." Bigotries born in anti-German, anti-pacifist, anti radical patriotic societies like the Knights of Liberty, the American Defense Society and the omnivorous American Protective League did not die with the Armistice. Labor strife in the postwar recession coupled with a new influx of immigrants from lands contaminated with Bolshevism—141,132 in 1919, 430,001 in 1920, 805,000 in 1921—convinced the self-proclaimed patriots, organized labor and Congress that something had to be done to preserve the national character of the United States. Wrote Nathan Glazer, "In 1921, America had decided to stop the kaleidoscope and find out what it had become."

The resulting legislation, passed on May 19, 1921, also proved inadequate. This first Johnson Act, named for Congressman Albert Johnson of Washington, a wealthy timber magnate, permitted immigration at the rate of three per cent of the number of foreign born in each European nationality in the United States in 1910, and an annual limit of 357,803 immigrants. Despite this provision, immigration totals continued to rise—522,919 in 1923, 706,896 in 1924. The desire to accommodate persons who had


14 All immigration statistics used in this paper refer to fiscal years ended June 30 and are taken from "Table 1. Immigration to the United States: 1820-1967" of the United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service.
contracted for passage to America before the law was enacted, the humanitarianism of consular officials and the need for stoop labor all contributed to a general laxity in enforcement of the first Johnson Act.

In 1924, Congress responded once more to a wide range of restrictionist pressures. Samuel Gompers, speaking for the American workingman, then enjoying an unprecedented level of prosperity, championed restriction. His views were echoed by John B. Trevor, an ubiquitous New York attorney representing several elitist American groups, Kenneth Roberts in a series of articles in *Saturday Evening Post*, and eugenicists Madison Grant and Harry Laughlin whose long discourses before Congressional committees about the dilution of the American Bloodstream had even frightened segments of the business community into reversing their traditional stand on unlimited immigration. Even the normally taciturn President Coolidge in his first State of the Union Address advocated further reduction of immigration. 15

Over the strenuous opposition of Catholic and Jewish lay groups, and despite the eloquent remonstrances of Congressmen Emanuel Celler, Adolph Sabbath, Samuel Dickstein, and Fiorello LaGuardia, Congress passed a second law bearing the name of Representative Johnson. The purpose of this act, according to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization was manifold: to maintain our standard of living, to sustain our institutions for the care of the socially inadequate, to preserve our basic political institutions, and "to preserve the basic stream of our

population." More succinctly, the bill which Coolidge signed into law on May 26, 1924, was designed to keep out what Kansas Senator Tincher termed "Bolshevik Wops, Dagoes, Kikes and Hunkies."  

The Johnson-Reed Bill, or National Origins Act, as it was subsequently dubbed, provided for an annual immigration of 164,667 persons, two per cent of each Caucasian nationality represented in the United States population in 1890. Effective July 1, 1929, the new quota would be 153,714, based on proportionate representation in the United States population in 1920. Of these, better than 120,000 visas were to be awarded to Great Britain, Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia, those Anglo-Saxon stocks which had presumably created the American republic.

The cutback from 1921 quotas was most severe among the "undesirable" nationalities of southern and eastern Europe. Poland, for example, was cut from 30,977 permits in 1921 to 6,524 in 1924. Italy was restricted to 5,802, Russia to 2,712, Hungary to 869, Yugoslavia to 845. Said Pennsylvania Senator David Reed, co-author of the measure: "I think most of us are reconciled to the idea of discrimination. I think the American people want us to discriminate; and I don't think discrimination itself is unfair. We have got to discriminate."

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18 The law continued non-quota exemptions for Western Hemisphere Caucasians. At the same time, however, it excluded all Orientals, thereby abrogating the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08 and touching the sensitivities of the Japanese who proclaimed a day of national mourning when the law went into effect.
19 *Whom Shall We Welcome*, p. 88.
What the new law meant in terms of human suffering can never be calculated, but it is not difficult to conjure up images of hopeful individuals waiting anxiously for years for a precious visa to the United States. By 1939 this meant a wait of four to six years for potential emigrants from Hungary. The irony is that although 2,616,000 immigrants were permitted under the quota system between 1930 and 1946 only 560,000 persons were ultimately admitted to the United States in this period. One obvious reason for this is that the system was heavily slanted in favor of those northwestern Europeans with little inclination to come to the United States. Another was that Hitler's domination of Eastern Europe made it difficult for persons to flee during wartime. But also true was the fact that the American government made itself most unhospitable toward immigration during this period.

Institution of the strictest provisions of the National Origins Law coincided with the collapse of America's financial system. Plunged into the Great Depression, the country found itself with as many as fifteen


21 Only forty-one per cent of the meagre Polish, forty per cent of the Czech, and thirty seven and seven-tenths per cent of the German quotas were ever used in this period. These surprising statistics can only be attributed to difficulties faced by refugees in leaving Europe and breaking through the consular barrier to the United States. See Bernard, American Immigration Policy, p. 304. Only Spain, Greece, and Portugal annually filled their respective quotas of 252, 307, and 440. "Immigration in the United States," International Labor Review, II (January, 1945), p. 98.
million unemployed, upwards of thirty per cent in some industrial areas. To make matters worse, immigrants were still coming into the United States at a rate of better than 300,000 per year in the years since the Johnson-Reed Bill had been signed into law. To prevent an escalation of America's domestic woes, President Hoover issued a White House directive on September 8, 1930, instructing consular officers "before issuing a visa . . . to pass judgment with particular care on whether the applicant may become a public charge and if the applicant cannot convince the officer that it is not probable, the visa will be refused." Hoover's strict interpretation of the LPC clause which had been on the books, but little enforced, since 1882, was all the more questionable because immigrants were simultaneously denied the right to secure jobs in advance of their arrival in the United States under the Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885. Henceforth, only the independently wealthy might attempt to emigrate to America. Immigration totals dropped from 241,700 in 1930 to 97,139 in 1931 and 35,576 in 1932.

In October of that last year, Hoover attributed the decline to the end of persecutions in Europe. Said he: "With the growth of democracy in foreign countries, political persecution has largely ceased. There is no longer a necessity for the United States to provide an asylum for those persecuted because of conscience." Several months later, the annual

23 Quoted in Morse, While Six Million Died, p. 136.
convention of the American Federation of Labor confuted the President's statement when it reaffirmed its stand against modification of existing immigration laws since "there is not a country in the world where there is not religious or political persecution." And, of course, on January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany by Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

The legacy of the Hoover administration continued to haunt consular officials and potential immigrants through the Hitler epoch. While Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long could affirm that "the historic attitude of the United States as a haven for the oppressed has not stopped," that "literally, the reports of the consular offices to Department of State form one of the most thrilling and one of the most saddening and awful pages of our human history," others passionately disagreed.

"Surely the American consular officials are today the world's most skilled experts in misery," noted Martin Gumpert in September, 1941. Much of the problem could be attributed to bureaucratic red tape. The potential immigrant had to present an unexpired passport, a police certificate attesting to his good conduct in the past, a certificate from


26 "Aid by the United States to the European Refugees: Testimony of Breckinridge Long," Interpreter Releases (Vol. XXI (January 10, 1944) p.5.

the Public Health Surgeon attached to the consul stating that the applicant was not suffering from "any loathsome or contagious disease or from an illness or physical handicap which might make him a public charge," duplicate records of all pertinent personal data (e.g. birth, marriage, divorce certificates), and a thorough financial statement indicative of his assets (certified through employers' statements or bank records) as well as an affidavit filed by some relative in this country affording the complete assets of the immigrant's guarantor and the specific percentage of support that he might expect to receive from this guarantor. One improper or incorrect entry among the volume of fifty or sixty pages could result in a rejection of the application and necessitate refiling.  

When it became obvious in 1934 that Nazi Germany would not be cooperative in supplying all the documents needed by emigrants, Secretary Hull instructed American consuls to waive the police certificate requirement where efforts to secure these might involve "personal risk" for the emigrant. Still, American consular offices in Germany throughout the 1930's were timorous about interpreting the law and their instructions liberally. An individual might be rejected because of a stiff knee, a missing finger, or even after waiting two years in refugee camps because he was underweight.

The most confusion, however, existed in the application of Hoover's LPC directive, which remained in force until January, 1937, when the probability and not the possibility of an immigrant's becoming a public charge was made the basis of rejection. Some consuls would only accept financial guarantees sworn by immediate relatives (parents, children) while for others the testament of a virtual stranger was almost sufficient. An affidavit filed by someone with a fixed income might be sufficient in one case and not in another. One consul might require a sponsor to deposit $2,000 in a blocked bank account. Another might reject the affidavit of a wealthy physician who attempted to serve as a guarantor of an individual simply because the physician had not been a source of support for the immigrant in the past.

All of this was especially ludicrous in view of the fact that a spokesman for the Department of Labor, charged with the responsibility of enforcing this nation's immigration laws in the Roosevelt Administration, had indicated that the guaranty bond was "legally worthless," "cannot be enforced," and "the Department makes no effort to enforce it."

31 Memorandum of Professor Joseph P. Chamberlain for the National Coordinating Committee, June 7, 1934, Professor Joseph P. Chamberlain Collection, YIVO, New York, 1619. For additional complaints about the application of this clause see also letter from Herbert Samuel to Felix Warburg, May 27, 1936, Decimal Files, Department of State, Washington, 150,626/J208.


33 Letter of Albert Coyle to Professor Joseph Chamberlain, June 6, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 3018.
The interpretation given to the LPC clause after 1937 was equally unrealistic in the face of the economic policies of the German Government vis-a-vis emigrants. Since the potential emigrant was forbidden to contract in advance for a job in this country and since it was technically forbidden to have some charitable organization underwrite his travel expenses or serve as guarantor, it was incumbent upon the individual himself to show sufficiently impressive assets to remove any doubts as to his potential impoverishment in America. This was practically an impossibility. In 1933 emigrants from Germany could only take 75% of their assets after taxes. By the spring of 1938 this figure had shrunk to 10%, as the Nazi Property Registration Act of April 26, 1938, declared all "private fortunes" over 5000 DM confiscable.\(^{34}\) By the end of summer, 1939, an individual with 10,000 DM in a German bank (roughly $4000) deemed himself fortunate if the Reichsbank gave him 600 DM ($240) to take out of the country.\(^{35}\) To attempt a financial analysis of emigrants in such a position was not only impossible, but unfair.\(^{36}\)

\(^{34}\) Nazi calculations of what constituted a "private fortune" were interesting. If a man, aged 75, received a monthly pension of 60 DM, his annual income (720 DM) was multiplied by a special numerical unit which varied with age and life expectancy tables (in this case the multiple was 7.) The result was that such a person was reckoned to possess a "private fortune" of 5,040 DM, and hence owed the State 40 DM. "Nazi Property Registration Law, April 26, 1938," Contemporary Jewish Record, VOL. I (September, 1938), p. 45.


\(^{36}\) No figures are available as to the precise number of applications rejected by consular officials in the period 1930-1946. All pertinent data are maintained by the Visa Section of the Department of State and are not open to historical researchers.
Strict enforcement of the LPC clause was all the more question-
able since more people were leaving the United States than were entering it in the heart of the Depression. Between 1933 and 1937, 174,067 persons entered this country while 221,239 departed for various reasons—a net loss of 47,172. The immigration total for 1933 (23,068) was the lowest in American History since 1831. But even that was insufficient to placate the vast numbers of restrictionist sympathizers in this country who called for additional diminutions in quotas, a suspension of all immigration until America's domestic problems were resolved, or an absolute halt of all immigration.

The cyclical nativism which Professor Higham assessed as near-
dormant in 1925 because of America's prosperity and general indifference to world affairs, was given resurgency by a number of factors in the 1930s. Economic dislocation, the consolidation of power of the Communist regime in the Soviet Union, the fear that this regime, expressly committed to furthering world revolution, might attempt the corruption of America's institutions, all gave rise to a new wave of anti-alien sentiment in that decade. Simultaneously, the word "communist" was made synonymous with "Jew" in the lexicon of super-nationalists around the world.


Adolf Hitler, rising to power on the basis of a stridently anti-communist platform, in equating Bolshevism with "international Jewry," popularized the fear that "Red Jews," "alien Jews," "Jewish-Bolsheviks," "Jewish radicals," and "non-Aryans" were plotting to destroy the foundations of Anglo-Saxon civilization. The United States, which had not yet shed the medieval regard of the Jew as the unassimilable alien, where the Jews of New York's lower East End provided a substantial portion of American Communist Party leadership, and where a once-impoverished Jewish minority was achieving enviable economic, social and political successes, was not immune to such fears. Moreover, the oldtime "100 per cent" patriotic organizations, panicked businessmen who regarded the New Deal as the vanguard of American Bolshevism, and the newly-founded neo-fascist cliques of the 1930s were not immune to the scapegoatism of the Nazis either.

Restrictionist sentiment flowed from many sources in this period. On the far right, neo-Nazi organizations found great appeal in assaulting Jews, Bolsheviks and aliens. According to a report of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, dated January 3, 1939, there were no less than 135 organizations in the United States which could then be labelled fascist. Of these, perhaps only 25% were bona fide organizations, that is, something more than mere rackets operated by individuals

40 Strong, Organized Anti-Semitism in America, pp. 176-78.

41 Writes Professor Strong: "Anti-Semitism in the United States may be considered as a phase of the anti-alien sentiment that has periodically manifested itself. The Jew is the perpetual alien. Since he is frequently identified as a member of a separate group, he is invariably a victim of any anti-alien movement." Strong, Organized Anti-Semitism in America, p. 14.
through the mails or out of empty offices. And even among this group there were some, like George Deatherage's Knights of the White Camellia, Gerald Winrod's Defenders, Parker Sage's National Workers League, Joseph Kamp's Constitutional Education League, Gerald L.K. Smith's Committee of One Million, and Harry Jung's American Vigilant Intelligence Federation which consisted more of inflated membership rolls than actual adherents.

This is not to say that the neo-Nazi groups were inconsequential in membership, public sympathy, financial support or influence. According to the Dies Committee, the German-American Bund, constructed on the foundations of the Chicago Teutonia Society and the Friends of the New Germany, received its inspiration, program and direction from the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda which was spending $300,000,000 annually to foment worldwide fascist revolution. Although somewhat clumsy in its efforts to enlist the active support of the 20,000,000 Americans of


German descent that it desired to enroll in the fight against "Jewocracy," the Bund claimed a dedicated membership of 25,000 operated 24 retreat camps across the country, distributed thousands of pamphlets, sponsored a daily national radio program, and could pack Madison Square Garden for surrealistic patriotic rallies in 1939 and 1940. Moreover, through its control of the German-American press, estimated at better than 90% pro-Nazi by 1940, the Bund could and did frustrate Administration policies which might be construed as prejudicial to the Fatherland, including any proposals for the harboring of refugees from Germany.

Actively collaborating with the Bund in its execration of Bolsheviks, aliens and Jews, was William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirt Legion of America. The Silver Shirts' claimed membership of 100,000

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45 Myers, History of Bigotry, pp. 319-42; Carlson, Under Cover, pp. 27-30 and 108-20; and Strong, Organized Anti-Semitism in America, pp. 21-40.

46 Such was the estimate of Louis Bean, Statistical Analyst of the Department of Agriculture, in a special report on the influence of nationality groups upon election returns done for President Roosevelt in 1941. See Louis L. Gerson, The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1964), pp. 120-21.

47 Long before Samuel Lubell made his analysis of the constituency of American isolationists in the pre-World War II period (see Lubell's Future of American Politics, New York: Harper and Row, Colophon Edition, 1965, pp. 132-51), Louis Bean had attributed the growth of this sentiment to propaganda among German-Americans and Russian-Americans in the Midwest. Gerson, The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy. The result was a much more intensified effort on the part of the Nationalities Division of the Democratic Party to placate these groups even between election campaigns. Gerson, pp. 30-32.

48 Once a highly successful Hollywood movie script writer, Pelley underwent an eerie transformation in April, 1928. At that time, he "died and went to heaven." Reborn, he was guided by an unseen Oracle, which gave him instructions. The most important was to find
in 22 states before Pelley's arrest first for embezzlement, then for violation of the Espionage Act in 1942, were undoubtedly inflated, but there is no question but what their program of "Christian Democracy" had great appeal for readers throughout America. Pelley advocated an Alien Registration Day for persons of "Hebrew blood," imprisonment of Jews who attempted to use Gentile names, prosecution of Jews who supported a Zionist state (on grounds of sedition), disenfranchisement of Jews, abrogation of all civil rights (including the right to hold property) for Hebrews, and the establishment of an urban ghetto in one city in every state to pen up all Jews in that state. With such concepts for his grist, Pelley was able to operate an $80,000 publishing plant in Asheville, North Carolina, which flooded the nation with three and one-half million tons of his brand of journalism (Pelley's Weekly, The Liberation Magazine, and books of the Skyland Press) in the nineteen months preceding August, 1938. The Dies Committee concluded that the Silver Shirt Legion was the largest, best-financed and best-publicized fascist movement in the country.

48 (Cont'd) the Silver Shirts on January 31, 1933, the day after Hitler took power in Germany. Pelley promised salvation of the United States by 1962, when he again would be transfigured. Harold Lavine, Fifth Column in America (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1940), pp. 171-50.

49 Myers, History of Bigotry, pp. 343-59.

50 House Report #1476, 76th Congress, p. 22.

51 Ibid., p. 19.
Even more influential than Pelley, however, was Father Charles E. Coughlin of Royal Oak, Michigan. Beginning his famous radio broadcasts in 1926 after a cross was burned before his parish church, Coughlin evolved from an advocate of the New Deal in 1932 into the principal backer of William Lemke for the Presidency in 1936, and finally into a mouthpiece of the German World Service News Agency, the propaganda wing of the Deutsches Ausland Institut by 1938. In 1936, Coughlin founded Social Justice, a tabloid with a reported weekly circulation of one million readers. In his Sunday radio broadcasts, which drew upon the resources of a $1,500,000 non-profit corporation, Coughlin fulminated against aliens who were depriving native Americans of jobs, and especially against Jewish communists who had engineered the Bolshevik takeover of Russia in 1917. He even revived the century-old canard of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" till his superior, Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago, belatedly moved to muzzle him in December, 1938.

52 The amount of available secondary material on Coughlin is quite large. The best contemporary analyses are Father Coughlin: His "Facts" and Arguments (New York: General Jewish Council, 1939), and The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches, ed. by Alfred M. Lee and Elizabeth B. Lee (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1939). More recently Charles Tull has published an excellent study, Father Coughlin and the New Deal (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965).

53 Coughlin continued to denounce Jews, aliens and Reds, and to praise Nazi Germany in the pages of Social Justice until Pearl Harbor, when he ceased publication and went into semi-retirement. On February 23, 1959, his secretary, H. Thomas, responding to an inquiry from this author regarding Coughlin's views on Jews, Roosevelt and the Depression Era wrote the following quixotic reply: "At this time, Father Coughlin finds it not proper to inscribe any remarks relative to his activities or to his career. This seems a very curt answer to a serious young man. However, I know that he understands that there are hidden activities in personnel who oftentimes interfere with the course and determination of events."
According to an American Institute of Public Opinion Poll conducted in January, 1939, Coughlin's weekly broadcasts were heard by a regular audience of 3,500,000 persons. Fifteen million Americans listened to him occasionally, and better than half of these were estimated to be in substantial agreement with the Detroit priest. Much of this agreement could be attributed to Coughlin's dated economic theories rather than to prejudice, as fully one-half of the Negroes and one-tenth of the Jews polled indicated agreement with some of his ideas. The Dies Committee concluded, however, that not over a million Americans "can be said to have been seriously affected" by Coughlin's philosophy. Even that nucleus of racist strength was apparently spent among dissident factions of the Social Justice movement, autochthonous cells of the leaderless Christian Front, and the several thousand followers of Joe McWilliams' Christian Mobilizers.

This dissipation of energies among neo-Nazi groups reduced their potential for revolution in the United States in the Depression. Many hopeful American Fuhrers refused to subordinate themselves or their incomes to any other leader and the residual anti-Catholic feeling of earlier decades precluded any real union with the principal supporters of Father


56 For McWilliams' checkered background from inventor to communist to fascist see Carlson, *Under Cover*, pp. 75-84, and Lavine, *Fifth Column in America*, pp. 90-99.
Coughlin. Still, such groups could coordinate their efforts for specific purposes, including immigration restriction. They did enjoy important pipelines to restrictionist spokesmen in Congress. Their waves of anti-Semitic literature did leave an indelible impression upon the consciousness of America. As Professor Myers wrote: "Organizations of the character described may and do have a transient existence, but their published matter sinks into many a receptive mind, there to abide long after the perpetrators responsible have disappeared and their malodorous methods have been forgotten."

A shade to the political left of the blatantly Nazi pressure groups were the self-proclaimed patriotic organizations, hastily constructed by the archons of American business to protect the republic during the 1930s. Foremost among these were the Crusaders, a million-member group originally conceived as a bulwark of prohibition, which shifted its focus from temperance to Americanism in 1933. Closely associated with George

57 Strong, Organized Anti-Semitism in America, pp. 133-37.


59 Myers, History of Bigotry, p. 350.
Christians' neo-Nazi White Shirts, the Crusaders were heavily underwritten by J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil, Ireneee, Pierre and Lammot DuPont, Sewell Avery of Montgomery Ward, and the directors of Weirton Steel. These same persons, along with Alfred Sloan of General Motors and E. T. Stotesbury of the House of Morgan, were major contributors to the Sentinels of the Republic, a nationwide organization dedicated to the creation of an American corporativist state. Sentinel President Alexander Lincoln scored "the Jewish brigade Roosevelt took to Washington" and once wrote that the fight for western civilization could only be won "if we recognize that the enemy is worldwide and that it is Jewish in origin."61

Successful businessmen and Americans of substantial pedigree were counted as friends and backers of a host of such corporativist bodies, and while they did not themselves disseminate anti-Semitic propaganda, it was unlikely that they were uninformed as to the purpose and policies of the groups which they subsidized. James Rand, President of Remington Rand, J. H. Alstyne, President of Otis Elevator, Sloan, and the DuPonts, contributed to Merwin K. Hart's long-lived New York State Economic Council, which Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson labelled fascist.62 Mrs. A. Cressy Morrison, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and Colonel Robert R. McCormick of the Chicago Tribune all endorsed Elizabeth Dilling's Paul Reverses, "We Mothers March on

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61 Seldes, *You Can't Do That*, p. 156.

Washington" (which opposed Lend Lease), and Mrs. Dilling's pamphlet *The Red Network* (which labelled the YMCA, John Dewey, the American Civil Liberties Union, and Sinclair Lewis all Bolsheviks).  


All of these groups, like the more respectable American Liberty League (ostensibly organized in 1934 "to preserve the principles of the Declaration of Independence for succeeding generations of Americans")

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63 Colonel McCormick presents a particularly fascinating image. A vigilant anti-communist, anti-alien (they meant the same for McCormick), he filled the columns of his journal with spurious assaults on Bolshevism, claiming, among other things, that the comintern was actively seeking Roosevelt's re-election in 1936, and that the proposed polar air route from the USSR to the U.S. was a communist plot. He also supplied Mrs. Dilling with a front cover endorsement for *The Red Network*, was actively associated with the Sentinels, and supplied Harry Jung, whom he considered an authority on communism, with offices in the Tribune Towers Building. For further background on McCormick, the DAR, Dilling and Jung, see Carlson, *Under Cover*, pp. 196-97 and 396; Seldes, *You Can't Do That*, pp. 148-158; Roy, *Apostles of Discord*, pp. 40-42; and George Seldes, *Lords of the Press* (New York: Julian Messner, 1939), pp. 54-57.

64 Seldes, *You Can't Do That*, pp. 138-43.

championed 100% Americanism. In general, this meant equating atheism, socialism, liberalism, pacifism and New Dealism with Bolshevism. It meant opposition to trade unions, child labor laws, immigration reform, or pure food and drug measures like the Tugwell Bill. It meant slanting the news in what Congressman Elmer Holland termed "the Vermin Press" to distort what was the program and ideology of fascism. It meant arousing nationwide fear, suspicion and race hatred to promote encroachments upon the constitution and civil liberties. And on several occasions, apparently, it meant an actual effort to overthrow the government.

66 Included in this collective noun were the major chains across the country, including Scripps-Howard, the Chandler and Heart newspapers on the West Coast, and the New York Herald-Tribune which editorialized on Sunday, May 22, 1932: "The hour has struck for a Fascist Party to be born in the United States." Holland, however, intended to direct his remark against McCormick and the Chicago Tribune and the Colonel's relatives, Captain Joseph Medill Patterson of the New York Daily News and Eleanor "Sissy" Patterson's Washington Times-Herald, journals accounting for five per cent of the daily readership in the U.S. Of these papers, which published exposes of "Jewish power" in Washington, which turned over their columns to defenses of Silver Shirt Pelley when he was charged with sedition, and which editorialized as late as August 30, 1942 (Daily News) that "Hitler was not wholly to blame" for the war and that "a big bloodletting might help matters," William L. Shirer commented, "Hardly a day goes by that they are noted cited by Goebbels to prove one of this points." Carlson, Under Cover, pp. 396-8, and Seldes, Lords of the Press.

67 For the resurgence of the right in this period, see Schlesinger, The Coming of the New Deal, pp. 423-511, in which the author attributes this phenomenon to an abiding fear among conservatives that communism genuinely menaced the American form of government.

68 Leading Wall Street bankers were implicated in several plots to "save the Republic" in the 1930s. The first, exposed by the McCormack Committee in 1935, involved the cooperation of ex-Marine General Smedly Butler, who testified he had been approached with money ($3,000,000) and manpower (500,000 men) to lead a Mussolini-type
The newly created neo-fascist cliques and their minions could rely upon the active assistance of longer-lived elitist organizations in their efforts to curb alien inroads into American society. The million-member American Legion and its night-riding cousin, the Black Legion, John Trevor's two and one-half million member American Coalition (which had done so much to promote the Johnson Acts in the 1920s and which counted the DAR and SAR among its 115 affiliates), Francis Kinnicutt's frenetic Allied Patriotic Societies, the 150,000 man Junior Order of

68 (Cont'd)
march on Washington in August, 1934. Seldes, You Can't Do That, pp. 173-84. A less cooperative witness, ex-Major General George Van Horn Moseley told the Dies Committee in May, 1939, that he was to prevent the takeover by 150,000 Spanish Republican mercenaries in the employ of Jewish Bolsheviks by directing a spontaneous uprising in the summer of 1939. Walter Goodman, The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), pp. 60-61. In the same year, other leading bankers were named in an unsuccessful coup to be directed by German Consul Manfred von Killinger in San Francisco. Carlson Under Cover, pp. 137-39.

69 The American Legion's 1937 convention at New York City endorsed vigilantism ("but not in uniforms") and opposed any attempt to alter existing immigration laws. A year later at Los Angeles, National Commander Stephen Chadwick and the Executive Committee forced the passage of a resolution calling for a ten-year suspension of immigration. About the same time, the Legion was linked with the Black Legion, a northern group which specialized in flogging, arson, and murder. See Carlson, Under Cover, pp. 285-6; Seldes, You Can't Do That, pp. 114-125; and Leuchtenberg, FDR and the New Deal, pp. 276-77.

70 Trevor's connections with Walter S. Steele, William Pelley, and John Snow were well-documented, and he would later be cited in connection with the wartime sedition trial of American Nazis. Still, he was considered an authority on immigration problems after the publication of An Analysis of the Immigration Act of 1924 (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924).

71 Whether the 30 organizations affiliated with Kinnicutt were substantial in membership or, like Dr. F. W. Buck's Defenders of the Constitution, numbered 25 members, they did demonstrate one advantage possessed by such pressure groups. Simultaneous membership in several organizations could seemingly multiply the weight of an individual's opinion upon a Congressman.
American Mechanics, 72 the American Medical Association, 73 the BPOE and Chambers of Commerce, 74 all spoke out in sympathy for the nation's 12,000,000 unemployed, the 443,000 World War I veterans without jobs, the 660,000 children on Social Security relief rolls.

None of these groups had ever championed the cause of America's poor during times of prosperity, none had ever befriended organized labor. But now they bombarded Congress with resolutions and recommendations about the necessity of halting all immigration. More aliens, it was argued, could only work to the detriment of the common laborer since jobs would be all the more scarce. Admission of Jews as a special refugee class could only set a precedent for later arrivals of persecuted Spaniards or "Mongolians." Admission of Germans or Russians might lead to the creation of a Nazi or Bolshevik underground. Admission of children without their parents would only result in pressure to reunite families, with the attendant weakening of immigration laws.

In addition to all this, the century-old cliché "the frontier has vanished" was echoed by the patriots. Only by halting all immigration till such

72 By its own admission, the JOAM was not a labor organization. Founded as a fraternal organization in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1853, it functioned primarily as a patriotic, restrictionist lobby.

73 Dr. Olin West, Secretary of the AMA, and Medical Economics Magazine both attacked government policy in permitting a "flood" of inferior alien doctors into this country before the war. For a refutation of their charges that aliens were practicing cut-rate medicine, see Lucille Milner and David Dempsey, "The Alien Myth," Harper's, Vol. CLXXXI (September, 1940), p. 376.

74 Seldes, You Can't Do That, pp. 73-83 and 137.
time as America's domestic woes were solved could the above dangers be averted.  

Specious as some of these arguments might sound to the historian, it should be noted that even the 5,000,000 man American Federation of Labor subscribed to some of these views during the Hitler Era. Traditionally hostile to the introduction of any new foreign population and the menace of cheap labor, the A.F. of L. wavered on the immigration question, first advocating complete restriction "till our house is in order" in March, 1939, then favoring the Wagner Bill to admit 200,000 non-Aryan German children as special non-quota immigrants in the summer of 1939, then reaffirming its traditional stand on exclusion at its annual convention in October, 1943.  

The position of the A. F. of L. was reflective not of the lunatic fringe of American society but of the prevailing sentiment of the man on the streets. Ninety-five per cent of Americans polled by Elmo Roper in 1938-1939 expressed disapproval of the existing regime in Germany. At the same time, however, only 8.7% of those polled answered in the affirmative when queried: "If you were a member of Congress would you vote yes or no on a bill to open the doors of the U.S. to a larger number of European refugees than now are admitted under our immigration quotas?" Fully 83% of those surveyed expressed total opposition to admission of more refugees, up 16% since the summer of 1938 despite known increased persecutions against German Jews that winter.  

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75 Divine, American Immigration Policy, pp.  
Such results could not be attributed to an inadequate sampling. Some months before, in November, 1938, exactly on the heels of Kristalnacht, 77% of those polled by George Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion opposed the idea of admitting a larger number of Jewish refugees to the U.S.\(^78\) In like manner, in January, 1939, two of three persons polled by the A.I.P.O. opposed any scheme to admit 10,000 non-Aryan refugees to the United States on a non-quota basis.\(^79\) The Editors of Fortune asked, "Would Herr Hitler and his German-American Bunds be safe in the joyful conclusion from this that Americans don't like the Jews much better than do the Nazis?"\(^80\)

In the face of such widespread anti-alienism, it is not remarkable that more than 70 bills directly touching upon immigration or registration of aliens were introduced in the 76th Congress (1939-40). This was the Congress which numbered among its members Jacob Thorkelson of Montana, a man who contributed numerous articles to the journals of Winrod and Pelley and who was a close adviser to General Moseley; Representative Clare Hoffman of Michigan, who warmly received Mrs. Dilling in his office chambers during the Lend Lease struggle and who was designated by Klansman Edward Smythe as Secretary of Public Health and Morals in the coming fascist cabinet; John Rankin of Mississippi, whose virulent diatribes against the Jews precipitated a heated debate


\(^80\) "Fortune Survey XX," p. 102.
on the House floor with Michael Edelstein in June, 1941; and Hamilton Fish, whose secretary George Hill was indicted as a paid liaison between Congressmen and Nazi fronts operated by George Viereck and Prescott Dennett. Viereck's Flanders Hall publishing firm circulated the defeatest works of Stephen Day, Gerald Nye, and Rush D. Holt. Through Dennett, Senators Ernest Lundeen of Minnesota, Burton Wheeler of Montana, Rufus Holman of Oregon, D. Worth Clark and Henry Dworshak were unknowingly supplied with fascist propaganda which was then inserted in the Congressional Record and subsequently reprinted at government expense. 81

Although these politicians, many of them dupes to their own egos, were unable to undermine the democratic system, they did succeed in creating an atmosphere of fear and doubt on Capitol Hill, in which anti-alienism thrived. Martin Dies, whose experience at the head of HUAC, should have merited him special attention as an expert on anti-American threats, tried in March, 1939, to introduce legislation which would have excluded or expelled alien communists, required the registration of all alien organizations, and forbidden the employment of fascists or communists by the federal government. 82 About the same time, Representatives

81 For a complete record of the connections of Congressmen and Nazi agents, see Carlson, Under Cover, pp. 82, 86, 87, 121, 122, 126, 127, 130, 171, 213, 227-33, 236, 293, 414-16, and 487-95.

82 Efforts were made to link Dies, no friend of foreigners, with fascism through forged letters from Pelley in 1940. Nothing more substantial could be uncovered. Though a friend of Winrod, and a recipient of neo-Nazi praise for his Red hunts, Dies did assist the government in uncovering underground fascist activities in 1940-41. See A Preliminary Digest and Report on Un-American Activities of Various Nazi Organizations and Individuals in the United States, Including Diplomatic and Consular Agents of the German Government (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940).
Joseph Starnes, John Dempsey, Stephen Pace, Frank Welchel, and Howard Smith were introducing bills to register and fingerprint all aliens, to deport "dangerous" aliens, or aliens "inimical to the public interest" or aliens "engaged in espionage," to exclude aliens who advocated "essential changes" in the form of the American government, or even to cut off immigration completely for five, ten, or an indefinite number of years till our economic situation was righted.83

The man in Congress who syncretized all of the alien phobias, fascist sympathies, and Jew-hatred in the country at the time was Senator Robert Reynolds of North Carolina. Some people had a tendency to low-rate Reynolds as a country eccentric who endorsed Lucky Strike Cigarettes, chewed plugs of tobacco on the floor of the Senate, and knew little of foreign affairs. (Late in 1938, he returned from "Hungria" and announced that it was wrong for Hitler to have taken "the Sudan.")84

But Reynolds was an astute politician who could not be dismissed lightly. Elected to the Senate in 1932 over then incumbent Cameron Morrison whom he had blasted as a "fish-aig" (Bolshevik) tool, Reynolds knew well the effectiveness of Red-baiting. A party regular on votes relating to the Roosevelt Administration's programs when such was becoming a rarity among his fellow Democrats, Reynolds could hope to trade off support for

83 Only the Smith Act was ever voted into law. Effective June 28, 1940, this bill required fingerprinting of aliens over 14, and also detailed penalties for aliens engaged in subversive activities. Approximately 4,000,000 aliens registered in the first year of operation. See Kansas, U.S. Immigration Exclusion, pp. 141-3 and 147-8.

84 "Feather in-Hat," Time Magazine, XXXIII (February 13, 1939), p. 16.
the President's reorganization bill, WPA, TVA, and devaluation in exchange for Administration silence on immigration and alien questions. A friend of Trevor, Deatherage, Winrod and Coughlin, Reynolds was moreover able to use the prestige of his position as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs to further the goals of the multifarious racist and patriotic organizations in the United States.

Reynolds repeatedly fulminated against aliens, "foreigners who are now here, who have never made application for American citizenship, and who never intend to make application for American citizenship." Using no verifiable data, the Senator maintained that there were six million aliens living in the U.S., four million of whom were employed. This last group not only was confounding the employment situation for native Americans, Reynolds argued, but was also drawing off millions of dollars to spend abroad rather than in the United States. "It is high time to call a halt," he charged in 1939. "I say we ought not to permit a single person from foreign shores to set foot upon the shores of America for ten years or longer, until such time as every unemployed American has

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85 Reynolds opposed the Administration on only 14% of the roll call votes to 1939, a record in direct contrast to that compiled by his fellow North Carolinian Josiah Bailey. In fact, 31 Democratic Senators opposed the Administration more often than Reynolds, who was not an intimate of the leading conservative insurgents like Glass, Tydings or George. See James T. Patterson, Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939 for the Organization of American Historians (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), p. 352.

86 U.S., Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, IXXXIV, Part 4, 3624.

87 Fields, The Refugee in the United States, pp. 202-3. Such statistics obviously are inaccurate since fewer than 5,000,000 aliens registered under the Smith Act, and not all were either employed or employable. See Earl G. Harrison, "Axis Aliens in an Emergency," Survey Graphic, XXX (September, 1941), p. 466.
been provided with remunerative employment."

Reynolds' critics noted that his mathematics were less than precise. In a manner reminiscent of the late Joseph McCarthy, he continually juggled about new figures (all admittedly "unofficial") to thoroughly becloud the immigration issue. The six million aliens referred to on January 13, 1939, became seven million three days later—"seven million potential enemy spies within our midst, boring from within like termites." At the same time, ten million unemployed Americans became thirteen, fifteen, or twenty, by the simple stroke of Reynolds' pen. Ultimately, by the end of March, 1939, Reynolds settled upon the figure of 26,000,000 unemployed Americans (hastening to add that this figure included the partially employed as well).

As far as Reynolds was concerned, there was a sinister conspiracy afoot, engineered by the Jews, the same people who were "trying to deprive the Arabs of their rightful possessions in Palestine." Since Europe was wrestling itself free of "the Jewish yoke," the Jews were trying to propagandize the American public, make it more amenable to a

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88 U.S. Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, IXXXIV, Part 1, p. 370.

89 Ibid., p. 370.

90 In the same discussion, Reynolds took a Washington Herald report of the passage of a handful of illegal immigrants across the Canadian border into the U.S. and transmuted it into a gigantic smuggling operation involving "thousands" of persons. Two months later, quoting from Coughlin's Social Justice, he set the figure of illegals at 25,000. U.S. Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, IXXXIV, Part 4, 3627 and 3629.
flood of immigrants. Instead of offering special immigration dispensations to Jews ("who don't become integral parts of American life except after generations and under pressure" according to Reynolds) the North Carolina Senator argued that the government should address itself first to the "30,000 WPA workers losing their jobs daily," or the "600,000 young people who reach working age every year in the U.S. and who face a jobless future," or the "3,000,000 Americans" working for WPA and the "8,000,000 sons and daughters of American sharecroppers" who lived in hovels, their clothes tattered and torn, lacking in proper medical attention and basic education, subsisting on thickened gravy and biscuits.

To correct this situation, Reynolds in 1939 established the Vindicators, another super-patriotic organization, whose emblem was a coiled snake on a field of red, white, and blue, and whose motto was "Crush the Enemies of America." It was his intent to create a united

91 U.S. Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, LXXIV, Part 4, 4546.

92 Ibid., p. 4546. Again, Reynolds apparently took a New York Times report of April 9, 1939, that stated that 10,975 men on WPA projects in the city had been dismissed during the previous week and inflated it to a figure of 30,000 men who were being laid off weekly.

93 U.S. Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939, LXXXIV, Part II, 1011.

94 Ibid., p. 1011. Lurid examples came readily to Reynolds who bewailed the abnormally high arrest rate among Americans under 21, told of young white and Negro girls standing on the street corners of major eastern cities, offering themselves as prostitutes for 15 or 20 cents, and who also told of an 18-year-old girl in Washington who wanted to sell her eyes for $1500 to help her family, including six siblings.
force of 5,000,000 vocal, loyal Americans, all lobbying for an end to conscription, the resumption of friendly relations with Germany and Italy, and the passage of numerous bills which Reynolds had introduced in the Senate and which bore the familiar restrictionist stamp of alien registration, exclusion of aliens whose entry would be inimical to American interests, employment of American citizens on "American jobs," deportation of aliens subsisting on relief, and the prohibition of separation of families through the entry of aliens with dependents abroad.

None of Reynolds' programs ever reached fruition, and few of the proposals advanced by the ever-changing melange of worried capitalists, 100 per centers, communist-hunters, and pro-fascists that constituted the restrictionist pressure blocs before World War II were ever enacted into law. But if Reynolds and the thousands of American restrictionists who regarded him as their spokesman in Washington were unable to move Congress to further tighten immigration quotas, they were nonetheless effective in preventing the friends of the stateless from gaining any successes either. The Johnson-Reed Law remained on the books throughout the Nazi epoch and the American government remained committed to its strict enforcement long after the expansionist policies of Adolf Hitler impressed many Americans that their government should make some humanitarian accommodation to the victims of German persecution.

Once more, after too short a lapse, the United States had witnessed the triumph of nativism. The restrictionism or anti-alienism of the 1930s and early 1940s was not, however, the creation of modern-day cranks or smooth-working propaganda mills. Rather, it was the revival
of a primitive human emotion, a distrust and fear of the other, which, according to Higham, has surfaced periodically in response to America's national anxieties and the limits of her tolerance. But while the nativist fears of Harrison Gray Otis, Henry Bowers, Denis Kearney and Madison Grant may have taken their small toll in human suffering, the twentieth century exclusivism born of self-interest, joblessness, insecurity, anti-Bolshevik hysteria, and hard-core anti-Semitism was to share partial responsibility for genocide. Wrote William Leuchtenberg, "For every refugee who came to this country, many more who could have been saved died in Hitler's extermination chambers."  

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95 Higham, Strangers in the Land, pp. ix-x.  
96 Leuchtenberg, FDR and the New Deal, p. 286.
CHAPTER TWO

FROM ANSCHLUSS TO EVIAN

Shortly before dawn on Saturday, March 12, 1938, advance patrols of the German 8th Army filtered unopposed across the Austrian border to secure abandoned fortifications at Passau, Salzburg and Kiefersfelden. By four o'clock that warm spring afternoon, Adolf Hitler, Chancellor of Germany, crossed the border in an open-air Mercedes at his birthplace, Brannau-am-Inn, ostensibly as a private visitor on the way to the grave of his mother, but actually as a conqueror surging with vengeance for the humiliations he had sustained in his native land two decades before. Now Hitler would be received in Vienna by cheers of 200,000 persons singing the "Horst Wessel Lied" to the ringing of church bells in steeples draped with the Swastika.

This bloodless coup was the culmination of four years of concerted intrigue and assassination directed by the Hitler regime against the Austrian Republic. Just twenty-four hours before the Anschluss, Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg had been proceeding with plans for a national referendum which would defiantly proclaim the nation's independence of Nazi influence. Schuschnigg had stationed 5,000 men, constituting Austria's standing army, in positions along the German border--pledged to die for their nation's honor and freedom. Hopelessly outmanned and outgunned by the German Wehrmacht, lacking the support
of any adherent of the so-called Stresa Front, and facing Nazi revolutionary activity in Graz and Styria, Schuschnigg yielded before the threats of Adolf Hitler.  

A world which had seen Hitler flaunt the Treaty of Versailles by repudiating its war guilt clause and rearming Germany with tanks, planes, and a powerful navy, which had permitted Hitler to propagandize the inhabitants of the Saar and Rhineland back into the Reich, which had looked askance as Hitler refortified Germany's frontiers, should not have been particularly horrified when the Nazi tyrant scrapped his mutual security pact with Schuschnigg and stormed into Austria.

Seventy-six thousand Austrian patriots, Catholics, Jews, and officials of the government in Vienna alone were trundled off to jails by the Nazis within a matter of hours after the invasion. Six thousand persons were dismissed from the ministries of Public Safety and Education. General Otto Zehner, the last Austrian Defense Minister, was murdered and the rest of the General Staff pensioned off. To ensure its loyalty, the tiny Austrian army was sent on parade in Germany, there to be integrated into the Wehrmacht.  

All of this occurred while Britain and France reacted dreamily to the Anschluss, treated it as a fait accompli even before the Germans had reached the outskirts of Vienna. London and Paris accepted Goering's

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2 Ibid., pp. 198-199.
vouchsafe that German troops would be withdrawn as soon as the Austrian situation stabilized. No protest was uttered by the Soviet Union. In the United States, Ambassador Hans Heinrich Dieskhoft cabled his superiors that he had discussed the matter with Secretary of State Cordell Hull on March 12 and "from a few questions, it was apparent that Mr. Hull thoroughly understands our actions."

Only the Czechs, who had volunteered to assist the Austrians in precisely such a crisis, stood ready to war against Germany and they were unable to act alone.

The democracies could ill afford to be so blase. Suddenly, what had always been regarded as a domestic problem, Germany's persecution of its Jews, now loomed before the entire world in more dramatic proportions. Somehow mankind had become inured to the harshness of the Nuremberg Laws as they slowly, methodically, declassed and dehumanized Germany's 700,000 "non-Aryans." Now abruptly and with especially disastrous results, that malevolence was being transmitted beyond the original confines of the Reich. Now the 1600-year-old Austrian-Jewish community, never as wealthy nor as secure as German Jewry, was to be subjected to an instantaneous terror.

In the first few days of the Anschluss, 500 Jewish leaders, including Dr. Otto Loewi (1936 Nobel Prize winner in medicine), Dr. Heinrich Neumann (a noted ear specialist who had treated both King George of England and the Duke of Windsor), Baron Louis de Rothschild, 82-year-old Sigmund Freud, and Felix Salten (author Bambi) were arrested.

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3Ibid., pp. 210-11.

Anti-Jewish caricatures showing large hook-nosed figures wearing a hammer and sickle, with palms outstretched, were plastered on public buildings in Vienna. Graveyards were desecrated with jeering invitations for Jews to come to the one place where they would be welcome. Jewish stores, newspapers, and offices were plundered. Reichsmarshal Goering announced that all Jews with more than $2000 in savings or property had to register such personal wealth with the state, which reserved the right to confiscate said property "wherever necessary." Jews were disfranchised, thereby preventing their interference in the special plebiscite on April 10, which the Nazis arranged to sanction the Anschluss. Jews were evicted from apartments, dismissed from medical schools and college faculties. Austrian literature and music were purged of the works of Stefan and Arnold Zweig, Franz Werfel, Vicki Baum, Mahler, Bizet, Mendelssohn, Toch and Komgold. According to a dispatch from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on March 18, Vienna was becoming a city of whispers.

The expressed purpose of this persecution, according to the 
Voelkischer Beobachter, was to rid Austria of its Jews. By all gauges, the Nazis were succeeding. Before the Anschluss, the daily mortality figure


6More than 99% of the 4,500,000 voters who ultimately participated in this referendum approved the Nazi takeover.

7The Vienna State Opera, rejuvenated by Bruno Walter, also suffered as Walter, Artur Rodzinski, Pierre Monteux, Ignaz Friedman, Rudolph Serkin, Fritz Kreisler, Yehudi Menuhin, Richard Tauber, Alexander Kipnis and Emanuel List were barred from performing with Aryans. See "The Locust Strikes Again," National Jewish Monthly, Vol. III (April, 1938), pp. 281ff.
among Jews in Vienna was six. Within a fortnight, the figure was 50, many attributable to starvation, beatings, or suicide. In the same period, more than 30,000 persons queued up before the American consulate, another 10,000 before the Australian consulate, in Vienna, seeking visas. Officials estimated that 95% of these persons were Jewish.  

Because legal emigration did not proceed with the speed and precision that the Germans desired, new techniques of expulsion were devised. Early in April, a group of 51 Jews, many of them children, were rousted from their homes in the Burgenland, were forced at gunpoint to board an old, vermin-infested barge, and then were abandoned in the Danube near the Hungarian shore. There they stayed, in no-man's land, without food, money, or warm clothing, while Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary all denied them entrance.  

What began here as an experiment in terror developed into an institutional part of the Nazi program through the remainder of 1938. After the Munich partition of Czechoslovakia in September, 20,000 more Jews were expelled from the Sudetenland. Late in October, another 18,000 Jews of Polish origin residing in Germany were rounded up in the middle of the night, driven to the swampy borders of Poland, where guards told them to run for their lives and shot over their heads.  

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ditch or open field between Germany and its neighbors now could serve as a dumping ground for unwanted Jews. They came to rest in stables or along the roads of Nitra, Tarpoloany, Lilina, Michalovce, Prestany, Zbonshen, Ziline, and Zbaszyn, there to sit in silence beside huge vats of steaming soup contributed by the Joint Distribution Committee, to sleep on straw supplied by local peasants, to freeze in Europe's most severe winter in a century, to die of typhus and typhoid which was rampant among those who had not gone mad.  

"No-man's Land" was not a concept limited to Nazi Germany. The Anschluss merely unleashed latent hostilities toward the Jews in virtually every state which had been a signatory to League of Nations minority treaties. The Ronyos Garda (Guards in Rags) in Hungary, the Iron Guard in Rumania, the Hlinka Guard in Slovakia, and the Six in the western Ukraine, all actively barred the gates of their homelands to Jewish refugees and turned on their own fellow nationals. Shortly after the Anschluss, Mussolini announced that the 15,000 Jews who had come to Italy after 1919 would have to leave within six months and that those remaining Jews would be barred from participating in the economic life

11 Viewing these camps a year after the expulsions, Dr. Max Brod noted bitterly that the democracies had done little to help these unfortunate. "Democratic solidarity," he noted, "is the solidarity of do-nothing." Max Brod, "Rivals in Misfortune," National Jewish Monthly (March, 1939), p. 227.

12 Germany was not a signatory to such treaties, but on May 29, 1919, the Weimar Government pledged: "Germany is resolved on her part to treat the national minorities living on her territory according to the same rules, that is to say, according to the principles laid down in the minorities treaties." Joseph Roucek, "Minorities--Basis of the Refugee Problem," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. CCIII (May, 1939), p. 6.
of Italy. For four days in October, anti-Semites in Slovakia and Hungary shunted 10,000 Jews back and forth across their common borders, till they came to rest in miserable camps operated by the Joint Distribution Committee near Kosice, Poland. One of the expellees expressed the grief of what he called "these human tennis balls" when he said, "I can't survive like a criminal. I can't gate-crash in this world. If this goes on, I'll kill myself."14

From a practical standpoint, then, the Anschluss put every one of Europe's seven million Jews on notice that they were in immediate jeopardy of becoming stateless refugees. On July 21, 1938, Estonian Minister of Welfare Otto Kask indicated that his country (with 5,000 Jews constituting 0.5% of the population) could accept no more refugees because of a rising tide of anti-Semitism. Like statements were issued by

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15 At Brussels in 1936, the Institute of International Law agreed that the term "refugee" would apply to persons who were forced to leave their homeland for political reasons, who were deprived of diplomatic protection, or who had acquired no diplomatic protection in another state. Sir John Hope Simpson later suggested that the term more properly should apply to those who "are deprived of legal protection, mutual support, access to employment, and the measure of freedom of movement which happier mortals take as a matter of course." Sir John Hope Simpson, The Refugee Problem: Report of a Survey (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 3. This meant that anyone stripped of de jure national status and even those who had not yet managed to flee a country should be considered as refugees. Dr. Tartakower and Mr. Grossmann concur. See Arieh Tartakower and Kurt Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress and American Jewish Congress, 1944), p. 2.
government spokesmen in Lithuania and Latvia.\textsuperscript{16} And in a communique to Cordell Hull, dated August 30, 1938, American Ambassador to Poland Anthony Biddle underscored the growing anxieties of the Slawoj-Sklad-kowski Government over the Jewish question. According to Foreign Minister Colonel Josef Beck, Poland, with three million Jews, resented being treated as the dumping ground of Europe's undesirables. For Beck and other officials in the anti-Semitic Camp of National Unity, which dominated Poland's government, there was no difference between the Jewish refugee problem and Poland's Jewish problem. The international community had to treat these questions as one and the same, had to provide some outlets of emigration for Polish as well as Austrian or German Jews.\textsuperscript{17}

That Poland might indeed emulate Germany by expelling masses of Jews across its boundaries was evidenced in an intensified anti-Semitic press and radio campaign conducted by the government in the Summer of 1938. This was followed by hints that "if other means fail" Poland might adopt "German methods" of calling attention to her Jewish problems.\textsuperscript{18} Equally distressing to Washington were reports coming from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}American Jewish Yearbook, 1939, pp. 310-14.
\item \textsuperscript{17}U.S., Foreign Relations of the United States, General, Vol. I (1938), pp. 778-80.
\item \textsuperscript{18}American Jewish Yearbook, 1938, p. 299. One way by which the Polish Government attempted to out-Germany Germany was the issuance of a decree in October, 1938, requiring Polish citizens resident abroad to renew their passports by October 29. The time factor prevented many in Germany from meeting the requirement, thereby depriving them of Polish citizenship and making them the responsibility of Germany. This precipitated Germany's hasty roundup and dumping of 16-18,000 persons on October 29. See Belth, "The Refugee Problem," p. 378.
\end{itemize}
Ambassador Hugh Wilson in Berlin that the Anschluss was merely a prelude to future German assaults on the Balkans for control of Hungarian wheat, Rumanian oil and Czech munitions. Wilson predicted that Hitler would not be satisfied until he had absorbed the Sudetenland, as well as Austria, and he worried that the peace of the world rested with the state of mind of "this nervous man." Despite Wilson's saga-city, the State Department's only official comment on the Anschluss, apart from a few bitter words addressed by Under Secretary Welles to Ambassador Dieckhoof on the 15th of March, was that it was studying the situation.

Much of the American public, however, was less reserved. The major New York dailies, like most newspapers across the country, editorialized against Nazi brutality in Austria and the snowballing effect of expulsions into no-man's lands. The Catholic monthly Wisdom, the Messenger, national organ of the Evangelical and Reform Churches in the United States, the National Methodist Student Conference, the YMCA, the World Conference of the Society of Friends, Bishop William Manning of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Al Smith, Representative Samuel Dickstein, Vito Marcantonio, were some of those who spoke out against the Nazi coup. Congressman Donald O'Toole of Brooklyn even introduced a bill in Congress calling for severance of diplomatic relations with Germany "until that nation relinquishes

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19 Wilson to Hull, March 24, 1938, Correspondence File, Hull Papers, Box 42.


coercive, forced control of Austria, and further abates persecution of minorities because of race or creed."\(^\text{22}\)

President Roosevelt shared this popular revulsion at the course of events in Europe, and was subsequently blamed by Dr. Dieckhoff for the sudden frost in American policy vis-à-vis Austria. Roosevelt was well aware of how this country had already been culturally and scientifically enriched by refugees from Hitlerian persecution, with people like Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, Niels Bohr, Max Reinhardt, Kurt Weill, Thomas Mann, George Grosz, Otto Klemperer, Julius Ehrlich, Nahum Glatzer, Dr. Richard Goldschmidt, Dr. Karl Lange, Dr. Rudolph Schoenheimer, and countless others, most of them Jews.\(^\text{23}\) He was also well aware that the Jews in America constituted his most vocal and loyal base of support.\(^\text{24}\)

Thus, at a cabinet meeting on March 18, 1938, Roosevelt, in what Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau described as an unusually serious mood, expressed his concern over the fate of the German Jews. "America was a place of refuge for so many fine Germans in the period of 1848," he said. "Why couldn't we offer them again a place of refuge at this time?"\(^\text{25}\)

\(^\text{22}\)U.S., Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3d Session, 1938, LXXXIII, Part 3, 3358.


\(^\text{24}\)The Jewish alliance with the Democratic Party in this country is attributable to Roosevelt, who consistently earned 90% of the Jewish vote. See Lawrence Fuchs, The Political Behavior of American Jews (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1956), 99-101.

\(^\text{25}\)Henry Morgenthau Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries: VI, The Refugee Runaround," Colliers, Vol. CXX (November 1, 1947), p. 63. For Roosevelt's concern that the country should remain a haven for the
The answer to that question should have been obvious. According to figures compiled by the American Federation of Labor, unemployment in 1938 stood at 11,000,000, nearly 20% of the work force. The longed-for emergence from the depression had been smashed in the recession of 1937 which left the welfare rolls of the nation expanded, public confidence shaken, and FDR listless and despondent. Roosevelt hardly needed to add the sensitive question of immigration to the series of domestic squabbles that he already had on his hands in the spring of 1938. The nation had not yet forgiven his badly-handled "court-packing scheme of 1937 and would presently frown upon an equally bungled purge of conservative Democrats in Congress. Roosevelt's popularity had reached a new low, and a nationwide survey indicated that barely one-half of the people would have voted for him if the presidential election had been held that year.

25 (Cont'd)

oppressed, witness his comment three years later: "For centuries this country has always been the traditional haven of refuge for countless victims of religious and political persecution in other lands. These immigrants have made outstanding contributions to American music, art, literature, business, finance, philanthropy, and many other phases of our cultural, political, industrial and commercial life. It was quite fitting, therefore, that the U.S. Government should follow its traditional role and take the lead in calling and conducting the Evian meeting." Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, compiled and collated by Samuel I. Rosenman, Vol. VII (1938) (New York: MacMillan, 1941), p. 170.


November. Immigration reform should have been the furthest thing from the President's mind that spring, especially after receiving a telephone call from one of his whips on Capitol Hill who informed him, "For God's sake, don't send us any more controversial legislation." Restrictionists had taken no chances, however, and once more William Green of the A.F. of L., John Rankin of Mississippi, Reynolds, and John Trevor went on record as opposing any legislation which might flood the country with communist agitators and competing workmen.

The President could hardly have bucked popular sentiment, which while sympathetic to the plight of the "non-Aryans" in Germany, was nevertheless firmly opposed to the admission of additional refugees in the spring of 1938. Only 4.9% of those persons polled by Roper felt that the United States should welcome the victims of Nazi persecution, even if it meant suspending immigration quotas. 18.2% felt that such refugees should be permitted to enter the United States within existing restrictions. But 67.4% of the Americans polled argued that conditions being what they were in this country at the time, the government should "keep them out." Ironically, though the position of the Jews under Nazism was most critical, 20% of the American Jews polled also favored an absolute exclusionist policy.

29 Ibid., p. 339
30 Divine, American Immigration Policy, p. 94.
If there was a foreign policy question which truly interested Americans at the time (after the all-encompassing domestic crisis), it was not what was going on in Austria, but Japan's mutilation of our long-fancied protege, China. Most Americans felt that the Jews in Europe were at least partially to blame for their present sufferings. Better than 60% of those polled by the Opinion Research Corporation in the spring of 1938 volunteered objections to Jews already in this country.


33 Polls conducted by the AIPO and ORC in March, April, and May, 1938, consistently showed that 10-12% of those surveyed blamed such persecution entirely upon the Jews, while another 48-50% indicated that it was "partly" the Jews' own fault. See Cantril, p. 381, and Charles Stember et al., Jews in the Mind of America (New York and London: Basic Books, Inc., 1966), pp. 138-39.

34 There were four distinct clusters of criticism: (1) Jews were overly concerned about money, unscrupulous in getting it, dishonest in business; (2) Jews were pushy, domineering, aggressive, obdurate, and lacking in respect for the rights of others; (3) Jews were clannish, discriminated against non-Jews, and covered up for one another; (4) Jews were unrefined, ill-mannered, unclean, generally repellent. Stember, pp. 54-69. The editors of Fortune published a splendid analysis of the Jews, The Jews in America (New York: Random House, 1936), and there were other excellent studies which probed the origins of anti-Semitism in totalitarian thought, analyzed Christian responsibility for Jew-hatred, and attempted to demonstrate the absurdity of pinning specific traits upon certain races. See Johan Smertenko's "Hitlerism Comes to America," Harper's, Vol. CIXVII (November, 1935), pp. 66-70; Frank Eakin's "What Christians Teach About Jews: Church School Lesson Materials," Christian Century, Vol. III (September 18, 1935), pp. 1173-76; Lyford Edwards' "Religious Sectarianism and Race Prejudice," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XII (September, 1935), pp. 167-79; Marjorie van de Walter's "Racial Psychology," Science, Vol. LXXVIII (December 30, 1938), pp. 7-8; May Sukov and E.G. Williamson's "Comparison between Jews and Non-Jews With Respect to Several Traits of Personality," Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. XXII (October, 1938), pp. 487-92; K. Sward and
substantial portion of the followers of demagogues like Coughlin and Gerald L.K. Smith believed there were too many Jews in the country already. The influential Jesuit weekly *America* washed its hands of the situation in Europe, despite the fact that 15% of the potential refugees in Germany and Austria were Christians, because "it remains mainly a Jewish problem." And a consistently sizable bloc of Americans, one in eight, indicated through 1938 and 1939 that they would support an organized anti-Semitic campaign against the Jews on a par with that being waged by the Nazis. The nation did not particularly appreciate its own Jews, let alone seek any more that might complicate the employment situation. It is significant that in virtually every poll conducted by Gallup, Roper, ORC, and NORC through February, 1946, the group singled out by most Americans as the one which posed the greatest menace to the country was

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35As late as 1946 only a handful of Americans could even approximate the number of Jews in this country. One in four estimated that there were more than 20 million Jews in America. And 10% of those polled put the figure at more than 40 million. Stember, *Jews in the Mind of America*, p. 77.


37The AIPO figure in polls conducted in April, 1938, March, 1939, and May, 1939, was 12% every time. See "American Institute of Public Opinion Surveys," 1938-39.
the Jews. 38

Roosevelt had learned the previous fall that he could ill afford to anticipate or antagonize American public opinion. By his own admission a novice in the field of foreign affairs (shortly after the Anschluss, he wrote a friend, "I am in the midst of a long process of education—and the process seems to be working slowly but surely"), his attempts to secure international peace late in 1937 had backfired miserably. The American-sponsored international disarmament conference at Brussels had foundered because of quarrels among the democracies, and the failure of Germany, Italy, or Japan to send delegates. 40 Then on October 5, 1937, Roosevelt stated that it might become necessary to quarantine aggressor nations which were "creating a state of international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality." 41

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38 Only in 1942 did another group pass the Jews in this category. In that year, with the disastrous news from the Pacific fresh in Americans' minds, the Japanese were regarded with greater dread than the Jews. Invariably, however, the Jews placed ahead of the Germans. See Stemmer, Jews in the Mind of America, p. 128. All kinds of explanations have been advanced for this, ranging from Talcott Parsons' suggestion that the Jews have been blamed for the anomie resulting from the rapid development of an impersonalized industrial society ("Some Sociological Aspects of the Fascist Movement," Social Forces, Vol. XXI, November, 1942) to Richard Hofstadter's claim that "there has been a curiously persistent linkage between anti-Semitism and money and credit obsessions." Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 81. Whatever the cause, there is no doubt that these anti-Jewish sentiments were shared by large segments of the population in every area of the country. See Stemmer, Jews in the Mind of America, p. 224 and Arthur Schlesinger, The Politics of Upheaval (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1957), pp. 67-69.

39 Bums, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 355.

40 In Roosevelt from Munich to Pearl Harbor: A Study in the Creation of a Foreign Policy (New York: Creative Age Press, 1950), pp. 47-55, Basil Rauch chronicles the ineptitude and naivete of American foreign policy late in 1937.

The President was not prepared for the response to his quarantine speech. Cheered abroad as a harbinger of American entry into a system of collective security, the speech was lacerated as an unwarranted departure from America's traditional stance of neutrality by isolationist newspapers and spokesmen in Congress. Welles wrote Presidential aide Samuel Rosenman of the surprise and dismay the President had felt about the attacks on his speech in this country. Rosenman later noted, "It was a mistake he seldom made—the mistake of trying to lead the people of the United States too quickly and before they had been adequately informed of the facts or spiritually prepared for the event." Once stung by such abuse, thoroughly aware that Congress was "in a nasty mood" and eager for a chance "to clip the President's wings," Roosevelt would step warily for awhile before provoking further outcries against his programs. As Rosenman writes, "During the years immediately preceding the war, and after the war began, the President, with rare exceptions, was very careful never to recommend any drastic action without first informing the people of the facts as thoroughly as military security allowed.

42 Some historians hostile to Roosevelt hold that he decided at this point to get the United States into war since he was unable to resolve the problems of the depression in a period of peace. See Frederic A. Sanborn, Design for War: A Study of Secret Power Politics, 1937-41 (New York: Devin-Adair, 1951), pp. 21-48, and Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, ed. Harry Elmer Barnes (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1953).


At the same time, however, the President was under great pressure from powerful Jewish groups in the country like the B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Committee, the Zionist Organization of America, the Jewish Labor Committee, and the American Jewish Congress as

46 The oldest (founded in 1843) and largest (130,000 members) Jewish service and fraternal organization in the U.S.; B'nai B'rith operated hospitals, orphanages, libraries, vocational training centers and Hillel foundations on college campuses in the U.S. It also established the Anti-Defamation League, the watchdog of American Anti-Semitism, in 1913. See "B'nai B'rith," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isaac Landman, vol. II (1940), pp. 422-27.

47 Founded in 1906 in response to renewed Russian pogroms against the Jews, the American Jewish Committee numbered among its early leaders the prestigious Louis Marshall, Oscar Straus, Jacob Schiff, Julius Rosenwald, and Mayer Sulzberger. Essentially anti-Zionist in its formative years, the AJC founded an autonomous branch, the Joint Distribution Committee, or Joint, in 1914 for the specific purpose of giving relief to persecuted Jews abroad. See Moses Leavitt, The JDC Story, 1914-52 (New York: Joint Distribution Committee, 1953).

48 After a diffused start among "Hovevei Zion" in the U.S. in the 1800s, the ZOA was formally established in 1917 with the merger of several sectional groups. Its honorary chairman was Justice Brandeis and it numbered 50,000 members by 1942. "Zionist Organization of America," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X (1943), pp. 658-662.

49 The Jewish Labor Committee, organized in 1934 by Baruch Vladeck, claimed to represent 756 labor organizations and 500,000 workers. Substantially larger than the rival Jewish National Workers Alliance, its base of strength were David Dubinsky's International Ladies Garment Workers Union and Sidney Hillman's Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. See Jewish Labor Committee: What it Does and What it Stands For (New York: Jewish Labor Committee, 1942).

50 Established on August 30, 1915, in response to reports of persecution of Jews along the Eastern Front, the Congress was dominated by Rabbi Wise until his death in 1949. It was instrumental in organizing the World Jewish Congress, successor to the Comite des delegations Juives, which was chaired by Dr. Nachum Goldman during the 1930s. A test of strength of the AJC came in June, 1938, when 698,993 persons registered in this country for elections of representatives to the WJC. "American Jewish Congress," Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. I (1940), pp. 246-252.
well as the non-sectarian National Coordinating Committee,\(^5\) to do something to succor the Jews of Europe. With Roosevelt surrounded by Jewish intimates like Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, Commerce Secretary David Niles, personal advisers Samuel Rosenman and Benjamin Cohen, economic advisers Bernard Baruch and Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel, Supreme Court Justices Brandeis and Frankfurter, and maintaining close lines of communication with Rabbis Stephen Wise and Abba Silver, Governor Herbert Lehman, and the NCC's Gentile chairman Joseph P. Chamberlain, the impact of such pressure should have been tremendous.

In actuality, however, the Jewish community in this country was as riven as the fascist bloc, but with the added complication of having no common, ultimate goal. Rabbi Wise, an indomitable soul who had been instrumental in founding the Zionist Organization of America, the American

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\(^5\) The National Coordinating Committee was founded in October, 1934, to aid refugees coming to the U.S. from Germany. Among its adherents were the American Committee for Christian-German Refugees, American Friends Services Committee, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany, Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds, Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Physicians, Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, German-Jewish Children's Aid, HIAS, HICEM (joint operation of HIAS, the Jewish Colonization Society, and the United Jewish Emigrants Committees of Europe), Intercollegiate Council for Refugee Students, International Migration Service, International Student Service, Jewish Agricultural Society of America, Joint Distribution Committee, Musicians Emergency Fund, Inc., National Board of the YWCA, National Council of Jewish Women, and Zionist Organization of America. For a specific breakdown on the activities of these groups see Memorandum of Professor Joseph P. Chamberlain, January 21, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 1295; Erika Mann and Eric Estorick, "Private and Government Aid of Refugees," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CCIII (May, 1939), pp. 143-48; and Fermi, \textit{Illustrious Immigrants}, pp. 76-80.
Jewish Congress, and the World Jewish Congress, complained in 1937 that he had Roosevelt all but convinced to issue a presidential decree in March, 1933, which would have admitted victims of political and religious persecution to the U.S. Only through the intervention of Eric and James Warburg, wealthy New York Jews who convinced Roosevelt that tales of persecution under Hitler were greatly exaggerated--"atrocity and mongering rumors"--was the plan rejected. 52

Wise continued to have difficulties with the more reserved American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith when he proposed a full scale boycott of German goods and mass demonstrations against Nazi persecution early in 1933. 53 Similarly, when Baruch Vladeck of the Jewish Labor Committee promised cooperation in such matters in 1937, Wise noted sourly, "He may cooperate in the boycott where the cooperation is altogether to their advantage, we doing all the work and they appropriating the major credit, but that's all." 54

Even when Pittsburgh philanthropist Edgar Kaufmann convinced the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, 52 Memorandum of Wise to Louis Lipsky, June 7, 1938, Wise Papers, Brandeis University, American Jewish Congress File, VII. Exactly such an attitude of disbelief in "atrocities" on the part of American Jewish Committee President Louis Marshall had led to a schism within the Committee in World War I and the eventual founding of the Congress. See To the Jews of America: The Jewish Congress versus the American Jewish Committee (New York: Jewish Congress Organizing Committee, 1915), pp. 5-8.

53 According to the Committee and B'nai B'rith, such actions would oversimplify the danger of Nazism to democratic institutions by merely identifying the movement with anti-Semitism. It was also argued that such boycotts could only lead to reprisals against the Jews in Germany. By the fall of 1933, however, both organizations had come around to the position of the Congress. "American Jewish Congress," UJE, p. 250.

54 Memorandum of Wise to the Governing Council of the American Jewish Congress, Jan. 19, 1937, Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, VII.
and the Jewish Labor Committee to merge their efforts in the summer of 1938 under one General Jewish Council, the groups failed to cooperate. Throughout 1938 and 1939, Wise and his Executive Secretary Lillie Shultz scored the separate fund-raising tactics of the American Jewish Committee, which merely duplicated the work of the United Jewish Appeal and deprived the other three organizations of a greater share of American support. 55

By April, 1941, the leaders of the Congress were positively paranoid about every action taken by the other groups. Witness Congress Vice-President Lipsky's warning to Wise that "the Congress will soon be facing a planned underground attack, which will come from the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, and possibly the B'nai B'rith."

Lipsky suggested avoiding the initiation of any attack, in favor of building up the structure and influence of the Congress. 56 By the end of the month the Congress had withdrawn from the General Jewish Council. With that pull-out, any thought of unity in the Jewish community died. 57

What happened in the General Jewish Council was not unique. Chaos and disagreement permeated every aspect of Jewish community planning to help the victims of Nazism. It was not until July, 1940, that

55 See the scathing letter from Lillie Shultz to Sol Stock, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee, November 6, 1939, Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, VII.

56 Letter of Lipsky to Wise, April 10, 1941, Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, VII.

HIAS, the Joint, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the National
Refugee Service (the creation of the National Coordinating Committee in
1939), which collectively spent upwards of $30,000,000 on relief in
Europe between 1933 and 1941, could decide among them what role each
organization should play in the transporting and reception of immigrants.

Some Jewish organizations championed emigration to the United States,
while others, motivated in part by fear that increased Jewish immigration
might result in violent anti-Semitic eruptions, opposed this. The
Zionists labored to effect the departure of thousands of persons from Aus-
tria and Germany to Palestine. In this they were frustrated by the Central
Conference of American Rabbis, which as late as 1935 was on record as
opposed to such a concept, and dissidents in the American Jewish Com-
mittee like Lessing Rosenwald who held that Jewish nationalism only
promoted the idea that there was a Jewish race as well.

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58 Tartakower and Grossmann, *The Jewish Refugee*, p. 496.

59 Dr. William Haber of the NRS finally negotiated a plan accept-
able to all by July 26, 1940. The Joint was to handle matters in Greater
Germany, HIAS-HICEM in all other countries. HIAS would receive all
unattached men or men with families when they arrived in the U.S., and
handle all appeals before the Department of Naturalization and Immigra-
tion. The National Council of Jewish women would greet all unattached
women. All of these agencies would act as referrals to the NRS, whose
duty it was to assist the refugee in resettling in the interior of the U.S.,
giving him vocational and educational training. See Albert Phiebig and
Dr. Frederick Grubel's HIRS Survey 1940-41, Special report prepared for
HIAS, New York, 1942, YIVO, pp. 11 and 99.

60 This was a common fear which was also expressed by Henry
Pratt Fairchild in "Should the Jews Come In?" *New Republic*, XCV
(January 25, 1939), p. 344.

61 The upshot of this was the creation by Rosenwald and other
leading assimilated American Jews of the American Council for Judaism.
Founded in 1943, it was responsible for forcing the Department of Immig-
At the same time, those organizations like the American Jewish Congress and the National Coordinating Committee which favored admission to the U.S. of larger numbers of Jewish refugees on a non-quota basis could marshal an impressive array of arguments to support their views. First, they rejected the restrictionist contention that immigration was a contributory factor in the depression. Statistics could be cited to show that immigration was self-regulating in times of economic distress. That far from competing with unskilled native labor, those persons who had fled to the U.S. from Nazi Germany were mainly professionals who were badly needed in this country, that many of these persons had actually

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gration and Naturalization to remove the odious category "Hebrew" from its annual statistics on immigration by race. Since that time, the Council, numbering some 20,000 members, including Stanley Marcus of Neiman-Marcus, Donald Klopfer of Random House, Walter Rothschild of Abraham and Strauss, and John Mosler, President of the Urban League of Greater New York, has consistently spoken out against Jewish Zionism. See the New York Times, July 16, 1967, p. 48.


63 Between 1935 and 1939, only 28.6% of those persons entering the U.S. listed unskilled occupations, and most of these were identified as servants, an occupation ever in great demand. Bernard, American Immigration Policy, p. 46. Among these were some 1500 physicians, far from the tidal wave mentioned by the AMA. See Memorandum for Joseph Chamberlain, undated, Chamberlain Collection, 3206. At the time the U.S. was graduating only 5,000 physicians per year, had even fallen behind the doctor-patient ratio in the country in 1886 and the Deans of
expanded job opportunities for Americans, rather than constricted them.64

The experience of Western Europe with German-Jewish refugees should clearly have demonstrated the beneficial aspects of such immigration upon employment. In 1934, a special Dutch commission reported that the number of persons given employment as a direct result of new economic activity introduced by the refugees was approximately equal to the number of immigrants taken in by the Netherlands since the rise of Hitler.65 Sir Samuel Hoar, British Home Secretary, later noted in the House of Commons that 15,000 British workers were directly employed by 11,000 refugees.66 And R.F. Harrod, President of the Economic Section of the British Association in 1938 rejected the notion that the existence of unemployment was a good reason for discouraging immigration. "There

Bellevue, Harvard, Tufts, Johns Hopkins, and Yale Medical Schools all were calling for assistance to emigrant physicians who were badly needed here. See Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, "Those German Refugees," Current History, vol. L (May, 1939), pp. 20-21.

64 In 1942, a team of social workers headed by Sophia Robinson reported that some 800 "refugee" enterprises had been located in the U.S. More than half of these had introduced something to the American market which had never previously been produced in this country, including harmonicas and Lebkuchen. More significant, it was estimated that each refugee entrepreneur had created jobs for approximately seven American workers. See Sophia Robinson, Refugees at Work: For the Committee on Selected Social Studies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. See also Oscar and Mary Handlin, "The United States," in The Positive Contributions by Immigrants, p. 33; Abe Revusky, "Refugees in America," National Jewish Monthly, vol. LIII (April, 1939), pp. 260-61; Memorandum of Joseph Chamberlain, undated, 1938, Chamberlain Collection, 1263; and letter from Joseph Hyman of the Joint Distribution Committee to Chamberlain, Chamberlain Collection, 1332.


66 Ibid., p. 166.
is much to be said for the proposition that the expansion of numbers is good for employment and a contraction bad," he concluded.  

The irony of this situation was that American immigration laws were allegedly designed to keep out the inferior elements of Europe. The persons now knocking at the door were refined, literate, professional Germans, whose average worth was once estimated at $25,000. But even if the refugees were not all capitalists, scientists, or shopkeepers who transferred complete enterprises to the U.S., they still offered another potential tonic to the U.S. economy. Many of the immigrants were children, aged persons, or wives, people without occupations and who posed little or no threat to those who did hold jobs. In fiscal 1938, for example, fewer than 20,000 of America's 68,000 immigrants fell in the employable male category. Between 1931 and 1940 not more than 49,000 new job competitors were introduced in this country by immigration.

These people did not oust native Americans from jobs which the latter

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67 British citizens were employed in the production of surgical adhesives, gelatin products, patent fasteners, canes, wrist watch straps, leather bags, furniture fabrics, bottlecaps, and furs as a result of the exodus from Germany after 1933. See Refugee Facts: A Study of the German Refugee in America, Report prepared for the American Friends Services Committee, Philadelphia, Penna., 1939, American Friends Services Committee Library, p. 19. When the war broke out these same refugees would win high praise from the British for their assistance in the manufacture of searchlights, prismatic reflectors, hardened glass ball bearings (substitutes for steel bearings), special torches, and other engineering work hitherto unknown in Britain. See Julius Isaacs, "Jewish Refugees in Great Britain," in The Positive Contributions by Immigrants, p. 69.

68 Bernard, American Immigration Policy, p. 27.


already held. They were not radicals or criminals. They did not subsist on welfare and did not lower the American standard of living.

71 Throughout the pre-war period, restrictionists circulated rumors that an influx of refugees, particularly Jewish refugees, would result in wealthy Jews in this country laying off as much as 2% of their work force, particularly Negroes, to accommodate their kinsmen. This charge was levelling against the New York department stores, where it was said one eventually would require a German dictionary to transact any business. The charge was vehemently denied by Delos Walker of Macy's, Walter Hoving of Lord and Taylor, Kenneth Collins of Gimbel's, and executives of Stern Bros., Bloomingdale's, and Abraham and Straus. See Leiper, "These German Refugees," p. 20, and also a report issued to the New York Times by the National Coordinating Committee, November 25, 1938, Chamberlain Collection, 1719.

72 The Department of Immigration and Naturalization deported an average of 40 persons per year for radicalism between 1907 and 1939. During that same period, more than 14,000,000 immigrants came to the United States. Milner and Dempsey, "The Alien Myth," p. 378. As to the criminality of immigrants, the Wickersham Committee had testified in 1931 "that in proportion to their respective numbers, the foreign-born commit considerably fewer crimes than the native born of the same age and sex." Bernard, American Immigration Policy, p. 122. A decade later the U.S. Census Bureau noted that the foreign born constituted 4.1% of the institutional population of the U.S., while they constituted 8.6% of the total population at the same time. These figures are borne out by a special survey done by the National Coordinating Committee in the summer of 1937. See report of New York City Commissioner A. H. McCormick, Department of Corrections, to NCC Secretary Cecilia Razovsky, June 25, 1937, Chamberlain Collection, 1166.

73 No aliens were permitted on federal relief rolls in 1939. Only 4% of the total number of families on WPA relief in 1936 were headed by men who had no intention of becoming citizens. Bernard, American Immigration Policy, pp. 89-90. The states recording the highest per capita income were those with the greatest alien populations. A greater percentage of the foreign born owned their homes (51.8%) than native born (48.9%), Milner and Dempsey, "The Alien Myth," p. 377. And those foreign born who did rent, paid a higher average monthly rental than the native born. Bernard, American Immigration Policy, p. 73. By such indices, it would have seemed that the foreign born were boosts to the economy.
In fact, every new immigrant with a family meant more mouths to feed, bodies to clothe, shelters to build, minds to educate, more services, more products. That they by no means constituted a menace to the economic life of the country was clear to Labor Secretary Frances Perkins who testified in February, 1939:

The number of immigrants admitted into the U.S. in the last five years has averaged less than 50,000 per annum. It is unlikely that this number has greatly affected the conditions of the unemployed in this country, especially when consideration is given to the fact that a large part of the number admitted were dependents of citizens or aliens legally here, or were otherwise not of the employee class.

While some persons in the U.S. labored in the Herculanean task of convincing the government that the admission of Jews to this country would serve as a boon to the economy, they labored in the face of the realization that many Jews in Europe simply did not want to leave their homelands, no matter how miserable their lot. Until the Anschluss, the Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland, founded in 1901 to help less fortunate East European Jews, was committed to the idea of holding on, rather than emigrating. Until the Anschluss, the German immigration quota of 27,370 was never filled. This desire to remain with the familiar,

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74 Professor Chamberlain of the NCC issued a memorandum in July which spoke glowingly of "more food, shoes, hospitals, churches, beauty parlors" if this country welcomed the refugees. See Memorandum Regarding Emigration of Refugees from Germany and Austria, Chamberlain Collection, July 7, 1938, 3172.


76 Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, p. 461.
even in times of evil, was best summarized by Marie Ginsberg, when she wrote:

Many thought that the Nazi regime was but a passing phenomenon and though prohibited from practicing their professions, still did not see that they ought to leave the country, but tried to make a living in trade or existed on their savings, hoping that a change of government would reinstate them in their former positions. Even those who did detach themselves from Germany clung to Europe because they wanted to be ready to return as soon as circumstances permitted. 77

Even if some form of planned emigration had been possible in 1933, the Anschluss had changed that. In the summer of 1938, the European office of the Joint Distribution Committee in Paris warned, "Mass emigration is impossible in view of the situation in the immigrant countries which have little capacity of absorption, and have unemployment questions of their own." 78 Noting the ominous prospect of three million more potential Jewish refugees in Poland (something which had perturbed World Zionist Organization President Chaim Weizmann as early as 1936), the Joint bravely resolved to treat the problem in the host countries through relief, rehabilitation and training. 79

There is a tribal myth among Jews that anytime two Jews congregate you have three opinions. Certainly, this approximates the dissention which existed in the American Jewish community on the eve of World War II. Presidential Aide Benjamin Cohen has indicated that Roosevelt was


79 Ibid., p. 243.
well aware of this division. While Roosevelt was sympathetic to the German refugees ("knocked pillar to post"), the President also recognized that the Jews were unable to present any united plan of action to save their brethren. Moreover, none of Roosevelt's Jewish advisers felt constrained to speak out in order to induce special action on behalf of the Jews in Europe. In the face of criticisms of Roosevelt's "Jew Deal" and "Jewocracy," Baruch, Rosenman, Frankfurter, Niles, Morgenthau and the others, "leaders of the periphery" according to Kurt Lewin's terminology, opted for mendicancy rather than leadership. Insecure in themselves, constantly wary of raising the spectre of double-loyalty which was the grist of anti-Semites, these persons ever-exerted themselves in an effort to assert their Americanism, their concern for this nation's welfare to the exclusion of all others, even when doing so meant the death of loved ones in Europe.

80 Interview with Benjamin Cohen, June 5, 1968.
81 Among successful or influential Jews, this feeling of ambivalence toward one's Jewish background is especially pronounced. Termed "Judische Selbstüberschätzung" by Professor Lessing in 1930, it explains the reluctance of powerful Jewish figures to champion the cause of their brethren in times of stress. See Kurt Lowin, "Self-Hatred Among Jews," Contemporary Jewish Record, vol. IV (June, 1941), pp. 228-9. The idea that semitophobia can lead to induced social neuroses in Jews, namely social-climbing or egomania," is also put forward in Read Bain's "Sociopathy of Anti-Semitism," Sociometry, Vol. VI (November, 1943), pp. 460-64.
82 A good example of this reluctance to identify oneself as a Jew to help a relative can be seen in a letter from Frankfurter to Roosevelt dated October 24, 1941. Frankfurter informed the President of the death of an aged uncle, Dr. Solomon Frank, onetime director of the library of the University of Vienna, in a Nazi concentration camp where he had been placed after the Anschluss. "Precisely because I wanted to avoid the criticism even of the evil-minded and hardhearted against any charge of favoritism by your administration, I did not invoke the good
Because of the explosiveness of the Jewish refugee question, and because no one could offer him a satisfactory suggestion as to how to go about resolving the problem, Roosevelt tempered his humanitarian impulses with the harsh realities of the times. It simply was not politically expedient for him to suggest anything which might smack of breaking down U.S. immigration walls. A fight over refugees might be just the opening his enemies were seeking to jeopardize his entire legislative program, including relief and public works projects, rearmament, and revision of neutrality legislation. The President made it clear to Mrs. Roosevelt, who had taken a keen interest in refugee affairs, that he was not willing to run that risk. "First things come first," he said, "and I can't alienate certain votes I need for measures that are more important at the moment by pushing any measure that would entail a fight." 83

Still, Roosevelt recognized the moral necessity of doing something to aid the Jews in Europe. He might have pondered that the problem should legitimately have been the concern of the League of Nations. After World War I, the League had been instrumental in underwriting international loans to cover the cost of transporting and integrating two million


Greeks and Turks, and 220,000 Bulgarians in new lands. Faced with the discomforting prospect of a million White Russian, 300,000 Armenian, 50,000 Saar German, and countless other political and religious refugees, the League had established the Nansen Organization for Help to Refugees in 1921. Directed by Norwegian polar-explorer Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the Nansen Office (as it was called after 1930) attempted to regularize the emigration of persecuted peoples by issuing an international passport, which was honored by 52 nations at one point.

The Nansen Office was to be complemented in its work after October, 1933, by the Autonomous Office of High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany. A reaction to the wave of anti-Jewish persecution in Germany, this second organization received at least the tacit endorsement of the United States. Joseph Chamberlain participated in organizational deliberations and James G. McDonald, an Ohioan who had written at length against German barbarities in World War I and who was then Chairman of the Foreign Policy Association of the United States, was named High Commissioner.


85 Louis W. Holborn, "The League of Nations and the Refugee Problem," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCIII (May, 1939), p. 126. It is interesting to note that during World War II, Nansen's son Otto, presently active in U.N. refugee work, was placed in a concentration camp for aiding Jews in Norway. He was required to wear a yellow star of David inscribed, "I am a Jewish slave."

86 Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, pp. 405-406.
Neither the Nansen Office nor the High Commissioner were able to handle the flow of German-Jewish refugees, to say nothing of the potential wave of humanity lying in Eastern Europe. The Nansen Certificate, that quasi-passport which accorded emigrants social and economic rights equal with those enjoyed by nationals in any host country, was valid only for one year, and only if the emigrant's original country would allow that he could ultimately return to the homeland. Quite obviously, then, the history of the Nansen Office was spotty. From the time it entered the League of Nations in 1934, the Soviet Union agitated to abolish the office, which it charged was giving protection to counter-revolutionaries living abroad. With the rise of Hitler, no German-Jewish refugee could qualify for one of these protective certificates, as one could not obtain the necessary guarantee regarding the right to return to his homeland. By the summer of 1938, the Nansen Office, which has issued only 4,782 passports during the previous fiscal year, admitted its inability to cope with more than several thousand refugees at best.  

The establishment of the High Commissioner's Office was of little help. For one thing, it was set up as a totally autonomous organization, divorced from the League of Nations, as much to appease the U.S. which, while interested in its success, did not want to become a party to any official League organization, as to spare the League's Treasury a constant drain on its resources. Initially funded with 25,000 francs from

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that Treasury, the Commission was dependent upon voluntary contributions to support its programs. Before he resigned in fury and frustration in December, 1935, High Commissioner McDonald did succeed in raising several million dollars to aid approximately 100,000 persons. But McDonald's 3000-word letter of resignation was as much an indictment of unwise reliance upon voluntary philanthropy to solve the refugee problem as it was of the Nazism that had created the problem. Lacking a firm financial base, without a secretariat till 1936, duplicating instead of supplementing the work of the Nansen Office, the High Commissioner was virtually impotent and by 1938 was placing no more than 50 to 100 refugees per week in countries surrounding Germany. Powerless to touch refugees from Hitlerian persecution in Austria (technically beyond the territorial limits of Germany and hence outside the jurisdiction of the Commissioner's Office), the office had been the subject of many proposals, all negative, most suggesting its abolition or, at best, its merger with the Nansen Office in 1938.

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88 Most of the money was contributed by Jewish relief groups, which, while quarrelsome among themselves, were unstinting in their generosity toward refugees of all faiths. Fields, The Refugee in the United States, pp. 189-92.


With the Anschluss, Roosevelt also was compelled to code that the League and its operatives had proven incapable of treating the Jewish refugee problem. The President wrote later in 1941, "At that time, it became apparent that some orderly plan for intergovernmental cooperation had to be formulated to deal with mass emigrations which had become necessary for the facilities of private organizations to find places of refuge had become overtaxed." On March 23, 1938, Roosevelt directed Hull to invite the representatives of more than 30 nations to another international conference on refugees. This time, for the first time, the U.S. Government pledged its fullest, official support.

On March 24, 1938, Hull issued the following statement to the press:

This government has become so impressed with the urgency of the problem of political refugees that it has inquired of a number of Governments 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 within 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. In making this proposal, the Government of the United States has emphasized that it in no sense intends to discourage or interfere with such work as is already being done on the refugee problem by any existing international agency. 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.93

93 Ibid., p. 169.
While this communique aroused much interest at the League of Nations, it also established a set of hard principles from which government officials, including Hull and Roosevelt were bound not to stray to 1944, noteworthy among them: (1) that no particular ethnic, political, or religious group be identified with the refugee problem or the calling of the conference; (2) that nothing be done to interfere with the operations of existing relief organizations, no matter how effectual those organizations might be; (3) that all assistance for refugee work should be drawn from purely voluntary sources; and (4) that no nation be required to amend its current immigration laws to accommodate the refugees.

Adherence to the euphemism "refugee" instead of speaking directly to the issue of "Jewish refugees," could be defended by the President and Secretary Hull. The League of Nations had estimated that there were still some 300,000 White Russians, 120,000 Armenians, 20,000 Nos-torian Iraqis, and 30,000 Italians in need of assistance in 1938, not to mention some 400,000 Spanish Republicans subsisting in French detention camps, another 3,000,000 of their countrymen who were labelled "internal refugees," and the millions of Chinese who had been uprooted by the Japanese invasion.

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94 Arthur Sweetser, U.S. Observer at the League of Nations Refugee Conference in Geneva, informed James McDonald that the U.S. now had "the center stage" and that the various nations were looking in this direction for constructive leadership. "What seems to be hoped for from us is that we will present a program which will make it possible to approach the refugee problem in the big rather than the purely individual way," Sweetser commented. Sweetser to McDonald, May 17, 1938, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees File, Wise Papers, V-I.

True as this may have been, the fact remains that in 1938 the Jewish question was the refugee question. This persecution and expulsion of the Jews was especially vicious, the potential numbers affected the greatest, the willingness of European nations to welcome the victims of persecution the least. The intergovernmental conference was called not in response to the Spanish Civil War nor Bolshevik purges, but as a direct consequence of the persecution of the Jews of Austria and Germany. This question would dominate the conference in its entirety. The number of "refugees" discussed at Evian, 600,000, would be identical with the Jewish population of Greater Germany. Walter Adams, Secretary to Sir John Hope Simpson's Survey of Refugee Problems, conducted under the joint auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, claimed the word refugee was a mere euphemism for Jew.96 U.S. Immigration Commissioner James Houghteling would later concede that the term "refugee" was useless as far as official definition went.97 Harold Willis Dodds, principal U.S. delegate to the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees at Bermuda in 1943, recently indicated, "Oh, everyone knew that when you talked about refugees in those days, you were talking about the Jews."98


97 Houghteling to Frances Perkins, January 5, 1940, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, Immigration File, OF133.

98 Interview with Harold Willis Dodds, June 2, 1968.
Roosevelt knew it too, for he wrote of the proposed intergovernmental conference, "The policy of the German Government toward Jewish minorities was the prime cause of the entire problem."\(^9^9\) Nevertheless, the government, partially for defensive purposes at home, where anti-Semitism bubbled near the surface of public opinion, partially for the sake of the Jews abroad whom it was feared would suffer additional persecution if their case was singled out for mention, held to the official fiction in 1938 and throughout the war years that there was nothing unique about the Jewish refugee problem.\(^1^0^0\) The nature of Hull’s call for an intergovernmental conference, then, in some ways obscured the true problem and prematurely burdened the conference with the same restrictions which had severely limited the League’s refugee bodies.


\(^{100}\) The President declined to issue statements for the Emergency Conference to Save the Jews of Europe in September, 1943, or to Guy Gillette who had arranged a special banquet on behalf of Albert Einstein in August, 1944, or to the Independent Jewish Press Service on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and was unavailable to representatives of Jewish parochial schools in New York City who had come to Washington seeking a statement on Nazi genocide. There was no mention of the Jewish tragedy in the declaration signed by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin on November 1, 1943, promising punishment of Nazi atrocities perpetrated against several listed nationalities. And in the spring of 1944, when Morgenthau, Stimson and Stettinius prepared a special condemnation of the Jewish massacres, the final draft was amended to speak at length first of the sufferings of Warsaw, Lidice, Kharkov, Nanking, the Chinese, Filipinos, Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Dutch, Danes, Greeks, Russians, and U.S. Servicemen. There was only a brief mention of the Jews on page two. See Church Matters, Jewish File, Roosevelt Library, OF-76-C, Box 17, and Refugee Folder, Roosevelt Library, Box 58.
Roosevelt and Hull could hardly have been buoyed by official responses to their announcement. Within four hours of receipt of Hull's cable, Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano notified the American Ambassador William Phillips that while he recognized the humanitarian character of the proposal, "Italy could not participate in any move to care for the enemies of Fascism or Nazism." 101 Rumania and Poland, in offering to attend the conference, conditioned their participation upon some discussion of their Jewish problems as well. 102 Russia hedged, fearing that the United States planned to revive the White Russian question. And Canada expressed concern over duplication of the work of existing League offices. 103

In America, the response to Hull's call was anything but positive. A.F. of L. President Green indicated his support as long as nothing was done in the matter of juggling quotas, which might prejudice labor's position. Representative Richard Jenkins of Ohio again warned against becoming embroiled in Europe's problems, and arch-anti-Semite John Rankin of Mississippi warned that "almost every disgruntled element that ever got into trouble in its own country has pleaded for admission into the United States on the ground that they were oppressed at home." 104

101 Foreign Relations of the U.S., Vol. I, 1938, p. 743. Italy also explained that it could not participate if Germany was unrepresented. This prompted The New Republic to comment: "One could as reasonably refuse to attend a funeral because the murderer had not been asked." "Doors Close Against the Refugees," New Republic, LXXXV (July 13, 1938), p. 263.


103 Ibid., pp. 742 and 753.

Roosevelt even received several pieces of hate literature from persons calling themselves "most ardent supporters." "Please spare us," these few letters ran. "Why open the door for more Jews? Don't we have enough of that scum here already?"\footnote{105}

On the whole, however, Roosevelt and Hull were cheered by British, American and French editorial opinion which applauded the idea of an international conference on refugees.\footnote{106} By the end of spring, acceptances had been received from Great Britain, the Dominions, Denmark, France, Belgium, Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia, and Ireland.\footnote{107} France had generously offered to host the conference at Evian-les-Bains, a small town in the Alps, whose only distinction was its proximity to the Little St. Bernard Pass used by Hannibal in the crossing of these mountains in the third century, B.C.E.

\footnote{105}Such letters and telegrams came from persons calling themselves "patriotic Democratic Americans" and a spurious Democratic Hollywood Movie Association. They were more than matched, perhaps as much as 10-1 by congratulatory messages from private citizens in this country and abroad. Especially pathetic were the pleas of a young Jewish girl in Czechoslovakia praising the President for his efforts and asking admission to the United States. In another, an American Jew asked help for his relatives abroad. And in a third, an aged woman in this country spelled out her gratitude for all that the President had done for her people in block letters. Roosevelt Library, File OF 133A, Box 3.

\footnote{106}Virtually every American newspaper played up the positive contributions of refugees to American culture and held that admission of Jewish refugees would be a signal act of Christian charity. The Fort Worth Star-Telegram went so far as to suggest swapping Nazi-minded citizens for Jews. See "The Evian Conference: Editorial Comment," Contemporary Jewish Record, Vol. I (September, 1938), pp. 47-56.
Nazi Germany, which had precipitated the call to Evian with its seizure of Austria and subsequent brutalization of that nation's Jewish community, would not attend the conference on the shores of Lake Leman. Nor were the interested East European nations accorded delegate status at Evian. Even before the conference began the western democracies decided upon a distinction between "sender" and "receiver" states. The East Europeans, who were permitted to send unofficial observers, were designated as "senders" of refugees.
CHAPTER THREE

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

There was a tragic element in the statement circulated among Europe's Jews in 1938 that the world was made up of two types of countries: the kind where Jews could not live, and the kind where Jews could not enter. This rather aptly described the situation as representatives of more than 30 nations and 39 private organizations gathered at Evian on the shores of Lake Geneva on July 6, 1938.

Persecution of the Jews in Germany and Austria had evoked the conference. A somewhat more subdued persecution in the Baltic and Balkan states was being viewed warily by diplomats and humanitarians. Potential receiver nations like Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and France were saturated with refugees, and France had even instituted a series of regulatory decrees upon aliens which one observer called super-scelerat. Refoulement, the subject of League discussions in every year since 1932, was even more pronounced in 1938 as some nations required transit visas of Germans fleeing their country, while others permitted only non-Aryans to cross the border, and still others which had welcomed refugees in 1933 stationed armed guards along barbed-wire to repulse any new immigrants. Every English-speaking nation in

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1 Tartakower and Grossmann, *The Jewish Refugee*, p. 140.
the world was committed to strict immigration restriction. Palestine was
off-limits to Jews as a result of demonstrations staged by Haj Amin al-
Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. And Latin American nations were
not eager to import Europe's problems either.

For its own reasons, once having called for the conference, the
United States soon abdicated all responsibility for preliminary prepara-
tions in favor of the French. On May 7, Hull named Myron C. Taylor,
onetime chairman of U.S. Steel, as Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary to head the American delegation to Evian. The sad-faced
Taylor's single qualification in the field of negotiation was his successful
resolution of contract differences with John L. Lewis in 1936. An Episco-
palian of Quaker stock, the 64-year-old Taylor had resigned from U.S.
Steel to take a sabbatical for what he termed "philosophic meditation on
the problems of modern civilizations." It was from such a sabbatical that
he was called to head a delegation which also included George Warren,
a well-known authority on refugee questions in his capacity as director
of the National Coordinating Committee's International Migration Office,
Robert Pell, an attorney from the State Department's European Division,
and George Brandt, a senior officer in the Immigration Division. Taylor
departed for Rome in the second week of May and fretted away two months,
awaiting instructions from Washington.

At the same time, Ambassador Joseph Kennedy in London noted a
growing concern in the British Foreign Office about the conference. What
organizational steps were being taken by the United States? What def-
inite proposals would the Americans make? How did the U.S. envision
the scope of the work: Would conference resolutions be binding or merely recommendations to the respective governments? Hull's evasive reply to Kennedy indicated that the French were assuming responsibility for all arrangements and that the Secretary would apprise the British of the American position as to scope and procedure "in the near future." No such memorandum was forthcoming before the meeting and on the eve of the conference the British were still totally in the dark as to the nature of U.S. refugee policy.

The British were not alone in laboring in a diplomatic vacuum, unaware of what policies other participants might advance once the conference began. Twenty-one of the 39 private organizations represented at Evian were Jewish. Each of these submitted memoranda that were heavily inscribed with innocence. (Funsters capitalized on the fact that Evian spelled backward was naive.) The Jewish Agency for Palestine,


4 Ibid., p. 745.

5 The list includes the Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews, Jewish Colonization Association, German-Jewish Aid Committee, Comité d'aide et d'assistance aux victimes d'antisémitisme en Allemagne, Comité voor Bijzondere Joodsche Belangen, Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, Agudath Israel World Organization, American Joint Distribution Committee, Council for German Jewry, HICEM, World Jewish Congress, New Zionist Organization, Alliance Israelite Universelle, Comité pour le développement de la grande colonisation juive, Freeland League, ORT, Centre de recherches de solutions au problème juif, Jewish Agency for Palestine, Comité pour la defense des droits des Israelites en Europe centrale et orientale, Union des Sociétés OSE, and Society d'émigration et de colonisation juive EMCOL.
unaware that the British had already informed Taylor that Palestine was absolutely out of the question as a haven, extolled the virtues of sending Jews to the Middle East, where they would be needed and welcomed by their brethren. Sixty-five-year-old Dr. Heinrich Neumann, released from a concentration camp to propose international sponsorship of Jewish emigration from Germany at a ransom price of $250 per head, was unaware that Rabbi Stephen Wise had rejected a similar scheme in January, 1936, as "Blackmail! Blackmail!" Wise's World Jewish Congress itself was talking of the feasibility of floating a $60,000,000 international loan to assist in the resettlement of German Jews, while Agudas Israel, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Council of German Jewry, and the Jewish Colonization Association were rejecting potential shifts of millions of people. And as if to compound the confusion among the various Jewish bodies in the U.S., the abortive Jewish People's Committee for

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6 This was the statement of British deputy Sir Michael Pailaret to Taylor in Rome. Taylor to Hull, July 1, 1938, State Department Files, 840.48/442. For the memorandum of the Jewish Agency see Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, pp. 538-45.


8 Speech of Wise, January 7, 1936, Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, VII.

9 The memorandum also directed the conference to acknowledge the special position of Jewish refugees and to permit 100,000 Jews to emigrate to Palestine annually. For the complete statement of the World Jewish Congress, see Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, pp. 529-37.

10 These groups were especially concerned about the possible repercussions in Poland, Hungary and Rumania, if Germany succeeded in becoming judenrein by force. "Memorandum of Miscellaneous Jewish Organizations," in Tartakower and Grossmann, pp. 545-55.
United Action against Fascism and Anti-Semitism was calling for the redistribution of unused immigrations visas and the immediate admission of German Jewish refugees to this country.11

Certainly Rabbi Wise should not have anticipated serious consideration of any of these proposals. A member of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, organized immediately after the call for an international conference had been sounded by Hull, Wise, along with other members of the committee,12 had been fully briefed by Assistant Secretary of State George Messersmith on what to expect of Evian at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee at the State Department on May 16, 1938.

According to Messersmith, the government was committed to the idea of creating some permanent apparatus, based in a European capital, to cope with the long-range problem of refugees. This proposed intergovernmental committee was to complement the work of the High Commission and Nansen Office, and would initially be restricted to Austria and Germany, to avoid encouraging other governments to persecute their own

11 Two petitions, bearing the signatures of more than 300,000 persons, were presented to the White House. Presidential Secretary Marvin McIntyre accepted them with pro forma courtesy and nothing more was ever done. See Petition of Jewish People's Committee, June 7, 1938, Political Refugees File, Roosevelt Library, OF 3186.

12 The other members were James McDonald, former League Commissioner who was lured back into refugee work as Chairman of the Advisory Committee; Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert of the Federal Council of Churches in America; Paul Baerwald of the American Jewish Committee, Bernard Baruch, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Professor Joseph Chamberlain, the Most Reverend Joseph F. Rummel, Basil Harris, James Spears and Louis Kennedy.
minorities. Economic conditions being what they were, no nation would be compelled to expand existing immigration quotas. The U.S., which had accepted more than its share of refugees since 1933, envisioned no plan of official assistance to refugees since this also might give encouragement to the Nazis to apply greater pressure upon Jews and other non-Aryans. Neither should the committee expect results relative to Palestine. "Any attempts to interject in an active form the Palestine and Zionist problems should be rejected," Messersmith stated, "as there are so many passions involved and so many major problems that any endeavor to consider these problems would probably lead to the early disruption of the committee."¹³

Messersmith conceded that the replies to Hull's invitation had been reserved in tone, that there was a tendency on the part of all nations merely to render lip service to humanitarianism. "Although many of the countries on the committee are deeply moved by humanitarian instincts," he continued, "none of them is approaching the problem with any enthusiasm and very few with a disposition to make sacrifices." Because of the complexities of the problem, because the work could only proceed at a slow rate, and because the expectancies of "certain groups" were totally out of proportion with potential results, Messersmith recommended that "the work of the international committee should not be overpublicized."¹⁴

¹³Minutes of the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, May 16, 1938, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees File, Wise Papers, V-I.

¹⁴Ibid. See also Memorandum of Messersmith to Hull, Decimal Files, Department of State, 150.01/34, April 17, 1938, in which the Assistant Secretary indicated basically the same ideas to six Jewish Congressmen.
That same position was clearly delineated in the opening remarks of Ambassador Taylor on July 6. The world was faced with a peculiar migration problem, said Taylor, one that was not the outgrowth of government colonization or economic motives. 600,000 persons, "men and women of every race, creed and economic condition," were in immediate need of sanctuary because of government-sponsored persecution. And the number was increasing daily. The United States, Taylor went on, favored a long-range comprehensive program to facilitate the orderly departure of refugees with their property from their native lands, but he made it perfectly clear that this country would do nothing to impair existing immigration laws. The U.S. would accept 27,000 refugees per year, the quota for Austria and Germany. Not once in his address did Taylor, who was selected by the delegates to chair the Evian Conference, use the word Jew. 15

Having established a precedent for inaction, the American delegation listened as one national representative after another disavowed any initiative in resolving the refugee problem. Canada's Hume Wrong, ignoring the vast stretches of uninhabited territory in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, begged off because of serious unemployment problems which limited his nation's capacity to absorb additional immigrants. 16 The representatives of Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Ireland, and


16. Ibid., p. 20.
Switzerland did the same. France's Henri Berenger, one time representative to the League High Commission for German Refugees and also former President of the Foreign Relations Committee of the French Senate, indicated that his country had already accepted more than 25,000 German refugees in 1938, and that henceforth no more would be accepted without transit visas. He concluded his remarks with a pointed reference to the fact that Australia and the United States owed their greatness to the influx of European immigrants. The unveiled intimation that now would be a good time for these vast nations to accept more refugees, was not lost on Australian Minister of Commerce Lt. Colonel T. W. White who snapped that his young country preferred to build up its manpower from the source from which it had sprung. "It will no doubt be appreciated," added White, "that as we have no real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration."

The U.S. could not look to Great Britain for any startling rescue proposals either. Taking his cue from Taylor, chief British delegate Lord

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17Ibid., p. 16.

18Australia, with a population of 6,000,000 had more than 500,000 square miles of land which was readily available. It was estimated that the nation-continent could sustain a population of perhaps 25 million persons. At this time, however, the government was committed to a narrowly-construed all-White restrictionist immigration policy, which while not excluding Jews, worked against them. See Dorothy Thompson, Refugees: Anarchy or Organization (New York: Random House, 1938), p. 84; Marie Clements, "Australia: A Haven?" National Jewish Monthly, vol. LIII (Jan., 1939), p. 163; and Ludwig Lore, "Watchman: What of the Refugees?" National Jewish Monthly, vol. LIII (August-September, 1938), pp. 4-5.

Winterton noted that while his government "had no intention of abandoning their policy of granting asylum to refugees," England could not accept more immigrants because of its own economic crisis. Several days later, Winterton cleared up any lingering questions about Palestine as a potential refuge when he dismissed such an idea as totally untenable. As the mandatory power, Great Britain had been obligated to facilitate Jewish immigration to Palestine, he argued, but nothing more. "The record that has been achieved in this respect is one that calls for no apology," he added. According to Winterton, 300,000 Jews had entered Palestine since 1920, 40,000 from Germany alone over the past several years. Further mass immigration was allegedly impossible because of the size of the state, "special considerations on the local scene," and the fact that Palestine was "in a period of transition."  

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20 By the end of December, 1937, Great Britain had actually given asylum to just 5,500 German refugees. Even then, immigration procedures were highly selective and discriminatory against children, the aged, disabled, unskilled, and those without transit visas. Isaac, The Positive Contribution by Refugees, p. 54.

21 Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, pp. 21-25. These statements can be challenged. While arguments may be made on either side as to whether the British actually pledged themselves to create a Jewish state, there is no question that British colonial officers did little to promote the flow of Jews into Palestine. What emigration did take place was conducted by Jewish agencies against the efforts of the Mandatory. Proof of Britain's policy in this matter can be seen in the action of censure taken by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations against His Majesty's Government in June, 1939. For a copy of this statement, see Oscar I. Janowsky's Foundations of Israel (Princeton, New Jersey: Anvil Press, 1959), p. 142.
Having suffered these self-abnegations and homilies in plenary session, the conferees then appointed two sub-committees, a general committee to hear in executive session the various testimonies of private relief organizations, and a technical committee chaired by Nansen Office President Michael Hansoon of Norway to review the immigration laws and practices of participating countries. For several days, in and out of the conference rooms, amidst the lovely gardens and terraces of the Royal Hotel, unofficial relief delegations waylaid the diplomats, even as they strolled or dined, to suggest a tangle of refugee settlements in West Australia, French North Africa, Shanghai, Angola, Alaska, Madagascar, Tanganyika, Rhodesia, or Mindanao.  

The region which most occupied the attention of the delegates, however, was Latin America. In their eagerness to come up with some proposal for public consumption, the American and European delegates fantasized that Latin America would be ideal for the German refugees. That region was underpopulated, its climate suitable for European settlement, and such colonization would result in exploitation of the vast agricultural and mineral wealth of South and Central America. The "Anglo" delegates read into the comments of past generosity toward the refugees

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on the part of Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Peru, a present willingness to accept more.\textsuperscript{23}

That the opposite was true is evident even from the most cursory reading of the opening remarks of the delegates from these countries. Without fail, virtually every Latin state expressed hostility at the thought of accepting more "non-Aryan" immigrants.\textsuperscript{24} Senor M. A. LeBreton of Argentina pointed out that his country had taken 32 Jewish immigrants for every 48 that entered the U.S. since 1935, yet Argentina was only one-tenth the size of the United States.\textsuperscript{25} Chile's Garcia Oldine noted that since 1933 his nation had accepted 14,000 refugees. Before the days of Hitler, Chile had only 2,200 Jews, which meant its Jewish population had increased 672\%.\textsuperscript{26} Bolivia also could point to a 600\% increase, Paraguay 58.3\%. M.J.M. Yepes of Colombia expressed the Latin fear of a refugee inundation when he warned the delegates at Evian that suc-

\textsuperscript{23}Representatives of these countries spoke with pride of the 40,000 refugees welcomed to Latin America since 1933. More impressive were the statistics of 171,000 immigrants accepted by Brazil between 1900 and 1939, and the six million accepted by Argentina since 1864. Delegates also could hardly be faulted for misinterpreting Mexico's pledge to remain "an asylum to foreigners who were afraid for their lives." "Evian Conference on Political Refugees," \textit{Social Service Review}, Vol. XII (September, 1938), p. 516.

\textsuperscript{24}George Warren noted this regretful situation in his daily communiqués to Professor Chamberlain during July. See Warren to Chamberlain, July 8, 9, 11, 1938, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees File, Wise Papers, V-I.

\textsuperscript{25}Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{26}Tartakower and Grossmann, \textit{The Jewish Refugee}, p. 344.
cessful resettlement of thousands of Jews could well result in Evian becoming the "Wailing Wall" of all who claimed to be persecuted. 27

Far from responding with generosity to the Jewish crisis engendered by the Anschluss, the Latin states shuddered at the prospect of additional Jewish refugees and tightened up their immigration laws. Vociferous pro-Nazi German minorities in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile exaggerated the evils of refugee relief and destroyed every plan put forward along these lines. 28 Now every Latin state required show or landing money to be held by the government for a period of years against the possibility that an individual might become a public charge. Such rules were tempered by further discrimination against Jews. Colombia's entry fee of $290, to be held in escrow for two years, was hiked to $500 and five years for Jews from Eastern Europe. Brazil and Argentina restricted visa applications to persons with "close relatives" already resident in those countries. Argentina, with 225,000 Jews, passed a series of laws establishing quotas in the professions. Trinidad prohibited immigration from nations south of Belgium or east of France. Mexico, Paraguay, and Bolivia made it perfectly clear that all future immigrants must be legitimate.

27 Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, p. 25.

agriculturists. And Venezuela's spokesmen bluntly state that Jews were not wanted and permission to immigrate would not be granted. 29

Only the tiny Dominican Republic held out any prospect of serving as an actual haven. On July 9, 1938, Virgilio Trujillo-Molina delighted the tedium ridden delegates of Evian by announcing his government's willingness to accept 100,000 refugees. Said Trujillo:

The Dominican Government, which for many years has been encouraging and promoting the development of agriculture by appropriate measures and which gives ample immigration facilities to agriculturists who wish to settle in the country as colonists, would be prepared to make its contribution by granting specially advantageous concessions to Austrian and German exiles, agriculturists with an unimpeachable record, who satisfy the conditions laid down by the Dominican legislature on immigration. 30

Hailed as a major breakthrough in the refugee question by President Roosevelt, 31 the Dominican offer was little more than an empty gesture by a self-seeking despot. The Trujillo regime received a good deal of favorable publicity as a result of its announcement, 32 but never intended that it should really succor the desperate Jews of Germany. It is


31 In a letter to James Rosenberg, President of the Dominican Settlement Association, Roosevelt called the project "a turning point" in relief work on behalf of the Jews. Roosevelt to Rosenberg, December 12, 1939, Church Matters: Jewish, Roosevelt Library, OF 76-C, Box 17.

doubtful whether more than a handful of the 600,000 highly urbanized Jews of Austria-Germany could have satisfied the requirement of being "agriculturists with an unimpeachable record." Moreover, experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture doubted that the Dominican Republic, with its limited land supply, could absorb 100,000 more persons.33 In fact, by the end of 1941, the Dominican Republic Settlement Corporation chartered in October, 1939, with Washington's approval, had succeeded in placing a mere 500 Jewish families in what was formerly Santo Domingo.34

Despite this obvious antipathy of the Latin republics toward non-farming Jewish immigrants, the intergovernmental conference at Evian recommended a host of research projects to probe the possibility of settlement in the Western Hemisphere. Through 1939, the British were especially keen about Guiana, which had been suggested as a haven for the Iraqi Assyrians in 1935. Rejected then as unfit for Caucasian habitation, what with its poor soil, lack of transportation, tropical diseases, floods and drought, Guiana had hardly improved in four years. In 1939, Karl Pelzer, geographical consultant for the Johns Hopkins Institute of Pacific

33 The Report Covering Field Investigations of Settlement Possibilities Existent on Selected Lands in the Dominican Republic (New York, 1939) done by Henry D. Barker (principal pathologist, Bureau of Plant Industry), William P. Kramer (chief of operations, Forestry Service) and A. E. Kocher (Bureau of Chemistry of Soils, Soil Conservation Service) painted a bleak picture of the Dominican's capacity to accommodate even a fraction of the proposed 100,000 immigrants.

34 Wischnitzer, The Historical Background of Settlement of Jewish Refugees, p. 47.
Relations labelled the prospects for settlement of even 30,000 persons along the thin coastal belt of Guiana as "negligible." Similar criticisms were hurled against Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala by Professor George McBride of the University of California, against British Honduras by Professor Lee Waibel, formerly of the Universities of Kiel and Bonn, against Panama by George Roberts of the National City Bank of New York, against Venezuela by Robert Strausz-Hupe of the University of Pennsylvania, against Brazil by Raye Platt, and Ecuador by Alec Góldetz and Cyril Henriques.

Each of these studies agreed on certain essential points; (1) Latin America needed agricultural workers, and the refugees most assuredly did not belong to this class; (2) each of the Latin states faced serious irrigation and water purification problems, problems which could only be multiplied with plans for new colonies; (3) the climates of most Latin states were temperate and tropical diseases most assuredly would take a high toll in deaths among any European settlers; (4) in each state there was a residual anti-Semitism, manifested principally among German hyphenates, but found among long-resident Spanish descendants as well; (5) German Jewish refugees would face a religious as well as linguistic

35 Karl Pelzer, Settlement Possibilities in British Guiana and Surinam (Baltimore: Institute for Pacific Relations, 1939). Another Anglo-American team, headed by Dr. Joseph Rosen explored Guyana in the spring of 1939 and concluded that "trial settlement" was possible even though "British Guiana is not an ideal place for refugees from Mid-European countries." Belth, p. 382.

36 Quest for Settlement: Summaries of Selected Economic and Geographic Reports on Settlement Possibilities for European Immigrants (New York: Refugee Economic Corporation and Johns Hopkins University, 1948). Despite the late publication date, these manuscripts were available before World War II.
barrier in settling in the Latin South; (6) the ultimate cost of such settlement would be inestimable because of the need for road construction, improved health and sanitation facilities, and the cost involved in setting up in homesteads. Latin America would therefore hardly make the most inviting refuge.

After a week of fruitless haggling, the Evian Conference adjourned on July 15, 1938. Ambassador Taylor, who in the words of George Warren had won the respect and admiration of those present as a first rate negotiator, delivered the valedictory. This final communique called attention to the involuntary emigration from Germany which threatened "the processes of appeasement in international relations" and recommended:

(1) That the life of the intergovernmental conference called by President Roosevelt be prolonged and that the body be formalized under the title Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, consisting of such members of the world community as wished to participate.

(2) That the IGCR maintain an executive council, sitting in London, with a Chairman and four Vice-Chairmen, along with a Director, whose function it would be to negotiate "to improve present conditions of exodus and to replace them with conditions of orderly emigration" from Germany.

(3) That the scope of the Committee be limited to those persons forced to leave Germany and Austria, and who had not established themselves permanently elsewhere, or who might yet have to flee these countries
because of their political opinions, religious beliefs, or racial origin.\textsuperscript{37}

The final communique from Evian did not address itself to the problem of additional refugees in Eastern Europe should Hitler's proposed expansion in this direction occur on schedule.\textsuperscript{38} Nor did it clearly distinguish among the functions of the League High Commission, the Hansen Office, and the IGCR, a problem which was to plague the IGCR's first Director George Rublee for the next six months. Nor did it clear up the problem of statelessness and the need for some improvement on Nansen passport procedures. And finally, the communique did nothing to oblige any government financially to the IGCR. Instead, it read, "The governments of the countries of refuge and settlement should not assume any obligations for the financing of involuntary emigration."\textsuperscript{39} The IGCR was to be a voluntary organization, like the League Commission on Refugees, totally dependent upon private donations.

Reacting to what it termed the "niggardly" positions of the democracies, the New Republic editorialized:

What a demonstration these nations might have provided for the world if they could have gone on wholeheartedly to act in the spirit of the cause that brought them together! If they had proclaimed at once that the unfortunate victims of


\textsuperscript{38} On August 31, 1928, FDR sent a memo to Hull indicating that earlier that spring Hitler had told Mussolini, Henlein, and Esterhazy of Hungary that he would present the Czechs with an ultimatum over the Sudetenland in ten weeks--September, 1938. He did. Roosevelt to Hull, August 31, 1939, Correspondence File, Box 43, Folder 107, Hull Papers, Library of Congress.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, vol. I, 1938, p. 756.
persecution would be welcomed elsewhere, promptly and with as few obstacles as possible. The humane superiority of democracy over its enemies would have been strikingly demonstrated. Unfortunately, however, many of the delegates protested that their countries had no room for the victims, and even the more liberal offers were scanty enough.\(^{40}\)

That pretty well summed up American press reaction to the conference, which was immediately labelled a failure. Some newspapers, like the St. Paul Dispatch, the Louisville Journal, and the Houston Chronicle went fishing for bright spots and concurred with Joint Distribution Committee representative Jonah Wise that while "no miracles could be expected," the conference nonetheless marked "a twilight of hope."\(^{41}\)

Others, like the Boston Post and San Francisco Chronicle, scored the "selfishness of nationalism and floundering methods of the conferees."

Added the Richmond News Leader, "Some of us are a bit ashamed of our country."\(^{42}\)

Roosevelt could not conceal his disappointment over the outcome of the meeting. Hopeful of some dramatic proposal from another country and mindful of the pathetic letters from refugees at home and abroad


\(^{41}\)Many Jews were cheered to note that they were not deemed "a superfluous part of a country's population" as a result of the consultations at Evian. See Jonah Wise, "Impressions of Evian," Contemporary Jewish Record, vol. I (September, 1938), pp. 40–42. For editorial comments see "The Evian Conference: Editorial Comment," Contemporary Jewish Record, Vol. I (September 1938), pp. 47–50.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 49.
showering him with blessings, the President conceded (in 1941):
"Unfortunately, most of the governments seemed overly-cautious in their attitude about receiving these refugees; and while they were generally sympathetic, no constructive plans were submitted." ⁴³

Among those hesitant governments which he so readily criticized, Roosevelt might have included his own. Shortly after the conference ended, Taylor cabled Hull requesting that the U.S. demonstrate its willingness to accept a substantial number of the 600,000 German refugees over the next five years. The Ambassador believed that because of health, age, etc. only 300,000 of these would ever be able to emigrate. If the United States, the moving force behind the IGCR did not act, said Taylor, "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." ⁴⁴

Hull's reply was akin to that of a school teacher upbraiding an errant schoolboy. The Secretary reminded Taylor of America's rigid immigration laws and pointed to the rising restrictionist tide in Congress, which most certainly would have opposed any juggling of quotas. Taylor was to explain to the other representatives of the IGCR that America, merely by taking its legally allotted number of German refugees, 27,300


per year, would in five years have accepted more than one-third of the total which Taylor himself said should be evacuated. 45

Hull preferred to pin his hopes for resolution of the refugee problem on the efforts of George Rublee, a seventy-year-old attorney who had been selected as the first Director of the IGCR. A Wilsonian Democrat, Rublee had acquired extensive administrative experience during World War I as a member of the Federal Trades Commission, the Treasury Department Legal Section, and the U.S. Shipping Board. He also had represented the United States at the Allied Maritime Transport Council in London in 1919, as legal adviser to the American Embassy in Mexico City between 1928 and 1930, as a member of the American delegation to the London Naval Conference in 1930, and as special consultant to the government of Colombia between 1930 and 1933. It is doubtful, however, whether in all his administrative and diplomatic experiences if Rublee had ever been as hamstrung by such balky instructions as he received from the second meeting of the IGCR in London on August 3, 1938.

No one yet had inquired whether the German Government would even talk with him, but Rublee was now given authority by the Inter-governamental Committee to arrange "the normal emigration" of Germany's 600,000 refugees. To avoid confusion, only the American Ambassador in Berlin, Hugh Wilson, was to approach the German Foreign Ministry

45 Ibid., p. 768. There is some question whether Hull even desired this much success. A month later, he wired Biddle in Poland, "Our efforts on behalf of German refugees must not, if it can possibly be avoided, encourage persecution by other governments aimed at forcing out unwanted sections of their populations and the dumping of these people onto the hands of international charity." Ibid., p. 783.
to secure an invitation for Rublee. Rublee was then to enter into "exploratory discussions" with Nazi officials, preparatory to working out some sensible scheme of emigration aimed at siphoning refugees off to South America.\textsuperscript{46} Such was the plan as approved at London and later endorsed by Secretary Hull, to whom Rublee reported scrupulously, though under no official obligation to do so.

Ambassador Wilson soon complained to Hull that it was practically impossible to see any official of consequence in Berlin at the end of the summer. Germany was preoccupied with the Sudetenland controversy during the months of August and September. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop had been away from the capital since July, and when he did return, disdained to treat with "an official person" representing a committee which Germany did not recognize "on matters affecting German internal affairs."\textsuperscript{47} It was not until October 18 that Wilson finally obtained a hearing for himself with German Secretary of State Ernst von Weizsaecker. At that time, Weizsaecker contemptuously rejected the Ambassador's entreaties on behalf of Rublee and the IGCR, noting that Germany had followed developments in the Committee and "had not been able to see that any particular headway had been made for the absorption of Jewish emigrants."\textsuperscript{48}

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\textsuperscript{46} Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, August 8, 1938, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees File, Wise Papers, VI.
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\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 772.
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Weizsaecker could not have been more astute had he been reading the confidential reports of Rublee to Hull. For months, Rublee waited in vain for an invitation from Berlin, busying himself in London with studies of relief possibilities around the world, seeking additional funds to supplement his meager $50,000 operational budget, and growing ever more enraged by the lack of cooperation of so-called "receiver nations." Late in August, he lamented, "The Allies are not terribly concerned over the fate of refugees still in Germany." France, Belgium and Holland enacted new restrictions barring immigration from Germany. On the first of September, Brazil, which along with the U.S., Great Britain and France, held one of the Vice-Chairmanships on the IGCR, resigned its seat, leaving little doubt that its interest in refugee affairs was moribund. The next day, Argentina barred all further immigration, arguing that it had a higher percentage of Jews than any other nation. On the 13th, Chile, never sympathetic to the Jews anyway, formally withdrew from the IGCR. Within two weeks, the three most industrialized Latin American nations had renounced all interest in refugee matters. Considering the interest that had been expressed in South America at Evian and London, this trend could only be termed disastrous, as other Latin states were certain to follow the lead of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. From London, Rublee worriedly wrote Hull that fall, "With the exception of the United States and the United Kingdom, doors have been systematically closed.

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49 Ibid., p. 753.
everywhere to involuntary emigrants since the meeting at Evian."  

If anything, the Director of the IGCR was momentarily being generous to the British who seemed inclined to minimize his mission. At first tolerant of what seemed to be legitimate procedural delays at the time of the Munich crisis, Rublee grew increasingly exasperated with the British in October and November. Five days after Roosevelt sent a message to Neville Chamberlain expressing the hope that the direct contacts established at Munich might be helpful in expediting deliberations over "religious persecution," Rublee telephoned Acting Secretary of State Welles to complain that the British "must be persuaded to take the matter more seriously." Two days later, he was more blunt. He charged that the British had made "no real effort to open up their colonies or use their influence with the Dominions," that far from the Germans being reluctant to speak with him, "it is apparent that the British are reluctant to have me talk with Germany," that British attitudes were "wholly unsatisfactory." A week later, he charged that the British were "sullen" over the prospect that he might indeed get to Berlin.

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50 Ibid., p. 821.

51 In the note, delivered by Ambassador Kennedy to Chamberlain on October 6, the President suggested that "it would seem reasonable to anticipate that the German Government will assist the other governments . . . to permit the arrangement of orderly emigration . . . and to permit them (the refugees) to take with them a reasonable percentage of their property." Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. VII (1938), p. 172.


53 Ibid., p. 798.

54 Ibid., p. 802.
Then, on the 25th of October, Rublee relayed the distressing news to Washington that the British were actively discriminating between "Aryan" and non-"Aryan" refugees. Independent of the IGCR, the British were attempting to bring Sudetenland Aryans, who, it was alleged, were more assimilable than non-Aryans, to the dominions. At the same time, IGCR Chairman Lord Winterton introduced a resolution to expand the Committee's authority to encompass Czech refugees, as well as Austrians and Germans. Rublee hastened to point out that for the first time in the Committee's history, the draft memorandum distinguished between Jews and non-Jews. After noting for Hull that the overwhelming majority of the persons with whom the Committee was obligated to deal were Jews, Rublee said, "If we were to begin to differentiate, even to the extent of indicating in a formal document that there are different categories based on religious and racial origins, encouragement would be given to the deplorable and growing tendency in many countries to discriminate against persons of Jewish faith, with the result that any problem of finding places of settlement for the great mass of involuntary emigrants would become insoluble and I should not be in a position to convince the governments participating in the IGCR to receive involuntary emigrants in greater numbers than are received by them at the present time." Hull agreed

55 This special concern for Sudetenland Aryans was evident in the efforts of the British to whisk a Czech theater group to Canada in October, 1938. See letter of Lord Winterton to Myron Taylor, Hull Papers, Correspondence, Box 44, Folder 116.

that this country could not countenance any discrimination, and the U.S., while agreeing to the expanded scope of the IGCR, succeeded in quashing Winterton's suggested distinctions among German refugees. 57

Still, the British continued to be most troublesome through the rest of 1938. On the 17th of November, their Ambassador in Washington, Sir Ronald Campbell, presented Welles with a demarche stating that Great Britain was willing to give up a portion of its immigration quota for use by German refugees. The same idea of re-allocating unused quotas had been considered in the U.S. on numerous occasions. Just two days before, however, Roosevelt had stated publicly that there would be no increase in the German quota, no juggling of figures. Highly critical of the British position on refugees anyhow, Welles was convinced that the British offer had been made solely to discomfort the U.S. He reminded the Ambassador that quotas were granted by Congress under existing laws and were not the free property of nations to which they were assigned. When the Under-Secretary indicated that the offer would have to be communicated to the President and perhaps even made public, the insincerity of the British gesture became apparent. In Welles' words, the Ambassador "became very disturbed," and backed down, suggesting that the matter not go beyond Hull and Welles since the offer was "unofficial" (i.e. not sanctioned by the British cabinet). 58

57 Ibid., pp. 808-9.

58 Ibid., p. 829.
British diplomatic flu and a sequence of more pressing engagements derailed Myron Taylor’s efforts through November to prod the IGCR to some kind of action. Then, during the first two weeks of December, rumors were circulated by the British Embassy in Berlin and the Foreign Office in London to the effect that the Nazis were about to send a "high-ranking" diplomat to open negotiations with Rublee’s Assistant Director Robert Pell in Brussels. When this trip never materialized, the British, who seemed to have more knowledge of what was going on in Berlin than anyone else (American Ambassador Wilson was recalled to the United States in November), attributed the failure to an illness which had bedridden the mysterious visitor.

Finally, on the morning of December 15, 1938, the American Charge d’Affairs in England notified Washington that Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht, President of the Reichsbank and Minister without Portfolio in the Nazi Cabinet, was to visit London, not Brussels, that very day to discuss the Jewish problem with a host of British experts attached to the League Commission on Refugees. IGCR Director Rublee was invited to join with Montagu Norman of the Bank of England and Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, chief economic adviser to the British Government, almost as an afterthought. While American diplomats abided by the rules of procedure set out in August to open a single line of communication with the Nazis, the British worked through Lord Halifax to open separate contacts. Disgruntled by this breach of diplomatic etiquette, America’s Charge in

Berlin, Paul Gilbert also noted, "It will be recalled that my knowledge of the proposed Brussels meeting derives solely from the Foreign Office."\textsuperscript{60}

Why should the British have deliberately engaged in such duplicity? The answer was obvious to Taylor, Hull and Rublee. At Evian, Taylor had wrestled with the British to prevent the IGCR from merely becoming an adjunct of the League High Commission.\textsuperscript{61} He thought he had won, but while the U.S. strove to avoid any connection with a League-instituted operation, the British tried just as hard to steer it toward a full-scale international commitment. Hull acknowledged as much when he informed Rublee on November 16, "We realize that the British are constantly pressing to have the Committee made an auxiliary of the League High Commission."\textsuperscript{62} British complaints about duplication of work, conflict over places of transit or refuge, finances, were regarded as a mere facade by the State Department, for there was never any doubt that the British considered the IGCR one more lure by which to embroil the U.S. in the affairs of the League of Nations.\textsuperscript{63}

The British were also concerned that nothing, not even the IGCR, top-heavy as it was with bungling Americans, should be permitted to

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., p. 865.

\textsuperscript{61}Warren to Chamberlain, July 19, 1938, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees File, Wise Papers, V-1.


\textsuperscript{63}On December 13, Lord Winterton, Chairman of the IGCR, indicated that in all conflicts between his organization and the High Commission, he was bound to support the League Commission. Ibid., p. 868.
jeopardize the delicate policy of appeasement which had been established as the *modus vivendi* of dealing with Hitler in 1938. On the 14th of November, from his offices in London, Rublee thought he detected a hopeful change in the British attitudes. Writing to Hull, he noted, "For the first time since my arrival in London, I feel that recognition is finding its way in high political quarters that the mistreatment by Germany of a half-million oppressed people is a definite obstacle to general appeasement in Europe."64

What had finally jarred the British from their lethargy, what had forced the recall of U.S. Ambassador Wilson, what had spurred the Germans to serious action, as sending a man of Schacht's esteem to negotiate with representatives of the international committees, was Kristalnacht, the systematic devastation of Jewish residences, businesses and houses of worship in Germany on "Black Thursday," November 10, 1938.

Until that date the Nazi regime seemed committed merely to a policy of humiliation and degradation of the Jewish community in Germany. The Nuremberg Laws of September, 1935, had reduced Jews and Mischlings to the status of stateless subhumans. In March, 1938, another law abolished the legal entity of Jewish community organizations dating back centuries and incorporated all such bodies under the state-supervised Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland. Between July and September,

64 *ibid.*, p. 822.
Jews were barred from holding positions as physicians, lawyers, financial advisers, salesmen, Realtors, and tourist guides. In the same period, 200 Jewish-owned banks were closed. All Jewish publishing firms were ordered to liquidate. All Jews were ordered to add the name "Israel" or "Sarah" to their given "Aryan" names. In such a context, the Voelkischer Beobachter could rightfully boast, "German citizens of the Jewish race existed once—they will never reappear." 65

It was at this time that the Polish Government tried to outwit the Nazis by revoking the citizenship of its nationals resident abroad. The Germans reacted swiftly by rounding up 18,000 Polish Jews before the deadline of October 29, and dumping them across the border into no-man's land. Among these unfortunates were the parents of Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old student in Paris. The boy received a letter from his parents, who had lived in Havor for thirty years, and who were now attempting to exist in a boxcar near Zbaszyn. Half-crazed with grief ("I could bear it no longer," he wrote, "I am not a dog"), Grynszpan purchased a cheap revolver, entered the German Embassy on Monday morning, November 7, and shot the legation's Third Secretary Ernst von Rath. Von Rath died the following day. 66

This assassination was the provocation the Nazis required to plunge Germany into a final bloodbath that would purge it of all its Jews. Beginning with coordinated assaults against the Jewish communities at

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65 Quoted in the American Jewish Yearbook, 1939-40, p. 262, this comment originally appeared in the Beobachter on November 13, 1938.

66 On September 1, 1941, Grynszpan, who had been retried by victorious Nazis in France was tortured to death.
2 a.m. on the 10th, the terror raged unchecked in Germany for several days. In a single night, twelve synagogues in Berlin, five in Frankfurt, 18 in Vienna, were gutted by men working in the Raueberzivil coats fancied by Nazis. At Worms, a synagogue dating back to 1034 was levelled. Many priceless objects, including a Torah scroll from the 13th century, a table and chair reputedly belonging to the Jewish sage Rashi, imperial documents concerning the Jews and dating from the 16th century all were lost. Close to 600 synagogues were bombed, burned or confiscated by the Nazis in "the Night of Breaking Glass," as police stood by or joined the looters. Some of the buildings later became dormitories for Hitlerjugend, sporting clubs, or itinerant house painters. Others became stables. Cemeteries throughout Germany were desecrated. The remaining business premises of Jews were demolished. Some 50,000 Jews were rounded up and thrown into concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald. In some places, Jews were lynched. Jewish suicides now leaped to 1000 per month.

According to Joseph Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry all of this was really the "spontaneous" reaction of the German people to the killing of Vom Rath. The actual responsibility for Kristalnacht, the Nazis argued with questionable logic, rested with the Jews themselves. On the

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12th of November, with the embers of destruction not yet cool, the German Government issued a new set of decrees calling for the elimination of Jews from the economic life of Germany. Under these laws, all Jewish businesses, industries, real estate, was to be liquidated and Aryanized by January 1, 1939. Jews whose business premises had been damaged were forced to make repairs at their own expense before the property was transferred. The Jewish community as a whole was required to pay an "atonement fine" of one billion marks ($400,000,000) to compensate the government for inconveniences sustained during Kristalnacht. Jews were barred from all trades and ordered to divest themselves of all stocks, bonds, securities, gold, platinum and silver within the week. They were to be reimbursed in German marks for only 10% of their valuables. Through such measures as the institution of a new flight tax, the Nazi regime was enriched by an additional $37,000,000 during November and December, 1938.\(^70\)

While Morse claims that Kristalnacht virtually shattered the hopes of Rublee to initiate fruitful negotiations with the Germans,\(^71\) the opposite opinion was expressed by Rublee himself when he made his final report to the President's Advisory Committee in February, 1939. Then, Rublee reasoned that adverse German reaction to the excesses of Nazi toughs during Kristalnacht coupled with hostile world opinion had forced the Hitler Government to seek a diplomatic solution to its Jewish problem.\(^72\)

\(^70\) Ibid., p. 263.
\(^71\) Morse, While Six Million Died, p. 228.
\(^72\) Minutes of the 20th Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee, February 24, 1939, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, Wise Papers, VI.
Rublee's analysis, based on direct conversations with Hermann Goering, was sustained in reports reaching Secretary Hull from the German underground by the end of 1938. Only it was not concern for the feelings of the international community which had prompted the Nazis to welcome negotiations with the till-now ignored IGCR. Rather, it was simple economics. The German state, in the midst of a highly-touted industrial Four Year Plan, was facing bankruptcy as international boycotts threatened to strangle production. As an example, just that fall Goering had informed a group of gauleiters that I. G. Farben's foreign orders had been curtailed by 40% since the middle of 1938 and the outlook for 1939 generally was not much better.

Goering's concept of Grossraumwirtschaft or autarky jeopardized, the Germans needed cash, international exchange, to rectify their economic imbalances and one logical means by which to obtain it was by blackmailing the world community with German Jews. The extremely delicate work of officials in the Reichswanderungsamt (Office of Migration), described by Joachim Prinz as "benevolent till Kristallnacht," was made impossible by new demands for forced emigration. Das Schwarze Korps,


75 Levin, The Holocaust, p. 125.
a semi-official military journal, preached "extermination with fire and sword" of all Jews who did not leave the Fatherland.\footnote{New York Times, November 23, 1928, p. 8.} Even the generally mild-mannered von Ribbentrop thundered against "800,000 bad Jews" in Germany in an interview with France's Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet. Von Ribbentrop expressed the official policy of the government when he told Bonnet that these "Eastern," "poverty-stricken," "diseased" Jews, who had wormed their way into the heart of German life and become rich at the expense of indigenous Aryans had to go--now.\footnote{Countries like France and England, with limited numbers of "good Jews" could not comprehend the strong feeling against the Jews in Germany, Ribbentrop said. Rublee to Hull, December 8, 1938, Foreign Relations of the U.S., vol. I, 1938, pp. 862-3, and 872.}

There was another reason why the Nazis moved so swiftly against the Jews. This became evident when Schacht presented the German proposal to the western diplomats assembled in London on the 15th of December. The Reichsbank President noted that Jewish property yet outstanding in Germany amounted to six billion marks (roughly two and one-half billion dollars). The Nazis envisioned confiscation of this sum, but in a manner which was draped with an humanitarian facade.

According to Schacht, there were in Germany (including the Austrian and Sudeten regions) 600,000 persons who under the Nuremberg Laws could be labelled Jews. Of these, 200,000 were aged people with no likelihood of leaving the country. Another 250,000 were women and children, and 150,000 were employable males. Schacht's scheme called for the annual
departure over a three-year-period of 50,000 of these males. Far from leaving penniless (Goering had said the week before that it was "absurd" to expect the Jews to leave without any assets), they would be assisted by a trust fund to be established from one-quarter of all Jewish property in Germany, roughly a billion and one-half marks. This fund, to be administered by one Jewish and two Aryan trustees, was to be raised by the Jewish community within a year in foreign exchange. From the proposed interest of 4% and annual amortization of 2%, the Jews would be permitted to buy German goods in Germany, which they could then take with them when leaving the country. As a condition to the plan, all persecution of the Jews would stop. 78

Such a scheme was not really remarkable. Practically the same idea had been broached by the Reich Ministry of Economics to the Jewish Agency in Palestine three years earlier. Roundly condemned as "blackmail" by Rabbi Wise, 79 the so-called Haavara (Transfer) System was actually implemented to permit 20,000 German-Jewish refugees to Palestine to contract for the purchase of German goods valued at 130,000,000 marks and their eventual transport to Palestine. Payment for this property came from blocked accounts in Germany. And while individuals lost as much as 50% of their assets, at least, it was rationalized, they came out of Germany with something. 80

78 Ibid., p. 874.

79 Memorandum of Wise to the Office Committee of the American Jewish Congress, January 12, 1936, American Jewish Congress File, Wise Papers, VII.

80 Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, p. 443.
With this in mind, Myron Taylor on August 15, 1938, had already suggested to Hull that the German Government might be receptive to a broader application of the Haavara System. In his reply, Hull flatly rejected any such scheme, pointing out that the Haavara plan had been limited to a small number of emigrants, and that a broader application of the scheme would provide Germany with an artificial trade lever in international affairs. Said Hull, "We cannot consider extension of that system to this country or look with favor on its extension to other countries." 81

Hull also voiced disapproval in October of a Rublee-sponsored measure that would have financed emigration from Germany with proceeds derived from an increase of German exports consequent to the reversal of international boycotts against German products. So similar to Schacht's proposal of December 15, that both were identified as the Rublee Plan by Roosevelt. 82 Rublee's suggestion differed from that of the German in several ways. The Director of the IGCR envisioned a complete restoration of German trade with countries which formerly absorbed that nation's export specialties. Half of the proceeds derived from this increase, over the present "base level" of exports, would be applied to assisting refugees. As a start toward facilitating the immediate departure of 50,000 non-Aryans, the German Government was to cease all persecution and would be asked to contribute fifty million pounds sterling from its foreign exchange to bonds payable in dollars. The Germans would receive an

average annual dividend of five reichsmarks for each dollar in bonds thus issued though the interest rate would fluctuate depending upon the wealth of the emigrant. Rublee emphasized that the German Government could readily turn a profit of 100% within a short period of years on these bonds. 83

To this, Hull replied that such a plan would place the entire obligation for the refugees upon the world's commercial markets, that it could lead to the creation of new competition by German products, that it might even rebound against the Jews in the form of overt anti-Semitism as the Jews would then be blamed for creating unfair trade advantages for the Germans. 84 The Secretary repeatedly affirmed his preference for some plan which would enable emigrants to take free exchange out of Germany (an idea which he conceded was impractical due to the critical situation of German finances at the end of 1938), or which would permit the refugee to take out convertible marks (Sperrmarks) which could then be used to make purchases of non-German goods through free foreign exchange. As a last resort, Hull even contemplated the funding of a Bank of International Settlement, which might grant emigrants loans. But even this would depend upon the willingness of the Germans to contribute to the assets of such an institution. 85


84. Hull also remarked that the Treasury Department was concerned about the fact that the dollar would be the currency used to underwrite the entire scheme. *Ibid.*, p. 812.

Having considered and rejected the above possibilities, the Americans should not have been stunned by Schacht's proposal, and yet the official reaction was one of outraged indignation. Ambassador Taylor called the offer blackmail, "asking the world to pay a ransom for the release of hostages in Germany and to barter human misery for increased exports." Sumner Welles blasted this unsubtle return to medieval diplomacy. "No one who has been consulted believes that it would be possible to raise the sum mentioned or even an appreciable part of it under the terms outlined," he wrote. "The plan is generally considered as asking the world to pay a ransom for the release of hostages in Germany."  

Apart from such visceral reactions to the thought of blackmail or ransom, there were other basic objections to the German plan. In an effort to convince the democracies that the problem would not be too taxing, Schacht had spoken of the necessity of finding outlets for 150,000 German males. He had said nothing about their 300,000 dependents. Moreover, in promising that persecution of the remaining Jews would cease, he offered no guarantees, did not even concede that expulsion of the Jews, together with confiscation of their property constituted another form of persecution.

Nevertheless, at the insistence of the British, the Schacht Plan was not dismissed outright. Rather than treating it as the final bid of the Nazis, the British contended that it should be considered as a basis for

future negotiations. Indeed, Schacht left this impression when he finally accorded Rublee his long-awaited invitation to visit Berlin in January, 1939, a month in advance of the third scheduled plenary session of the IGCR in London.

To expedite Rublee's Mission, the British, who had procrastinated for so long, startled the Americans on December 16, 1938, by proposing the establishment of two additional committees. The first, to be headed by Rublee, was to include financial experts from the governments of the United States, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden. The other was to consist of prominent Jews from these and other major receiving nations, as well as "churchmen interested in non-Aryans." 88

Both committees died aborning: the first when Welles (acting for Hull who had gone off to Lima for the hemispheric conference) protested that there was no qualified banker in the employ of the government and that a qualified banker would not be aware of the intricacies of government policy; the second when Jewish leaders in London and Paris categorically opposed the creation of any committee which might lend an air of credulity to the canard that there was such a thing as an international Jewish Sanhedrin or conspiracy. 89

The best counter-proposal that Rublee could carry with him when he and Pell journeyed to Berlin was a plan which had originated with Welles on December 21. According to this scheme, a central financial


organization was to be established in London with an initial funding of $50,000,000, some of which was to be voluntarily contributed by the Nazi Government. The function of this agency, subordinated to the IGCR, was to sponsor specific settlement projects for German refugees. As many as 100,000 persons, it was conjectured, might be assisted through loans totalling as much as $2500 per family. The plan possessed several advantages over any previously discussed. The officers of the bank would be international financiers instead of Nazi "trustees." The bank would be self-sustaining as all expenditures would be in the form of loans rather than outright grants like those which had depleted the resources of voluntary relief organizations. No economic advantage would accrue to the Germans through a rise in exports. Yet Germany would inevitably profit through the departure of a racially undesirable element.90

Rublee finally arrived in Berlin on January 10, 1939, more than four months after his mission originally had been chartered. He may well have wished that he had never left London. After two days of unproductive talks, the Germans broke off negotiations to study the "modifications" made in the Schacht Plan by Welles. When discussions resumed on the 21st, Rublee was dumbfounded by the Germans' absolute rejection of Welles' loan plan. The next day discussions were postponed once more, and only later did Rublee learn that Schacht, who was considered unreliable and defeatist by the Nazi elite, had been removed from his position as Reichsbank President.

Rublee continued to press the negotiations with Goering and Schacht's successor, Dr. Helmut Wohlthat of the Economics Ministry. In February, he wrested several concessions from the Germans: (1) that Jews might re-enter the various trades until they could emigrate from Germany; (2) that Jews might obtain a moderate form of relief from the all-encompassing Fluchsteuer or flight tax (the Germans were deliberately vague about this pledge and continued to confiscate jewelry, precious metals, and works of art); (3) that the Germans would ease up on the issuance of bogus visas to Jews for South American countries, which practice had resulted in the suspension of all immigration in some Latin states; (4) that the Germans would expect no compensation or aid for their exports once the orderly emigration of Jews began; and (5) that an international organization fashioned after that proposed by Welles would be established, but without any German assistance. 91

It is currently impossible to assess this policy change on the part of the German Government. Perhaps the Nazis felt that by cooperating with the democracies, they might puncture the economic boycotts imposed upon them. Perhaps they agreed that they would be well enough off in getting rid of the Jews at any cost. In any event, German actions toward refugees through the spring and summer months of 1939 gave no indication of easing the persecution of these people, nor of beginning a non-confiscation policy.

On the 12th of February, Director Rublee delivered his final report to the IGCR plenary body in London. In his eyes, the refugee outlook was now "encouraging." Rublee noted all that had been done by the Intergovernmental Committee in the past six months and recommended that the IGCR continue to explore all possible settlements for involuntary emigrants and that it set about establishing the international corporation so necessary to the financing of this emigration. Both ideas were accepted. Feeling that his task had thus been completed after six months in office, Rublee tendered his resignation.\footnote{New York \textit{Times}, February 15, 1939, p. 1.} His place as Director was taken by Herbert Emerson, League Commissioner on Refugees from Germany since September, 1938, and League Commissioner on all refugee questions with the abolition of the Nansen Office in December. At long last the various relief committees had come under the direction of one man.

\footnote{Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, March 6, 1939, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, V-I.}

Until Hitler's march on Poland in September, 1939, the IGCR seemed unable to achieve any of its stated purposes. While Executive Director Pell tried to convince Wohlthat that extensive surveys were being undertaken and that new settlements might shortly be opened in Australia, Canada, Alaska, Finland, Sweden, Tanganyika, the Guianas, the Philippines, or the Dominican Republic, the British Foreign and
Colonial Offices continued to negate the efforts of the Committee. Ignoring the fact that any unilateral action taken by His Majesty's Government could not but affect the entire refugee problem, the British jealously regarded any discussion of the colonies as an invasion of a purely imperial question. Then, on May 17, 1939, the British Government dealt a deathblow to Zionist hopes for Palestine by issuing a White Paper which restricted total Jewish immigration over the next five years to 75,000 persons, dependent, of course, upon "the economic absorptive capacity" of Palestine.

Through the last months of 1938 and into 1939, leaders in the World Zionist Organization and the Zionist Organization of America had worked desperately to prevent the enactment of just such a policy. Not only had they failed, but in the process their efforts had antagonized

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94 See cable of Anthony Rothschild to George Warren, May 26, 1939, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, V-I.

95 The White Paper also indicated that no further Jewish immigration would be permitted after 1944, that the British Government would be under no obligation to create a Jewish state, and that within ten years an independent Arab state of Palestine would be proclaimed. In every essential aspect, it was a violation of the original League Mandate. See H.C. Allen, Great Britain and the United States: A History of Anglo-American Relations (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1955), p. 916.

96 Long before the issuance of the White Paper, Rabbi Abbá Silver of the ZOA and Solomon Goldman of the WZO exchanged telegrams warning that any closing of Palestine to Jewish immigration would mark the total failure of the IGCR. See Goldman to Silver, October 11, 1938, Zionist Organization of America File, 1938-39, Silver Papers, the Temple Library, Cleveland, Ohio.
the British. Disgusted with the Jews, IGCR chief Emerson told Pell, "The trouble in this whole refugee affair was the trouble of the Jews and most European people. There was always some other scheme in the background for which they were prepared to sacrifice schemes which were already in hand." Thus Emerson and Lord Winterton refused to be panicked by another Jewish delegation from Germany which begged the Committee for a scrap of paper, anything, to show the Nazis, as proof of the intention of the democracies to siphon off the Jews. Not even the threat of a second and more disastrous Kristallnacht could move the leaders of the IGCR.

This diplomatic paralysis also accounts in part for the delay in funding the international corporation which was to assist refugees. Neither the British nor the American Governments felt any direct responsibility to contribute financially to the corporation. As a result, when the Co-Ordinating Foundation was chartered on the 20th of July at the fourth

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97 Foreign Relations of the U.S., General, British Commonwealth, and Europe, Vol. II, 1939, p. 39. A good example of this was Wise's rejection of any settlement plan for the Jews in Africa in lieu of Palestine. Apart from the indignity of asking refined Europeans to settle in the backward former German colonies of East Africa, Wise objected that, "There will be an element of reprisal if Jews were to occupy the once German territories. The destruction of these Jewishly-occupied territories would become one of the supreme objectives of the German Reich." Wise to Taylor, November 23, 1938, FDR File, Wise Papers, XI.A.7.


99 Pell wrote Hull, "To ask the general public and its representatives in Congress, most of whom have no direct interest in the problem other than a remote humanitarian one to approve expenditures for this purpose would be utopian." Ibid., pp. 135-6.
plenary meeting of the IGCR in London, its total assets came to £ 200,000. This sum was a mere 2% of the $50,000,000 fund which Welles had recommended in December. More significant, the operating funds were drawn almost exclusively from a voluntary pledge of $1,000,000 given by Paul Baerwald, Chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, who was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation. In short, American Jews contributed 100% of the budget to what had been established as an international agency. 100

By this time, however, it hardly mattered what the IGCR stood for. On June 8, 1939, President Roosevelt, the Committee's godfather, and the man without whose active support it could not hope to succeed, expressed dismay over what appeared to be the insoluble problem of refugee placement. In a communique to Taylor, he said:

It must reluctantly be admitted that this Government's efforts to stimulate concrete action by other Governments to meet the problem have been met at best by a lukewarm attitude. In view of the attitude of other Governments and the reluctance which may have been shown to contribute toward the Committee's expenses during its first year, it is apparent that few Governments are willing to contribute on the present basis to the Committee's support for another year. 101

Roosevelt's solution, one month before the Co-Ordinating Foundation was ever chartered and two months before the outbreak of World War II, was the virtual abolition of the IGCR. Such functions as the Committee deemed crucial, e.g. surveys then being conducted by Dr. Isaiah Bowman


and Dr. Owen Lattimore of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Pacific Relations, should be transferred to the League Office on Refugees. The IGCR should maintain only a skeletal staff in London, paid from voluntary contributions "as member governments might consider appropriate." It would be most appropriate, felt Roosevelt, if the IGCR was to continue in existence, "though in an inactive form."\textsuperscript{102}

Roosevelt was to reverse himself again in October, 1939, when in a special conference at the White House, he called for "redoubled vigour" on the part of Emerson, Winterton and the IGCR to assist innocent victims of the European war.\textsuperscript{103} By that time, however, it was too late. British delegates pleaded an insufficiency of funds because of war expenditures.\textsuperscript{104} Paul van Zeeland, the former Belgian Premier who had assumed the post of Executive President of the Co-Ordinating Foundation, conceded on October 30 that the activities of the organization had been "reduced to almost nothing" and that any program of refugee relief would have to wait until "the peace conference."\textsuperscript{105} Even Herbert Emerson had given up hope by this time. To Ambassador John Winant he said that the

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 361.  
\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 546-7.  
\textsuperscript{104}Memorandum of George Warren for President's Advisory Committee," November 6, 1939, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, V-I.  
\textsuperscript{105}Minutes of the Co-Ordinating Foundation of the IGCR, October 30, 1939, Refugee File, Wise Papers, XIII. Van Zeeland did little but visit Latin America and the U.S. during the first years of the war, mainly to generate interest in the Foundation. After 1944, it was absorbed by UNRRA. See Report of Van Zeeland, December 29, 1943, Refugee File, Wise Papers, XIII.
war had forced the suspension of both the Committee's and League's activities on behalf of refugees. His position as IGCR Director henceforth would be "purely honorary" as the Committee maintained an office in London with the skeletal force and limited budget Roosevelt had recommended earlier. 106

A frustrated President Roosevelt called for the de-activizatization of the IGCR during the last summer of peace in Europe, precisely at the moment when Emerson was telling the Committee that more than 500,000 persons were in need of immediate assistance for emigration. Of these 167,000 were confessional Jews drawn from pre-Hitler Germany, 42,000 were confessional Jews from Austria, 127,000 were non-Aryan Christians (labelled Jews by the Nuremberg Laws) from Greater Germany, 140,000 were Jews in European countries of temporary refuge, and 16,000 (mostly Jews) were persons in non-European countries of temporary refuge. 107

The overwhelming preponderance of refugees in need of immediate aid on the eve of World War II, then, were Jews. 108 They could hardly have lamented the passing of an international committee which had never truly addressed itself formally to their special problem. After all the diplomatic motion emanating from Washington, Evian, London, and

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106 Report of Emerson to John Winant, August, 1942, Correspondence File, Hull Papers, Box 50, Folder 151, p. 11.


Berlin, the doomed Jews of Europe would probably have agreed with Adolf Hitler, who, seething with sarcasm, said on January 30, 1939: "It is a shameful example to observe today how the entire democratic world dissolves in tears of pity, but then, in spite of its obvious duty to help, closes its heart to the poor, tortured people." 109

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE WAGNER BILL

The failure of the United States to effect any major breakthrough in the placement of Jewish refugees at the international level before the war was hardly remarkable in view of the unwillingness of this nation to accept more than its "fair share" of these people. Other receiver states could not be faulted for declining to strain their own resources when they witnessed the unhelpful attitudes of the American government.

America's near universal condemnation of Nazi brutality as a result of Kristallnacht gave hope that this country might make some accommodation in its immigration laws to the refugee crisis. Assistant Secretary Messersmith accurately assessed America's indignation when he wrote Hull on the 14th of November, 1938, "It is my belief that unless we take some action in the face of the events in Germany of the last few days, we shall be much behind our public opinion in this country." Republican leaders like Herbert Hoover, Alfred Landon, Thomas Dewey and Gerald Nye chastised the Nazis, as distinct from the German people, for the bloodiest pogrom in History. They were


joined by Democrats Al Smith (who said, "Democracy died in Germany on the dustheap of the German Constitution")\(^3\) and Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, who nearly precipitated an international incident when he lambasted Hitler as "a brutal dictator" at a Hanukkah banquet in Cleveland on November 18.\(^4\) Protests were issued by John L. Lewis of the C.I.O. and William Green of the A.F. of L., by Sinclair Lewis, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Henry Sloane Coffin of the Union Theological Seminary, the Most Rev. Michael Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore, Episcopal Bishop William T. Manning, Bishop Edwin Hughes of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Archbishop John S. Mitty of San Francisco, and Bishop John Mark Cannon of Cleveland. On November 15, 1938, the New Yorker Staats-Zeitung, the foremost German-language daily in the U.S., hitherto silent about the persecution of the Jews in Germany, editorialized: "In the name of our dear ones do we protest against the desecration of the German name through fanatics in the ranks of the party in power who are trying to drag a great people into the mire of their degradation."\(^5\) Too, the National Executive of the American Legion, meeting in Indianapolis, issued a statement deploiring "the

\(^{3}\) "German Crisis Aroused the World," National Jewish Monthly, LIII (December, 1938), pp. 124-5.

\(^{4}\) Dr. Hans Thompson, German Charge d'Affaires in Washington, issued a protest to Welles several days later. The Under-Secretary rejected it saying that Ickes was entitled to his own opinion, adding that it was ironic that Germany should protest in view of Nazi vituperations against Roosevelt. See The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The Inside Struggle, Vol. II, 1936-39 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954), pp. 503-4.

\(^{5}\) "German Crisis Aroused the World," p. 125.
unconscionable policies now being pursued by the German Government with respect to racial and religious minorities."

For some, however, verbal protest was not enough. The National Conference of Christians and Jews set aside November 20-21 as days of prayer, mass meeting and demonstration. Reverend Ralph W. Sockman of New York warned, "Christianity must save the Jews if it is to save itself." William Randolph Hearst, once an admirer of Hitler, recalled an earlier day when he had pressed for the severance of commercial relations with Tsarist Russia as a result of its abuse of Jews. Passive sympathy was not enough, argued Hearst. "We Americans must begin the great work, because we are free to speak. We are free to act." Senator William King of Utah demanded action—immediate severance of diplomatic relations with Germany—and the State Department was bombarded with letters urging this, or, as an alternative, economic sanctions against Germany.

But the most amazing statement of all came from Henry Ford. The intractable squire of River Rouge, once the foremost purveyor of anti-Semitic literature in this country (through his Dearborn Independent), and presently the most implacable foe of organized labor issued a statement shortly after Kristallnacht which rang of genuine sympathy for the oppressed Jews. Ford even went so far as to advocate bringing

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6 National Executive of the American Legion to Roosevelt, November 19, 1938, Roosevelt Library, Germany 1933-45, OF 198, Box 1.

7 "German Crisis Arouses World," p. 150.
these people to the United States. The statement read:

I believe that the United States cannot fail at this time to maintain its traditional role as a haven for the oppressed. I am convinced not only that this country could absorb many of the victims of oppression who must find a refuge outside of their native lands, but that as many of them as could be admitted under our selective quota system would constitute a real asset to our country.

Because of their special adaptability in the field of production, distribution and agriculture, they would offer to the business of this country a new impetus at a time like this when it is badly needed. Hundreds of Jewish men now employed in our plants show marked ability and loyalty, and if the turnover among them is sometimes comparatively high, it is indicative of their ambition to improve themselves.

It is my opinion that the German people, as a whole, are not in sympathy with their rulers in their anti-Jewish policies, which is the work of a few war-makers at the top.

My acceptance of a medal from the German people does not, as some people seem to think, involve any sympathy on my part with Nazism. Those who have known me for many years realize that anything that breeds hate is repulsive to me.

I am confident that the time is near when there will be so many jobs available in this country that the entrance of a few thousand Jews, or other immigrants, will be negligible.

I believe that the return-to-the-land movement is one of the ultimate solutions of our economic problems and in this movement of the Jews of the Old World can play a significant part. I am wholly sympathetic with the movement to give the oppressed Jew an opportunity to rebuild his life in this country, and I myself will do everything possible toward that end.  

Ford reflected the initial American reaction to Kristallnacht. In December, 1938, the American Institute of Public Opinion indicated that 94% of those persons polled voiced disapproval of the Nazi treatment.

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of the Jews. At the same time, a growing number of Americans (56% in October, 61% in December, 66% in April, 1939) were expressing themselves in favor of some form of boycott against German products. By April of 1939, 78% of those polled approved a proposed 25% penalty tax on German imports. Understating the situation somewhat, Key Pittman, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, noted, "The people of the United States do not like the Government of Germany."  

Roosevelt reacted to the crisis of Kristalnacht by issuing a typically dramatic statement. In his 500th press conference, held at the Washington Airport on November 15, the President announced that he was recalling Ambassador Hugh Wilson from Berlin. "The news of the past few days from Germany has deeply shocked public opinion in the United States," said Roosevelt. "Such news from any part of the world would inevitably produce a similar profound reaction among American people in every part of the nation. I myself could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a twentieth century civilization. With a view to gaining a first-hand picture of the current situation in Germany, I asked the Secretary of State to order our Ambassador in Berlin to return at once for report and consultation."

Asked if he had given any thought to a possible mass transfer of Jews from Germany as a consequence of Kristalnacht, Roosevelt

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9 This last figure was more a reaction to German confiscation of property belonging to American nationals (who coincidentally were Jewish) than to abuses of Jews per se. See Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. III (1939), pp. 581-607.


hedged, saying first, "I have given a great deal of thought to it," then added, "the time is not ripe for that." Asked if he might recommend the relaxation of our immigration restrictions to permit the entry of Jewish refugees, Roosevelt, ever cognizant of the restrictionist spirit of the Congress, answered, "That is not in contemplation. We have the quota system."12

Despite the President's apparent coolness to the idea of any alteration of that quota system, the hope was repeatedly expressed by liberal journals that existing immigration laws might be modified along lines proposed by Samuel Dickstein, Chairman of the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee. Such a plan would have suspended quota allotments during the emergency and established a reservoir of approximately 100,000 visas, drawn from those nations which were not using their annual quotas. Commonweal,13 Nation,14 and New Republic15 were some of those who endorsed the idea of emergency immigration allotments to help the German refugees. The New Republic was especially

12 Ibid., p. 598.


outspoken in support of such a scheme. It editorialized on November 30, "One would think that we might let in the entire 500,000 Jewish population of Germany in a single year without serious dislocation. It would be equivalent to an increase of about four-tenths of one percent in our existing population."16

Any hope that the government might be receptive to the idea of redistribution of unused quota certificates among refugees was dashed in Roosevelt's next press conference on November 18. After a verbal tilt with one reporter over whether Ambassador Wilson had been "summoned" home, the President announced that he planned to submit no recommendations for change in existing immigration laws to Congress. The best he could offer the refugees ("not all Jews by any means," said Roosevelt) was an extension of visitors' permits by six months. Some 15,000 German nationals in the country would not be forced to return home. Labor Secretary Frances Perkins, who just the previous day convinced the President that there was no need to alter the laws,17 assured Roosevelt that additional extensions could be tacked on indefinitely for those visitors whose lives might be imperiled upon their return to Germany. Roosevelt acknowledged that few, if any, additional refugees would profit by this idea, since Germany would not issue visitors' visas to non-Aryans.

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17 Miss Perkins informed the President that there was no public outcry to justify any change in our laws. Readings of the Gallup and Roper Polls would indicate that she was correct. Morse, *While Six Million Died*, p. 236.
The President also conceded that to qualify as a full-fledged immigrant, that is, to qualify for ultimate naturalization, visitors would have to return to their native countries and undergo existing quota processing from the beginning. 18

Like Roosevelt's call to Evian, news of the President's announcement concerning visitors made good copy for several days. Henceforth, however, all official efforts on behalf of the Jewish refugees would be addressed to, and at the expense of, other nations. Shortly after Kristallnacht, Treasury Secretary Morgenthau began to badger Roosevelt with letters and reports regarding the feasibility of settlement of great numbers of refugees in South and Central America, particularly in Costa Rica. 19 Apparently undaunted by repeated anti-Jewish expressions of the Latin American governments, Secretary Hull cabled American missions in that region on the 22nd of November, seeking further clarification from the governments on the question of accepting additional numbers of refugees. In making such overtures, the Secretary instructed American


19 According to Dr. Isaiah Bowman, as many as 10,000 families might be comfortably settled in Costa Rica. Morgenthau to Roosevelt, November 21, 1938, Roosevelt Library, Refugee Folder, Box 58. This and similar settlement schemes had been fully debated by the President's Advisory Committee as early as October 13. They had been rejected then by most experts as unrealistic and idealistic. See Minutes of the President's Advisory Committee, October 13, 1938, Wise Papers, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, VI.
diplomats to point out what this nation was doing already within existing laws and to emphasize once more that no state would be expected to take more refugees than its absorptive capacity would allow. The responses, received within a week, indicated no retreat on the part of the Latins from earlier firm restrictionist positions. Only Peru, the Dominican, and Haiti seemed truly interested in receiving Jews. The other replies ranged from Mexico's "wait and see" and Uruguay's "agriculturists only" to Colombia's "impossible to accept any more Jews" and Costa Rica's "considerable anti-Semitic feeling in this country."
The Venezuelan Government did not even bother to respond officially to the American query.  

Somewhat glumly did Hull send Roosevelt a comprehensive report on potential refugee havens around the world on the 28th of November. This bleak twelve-page document clearly outlined the difficulties which existed in such tropical regions as Tanganyika, Rhodesia, Hyasaland, Madagascar and New Caledonia. As for the Latin states, Hull noted, "Only Peru seems to be willing to follow U.S. pressure."  

Jews found little to commend in the actions of the Latin American nations over the next six month period. As Germany's Jews stampeded

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21 Among the more bizarre plans that crossed Hull's desk was one from Mexico which indicated that government's willingness to accept immigrants who established "mestize" families in Mexico. What this meant, whether a desire to become a naturalized citizen or to intermarry with a renunciation of the Jewish faith, no one at the State Department was willing to say. In any case, prospects for settlement in Mexico was labelled dim. For Hull's memorandum to Roosevelt, see Refugee Folder, November 28, 1938, Roosevelt Library, Box 58.
under the terror of new Nazi persecutions in the closing days of 1939, corrupt Gestapo officials and Latin consuls in Berlin collaborated in a lucrative trade of supplying them with inadequate or invalid passports. Jews bribed German peasants to obtain certificates which qualified them for admission to South American countries as legitimate farmers. They purchased property in the unexplored reaches of Brazil to qualify as immigrants with landed holdings. Such tactics, however, often proved fruitless. The Latin governments changed regulations even as the refugees departed Germany. Some suspended all immigration as overcrowded vessels of the Hanburg-American Line cruised the Caribbean in search of port.  

22 In January, 1939, a group of Austrian Jews bound for the Dominican Republic was stranded in the U.S. because of new laws passed after they had sailed from Europe. At the same time, 37 passengers aboard the S.S. Imperial were denied admission to Peru because their documents were said to be invalid. Several days later, Paraguay revoked the immigration permits of 300 Jewish refugees, leaving them stranded in Uruguay. 23 refugees aboard the S.S. Orinoco were repulsed by Mexico after they had succeeded in bribing the Mexican consul in Germany for their papers. At the end of the month, another 83 Jewish refugees aboard the Caribia were denied passage into Trinidad.  

At first these unfortunates could find eventual havens in other Latin American nations, but these also tightened up their restrictions as Jews continued to pour across the Atlantic. In March, Uruguay refused to admit another group of Jews. In May, Chile suspended all immigration for a year. Twelve days later, Colombia followed suit. A week later, Jewish agencies in Bolivia exposed a plot to sell Jews permission to settle in that country.  

The worst incident along these lines, however, took place in June, when the Cuban Government of Laredo Bru revoked the landing permits of 907 passengers aboard the S.S. St. Louis. After toying with the idea of extorting $1,000,000 from Jewish organizations in the U.S. for the passengers' safety, the Cuban Government forced the St. Louis out to sea. For the near-happy ending of this tale see Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 219-234. For the details on the other incidents listed above see Cecilia Razovsky’s "Disorganized Panic Emigration," Speech prepared for the National Coordinating Committee, February, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 1305-1309, and New York Times, March 10, 1939, p. 5; May 5, 1939, p. 13; May 17, 1939, p. 13; and May 25, 1939, p. 13.
On December 7, 1938, with the Rublee negotiations foundering (Schacht had not yet been to London), with the Latin states obdurate, and no other reasonable alternative for settlement of the refugees in the offing, Roosevelt turned in desperation to the dictator of Italy. He instructed Ambassador Phillips in Rome to deliver a personal note outlining a startling solution to the problem to "my dear Signor Mussolini." After applauding Mussolini's "decisive action" at Munich, which allegedly had preserved peace in Europe, Roosevelt suggested that he might also resolve the Jewish question by opening the southwestern section of Ethiopia, known as the Plateau, to colonization by German refugees. Italy would profit through the exploitation of this vast region by a white colonial population. Germany too would profit, Roosevelt continued, as the emigrants would bring with them supplies, clothing, tools, and other items indispensable for their resettlement, along with German marks. The U.S. would even assume a share in the cost of the settlement.  

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One can only conjecture as to the hilarity such a scheme must have provoked in Rome and Berlin. For three years, the American Government had firmly aligned itself on the side of those states which had censured Mussolini's imperial ventures. The U.S., at Roosevelt's urging, had proclaimed a moral embargo against Italy when the Fascists invaded the kingdom of Haile Selassie in 1935. Two years later, when Mussolini intervened in Spain to assist Generalissimo Francisco Franco, the U.S. extended its embargo of arms and oil shipments to Italy. And yet here in December, 1938, was the President asking Mussolini's permission to capitalize on that same Italian aggression while acquiescing in the financial extortion so often condemned by State Department officials that Fall.

Before Phillips could secure an audience with Mussolini, Schacht and Rublee entered into serious negotiations and Welles subsequently cancelled the instructions to the American Ambassador in Rome in a communique dated December 30. It was too late, however, for the proposal afforded Mussolini an opportunity to chastise "the large democracies" (the United States, Soviet Union, Brazil) for their failure

25 Several months later Goering and Hitler delighted in accusing Roosevelt of "creeping paralysis of the brain" when the President naively sought guarantees from Germany that it had no territorial designs on 31 states, including the Arabias and Liechtenstein. Despite newsreels showing Nazi deputies in hysterics at Hitler's reading of his note, Roosevelt followed this up with another dated August 24, 1939, which began: "To the message which I sent you last April, I have received no reply." Roosevelt to Hitler, August 24, 1939, Roosevelt Library, Germany 1933-45, OF 198.

to accept greater numbers of Jews. The scheme also incurred the
disapproval and rebuke of the World Jewish Congress which refused to
have anything to do with "an anti-Semite government such as the Italian
Government." With this last extreme possibility eliminated, the question
recurs, why didn't Roosevelt champion some drastic change in America's
immigration laws at this point? The answer lies in the complex personal-
ality of the President, a blend of political pragmatism and human ex-
pression. Ever sensitive to public opinion, Roosevelt recognized that
American condemnation of Nazi persecution simply was not matched by a
corresponding concern for its victims. His own personal popularity,
already at an all-time low, the President could only have suffered from
directing such a crusade. He faced a hostile 76th Congress, one charged
with nativist and neo-Fascist sentiment, and peopled by many Senators
that he had tried unsuccessfully to purge that November. Even his

27 Mussolini charged that if the United States opened its doors
to a population comparable in density with that of Italy, this nation could
accommodate at least one billion more immigrants. Levin, The Holocaust,
p. 127.

28 At the same time, Rabbi M. L. Perlzwieg of the British Section
of the World Jewish congress rejected any proposed settlement in Djibuti.
Memorandum of the World Jewish Congress to the IGCR, January 16, 1939,
World Jewish Congress File, Wise Papers, VII.

29 Supra, pp. 49-50.

30 In January, 1939, Roper reported that 67% of the American
people opposed any major legislative or administrative changes in govern-
ment. This conservatism was also directed against Roosevelt, as only
33% of those polled indicated a willingness to vote for the President if
he ran again in 1940, while 55% said no to a third term. Elmo Roper,
You and Your Leaders: Their Actions and Your Reactions, 1936-1956 (New
closest Jewish advisers, Samuel Rosenman and Bernard Baruch, cautioned against increasing quotas for German refugees for fear of creating "a Jewish problem" in the United States. 31 For these reasons, apparently, the President abdicated his leadership role in the refugee question to Congress. In the future, those Congressmen calling for immigration reform could count on only sotto voce support from the White House.

Among the many bills considered by the 76th Congress that were designed to give relief to Jewish refugees in the winter of 1938-39, the most celebrated was the Wagner-Rogers Bill. Introduced in the Senate on February 9, 1939, by New York's Robert Wagner, and in the House five days later by Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, this measure called for the admission into the United States of 20,000 German refugee children under the age of 14 on a non-quota basis over the next two years.

The choice of terms (German refugee children instead of Jewish refugee children) was deliberate as sponsors of the bill did not want to provoke anti-Semites by calling for special exemptions solely for Jewish children. For this reason, a special Non-Sectarian Committee for German

31Rosenman indicated that any legislative debate over the problem would merely delay comprehensive international action. In view of the threatened magnitude of the Jewish refugee problem in Poland and Rumania, Rosenman argued for immediate settlement in new and undeveloped regions of Africa or South America. The fact that leaders of Jewish organizations, especially Zionist groups, had always opposed such proposals made no impact upon Rosenman, who worried about the threat of a tidal wave of Jews, and only Jews, coming to the U.S. in this emergency. Memorandum of Rosenman to Roosevelt, December 5, 1938, Roosevelt Library, PPF 64.
Refugee Children was established. To underscore the non-sectarian nature of the legislation, the committee arranged to have only a handful of Jews appear before the various Congressional hearings conducted on the bill in April and May, 1939. When Clarence Pickett, Executive Secretary of the American Friends Services Committee and Chairman of the Non-Sectarian Committee, appeared before the Congressional committees to outline placement procedures, he emphasized that the proposals dealt with "children of all faiths." Senator Wagner also testified that he never would have fathered the legislation if he had thought that it might contain a suggestion of selection made on the basis of race or religion. The basis of selection, he argued, must be need.

There was little doubt in anyone's mind at the time, though, that the children in need of rescue in Germany were Jewish and that the bill directly alluded to their plight. For one thing, the idea of admitting special numbers of German children was based on the success of the German-Jewish Children's Aid Committee. From April 6, 1934, when Max

32 Headed by Quaker Clarence Pickett, the committee numbered among its sponsors George Cardinal Mundelein, Owen Young, Canon Anson Phelps Stokes, William Allen White, Helen Taft Manning, and Frank Graham, President of the University of North Carolina.


34 Ibid., p. 66.
Kohler first broached the idea to Frances Perkins, to January, 1939, 397 Jewish children had been resettled in the United States under special non-quota arrangements worked out with the Department of Naturalization and Immigration. Social worker evaluations of their adjustment to this country had been so favorable, that as a consequence of Kristalnacht, suggestions for an expanded program had been made by playwright Sam Spewack to Lessing Rosenwald of the American Jewish Committee and by James McDonald to the President's Advisory Committee. There is even some evidence that Secretary of Labor Perkins surreptitiously lent her support to the idea.

35It was not until February 15, 1935, that the first group arrived, over the opposition of John Trevor's American Coalition, which exhorted Americans "to be on guard" against this subversion of our immigration laws. For the work of Solomon Lowenstein, Cecelia Razovsky and Joseph Chamberlain in this regard, see German-Jewish Children's Aid File, Chamberlain Collection, 2110-2177.

36According to a lengthy study done by the German-Jewish Children's Aid, none of the children admitted in the previous four years had encountered significant difficulties in social, educational or vocational adjustment. Thirty-two, thus admitted, had already achieved a level of self-support. Memorandum of German-Jewish Children's Aid, January 1, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 2229.

37Spewack wanted to bring in all refugee children from Germany and Austria who were under the age of 10. Memorandum of Rosenwald to Chamberlain, December 2, 1938, Chamberlain Collection, 2225.

38Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, December 23, 1938, Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, VI.

39According to Rosenwald, Isidor Lubin had said that Miss Perkins was trying to instigate legislation in the 76th Congress to enable German Jewish children to come over as immigrants, but not under the quota system. Precisely the same idea was embodied in the Wagner-Rogers Bill. Memorandum of Rosenwald to Chamberlain, December 2, 1938, Chamberlain Collection, 2225.
There were other connections between the Wagner Bill and the Jews of Germany. Wagner could argue that there were 75,000 "non-Aryan" children in Germany in 1939, but in the context in which such language was understood, the term "non-Aryan" was generally conceded to mean Jewish. More specifically, the American Jewish Committee estimated that there were 20,500 children in Germany between the ages of six and fourteen, whose parents could be labelled observant or practising Jews. This figure was strikingly similar to the number of immigrants envisioned in the Wagner Bill. And while Wagner labored hard to foster the illusion of a truly non-sectarian proposition, his efforts were unintentionally undermined by witnesses before the Congressional committees who lapsed into the habit of speaking only of the sufferings of "Jewish children."

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40 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 9.


42 Pickett vividly described the terror and insecurity felt by non-Aryan children, spat upon, insulted, physically degraded, merely because of their Jewish lineage. Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 57. Sidney Hollander, a Jewish member of the Non-Sectarian Committee, told of children who had seen their parents taken to concentration camps because they were Jewish, and who subsequently had received the urns of their father's ashes. Hollander also told of a Jewish orphanage in Vienna which was closed down without warning in the middle of one night. The children, the eldest of whom was three, were carried from door to door seeking shelter. Ibid., p. 91. Robert Balderston of Chicago, just back from two months volunteer work in the soup kitchens operated by the Friends amid no-man's lands, described the plight of Jews in these purgatories. Ibid., pp. 72-78. And Dr. Robert Yamall, a Philadelphia engineer and a Quaker who had worked in Germany under the Hoover Child Welfare Administration after World War I, reported, "I am convinced there is no future for Jewish or non-Aryan children in Greater Germany now or in the near future." Ibid., p. 134.
In a sense, the history of the Wagner Bill was symptomatic of the anti-alien, anti-Jewish sentiments which helped to shape American immigration policy in this era. Proponents of the measure were buoyed by the thousands of supporting letters which poured into Washington from every state in the Union. Endorsements were received from Herbert Hoover, Albert Einstein, Robert Hutchins, Norman Thomas, Dr. Samuel Cavert of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the American Unitarian Association, the National YMCA, the Methodist Federation for Social Service, the Executive of the Boy Scouts of America, the faculties of Columbia, Wellesley, Harvard and Los Angeles City College. Both the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. went on record as approving passage. Wagner was hard-pressed to read into the record the dozens of newspaper editorials from the Boise Statesman, the Christian Science Monitor, the New York Herald-Tribune, the New York Times, the Boston Herald, the Washington Post, the Cincinnati Enquirer, the New Orleans Times-Picayune among others, all in support of his bill. And yet the measure failed.

43 See Legislative Correspondence, 1939: Child Refugees, Pro Folder, Wagner Papers, Georgetown University, C-7.


45 U.S., Congressional Record, 76th Cong., 1st Sess., 1939, LXXXIV, Part 2, 2338-41 and 2805; Part 4, 3865; Part 5, 4817 and 5200; and Part 11, 641.
The Wagner Bill failed, in part, because its opponents—John Trevor's American Coalition, Francis Kinnicutt's Allied Patriotic Societies, the Junior Order of American Mechanics, the American Legion, Senator Reynolds—were old hands at beclouding immigration issues with procedural objections, sham humanitarianism, or outright bigotry. Representative Charles Kramer of California, no great friend of refugees himself, noting the ubiquity of these self-proclaimed patriots whenever Congress debated immigration legislation, charged that they "came out of their holes to lobby" when such bills were under consideration. Like the mythological dragon's teeth, these nativists would throw up new obstacles just as Wagner, Pickett and their colleagues, struck down the old ones.

The principal objection of the restrictionists, including those who swamped Wagner with hate mail demanding that he withdraw his bill in favor of one introduced by Reynolds at the same time which would have suspended immigration indefinitely, was that the Wagner Bill was designed to help only the Jews. Assisting the Jews, allegedly notorious "mental defectives," a clannish people who hired only their kinsmen.

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47 The Wagner file includes several hundred negative letters, including some which accused the Senator of being a tool of Wall Street and one which threatened "You are getting in too deep with some people. BEWARE. I say it again." Still, the ratio of letters ran about 60-40 in favor of the measure. Legislative Correspondence 1939: Child Refugees, Con Folder, Wagner Papers, C-7.


49 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 207.
and also the people who "originally financed Hitler," 50 was not merely illogical, it was said, but also unfair to the thousands of persecuted Spanish children who had been forced to flee from France and had no special interest group agitating for their admission to the United States.

While the restrictionists lamented for the Spanish refugees, they also charged that the bill could serve as a precedent for "similar unscientific and favored-nation legislation in response to the pressure of foreign nationalistic or racial groups, rather than in accordance with the needs and desires of the American people." 51 Eventually, the U.S., which according to James Wilmeth of the Junior Order of American Mechanics already contained 21% of the "alien population of the earth," 52 might be bound to admit "many millions" from Europe and from Asia, persons imbued with "a heritage of hate," who would then drown American liberty in Communism or Nazism. 53 Twenty thousand children, warned a circular issued by Trevor's American Coalition, mating within or without the original group and each union resulting in four children who in turn became parents, could provide 640,000 offspring within five generations.

51 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 187.
53 The most striking testimony along these lines was given by Mrs. Agnes Waters, a resident of Washington, speaking as an individual. She charged that 7,000,000 such alien saboteurs already were roaming the land. When the committee finally dismissed her with disgust, she continued, calling Representative Lesinski who had gotten up to go, "a Third Internationale." Hearings on H.J. Res. 165 and H.J. Res. 168, p. 256. The notion that the Jews were also Nazis was shared by James Patton and James Wilmoth of the JOAM, Ibid., pp. 119 and 232.
truly an ominous subversive bloc. Margaret Hopkins Worrell, national Legislative Chairman of the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, also wary of the breeding habits of immigrants, went so far as to claim that she did not believe it possible to "Americanize" any immigrant over the age of four.

Spokesmen for the Wagner Bill patiently refuted each of these arguments. Clarence Pickett pointed out that there was no special urgency in the Spanish refugee situation since: (1) the Civil War was ending and France "would not stand for the torture of children"; (2) those Spanish children in France were being well cared for by French authorities till such time as they desired to return to Spain; and (3) Mexico had volunteered to take at least 20,000 Spanish refugee children. As for shattering the dike of American immigration laws, Wilbur LaRoe, a well-known Washington attorney who served as legal counsel for the Non-Sectarian Committee, and Avra Warren of the Immigration Service, both had testified that the figure of 20,000 children was "solely a maximum number." And far from being a random or unscientific selection of social undesirables, the Wagner Bill would offer this country its first intelligently planned

54 Circular of the American Coalition, February 20, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 1334.

55 Representative Noah Mason of Illinois drew applause when he challenged her, saying, "I was 8 when I entered this country and I claim that I have become quite Americanized." Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 225.


57 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, pp. 49, 97, and 160.
immigration. Pickett repeatedly emphasized that a trained staff of social workers would screen applicants in Germany and recommend that only the physically and mentally fit, those who seemed "good material for American citizenship" be considered for admission. The final safeguard against any child sabotour, Pickett pointed out, would still lie in the vote enjoyed by the American consul. 58

If the entry of 20,000 children would not unleash a tidal wave of immigration, might it not, at least, have created an endless trickle? The restrictionists, labelled by Utah's Senator King as "200% Americans," raised an humanitarian objection to separating children from their parents. In May, 1939, Ohio's Republican Senator Robert A. Taft, a budding candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1940, lent credence to this argument when he informed the Non-Sectarian Committee that such a separation might impose hardships greater than those which might result if the children remained with their parents. 59

To preclude the possibility that those parents might one day play upon America's heartstrings to be reunited with their children, several Congressmen demanded that specific guidelines for adoption be written into the proposed bill. 60 Others wanted Pickett's selection procedure clearly delineated in the legislation. 61 Still others asked for

59 Letter from Taft to Rose Frank, May 11, 1939, American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Immigrants and Immigration File, II.
61 Ibid., pp. 24, 33, 47, and 262.
written guarantees that the children would never become public charges. Quite understandably, then, did Monte Lemann, once a member of Hoover's Wickersham Committee and now a proponent of the bill, explode saying that no bill ever written had fulfilled all the reservations of Congress.

It is difficult to imagine how any non-Aryan child could have profited by remaining in Germany, a land in which author Quentin Reynolds had said, "The complete pogrom is not very far away." As for guarantees from parents that they would not use their children as ploys by which to enter the U.S., Pickett had testified that the Non-Sectarian Committee would accept only children whose families were already ruptured, a not uncommon circumstance in Nazi Germany. Another witness on behalf of the bill, Mrs. Benjamin Soffe of the Michigan Federation of Woman's Clubs, emphasized that many desperate parents were willing to give up their children in order to save them.

As for financial guarantees that the children would not become public charges upon entry into this country, Pickett pointed out that the Department of Labor, under whose jurisdiction immigration questions lay, was satisfied that they would not pose a relief problem. According to

63 Ibid., p. 78.
64 Ibid., p. 104.
65 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 59.
66 Ibid., pp. 85-88.
Pickett and Non-Sectarian Committee Treasurer Newbold Morris, more than $250,000 had been pledged by voluntary sources to underwrite the costs of this operation.\(^6^8\) NSC Counsel LaRoe repetitiously affirmed, "Not a single child will be brought into this country under this bill, for whom satisfactory assurances as to its support have not been given in advance."\(^6^9\)

The Non-Sectarian Committee also supplied guarantees of placement in good American homes where the children would be taught democratic ideals. LaRoe read off a list of letters from Protestants volunteering to take the children. Morris spoke of 1500 unsolicited offers of foster homes in 46 states. Even Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, in Northampton, Massachusetts, was moved to pledge her support in sponsoring 25 of these children.\(^7^0\)

Such statements seemed merely to provoke the restrictionists who painted touching images of millions of native American children wandering the streets, clothed in rags, diseased, starving, without any hope of adoption. Taft noted, for example, "20,000 American children could profit if such nice homes were available."\(^7^1\) Trevor summed up

\(^6^8\) Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, pp. 59 and 118.

\(^6^9\) Ibid., p. 49. Such guarantees were hardly necessary, as Mr. Warren of the State Department pointed out that the LPC clause had never been applied against children. Ibid., p. 271.

\(^7^0\) Hearings on H.J. Res. 165 and H.J. Res. 168, p. 169.

\(^7^1\) Taft to Mrs. Frank, loc. cit.
this attitude when he ended his testimony on a bromidical note saying, "Charity begins at home." 72

Few, if any, of the opponents of the bill had really bothered to inquire into the existing child care situation in this country. Wilmeth, while proud of the record of his Junior Order of American Mechanics in maintaining 206 orphanages, was unable to say whether current demand for adoptions outstripped the available supply in these institutions. 73 Kinnicutt could do no better. Queried by Representative Anton Maciejewski as to what the Allied Patriotic Societies did for American children, Kinnicutt stammered, "That is not exactly our function. Our function is in reference to legislation of this kind which affects our whole system." 74

Even Representative Kramer, who expressed the fear that 20,000 refugee children might "be blown" into California by the dust storms of Kansas, was compelled to cede that no one had shown where those thousands of suffering American children were. 75

Substantial evidence indicated that the country was not only willing but able to accommodate the 20,000 children. According to Katherine Lenroot, Chief of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, there were approximately 250,000 children in charitable institutions

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72 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 224.

73 Ibid., p. 208.

74 Ibid., p. 190.

and foster homes in the spring of 1939. An additional 20,000 would be an increase of 4-8%, an increase which welfare agencies in the U.S. could, according to Mrs. Lenroot, easily handle. Catholic Bishop Sheehy also testified that there was no "surplus" in Catholic orphanages, that children were being adopted as rapidly as they could be obtained. Paul Beissler, President of the Child Welfare League of America, estimated that the demand for children was so great that there were already 12 applicants for every child in an American institution. Jacob Kepecs, Executive Director of the Jewish Children's Bureau went even higher, saying that the ratio was "at least twenty applicants for every child."

To the argument that the entry of the 20,000 might aggravate an already critical unemployment situation among America's youth, Mrs. Gertrude Zimand of the National Child Labor Committee stood ready with figures to show that because of their differing ages, the children's entry into the labor market would be staggered over a fifteen year period, between 1943 and 1958. Perhaps 1,500 children would reach employable age each year—a number which figured out to an addition of one for every 4,500 unemployed youth in the nation in 1939.

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76 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, pp. 125-30.
77 Ibid., p. 113.
78 Ibid., p. 150.
79 Ibid., p. 144.
80 Ibid., p. 144.
In their anxiety, proponents of the Wagner Bill called upon every conceivable argument to secure its passage. Southerners like Douglas Carroll, Dean of the School of Commerce of the University of North Carolina, Dr. Homer Rainey, President of the University of Texas, Dr. Samuel C. Mitchell, Professor of Social History at the University of Richmond, and dirt farmer Hugh McRae, from Wilmington, North Carolina, all testified that the South had been "shortchanged" in previous waves of immigration, that the South could be rejuvenated by an influx of industrious young people. Professional social workers like Cheney Jones, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Conference of Social Work and a foster father for 550 New England children, Paul Beissler, and Gaynell Hawkins, President of the Texas Social Welfare Association, warned that the birth rate in the U.S. was falling, that the U.S. needed children, that 700,000 fewer children had been born in this country than in 1931, that at least 20,000 children died each year in domestic accidents. Beissler pleaded in vain, "The more we do in our field, the better we do it, and that affects all the children we care for." 81

81 Ibid., p. 150.
If the Wagner Bill was carried along by the eloquence of some of its supporters, it was simultaneously doomed by the ambivalence or silence of others. Once more, the Jewish community could not agree upon any decisive action for fear that this might evoke charges of double-loyalty and lead to the measure's defeat. Rabbi Wise labored behind the scenes to gain the endorsement of key politicians, but publicly coun­selled caution. Such timidity was, however, generally construed by the nativists as symbolic of indifference and weakness. If American Jews did not feel strongly enough about the bill to marshal their forces in complete support, it could be argued, why should American Gentiles act for them. As late as May, 1939, some segments of the Jewish community, having pledged themselves to Wise to "refrain from publicity" while the bill was under consideration, were having second thoughts about such tactics. Dr. Ludwig Auer of the American Hungarian Jewish community scored Wise for his failure to supply the forthright leadership required under the circumstances, his failure to achieve any "concrete results" after obtaining the pledge of silence from his peers.

Officially, the principal spokesmen of major Jewish organizations in America remained silent, but on those occasions when individuals

82 On Wise's attempts to win the support of Thomas Dewey, see the letters to Murray Garfein, one of Dewey's assistants, April 26 and May 9, 1939, Refugee Children Folder, Wise Papers, XIII.

83 Auer was mollified by a letter disclaiming responsibility for the fate of the legislation which was based on suggestions made to Wise by his daughter. Auer to Wise, May 16, 1939, Refugee Children Folder, Wise Papers, XIII.
did speak out, they did as much harm as any American Legion petition. Samuel Dickstein's comments about a steady tide of illegal immigrants coming from Canada were readily seized upon by restrictionists and converted into page one copy about "thousands" and "millions" of illegals streaming across our borders. 84

Even more damaging was the effect of a Jewish Exponent story on June 9, 1939, which told how the Independent Order of B'rith Sholom was arranging to bring 50 Jewish children from Germany to Philadelphia on a non-quota basis. Coming at a time when the Wagner Bill was being readied for report, this announcement was immediately denounced as fallacious bombast by the National Coordinating Committee and the Non-Sectarian Committee. Jacob Kepecs of the Philadelphia lodge of B'rith Sholom was angrily denounced by Joseph Chamberlain of the NCC for creating the illusion that Jews could get around the nation's immigration laws if they had enough influence and money. 85

In like manner, the well-meaning representatives of America's largest labor unions did more harm than good when they testified before Congressional committees. In May, Joseph Padway, counsel of the A.F. of L., made his second appearance at the hearings and read a letter from William Green, dated April 30, 1939. In this note, the

84 People were often reminded by Senator Reynolds that Dickstein, a Jew, had said of the Johnson Immigration Bill, "I believe in restriction, certainly. We cannot afford to open our doors." For Dickstein's reference to a flood of illegals, see New York Sun, March 7, 1939, p. 1.

85 See Chamberlain's angry exchanges with Jacob Kepecs, June 16, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 2268 and 2271.
President of the A.F. of L. indicated his "personal approval" for the Wagner Bill, and added that the membership of his organization also would be sympathetic to its passage. This clumsy attempt to weld the opinion of Green, who was none too enthusiastic about the measure in any case, upon the rank and file membership of the A.F. of L. resulted in a merciless grilling of lawyer Padway by Congressmen William Schulte, Clifford Clevenger, George Allen, William Poage, and Kramer.

Was this a departure from the traditional restrictionist stand of the A.F. of L.? Wasn't the membership actually split on the question?

What would the A.F. of L. do five years hence when these children reached working age? What was its position on admitting Spanish refugee children? Chinese immigrants? Hadn't Paul Scharrenberg, another legal expert of the A.F. of L. testified that same March that the organization "heartily favored" closing the gates to the U.S. for a period of years to permit the nation to set its own house in order?

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In the first months of 1939, Green wrote letters to Spencer Miller of the National Council of Protestant Episcopal Churches in the U.S. and to Professor Chamberlain, in which he repeatedly cautioned against "overdoing the situation" or breaking down "our quota statutes." Green to Miller, January 25, 1939, and Green to Chamberlain, February 22, 1939, Chamberlain Collection, 2233 and 2234.

The same standard was not used to impugn the testimony of Colonel Thomas Taylor of the American Legion when he noted that that body had come out against the bill in May, 1939. Jewish members of the Legion testified that no such resolution had ever been debated in the Legion's convention at New York. Ibid., p. 280.

time Padway left the stand, what was supposed to be testimony in favor of the Wagner Bill had left the Congressmen with a picture of organized labor that didn't really know what it believed.

Equally useless was the testimony of C.I.O. representatives. In this instance, at least, the position of this organization's president, John L. Lewis, was unequivocal. The gruff leader of the United Mine Workers had said, "Assuredly America should do its part in caring for some of the children who are victims of religious and racial oppression in Germany. I heartily approve of any practical action necessary for the accomplishment of this purpose." John Brophy, Director of the C.I.O., minced no words in lashing out at "cowardly thugs" who persecuted little children. He added that the Wagner Bill had the ringing endorsement of his union in convention.

Like Padway, however, Brophy was questioned and nitpicked to death by Congressmen Allen, Clevenger and Kramer who asked rhetorically if the C.I.O. might welcome all six million potential refugees in Europe. Never popular with conservative Congressmen, the C.I.O. was smeared as red-lining in this and simultaneous hearings conducted on Reynolds' sequence of bills before the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration. By

90 *Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children*, p. 70.
93 Senator Rufus Helman of Oregon became embroiled in a debate with Ralph Emerson of the C.I.O. as to whether the organization was "American" or "international" in its makeup and orientation. Similar charges of pro-communist activities were hurled against other witnesses on behalf of the Wagner Bill, principal among them, Read Lewis of the International Migration Service. *Hearings on S. 407, 408, 409, 410, 411*, p. 64 and p. 150.
the time restrictionist Congressmen had finished with the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., the official expressions of these two union groups had been rendered valueless. Unbelievably, spokesmen of the Junior Order of American Mechanics, by its own admission not a labor group, and M.W. Poulson of the Adams Hat Employees Association, 176 members strong and the only legitimate labor organization (a company union) to oppose the measure, were able to speak at equal length and on an equal par with the hesitant representatives of eight million American workers.

The most telling blow against the Wagner Bill, however, was not delivered by the indecisive Jewish community or the Hugh Herbert-like spokesmen of organized labor, but by official Washington. The wily James Patton, a Harvard graduate who was Secretary of the New York JOAM, noted in the course of a three-hour debate with Representative Poage in May that no high-ranking official in government, not FDR, Hull, Frances Perkins, Taylor, or Rublee had said one word pro or con about the bill, although it had been much in prominence for three months. Commenting on the official silence in Washington, Patton said, "I think that is significant."

Indeed, it was significant, for the unexpressed dictum in the executive branch was that this was solely a legislative matter and that the administration would in no way attempt to influence its outcome. Frances Perkins, with whom the idea for a child immigration bill may have originated, spoke out forcefully against Reynolds' proposed

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restrictionist legislation in February, 1939, but said nothing about the Wagner Bill. During the Senate deliberations, her subordinates, James J. Houghteling, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, and Edward Shaughnessy, Deputy Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, remained laconic in the face of personal vilification by Senator Reynolds.

Houghteling's exchange with the Senator was especially enlightening. After contesting Reynolds charges that there were more than 300,000 "visitors" in the U.S., Houghteling was asked if he wanted more visitors to enter this country. "Not under present circumstances," he responded. Asked if he then opposed the Wagner Bill, the Commissioner said, "I am not taking any position on that." Asked for his personal opinion, he replied, "My official opinion is that it is a matter to be decided by the Congress." When Reynolds pressed him for a definitive answer, since the Department of Labor was so liberal with its words of censure where his bills were concerned, Houghteling begged off saying, "I am not prepared to express a personal opinion at this time."

"You don't care to answer?" Reynolds stormed.

"I do not care to answer," concluded Houghteling. That same kind of verbal exchange frustrated Congressman Poage when he questioned Mrs. Lenroot, another Labor Department section hand, during the second session of public hearings on the Wagner Bill. When

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95 Hearings on S. 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, pp. 7-10.
96 Ibid., pp. 53-55.
Mrs. Lenroot, who spoke on behalf of the measure, tempered her remarks by saying that she was merely presenting her personal views and not those of the administration. Poage asked, "How can we get the views of the administration?"

"Through the usual channels," was the answer.

"There is not any usual channel," said Poage. "You are told to ask the Bureau of the Budget and they say they are not ready to comment on it. Agencies supposedly organized for the purpose of giving information do not give it. We cannot get a thing." 97

Actually, it should not have been too difficult for any discerning person to fathom the position of the administration. At the very first hearing of the Joint Subcommittee on Immigration in April, Secretary Hull had paved the way for the restrictionists' objections when he warned of a potential tidal wave of immigrants based on the success of this extraordinary precedent. Hull conceded that the bill "could open the door to similar or more radical departures from existing immigration legislation." 98

More deleterious, however, from the standpoint of the bill's chances for success was the Fourth White House Conference on Children held that same month, April, 1939. At a time when the restrictionists were seeking arguments to support their charges of pathetic American children without shoes or crayons, food or shelter, the President and 500 educators and social workers gave them the needed evidence. Dr.

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98 Hearings on the Admission of German Refugee Children, p. 2.
Isidore Falk of the Social Security Board termed children "the economic orphans of our society" and added that 71% of the children in America were in homes "where the income is inadequate or just barely adequate." 99

Then Roosevelt, who had been hard-pressed by wife Eleanor to come out for the Wagner Bill, 100 addressed the throng in the East Room. The fundamental concomittants of a happy child, he said, were home warmth, food, affection, a good education and the knowledge that a secure job awaited him. "As we consider these essentials of a happy childhood," the President continued, "our hearts are heavy with the knowledge that there are many children who cannot make these assumptions." Harkening back to the imagery of his second inaugural address, Roosevelt emphasized the need for the nation to do more for the children of the unemployed, of minority groups, of migrant families swept out of the Dust Bowl, children without adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical attention or education. 101

Throughout the hearings, restrictionists and wavering Congressmen alike would incessantly return to this theme of underprivileged American youth, 102 and could always cite the President of the United

100 Cable of Eleanor Roosevelt to FDVr, Feb. 22, 1939, Roosevelt Library, Personal Correspondence, PPF 2.
101 Washington Post, April 27, 1939, p. 4.
States as their authority. More than anything else, the words "one third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad and ill-nourished" spelled doom for the Wagner Bill.\footnote{When Representative Catherine O'Day wrote Roosevelt asking for an opinion on the measure, he pencilled in the following instruction to Secretary "Pa" Watson: "File, no action. FDR." That was the administration view of the Wagner Bill. Day to Roosevelt, June 2, 1939, Political Refugee File, Roosevelt Library, OF 3186.}

What then could be done in fairness to both American and German-Jewish children? Congressman Poage offered one compromise. He suggested that as many as 50,000 of these German children be admitted as visitors, with passes renewable to the age of 21. At that time, they could be eligible for citizenship and charged against the quota. George Allen of Alabama swiftly vetoed the idea, pointing out that the proposal was illegal as a visitor must have the right to return to his native land.\footnote{Hearings on H.J. Res. 165 and H.J. Res. 168, pp. 229-31.} When Congressmen Kramer asked several witnesses what their thoughts were about admitting the children on a preferential basis within existing quotas, they all opposed the idea saying it would destroy the purpose of the bill. As Monte Lemann said, "You would be giving a stone instead of a piece of bread."\footnote{Ibid., p. 81.}
In a last ditch attempt to wrench the bill free from the Senate and House immigration committees, Wagner delivered an impassioned radio address over a nationwide hookup on June 7, 1939. He began by relating the story of the St. Louis which had been ordered out of Havana harbor six days before. He spoke of the misery of people in no-man's lands, of the "unfortunate waifs"—Catholic, Protestant and Jewish children—behind the barbed wire of concentration camps. He berated the American public for its evanescent concern over the fate of these people saying, "One by one, these incidents impress themselves on our consciousness, until they disappear from the public prints, and a merciful curtain of obscurity is drawn over their ultimate outcome." For Wagner, the passage of this bill was crucial not merely as "a token of our sympathy" but also "as a symbol of our faith in the ideals of human brotherhood."\(^{106}\)

The purpose of Wagner's speech was to elicit widespread public support at the last moment for his measure. It did no such thing, and when the bill emerged from committee on June 30, 1939, it was with the amendment that the 20,000 children were to enter the country under existing quotas. What Pickett, LaRoe, Mrs. Rogers and Wagner had all opposed, giving over 10,000 of the annual 27,000 German certificates to the children on a preferential basis instead of adding 10,000 to the 27,000 was to become a reality if the bill passed.\(^{107}\)


\(^{107}\) New York Times, July 1, 1939, pp. 3 and 8.
His bill emasculated, Wagner lashed out bitterly against the amendment. "The proposed change," he said, "would, in effect, convert the measure from a humane proposal to help children who are in acute distress to a proposal with needlessly cruel consequences for adults in Germany who are in need of succor and are fortunate enough to obtain visas under the present drastic quota restrictions." Because of Wagner's opposition, the amended bill never came to a vote in Congress.

This was not the end of the German refugee children question. Amazingly, the subject reappeared in the Senate Immigration Committee's report on Reynolds' bill to suspend immigration for an indefinite period. Among the many amendments which were tacked on to this doomed piece of legislation was the recommendation to admit 20,000 refugee children from Germany, Moravia, and Slovakia, provided they possessed genuine certificates proving they were under the age of 14, and provided they did not become public charges. Wagner and his associates had chosen to destroy their own bill rather than see 20,000 of 54,000 certificates go to children. Now the Senate was suggesting that 20,000 certificates go to children in lieu of any being granted to adults. 109


Both the Wagner and Reynolds bills went down to defeat in the summer of 1939 and it is ironic that in their last moments the two were conjoined. It was a fitting testimonial to the hesitance of the administration, the anomie of the Jewish community, and the hostility of the American people, 60% of whom had told George Gallup that they opposed the bill.  

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\[\text{Cantril, Public Opinion, p. 1081.}\]
CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIFTH COLUMN

Three weeks after Adolf Hitler unleashed his Panzer divisions against Poland, on September 1, 1939, agents of the moribund Jewish Hilfsverein in Berlin cabled HIAS President Abraham Herman in New York: "Continuance of emigration possible and urgently requested." Similar communications were received from Jews singled out for special abuse by conquering Nazi and Russian armies in Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania. Confronted with the actuality, not merely the prospect, of nearly four million stateless Jews, Herman and HIAS Vice-President Solomon Dingol submitted a memorandum outlining a plan of rescue to Representative Sol Bloom of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, to IGCR Vice-Director Robert Pell, and to the U.S. State Department. The failure of any of these to take action on the HIAS proposal illustrated the lack of coordinated effort in America toward refugee problems through the twilight of

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2 This plan called for the admission to the United States of large numbers of Jewish refugees on temporary visas, transport to be supplied by neutral nations at cost to the American Jewish community. See Mark Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom: The History of HIAS* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing, 1956), p. 160.
As yet uncommitted to a policy of extermination of the Jews, the German Government was more than cooperative in permitting Jews to leave Greater Germany in the days of the "Phoney War." As late as June, 1940, trains carrying frightened emigrants made regular runs from Berlin, Prague and Vienna to Lisbon, Bilbao and Vigo. From these Iberian ports, refugees could depart for South America or the United States on any of a dozen neutral vessels, with capacities ranging from 1,200 to 2,300 passengers. It was estimated that 2,600 persons left Lisbon in this manner each month. Many more could have made the journey to freedom on half-empty vessels, but for the decisions of American consular officials who felt unable or would not supply extensions on transit visas which might have expired before the emigrant

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3 National Refugee Service Information Bulletin #3, December 20, 1939, p. 2. A year later the American Jewish Congress received word that Jewish leaders in Germany had been summoned to a special meeting with Gestapo Colonel "Julius" Eichmann, "a native Palestinian who speaks Hebrew fluently." Even then, after the fall of France, they were told that Europe must be free of Jews, but that the Nazis would cooperate with emigration to Palestine, Kenya, Australia, or Madagascar. Memorandum of Lillie Shultz to Wise, September 11, 1940, American Jewish Congress File, Wise Papers, VII.

4 The American Export Line alone accepted 10,000 bookings before the Maritime Commission in Washington ordered it to half on March 14, 1941. For a discussion of shipping possibilities between 1939 and 1941 see Tartakower and Grossman, The Jewish Refugee, pp. 205-06.

5 Ibid., p. 205.
reached Lisbon. Some Jews, desirous of emigrating to Palestine, fled through the Balkans, chartered tramp steamers in the Black Sea and sailed on to the Holy Land, there to vex the British. Perhaps as many as 25,000 illegals flouted the White Paper and two subsequent suspensions of all immigration between 1939 and 1941. The most adventurous Jewish refugees could make the 6,000-mile-trek by rail to Vladivostock, there to sail for Yokahoma or Kobe, and ultimately the United States or South America. Between July 1, 1940 and June 1, 1941, 4,413 persons made this journey through Kobe bound for the Western Hemisphere.

6 The American vessel McKeesport left Marseilles in July, 1940, with scores of refugees standing on the quais, and no passengers aboard. The explanation offered by consular officials for their failure to expedite clearance of refugees was the need to abide by all immigration regulations, including meticulous review of papers of the refugees. Some persons argued that they were being over-scrupulous. See Jay Allen, "Refugees and American Defense," Survey Graphic, Vol. XXIX (October, 1940), p. 488.

7 The British Government, concerned over its vital communication links and oil supplies in the Middle East, and worried that additional Jewish immigration might lead the Arabs into the Axis camp, had 20,000 men on duty in Palestine at the time, to ward off these vessels. Winston Churchill, The Second World War: Their Finest Hour, Vol. II (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1949), p. 173.

8 Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, pp. 70-71. No accurate statistics are available, but Mark Wischnitzer has chronicled the voyages of most of these ill-fated Balkan vessels in To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949), pp. 228-55, and has estimated that as many as 10,000 persons lost their lives on vessels that were rebuffed from Palestine by the British.

9 Wischnitzer, Visas to Freedom, pp. 164-5.
Here, the refugees were hardly greeted with open arms. The United States, for example, first refused admission to passengers stuffed in the clammy holds of the freighter Navemar because they possessed deficient papers. Another vessel, the Quanza, turned away from Mexico, was repulsed from Norfolk, despite the intercession of Dr. Nahum Goldmann with Cordell Hull. Chile barred all immigration on October 11, 1939. Brazil closed its borders to Jews. Cuba raised its entry guarantee to $2500 per person. And while all this went on, the IGCR explored the possibility of planting colonies of refugees in Yunnan, China, or Birobidjan, Siberia.

The U.S. Government was outwardly sympathetic to the entreaties of the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Friends Services Committee, and other humanitarian agencies engaged in refugee work. The nation and its representatives knew that something was terribly wrong in Europe, that thousands of innocent civilians were starving to death in


11 When Goldmann pointed out that Hull had permitted anti-Nazi German sailors who jumped ship to remain in the country and that the Secretary could not very readily turn away the refugees if they did the same, Hull said angrily, "You are the most cynical man I have ever met." Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 30-31.

Poland's ghettos, that thousands more were dying of disease and brutality in French detention camps. Herbert Hoover predicted that as many as 18,000,000 Europeans would be without food in 1941. Like so many other Americans, Hoover, though grief-stricken at the plight of the Europeans, and particularly the Jews, did not feel that this country should ameliorate the situation by opening its doors to refugees. In an address before the Jewish Welfare Fund in Chicago on February 11, 1940, the man who had fed Europe during and after World War I affirmed, "For one hundred and fifty years America was this refuge and this sanctuary. Sanctuary must be found elsewhere."
About the same time, Hoover's successor, Franklin Roosevelt, convinced that no plan of international cooperation was feasible, and dogged by his wife Eleanor, requested that U.S. Commissioner of Immigration Houghteling explore the possibility of Congressional liberalization of existing refugee laws. Houghteling reported his discouraging findings on the fifth of January, 1940. Instead of mounting sympathy for the victims of Nazism, the Commissioner reported that the tenor of Congress was for more stringent alien control, of the sort which ultimately was enacted in the Smith Law. Said Houghteling, "I sat with the Immigration Committee of the Senate and the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization of the House of Representatives at all their sessions and found a great deal of confusion in the minds of Congressmen on the subject of refugees and of hostility to the admission of any considerable number of aliens to compete for employment with American citizens."

With eight million Americans yet unemployed, Houghteling warned: "The tendency of a considerable part of Congress was toward the reduction of existing immigration quotas. The chance of any liberalizing legislation seemed negligible."^{18}

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17 Roosevelt had all but abandoned hope for achieving anything through the Intergovernmental Committee after the chilly response he received from Britain on expanding the role of the IGCR in October, 1939. The Division of European Affairs of the State Department also considered the IGCR inoperative. Memorandum to Hull, March 7, 1940, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 50.

18 Houghteling to FDR, January 5, 1940, Immigration File, 1933-45, Roosevelt Library, OF 133.
Although the nation had begun to enjoy an economic resurgence
directly related to defense production, the old fears of foreigners push-
ing American laborers out of jobs remained very real in 1940. A study
of 149 companies done by the National Industrial Conference Board (an
employers' research organization) noted that two-thirds of the companies
queried refused to hire any alien workers. Those that did generally did
so only if no other applicant was available, and only after a compre-
hensive examination of the alien's background. Coincidentally, the
Opinion Research Corporation indicated that 40% of those polled between
1940 and 1942 would refuse to hire a Jew, regardless of whether he were
or were not an alien.

The Federal Government discriminated against aliens in its civil
service, where applicants were required to swear out affidavits that they
were citizens or intended to apply for naturalization, and in the merchant
marines, where citizenship was a prerequisite for all crew members on
cargo vessels and 90% of the crews aboard passenger vessels. At the
same time, practically every state in the Union had laws of one kind or
another barring aliens from certain occupations. In 1940 aliens were


20 Stember, p. 92. This figure is consistent with the expressed
level of anti-Semitism throughout the war years. Roper, for instance,
indicated that 42% of 5,000 persons polled in November, 1942, would
object to living next door to Jewish neighbors. Ibid., p. 96. The ORC
reported that 40-60% of the Gentile-Americans polled would counsel
against marrying a Jew. Ibid., pp. 104-5. Roughly the same figure be-
lieved that Jews had too much power in the U.S. and questioned Jewish
patriotism. Ibid., pp. 121 and 116.
prohibited from practising medicine in 28 states, law in 26, accounting in 15, pharmacy in 14, dentistry and optometry in 11, banking in 7, plumbing in 4. In several states, aliens could not become teachers, barbers, engineers, pilots of vessels, registered nurses, architects, or even garbage collectors. In others, aliens could not own land, kill game, or fish. Such laws had repeatedly been validated by the courts on constitutional grounds reserving police power in regulating trades and professions to the states. Many explanations might be offered, that training received abroad might not be applicable in the United States, that language could serve as a barrier to carrying out one's functions, but the impression was left that the United States still subscribed to the nativist rationalization expressed in an earlier case that "foreign born have not the same inspiration for the public weal, nor are they as well-disposed toward the United States as those who by citizenship are a part of the government itself." 

Hostility toward aliens, refugees or Jews in the form of dismissals and job turn-downs became so pronounced in 1940-41 that officials in Washington had second thoughts about the propriety of legal restrictions on their employment. In September, 1940, Attorney General Biddle warned that continued discrimination against aliens in employment

could ultimately create a refugee problem within this nation, as such people could not return to their native lands even if they desired and since they were barred by law from obtaining government welfare aid. "To deprive them of their employment," said Biddle, "is often to deprive them and their dependents of their sole means of livelihood and to leave them helpless."24

For Roosevelt, such economic discrimination was "as stupid as it is unjust, and on both counts it plays into the hands of the enemies of American democracy."25 The government now moved to assure employers that aliens could be employed in defense plants despite laws dating from July 2, 1926, and June 28, 1940, which seemed to indicate that this was illegal and punishable by imprisonment for five years and a fine of $10,000. All the alien needed, however, was approval from the federal department involved in the work project.26 Thousands of aliens did this, but thousands more had to fall back upon the labors of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices headed by Dr. Malcolm MacLean and civil servants like Governor Herbert Lehman of New York, Governor Charles Edison of New Jersey, and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York City who tried in vain to implement the laws equitably.27

25 Roosevelt to Biddle, January 2, 1942, Immigration File, 1933-45, Roosevelt Library, OF 133.
26 Biddle to FDR, November 6, 1941, Immigration File, 1933-45, Roosevelt Library, OF 133.
This employment hassle notwithstanding, through the winter months of 1939-40, the American Government acted as if it fully concurred with Jay Allen's cynical appraisal that "there is no reason to talk of refugee problems anymore." Wrote Allen, "Hitler has solved it with the continental concentration camp." 28

The attitude of most Americans was that with the outbreak of the world war, all non-belligerents who found themselves persecuted, dispossessed, or dominated by the Nazis could technically be lumped into the category of stateless or displaced persons. In the process, the suffering of the Jews was relegated to minor position. Even some Jews shared this attitude. William Zukerman, European Correspondent for the New York Jewish Morning Journal, wrote that the suffering of the Jews was no greater than that sustained by any other population. After the fall of France, Zukerman prophesied that Nazi anti-Semitism would now abate because it had "served its purpose" and because "very few people are now left who can be taken in by this obvious bluff." 29


The popular view in the U.S. was that while conditions in French and British internment camps were bad, they were not intolerable. The fall of France changed that. At the instance of German and Jewish refugee organizations, IGCR Director Emerson cabled the President's Advisory Committee on June 7, calling for the creation of a common reservoir of quota certificates and the immediate admission of sufficient refugees (many of whom had been battered about several countries already) to fill the quotas for 1940 and 1941. The British and French Ambassadors also called on Hull to assist the Allies by removing refugees who impeded military operations. The American Red Cross requested aid for some two million refugees from Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg, who were currently in France. The U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, founded that spring and numbering among its sponsors Mrs. Roosevelt, Marshall Field III, Raymond Clapper, and Joseph Alsop pressed for an emergency treasury of $5,000,000 and the admission of 70,000 refugee children to the U.S. in 1940.


31 Cable of Emerson to George Warren, June 7, 1940, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, VI.

32 Minutes of the 35th Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, VI.

Only 120,000 immigrants, less than half the number permitted under existing legislation, were admitted to the United States in 1940-41, as the government steadfastly refrained from redistributing unused quota allotments. 34 But Congress did set aside $50,000,000 for European relief in the summer of 1940. 35 Four measures were introduced in the House and Senate to facilitate the transport and admission of "refugee children" to the U.S. 36 And Roosevelt, again demonstrating his proclivity to government by crisis, reorganized his refugee advisory committee as the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees, and asked this body to draw up a list of eminent refugees who could receive temporary visitors' visas to America. 37

In doing so, the President was responding to pressure from Mrs. Roosevelt, Thomas Mann, Joseph Chamberlain, and Albert Hirschmann, Professor of International Relations at Columbia University. 38 Such a

34 The government would not even consider sending surplus commodities abroad, where they might be used by starving refugees. Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel explained that the government did not actually own such surpluses, that inordinately involved procedures with the farmers, several government agencies, and retailers would have to be worked out before the use of grain or cotton could be considered. Ezekiel to Warren, February 9, 1940, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, VI.


36 Congressmen Celler, Hennings, and Havenner, and Senator Glass introduced bills relating to this point between July 3 and July 24. None passed.


38 Fermi, Illustrious Immigrants, p. 85.
list, containing the names of 3286 persons of "superior intellectual attainment, of indomitable spirit, experienced in vigorous support of the principles of liberal government, and who were in danger of persecution or death at the hands of autocracy" was prepared for Dr. Alvin Johnson of the New School for Social Research, an institution rich in refugee faculty, and released by Sumner Welles to the public in November.\(^{39}\) The proposal was undermined, however, partly by the diffidence of American consular officials here and abroad.\(^{40}\) Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Jacques Lipschitz, Lion Feuchtwanger, Franz Werfel, Konrad Heiden, were among the fortunes, most of them Jews, who fled France under the terms of this special measure. In all only 1236 persons were rescued before January, 1941, when the plan was aborted.\(^{41}\)

\(^{39}\) Welles to Attorney General Robert Jackson, November 23, 1940, Political Refugees File, Roosevelt Library, OF 3186.

\(^{40}\) The State Department delayed, awaiting Vichy approval for the fictitious return of the "visitors." It never came, since it was the policy of the Laval Government to wait until emigrants presented their entry permits before granting exit permits. State also possessed Dr. Johnson's list of names more than a month before it was pared and made public. As a result, by December 19, 1940, only 238 visas had been issued. Minutes of the 42nd Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee, December 19, 1940, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, VI.

\(^{41}\) Memorandum of Breckinridge Long to Roosevelt, January 6, 1941, Political Refugees File, Roosevelt Library, OF 3186. About this time, the President pressed the Justice and State Departments for special rulings to permit such visitors to make a trip to Canada where they could be certified as bona fide immigrants and issued regular quota visas. Divine, American Immigration Policy, p. 103.
Various proposals to bring children to this country in 1940 did not fare much better. This time there was no question but what the children involved would be "Aryan," or, more specifically, British. The scheme was based on the success of the removal of approximately 38,000 British children to Canada in the first year of the war. Within five weeks of the announcement on July 14, 1940, that the United States was considering issuing visas to children in England, 32,000 applications had been filed by British parents anxious to have their children removed from the pending threat of the Blitz.

Despite the obvious racial, religious and philosophical affinity with the American way of life that these children demonstrated, American restrictionists reverted to their standard arguments during Congressional hearings on the proposal that August. What of financial guarantees? What of the sanctity of the quota system? Could such a measure pave the way for the admission of thousands of Chinese? Would the children be here permanently? Most significant, however, was the query of Representative Noah Mason. Sympathetic to the refugee measures of 1939 and 1940, Mason asked simply how could the children safely cross the Atlantic?

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42 U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, To Provide a Temporary Haven from the Dangers or Effects of War for European Children under the Age of 16, 76th Cong., 3d Sess., 1940, p. 20.


44 Hearings to Provide a Temporary Haven, pp. 3 and 14.
Apparently the House felt it hit on a solution when it tagged the Hennings Bill as an amendment to the Neutrality Act of August 7, 1940. Under this provision, adopted by the Senate on August 19, American ships could be used to transport children under the age of sixteen out of the war zone, including France and Portugal. Cognizant of the dangers which American vessels had faced in World War I, Congress required that these rescue ships have huge American flags painted on both sides and on the decks of such vessels. The ships would sail, however, only when all belligerents had guaranteed them safe conduct. These voluntary restrictions were reminiscent of the German demands on American shipping at the time of resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in January, 1917. Such demands had virtually impelled the United States, traditionally jealous about its rights to freedom of the seas, to go to war against Germany that spring. In 1940, however, American Congressmen prided themselves on having achieved a relatively good compromise with Hitler. Now if he declined to agree to such arrangements, Hitler would be fully exposed as "an advocate of genocide."  

Here again, the nation's representatives in Washington were going no further than their readings of American public opinion would allow. In June, Gallup reported that 58% of the persons polled favored admitting British and French women and children for the duration of the

war. Americans were reluctant, though, to have their ships involved in this affair. In July and August, fully 55% opposed the use of U.S. liners for transport purposes. But when the AIPO prefaced the question with hypothetical guarantees of safety from Italy and Germany, public opinion in this country shifted, with 63% now favoring the use of American ships to bring the refugees across the Atlantic. 46

In all, some 4,200 children and 1,100 adults reached the United States, another 6,000 reached Canada, before the massive rescue plan was abandoned in the fall of 1940. 47 The unmerciful sinking of the Canadian liner Arandora Star, carrying a mixed passenger list of refugees and prisoners of war that summer, plus the sinking of the S.S. City of Benares, with 73 children and six adult refugees aboard, on September 17, 1940, dispelled any notion that the Germans would permit unescorted vessels to traverse the ocean at will. Fully alive to such perils, the British Government argued that it could not spare the necessary convey ships and Clement Atlee asked the U.S. to postpone plans for future passage. 48

All but a handful of the children thus saved in 1940 were British, a fact which has led Arthur Morse to divine that the rescue operations

46 Cantril, Public Opinion, 1150.

47 Titmuss, Problems of Social Policy, p. 247. This compares unfavorably with the relocation of 1,400,000 children, women, aged and sick persons in the British Isles in 1939-40. Ibid., p. 103.

deliberately against the true refugee children of Europe, the Jews. It also contributed to the yet extant myth that thousands of British children swarmed into the United States during World War II while refugee children faced extermination. In fact, all of these children could legitimately have entered under Britain's never-filled quota allotment of 65,000 per year. That they entered as legitimate immigrants may explain why the Department of Immigration and Naturalization has no special statistics available for British refugee children, as such, during this time.

Perhaps the saddest innuendo about refugee children that had to be refuted in 1940 was the charge that they were potential fifth columnists. Professor Chamberlain of the National Coordinating Committee actually felt constrained to petition Roosevelt on behalf of the innocence of these young travelers that summer. But the United States looked out onto a different world in that fearful epoch, one haunted by the effectiveness of

49Morse, While Six Million Died, p. 293.


51According to Helen Eckerson, Chief of the Statistical Section of the Department of Naturalization and Immigration, no sizable number of British children was ever accorded special immigration rights during the war. Interview with Miss Eckerson, June 5, 1968.

52Letter of Chamberlain to Roosevelt, June 18, 1940, President's Advisory Committee File, Wise Papers, VI.
Nazi military prowess and brutality, one in which Madrid, Oslo, Prague and a score of other ancient centers of civilization had been betrayed by Nazi sympathizers within the defensive perimeters of these cities. Fear of internal traitors known as the Fifth Column generated an irrational hysteria seldom equalled in American history. Members of the Jehovah's Witnesses were mobbed as "fifth columnists" for refusing to salute the flag. A foundry worker in Sparta, Michigan, was killed by his neighbor because "he was in the fifth column." In Sapulpa, Oklahoma, a Technocrat was jailed because he allegedly was a "fifth columnist." Jeff Davis, self-anointed king of America's hoboes, appointed celebrated gate-crasher "One-Eyed" Connolly to watch for the fifth column on the rails. In New York State, a group of women banded together, like so many Mrs. Minnivers, vowing to shoot on sight any German parachutists. An American Legion Post in Erie County, New York, promised to bar the fifth column from crossing the Niagara River. 53

Despite the admonitions of John Haynes Holmes, William Haber of the National Refugee Service, George Warren of the President's Advisory Committee, and Attorney General Robert Jackson, all of whom cautioned against lawlessness or vigilantism in the guise of upholding liberty, 54 and despite Werner Guttmann's detailed expose of Hitler's underground operations in the United States, 55 many people still considered liberals, 53 Lavine, *Fifth Column in America*, p. 5.


Trotskyites, aliens, Jews, Earl Browder, and J.P. Morgan as part of the fascist fifth column in 1940. Anyone who was unknown or disliked could be labelled a fifth columnist by a panicked America, which even before Pearl Harbor was deluging the Federal Bureau of Investigation with as many as 2800 complaints daily about spies in the neighborhood.  

The fright mongers and sensation-seekers did a thriving business in this atmosphere. Ex-Storm Trooper Otto Strasser painted a gloomy picture of impending fascist takeovers in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and even Mexico. Samuel Lubell, Donald Keyhoe, and John Daly brought the menace closer to home, charging that Hitler was forcing expellees in this country who had relatives in European concentration camps to do his bidding. Through the summer of 1940, Martin Dies, never particularly sympathetic to refugees or "sobbing sentimentalists" in this country who championed their cause, used the platform of the House Un-American Activities Committee to lash out at the fifth column. Dies, whose bird-dogging tactics earned commendation from Roosevelt (who had himself warned Americans to be alert to the fifth column menace that summer), charged that there were six million Communist and Nazi sympathizers

in the U.S. working hand-in-glove with one another and with the Gestapo and GPU to destroy American liberty.\textsuperscript{59} And finally, American fears were not eased when intelligence chief Colonel William Donovan told the press that foreign agents were free to function at will in the democracies.\textsuperscript{60}

Not all Americans believed that aliens and Jews were fifth columnists, but many Americans believed it, and one of those who did and had the power to do something about it was Breckinridge Long. The small, wizened man that Sumner Welles had recommended for the position of Assistant Secretary of State in January, 1940, when George Messersmith resigned to become Ambassador to Cuba, Long was descended from Kentucky's aristocratic Breckinridge clan. A State Department functionary in the restrictionist heyday toward the end of the Wilson Administration, defeated in his only two bids for public office in his native Missouri, Long possessed little fondness for the common man or the foreigner. In October, 1940, James McDonald, Chairman of the President's Advisory Committee, walked out on a meeting with the Assistant Secretary after blasting him for his "vindictive mentality and superlative ego."\textsuperscript{61} A similar judgment was passed by Tabitha Petran and


\textsuperscript{60}\textit{New York Times}, August 21, 1940, p. 9.

William Walton in PM who said of Long: "He is an old man, a narrow, limited man, whose wealth and inclination have kept him from ever having any sympathy for the people who get pushed around. He may no longer admire the fascist way of life, but he still retains a contempt for the little people, which makes his holding of any government position a danger to American democracy." 62

For his generous contributions to the Roosevelt's campaign coffers in 1932, Long was rewarded with the post of Ambassador to Italy. He served in this capacity for three years, hosting swank parties that were the envy of other embassies, lavishing praise upon the Fascists for their efficiency in getting the trains to run on time, and generally making clear his approbation of the Mussolini regime. Even before Mussolini's forces invaded Ethiopia, Long advocated appeasement in the form of offering huge slices of land in the contested region to the Italians. Afterward, he endorsed the Fascist conquest and sent repeated cables to Washington, criticizing the American embargo. He opposed Roosevelt's fireside chats on European affairs warning of the President's criticism of Hitler's expansionist policies. "He must not say that. This is terrible. This will get us into war." He advocated a $100,000,000 credit in the form of food supplies for France. He opposed the language used by Roosevelt in his "Hand that held the Dagger" speech, which the President delivered in June, 1940, as a condemnation of Italy's entry into the war against France. Long questioned the wisdom of the embargo on steel, oil, and iron to

62PM, February 11, 1941, p. 7.
Japan in November, 1940, and spoke out against Lend Lease in the winter of 1940-41. Breckinridge Long was one of that great host unable to see the dimensions of the Fascist threat to America, and his counsels, in retrospect, were generally in error.

In 1936, Long was recalled from Italy, ostensibly for reasons of health, but newspapers blamed his constant indiscretions. After holding a number of legal positions in private life for three years, he reappeared in government circles as the American member of a Commission for the Advancement of Peace with Italy. Then, in 1939, he was appointed as an adviser on international trade and war emergency matters in the State Department's Special Division on War Problems. Here he so impressed Sumner Welles with his geniality that when George Messersmith's departure created a vacancy at the top level in the State Department, Hull and Welles both pushed for his promotion to Assistant Secretary.

In his four years as Assistant Secretary, Long supervised 23 of the 42 divisions in the State Department, including those related to overseas relief, transports, civilian internees, prisoners of war, and the all-important visa section. From the standpoint of the refugee, Long's attitudes were narrow and unsympathetic. On one occasion, Long directed the Visa Division to turn down the applications of a group of 292 German-Jewish refugees in England because "they are pacifists."

In a comment reminiscent of the faded days of his youth in the era of

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A. Mitchell Palmer, Long explained, "They would have the same attitude about this country as was indicated in the last war. If this country is not worth fighting for, it is not worth coming to." On another occasion, when under pressure from the many religious and nationality groups that were badgering his office for special favors, he stated, "Personally, I would feel much easier about the future if we could get rid of all groups, blocks, and special interests."

The group that especially harassed the Assistant Secretary was the Jews. Far from being the dripping anti-Semite painted by Morse, however, Long was extremely cordial to the Jews and opened his office on repeated occasions to spokesmen of every faction. Whether cynically or not, he even patronally suggested that it would help their cause if these factions coalesced behind a single leader. Long recognized that the major portion of visa applicants from Europe in the period before Pearl Harbor were Jews, and one is hard-pressed to find a single anti-Semitic statement in any of his personal notes or memoranda. In fact, the Assistant Secretary was apparently genuinely concerned over the fate of European Jewry. Witness his instruction to Avra Warren of the Visa Section, dated December 23, 1940, on the question of extending visas to rabbinical

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64 Long to Coulter, Visa Division, August 30, 1940, Long Papers, Library of Congress, Visa File, Container 211.


66 Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 38-42.

67 On October 31, 1941, the Visa Division reported that it was processing 2000-3000 alien applications per week. 90% of these came from Europe. And of these more than 80% were applications of Jewish refugees. Benton to Warren, October 31, 1941, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 212.
students in Lithuania. "I want to do everything we legitimately can to help these people out of the predicaments they find themselves in," wrote Long, "at the same time observing the requirements of our law."68

This rigid adherence to the letter of the law was what inevitably earned Long the enmity of the Jewish community and other nationality groups as well. He personally crippled efforts to save the British children during the summer months of 1940, charging on the one hand that there were no American vessels available for this purpose ("impracticable and entirely out of the question," he said),69 and adding that "the very surest way to get America into this war would be to send an American ship to England and put 2000 babies on it and then have it sunk by a German torpedo."70

Long's refusal to approve visas for the scholars and scientists stranded in France solely because they had no French exit visas (which, of course, the Vichy Government would not issue without an American entry visa, ad infinitum) nearly provoked a mass resignation of the President's Advisory Committee in the fall of 1940.71

68 Long to Warren, December 23, 1940, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.

69 Long to Welles, July 11, 1940, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211. According to Admiral Land, such rescue operations were not inconceivable and several large vessels, including the Sibboney, Manhattan, and Washington, were available for such an exodus. Land to Long, March 24, 1941, Long Papers, Special Division—Shipping File, Container 209.

70 The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, p. 119. Long derisively noted that everybody in the U.S. had somebody they wanted to bring out of Europe and predicted that enthusiasm for the rescue of the British children would soon wane. Ibid., p. 109.

71 PM, February 11, 1941, p. 7.
Long even abandoned his initial efforts on behalf of Jewish rabbis and students, persons who could legitimately have qualified under existing legislation as non-quota immigrants. He explained that all plans under consideration for the rescue of European yeshivet were inadequate since they did not carry "any definite assurance" that the persons to whom passports would be delivered would actually be the persons whose names appeared on the various consular lists.  

Once more the Gorgon of the Fifth Column reared its ugly head, for Long was not immune to the fear of spies and saboteurs that was sweeping the country in 1940. On the 17th of June, 1940, he noted in his diary that alien agents could merely walk across the American-Canadian border, a "sieve" he called it, to do their nefarious work. On the same day, to Avra Warren, he confided that American nationality laws were in a lax condition and had to be tightened up. Later that month, the fall of France having conjured up for him "all my childhood fears—Genghis Khan, Cyrus, Xerxes, the Pharaohs (sic), Caesar, Mahomet, Napoleon, on the march," he was able to convince the Attorney General to issue a special ruling, confirmed by Executive Order, to the effect that future immigrants would be admitted on the basis of "reasonable need." But henceforth


73 The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, p. 108.

74 Long to Warren, June 17, 1940, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.

75 The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, p. 117.
such need was to be determined from the viewpoint of the American nation; whether the U.S. would profit from the admission of such immigrants, and not whether the alien himself was to be the determining test for admission. 76

Long advocated alien registration and favored a narrower interpretation of the nation's LPC clause in granting visas. Through the fall of 1940, he fretted about the 2,000 saboteurs currently employed in the shipping and aircraft industries, persons known to the Dies Un-American Activities Committee, who could not be removed for fear of antagonizing the already fractious labor unions. 77 In November, he lamented, "We're still having a good deal of trouble with refugees," and blamed the President's Advisory Committee for having forced most of the State Department's mistakes, including the granting of a visa to one individual who was, in Long's words, "an expert dynamiter with a subversive intent." 78

Seeing spies everywhere, Long departed from the State Department's tradition of silence on legislative matters and submitted a draft text on exclusion of aliens whose admission would be "inimical to the interests of the United States" to Attorney General Francis Biddle. 79

There is even some reason to believe that Long's eventual acquiescence

76 Long to Berle, Feb. 7, 1941, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.

77 The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, p. 135.

78 Ibid., p. 154. For additional comments by Long on the threat of the Nazis through the manipulation of refugees, see pp. 156-7.

in the scheme to rescue elite scholars was purchased at the price of promises from the Attorney General, Solicitor General, and other representatives of the Justice Department to champion a tightening up of immigration examination procedures at the end of 1940.  

Long's determination to make a complete review of an immigrant's credentials before admitting him to the United States was sustained by his subordinates, some of whom appeared to interested analysts as suave anti-Semites. Journalists Petran and Walton charged in _PM_ that Long readily admitted that Consuls Leland Morris in Berlin and James Stewart in Zurich were anti-Semites who were loath to issue visas to Jews, yet he did nothing to remove them from their crucial posts during the period before the United States entered the war. State Department functionaries who counseled Long also evidenced little sympathy for the Jewish refugees.

The cool, young, legalistic head of the Visa Division, Avra Warren, echoed Westbrook Pegler's fulminations in November, 1940, when he vetoed a Harold Ickes suggestion to permit 12,000 "German" refugees in Portugal to colonize the underpopulated Virgin Islands. Warren, like Pegler, warned that many of these applicants were

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80 Long expressed his assent for the plan only after these officials agreed that consuls should scrutinize all applicants to sift out those who might engage in activities deemed inimical to the interest of the U.S. See Memoranda of Long for Hull, October 3, 1940, and October 18, 1940, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.

81 _PM_, February 11, 1941, p. 7.
subversives or operatives of the Nazi Government. Warren also rejected as impractical a scheme to set up a haven for refugees in Alaska, arguing that "nearly all of them (the refugees) belong to a particular race" and that their admission in large numbers would eventually create "serious problems."

Warren's assistant in the Visa Division, Robert Alexander, supported his superior's views on refugees. He consistently opposed the idea of lumping all unused quota permits into what he derogatorily referred to as "a jackpot for the Jews." Alexander even intimated that the Jews in this country were consciously or unconsciously in league with Hitler, as their hyper-emotional antics only served to impede the success of the Allied war effort.

Like views were also entertained by Long's executive assistant George Brandt; a man who had served as a delegate to Evian, who would later play a key role in deliberations at Bermuda, and who would later withhold information of Nazi genocide from the public. Such views were also entertained by European Division Chief Elbridge Durbrow, who

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82 Long Memorandum, November 13, 1940, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.
83 Warren to Hackworth, Legal Division, February 4, 1941, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.
dismissed reports of mass extermination issuing from Europe as atrocity tales. And finally, such views were also entertained by Robert Borden Reams, a Pennsylvanian who had risen in the ranks of the Foreign Service to become Long's principal advisor on Jewish questions in the Division of European Affairs by 1942. Reams was most instrumental in reinforcing Long's view that most refugees coming to the United States were fifth columnist's disguise. "Naturally it can't be made public knowledge," Reams was to comment later, "but some are getting in and some have been apprehended as agents." 86

This gnawing fear that somehow the U.S. was being duped into admitting Nazi and Bolshevik agents preyed upon Long through the winter of 1940-41. Despite his labors on behalf of more stringent reviews of visa applications, he was disturbed by reports reaching his desk from Cordell Hull to the effect that consuls abroad should be instructed to be as lenient as possible in processing refugees. 87 Hull indicated that the Nazis were sending 450,000 Jews in sealed cars to Lisbon and the Secretary wanted them moved out as swiftly as possible "within existing quotas." 88

86 Minutes of the Meeting of American Delegates to Bermuda Conference, April 25, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 211, p. 25.
87 Long to Hull, Jan. 6, 1941, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211.
88 Hull to Long, Feb. 7, 1941, Long Papers, Visa File, Container 211. About the same time, Hull made it rather clear that the U.S. would not countenance any French scheme to dump 300,000 Jews (the term used by Premier Laval and Ambassador Gaston Henry-Haye) on the Western Hemisphere since the U.S. would never accord preferential treatment to any ethnic or religious group and would not be a party to any international action which might be interpreted as placing pressures on governments to do more than already permitted by existing laws. Turtakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, p. 203.
Long was even more distressed by the receipt of a nine-page letter from Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt in Moscow in early May. In this letter Steinhardt, who later earned the plaudits of Jewish relief groups for his work as minister to Turkey, blasted "the so-called humanitarian agencies" which were being "derelict in their duties as Americans" in sponsoring "so-called refugees." He charged that in the past eighteen months "many who will engage in activities inimical to our interest" had entered the U.S. under fraudulent pretenses. "We have direct evidence," Steinhardt said, "that a substantial proportion of these so-called refugees from the Soviet Union and Soviet-controlled areas are approach by the G.P.U. to act as agents in the U.S." The Ambassador called on Long to restore the discretionary powers of consuls, who by this time were so confused they could only deny admission to someone "naive enough to tell us he is going to blow up the DuPont powder works." "I feel strongly," added Steinhardt, "that when our country is facing perhaps the greatest crisis in its history, its security from foreign machinations is of a great deal more importance than the entry of this, that, or the other immigrant, no matter how good a case he or she can make out on humanitarian grounds."

To check this flow of subversive personnel, Long recommended the expansion of the visa Division to include 300 persons and the establishment of five inter-departmental review boards to pass upon the merits of each visa application in Washington and not to leave the decision totally

in the hands of the harried consuls. Such a time-consuming review would, according to Long, discourage "the insidious infiltration of whispering agents . . . the agents of trouble and discord . . . the saboteurs (who) throw monkey wrenches into the machinery . . . all with the object of creating discord and dismay and of rendering nugatory efficient organization."  

It is doubtful that Long's viewpoints would have become policy but for the drastic deterioration of German-American relations in the spring of 1941. The transfer of fifty World War I vintage destroyers to the British Navy in September, 1940, the convening of joint Anglo-American military staff talks in January, 1941, the enactment of Lend-Lease on March 11, 1941, the acquisition of bases in Greenland in April, 1941, all pushed the United States further along the road to undeclared war with Germany.

Then on May 21, 1941, an unarmed American merchant ship, the Robin Moor, bound from New York to Capetown, bearing a non-contraband cargo, was attacked and sunk by a German submarine operating well


91 The comments come from Long's speech before the Rotary Club of Chattanooga in the summer of 1941, but are representative of the Assistant Secretary's utterances during this period. See U.S., Department of State Bulletins, Vol. IV (June 28, 1941), pp. 761-4.
outside the blockade zone proclaimed by the German Government on March 25, 1941. Although all passengers and crew were permitted to take to lifeboats, this first sinking of an American vessel so incensed the public that Roosevelt was able to proclaim an unlimited national emergency on May 27. 92

In June, the United States seized Italian and German vessels "idled" in American harbors. Shortly after, Hitler's invasion of Russia prompted the freezing of Axis funds in this country and the closing of their consulates. The Nazis and Fascists retaliated by closing down American consulates in Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy and Occupied France. With these closings, Spain, Portugal and Vichy France, fearing that the chances of refugees being admitted to the U.S. would be constricted, began to restrict the issuance of transit and/or exit permits. Then, on October 1, 1941, the German Government, already in a verbal and shooting war with the United States, removed much of the fear that refugees might act as spies by prohibiting the departure of Jews from the Reich and Government General of Poland. Most of the exit portals of Europe, therefore, were sealed against the Jews well before Pearl Harbor. 93

What the Nazis attempted to do in Europe, the State Department matched in this country. On June 5, 1941, the Department issued


93 Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, p. 473.
a telegram to all consuls directing them to submit all visa applications of persons with close relatives in occupied territory to Washington for final approval. Assistant Secretary Long later explained to Roosevelt that the Department was prompted to make this recommendation on the basis of a confidential memorandum received from J. Edgar Hoover. According to Hoover, refugees leaving Vichy France were being required to submit four photographs instead of the usual three when applying for exit permits. The extra picture was added to the files of the Second Bureau which was responsible for French espionage activity. Permission to leave France, Long added, was granted on the condition that the emigrant, who left the proverbial close relative behind as insurance, would serve as an agent of the Fascist government in Vichy upon reaching the United States.

Here at last was the concrete evidence of espionage that Long needed to stem the flow of immigration. It is no coincidence that the Bloom-Van Nuys Bill, introduced by Long's good friend Representative Sol Bloom, and enacted into law on June 20, 1941, bore many trademarks of Long's philosophy. This law provided for five possible levels of review of every immigration application. The first was the consular level, at which stage the American official was empowered to reject an applicant if he maintained close ties with someone in a hostile country or if there were other evidence that the applicant's entry would be inimical to the public safety. All consular decisions had to be confirmed by an

94Long to Roosevelt, August 20, 1941, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OP 3186.
Interdepartmental committee in Washington, comprised of representatives from the Departments of State, Navy, Army, Justice, and the FBI. Beyond this, unsuccessful applicants could run the gauntlet of appeals to a special committee of review, a board of appeals, and ultimately to the Secretary of State himself.

The law, and subsequent State Department clarifications, required consuls in the south of France and Iberia to serve as amateur psychiatrists or seers. In his memorandum to Roosevelt, Long defended the measure by saying that visas would be denied only after "meticulous inquiry" into the background of the refugees. Applicants would be considered undesirable if "they had agreed to be agents for one of these governments or who might under circumstances existing and because of their mental philosophy serve as agents." 95 What this last phrase really meant was never sufficiently denied. Consular officials interpreted such directives as having only one meaning, however, and that to slow down immigration processing.

Long and his staff prided themselves on pushing through "the relative rule" as the Bloom-Van Nuys Bill was known, to hinder the entry of potential fifth columnists. Subsequently, Robert Alexander was to draft a statement for Long which pointed out that the government faced three alternatives in the middle of 1941: (1) suspend all immigration for the duration of the unlimited national emergency; (2) repeal all restrictions on immigration so that refugees and spies could pour into the

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95 Ibid., The reference to "those governments" refers to Germany, Italy and Vichy.
country on an indiscriminate basis; or (3) pursue a middle course between the first two possibilities, keeping the doors ajar, but utilizing intensive screening to protect internal security from enemy infiltration. That this had actually worked to the best interests of the nation, Long and Alexander were assured, and they cited the Attorney General's favorable report on their actions to Hull dated November 27, 1942, as proof.  

There is no way of estimating how many desperate persons found themselves jeopardized by State Department insistence upon complete typewritten copies of immigration forms B, C, and D, done in sextuplicate, for ultimate review by slow-moving officials in Washington. In some instances, consulates that were functioning in Europe were not equipped with the typewriters made mandatory by Long's Order #946, and the Joint Distribution Committee was forced to rush the machines overseas. Even then the wait might be four or five months before the applicant, panicked that his transit visa in France, Spain or Portugal might expire any day and he would then be returned to Nazi-occupied territory and certain death, would learn that he had been rejected because of a narrow interpretation of the relative rule. In August, 1942, Secretary Hull noted that 10,649 visa applications out of a total of 69,604 had been refused in the previous fiscal year. Such a figure is misleading, however, as both Assistant

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96 Alexander to Long, Feb. 2, 1944, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202. Biddle testified in the report of November, 1942, that the screening process had "worked well" and added, "It is my judgment, therefore, that the present procedure for control of issuance of visas is satisfactory."

97 Hull to Roosevelt, August 11, 1942, Roosevelt Library, Miscellaneous Immigration File, OF 133A.
Secretary Long and Visa Division Chief Warren both prided themselves on the fact that roughly half of the applicants turned down by the State Department before the U.S. entered World War II had been rejected because of the relative rule.  

On July 26, 1941, Albert Einstein, a personal friend of the Roosevelt family, wrote Mrs. Roosevelt to remonstrate against the callousness of the State Department in its immigration practices. "A policy is now being pursued," the brilliant physicist wrote, "which makes it all but impossible to give refuge in America to many worthy persons who are the victims of Fascist cruelty in Europe. Of course this is not openly avowed by those responsible for it. The method which is being used, however, is to make immigration impossible by creating a wall of bureaucratic measures alleged to be necessary to protect America against subversive, dangerous elements." The Einstein letter, like the urgings of the earlier Princeton Conference on Refugee Problems and Needs, in which Mrs. Roosevelt had participated, had no affect on policy. At the time, the President and Mr. Hull were more concerned with the impending rupture with Japan, with the embargo on oil shipments to that nation, and with defensive measures designed to protect American possessions in the Philippines.

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98 Long to Roosevelt, August 20, 1941, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OF 3186. See also Tartakower and Grossmann.

99 Einstein to Mrs. Roosevelt, July 26, 1941, Roosevelt Library, PPF 7177.

100 For the recommendations of this conference, held on February 28 and March 1, 1941, see Political Refugee File, Roosevelt Library, OF 3186.
If American humanitarians and idealists were dismayed at the State Department's constricted interpretation of the relative rule, the pragmatists on the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees were outraged. On September 4, 1941, Chairman James McDonald, speaking for the entire committee, issued a statement to Roosevelt, which completely contradicted everything the President had been told by Long. "The so-called relative rule," wrote McDonald, "should be cancelled or substantially modified. Our experience with refugees has convinced us that it is unnecessary, illogical, ill-adapted to the purposes claimed for it, and cruelly burdensome on the refugees affected by it."

Rather than elaborating the visa process, argued McDonald, what was needed was a simplification. Washington need only be consulted as a final resort, rather than as a preliminary step to approval.  

The attack on Pearl Harbor banished all hopes of modifications along the lines favored by McDonald and the Advisory Committee. Instead, there was talk in December, 1941, of reviving the Hobbs Bill, a measure which would have interned all aliens in concentration camps where "good" aliens could be sifted from the "bad."  

On December 7, Roosevelt enjoined Japanese in this country to refrain from acts against the public safety and issued restrictions on travel, possession of

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101 Minutes of the 50th Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, Sept. 4, 1941, Wise Papers, Advisory Committee File, VI.

102 The Measure was defeated in Congress only two weeks earlier on November 20.
firearms, cameras, or shortwave radios, preparatory to the removal of 100,000 of these aliens and Nisei from the West Coast to 18 "relocation centers" in Utah, Idaho, and Colorado by the summer of 1942. By January 7, 1942, further restrictions were imposed against all alien nationals who may have fled the "enemy" states of Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Korea. Even Jews who were technically stateless emigres were instructed that they were now classified as "enemy nationals" and bound to obtain affidavits of two persons who could vouch for their loyalty. Not until November, 1942, did the Alien Enemy Control Unit, set up in the first days of the war by the Department of Justice, remove such restrictions on the stateless and the Italians. 103

The State Department prided itself on having spared the nation what Long termed "the pernicious activities against the United States by German agents in the guise of refugees" between 1939 and 1942. Testifying before Congress in the winter of 1943, Long said, "I think the records of the FBI will show that there was quite a good deal of that at one time and that there were in this country certain persons to whom those persons were under instructions to report when they arrived." 104  In his memoirs, Secretary Hull also subscribed to the theory that without the vigilance

103 Tartakower and Grossmann.

of the State Department an unchecked influx of refugees would only have resulted in widespread espionage before Pearl Harbor and catastrophe afterward. 105

The facts do not support such viewpoints. Far from finding a sinister anti-democratic conspiracy among refugees, the FBI could and did testify to the loyalty of America's immigrants. J. Edgar Hoover indicated as much in a letter to Representative William G. Stratton in April, 1947. Wrote Hoover, "The experience of the FBI in coping with foreign agents, spies and saboteurs has conclusively illustrated that the great mass of aliens are loyal to America, devoted to the principles of democracy. The vast majority of aliens have remained true to the land of their adoption." 106 Only 23,000 "enemy aliens," representing less than one-half of one per cent of all aliens of enemy nationality in the U.S. in 1940 were ever taken into custody for questioning. Only a fraction of these ever received jail sentences--generally for minor violations of immigration regulations. Moreover, these so-called enemy aliens distinguished themselves in all kinds of endeavors which were beneficial to the war effort. Between July 1, 1940, and June 30, 1945, some 300,000 foreign born served in the U.S. Army, among them 109,000 non-citizens and 30,000 "enemy aliens." Thousands more labored in defense plants or contributed their ingenuity in promoting the Allied cause. 107

It may be argued that Hull and Long did not have the benefit of this hindsight, that the Nazi menace seemed quite real, when they were faced with making decisions in 1940-41. But the government did have access to reports of the Provost Marshall General from World War I, telling of the overwhelming loyalty of immigrants then. Four million aliens, sixty per cent of whom had not even sworn out their declarations of intent to become naturalized citizens, registered for the draft in that first war. Thousands distinguished themselves on the Allied side in a war where the issues were not as defined as in World War II. Moreover, the State Department did possess the analysis of new Immigration and Naturalization Commissioner Earl Harrison, issued three months before Pearl Harbor, that aliens were reliable persons, with strong ties in the U.S., and that aliens never, at any time, conducted themselves en masse as "enemies" of the United States.

In the final analysis, the State Department's reasoning for restricting immigration between 1939 and 1942 had little basis in fact. Despite Long's efforts to the contrary, Nazi sympathizers could, and did, come and go in and out of the U.S. with relative ease. In 1940, for example, the U.S. admitted French anti-Semite Pierre Massin, John Makkari, author of Hungary's anti-Jewish laws, Dr. Gerhard Westrick,

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a Nazi business man from Germany, and several anti-Jewish Czech laborers from Bata (subsequently deported for their anti-democratic behavior in this country) while legitimate refugees from totalitarianism perched anxiously at the tips of semi-free Europe. Even after Germany declared war on the U.S., several persons who had emigrated to the land of Hitler during the late years of the Depression were received back in the U.S. on the S.S. Drottningham.

The U.S. made no effort to bar Frederich Ried, German Consul in New York, from taking his post in the summer of 1940, although Brazil expelled him for the very subversive conduct which now sent shudders up and down the spines of State Department personnel. Ried boasted openly of having founded 1000 schools for Nazi activity in Brazil before being ousted from that country. His story was not unique, as Breckinridge Long complained throughout 1940 that the German Consulate and Embassy were spy-infested, that diplomatic visas were being granted to individuals who were not members of the German Foreign Service. The German Embassy in Washington remained open till June 30, 1941. Italy and Japan maintained their centers of foreign intrigue

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110 PM, Feb. 11, 1941, p. 7.


in the Capital till December of that year. And Vichy France, whose Second Bureau caused Long and the FBI so much consternation, main-
tained its embassy in Washington until November, 1942.

While the State Department was alarmed by the thought of refugee conspirators, it is significant that of 30 persons indicted for sedition by the Attorney-General's Office in the spring of 1942, not one was an alien. Even more significant was the fact that many months before Pearl Harbor, the FBI and various municipal police had shattered every one of the major Nazi espionage networks in the United States, including those operations headed by Wilhelm Lonkowsky, Ludwig Crown, Guenther Rumrich, Baron Duquesne, Franz von der Osten, and Paul Borchardt. Lamented German Charge in Washington Hans Thomsen in 1941, "American authorities knew of the entire network, which was no work of art in view of the naive and, to a certain extent, stupid manner in the way these people carried on."

114 Among those indicted were Gerald Winrod, William Dudley Pelley, Eugene Sanctuary, Lawrence Dennis, James True, Mrs. Elizabeth Dilling, and Joe McWilliams. John Trevor's American Coalition repeatedly was referred to as a fascist front. The trial, on charges of violating the Smith Act, dragged on for nearly five years, during which time one judge died and Prosecutor Oetje John Rogge was replaced for an intemperate public outburst on the matter. At the end of 1946, the Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia released the defendants, since they had been denied the speedy trial guaranteed them under the Constitution. For the defendants' view of this ordeal, see Lawrence Dennis and Maximilian St. George, A Trial on Trial: The Great Sedition Trial of 1944 (New York: National Civil Rights Committee, 1946).


Irrational panic, fanned by the strong winds of nativism and anti-Semitism, resulted in the constriction of American immigration at a time when sanctuary for refugees of all faiths was both desirable and possible, when French ships sailed regularly from Marseilles to Martinique, when the British Blue Star Line carried on a steady passenger trade to South America, when Sweden offered to charter vessels from Goteborg to the United States, when C.I.T. the Italian Travel Agency, and steamship lines in Portugal and Spain stood by ready to transport emigrants to the Western Hemisphere at $500 to $1000 per head. Of the American Government's reluctance to evince interest in any of these facilities, Nation editor Freda Kirchwey wrote: "The record is one which must sicken any person of ordinarily humane instinct. It is as if we were to examine laboriously the curricula vitae of flood victims clinging to a piece of floating wreckage and finally to decide that no matter what their virtues, all but a few had better be allowed to drown."  

Not until the spring of 1944, when the operations of the Visa Division were transferred to Adolph Berle, would there be a liberalization of the policies of Breckinridge Long and his associates.


119 With the war going well for the Allies, visa forms were shortened, some questions pertaining to national security deleted, and the provision requiring the applicant to show that the United States would profit from his admission in some tangible way removed. New York Post, April 28, 1944, p. 5.
CHAPTER SIX

A PARTNERSHIP OF SILENCE

Stephen S. Wise was the most important Jewish leader in the
United States during the Second World War. In his quest for justice for
his people, the Budapest-born rabbi wore many hats during this critical
period--President of the American Jewish Congress, Chairman of the
American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Chairman of the
Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress, Co-Chairman of the
Zionist Organization of America, Chairman of the United Jewish War
Effort, Chairman of the American Jewish Conference, and Co-Chairman
of the Commission of Rescue of the American Jewish Conference. Wise
had long been a leader in the fight to establish a Jewish homeland in
Palestine. He prided himself on sensing the danger inherent in Hitler's
rise to power in 1932 when German-Jewish leaders were saying, "Er
wird nie zur Macht Kommen."¹ Wise advocated boycotts and protest
demonstrations against Hitler long before such tactics became stylish
in the U.S. He championed relief and rescue of refugees during the

¹ Challenging Years: The Autobiography of Stephen Wise (New
Thirties, was instrumental in trying to bring about the short-lived unity among Jewish groups on the eve of the war. His well-publicized friendship with FDR, whom he addressed affectionately as "Boss" or "Chief" dated back to the President's unsuccessful Senatorial race in 1914. The doors of the White House were always open to Rabbi Wise whom Roosevelt had appointed to his Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. To his comrades at the American Jewish Congress, Wise was a "hero" who labored night and day to organize fifteen massive rallies at Madison Square Garden, who badgered the State Department, Roosevelt, and Treasury Secretary Morgenthau with constant overtures for more action on behalf of his tortured people in wartime.  

Because of his power and prestige, Wise was the man with whom anyone receiving confirmation of the rumored Nazi extermination plot against the Jews in 1942 would wish to communicate. One in possession of such catastrophic news, it was believed, perhaps Rabbi Wise

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2 Interviews with Lillie Shultz (former special assistant to Wise at the American Jewish Congress and presently publicity director of the Weizmann Institute), Leona Duckler (former personal secretary to Wise) and Richard Cohn (Assistant Executive Director of the American Jewish Congress), January 8, 1969. All of these people are only laudatory concerning the work of Wise, whom they regarded as the one legitimate Jewish hero in the U.S. during World War II.

3 The German attack on Russia on June 22, 1941, sealed the fate of European Jewry. In laying his plans for Operation Barbarossa, Hitler made it perfectly clear that he did not wish to be saddled with an additional three million Jews found in eastern Poland and the Ukraine. Starvation, brutality and expulsion had not adequately cleared occupied Europe of its Jews. For this reason, Goering issued a directive to Reinhard Heydrich, the handsome blond who had engineered Kristallnacht and who was currently serving as chief of the Reich Main Security Office or RHSA, "to take all preparatory measures required for final solution of the Jewish question in European territories under German influence." Through the summer and fall of 1941, special Death's Head Corps, the
would be able to use his personal influence with the President to force the Allies to take decisive measures to save the rest of Europe's doomed Jews. Failing this, perhaps Wise would be able to rally the American public to break down existing immigration barriers. Perhaps the Rabbi, in desperation, would implement Gandhi's well-known techniques of Satyagraha, lead a march on Washington like that threatened by Negro leader A. Philip Randolph, engage in a hunger strike, or call for civil disobedience to effect some outward expression of concern for the Jews on the part of the United Nations. For precisely such reasons as these, intimates Arthur Morse, did the State Department deliberately deceive the Rabbi and withhold information confirming Nazi genocide from Wise for three months in the fall of 1942.\footnote{Morse, \textit{While Six Million Died}, pp. 3-11.}

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3 (Cont'd).

Einsatzkommando and Sonderkommando, performed their grisly work in league with advance units of the Wehrmacht. The massacre of 30,000 Jews at Kiev's Babi Yar Ravine dates from the early period of German genocide. On January 20, 1942, Heydrich called a conference of the Gestapo heads of all occupied territories in the office of the International Criminal Police Commission in Berlin at Grossen Wannsee No. 56-8. Fifteen persons were present, including Adolf Eichmann, head of Bureau IVA, 4B of the RHSA, the office established for dealing with Jewish problems. In this Wannsee Conference, plans were confirmed to "stamp out the germ cell of a new Jewish development in Europe." The task of dealing with Jews of Eastern Europe was given to SS leader Odile Globocnik of Lublin. Under his direction, death camps were established at Belzec, Maidanek, Chelmne, Treblinka and Sobibor in Poland. Originally the Nazis expected to execute 6,000 persons per day, using the method prescribed by Hitler—gassing. Primitive gas chambers utilizing the carbon monoxide of tank and automobile exhausts proved incapable of attaining that figure. Finally, in March, 1943, Lieutenant General Heinz Kammler, the Wehrmacht engineer who designed Germany's rocket bases along the French coast, developed the now infamous system of mock shower chambers where Zyklon B gas was used. Levin, \textit{The Holocaust}, pp. 41-54.
Perusal of State Department Records would seem to bear out Morse's contention that Wise personally, and the American Jewish community collectively, were unaware of the State Department's new information. On August 10, 1942, Howard Elting Jr., American Vice-Consul in Geneva, mailed the Secretary of State a two-page memorandum related to discussion held with Gerhart Riegner, Secretary of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland. Riegner claimed that an unnamed German businessman, who had supplied him with accurate information on two previous occasions, had verified the Nazi plan to exterminate all four million of Europe's surviving Jews that fall through the use of Zyklon B gas—Prussic Acid. Riegner, in what Elting termed "a state of great agitation," requested that all Allied governments and Jewish organizations, particularly the World Jewish Congress, of which Rabbi Wise was the leader, be informed of his report. For his part, Elting, though astonished by Riegner's statements, emphasized that the young Jewish attorney appeared to be "a serious and balanced individual, and that he would never have come to the consulate with the above report if he had not had confidence in his informant's reliability and if he did not seriously consider that the report might well contain an element of truth." Elting recommended that Riegner's request to relay this news to Wise be honored.  

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5Elting to Hull, August 10, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2234.
Unfortunately, Elting's superior in Bern, Leland Harrison, was more skeptical. When he cabled the essence of the Riegner message to the State Department on August 11, Harrison attached a disclaimer, attributing the report to "war rumor inspired by fear and what is commonly understood to be the actually miserable condition of these refugees who face decimation as a result of physical maltreatment, persecution, and scarcely endurable privations, malnutrition and disease."

The State Department's European Division Director Elbridge Durbrow went further. He recommended that Wise and other Jewish leaders not be informed of Riegner's "fantastic" allegations. Even if true, he reasoned, the United States could do nothing at the present time to help the victims.

Another view was taken by Paul T. Culbertson, Durbrow's Assistant Chief in the European Division. He set about drafting a communication to Wise along the lines indicated in the Riegner message. This note, which attempted to dismiss Riegner's tale as "unreliable war rumor" was never sent. The original is still on file, bearing three pencil slashes across the body with the statement "Do Not Send" and

7 Memorandum of Durbrow, August 11, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2235.

8 Morse makes much of a memorandum addressed to "S.W.J." on August 13 to lump Culbertson with those who opposed the issuance of any note to Wise. Morse, p. 9. This note read: "I don't like the idea of sending this one to Wise, but if the Rabbi hears later that we had the message and didn't let him in on it, he might put up a _______ ."

"The last work is illegible, but Morse interpolates 'kick.'" Why not send it on and add that this legation has no information to confirm the story." The signature is virtually illegible but it appears to be initialled P.A. or P.C. It does not appear to be identical with Culbertson's in his letter to Wise or in any other document. See State Department Records, August 13, 1942, 862.4016/2233.
the initials "ED" of Durbrow. Instead of provoking the American Jewish community into fits of frenzy over an atrocity tale, the State Department wired Geneva on the 17th to "recommend" that no further unconfirmed reports be transmitted by "third parties" and that all reports be limited to information involving "definite American interests." This cable was signed by Welles and Hull, and initialied by Durbrow and J.H. Hickerson among others. 10

Despite this admonition, American officials in Switzerland felt they could not sit on information supplied by Riegner in the fall of 1942. On the 28th of September, Paul C. Squire, American Consul in Geneva, mailed a set of reports to Hull. They did not arrive until October 23, indicative of a slowdown in the transmission of such information at this critical juncture. In these documents, Riegner identified his source as a man called "Frank," someone who maintained close political and military connections in the Government-General of Poland. By this time, Riegner had received additional confirmation of the extermination scheme from several other sources. From a Swiss University professor, he had obtained a memorandum of a German officer attached to the OKW (Wehrmacht High Command), detailing how the Nazis were proceeding against the Jews. This Wehrmacht officer, allegedly a member of a group opposed to the Hitler regime, told of cattle trains from the West streaming through Germany loaded with Jews, many of them already dead of

10. Welles to Harrison, August 17, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2233.
suffocation or starvation. He told of mass killings, often done by physicians who injected air into the veins of their victims, and of other physicians who were researching new uses for corpses such as in the production of soap, glue and lubricants.\textsuperscript{11}

Riegner also supplied Squire with photostats of two letters written in code from Jews in Warsaw to friends in St. Gallen, Switzerland. The first, dated September 4, 1942, read:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

State Department interpreters confirmed that there were numerous code words in the above message including: Mr. Jaeger (Germans),

\textsuperscript{11}Squire to State Department, September 28, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2242.

\textsuperscript{12}Literal translation: "I spoke to Mr. Jaeger, He told me that he will invite all relatives of the family Achenu with the exception of Miss Eisensweig from Warsaw to his countryside dwelling Kewer. I am alone here; I feel lonely ... As to the citrus fruit I hope that I shall receive them in time (for Sukkos) but I do not know whether I shall then find anybody of my acquaintances. I feel very weak. A week ago I yet spoke to Mrs. Orlean. Mrs. Gefen telephones very often. Uncle Gerusch also works in Warsaw; he is a very capable worker. His friend Miso works together with him. Please pray for me."
the family Achenu (our brethren, the Jews), Miss Eisenzweig (probably those working in the iron industry), Kewer (tomb, grave), Zitrus fruchte (citrus fruits used on Succos near the end of September), Gerusch (deportation), Miso (death), Mrs. Gefen and Mr. Orlean (references to the countryside). The implication which these governmental officials gave to the message was that Jews in Warsaw, with the exception of those in vital industries, were being deported to be killed in the countryside of Poland and that this was to be accomplished before Succos. 13

Riegner's second letter, dated September 12, read:


Once more, State Department translators noted that the Mr. Tschlenoff referred to was the representative of the Jewish OSE, specializing

13 See translators' commentary attached to Squire letter, September 28, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2242.

14 Literal translation: "I too was in sorrow, for I am now so lonely. Uncle Achenu has died. Excuse my fashion of expression. I suppose that I shall receive the advised citrus fruit these days. As the Uncle is now dead, I do not know to whom to give them. I am very sad that I cannot use them and that they will have to dry miserably. Those fine fruits. My regards to Mr. Tschlenoff and please tell him that all his work and pains are in vain completely. I shall write about it in my next letter."
in medical support for the ghettos in Poland. The import of this letter, then, was that few Jews remained alive in Warsaw and that those who did survive were doomed anyway. 15

On December 17, 1942, the U.S. Government, in conjunction with eleven other nations engaged in the struggle against the Axis, formally acknowledged the existence of this mass murder plot in a declaration which warned that "those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution." 16 Any thought that this might effect a change in attitude at the State Department was dispelled early in February, 1943. For the previous five months, Riegner had continued to pepper Washington with verified accounts of atrocities in Poland Rumania, contributing as much as anyone to the conversion of this government from a position of doubt to one of belief in the horrid reality of Nazi genocide. 17

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15 The authoritative diaries of Emanuel Ringelblum bear out the September massacres. See Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emanuel Ringelblum, ed. and trans. by Jacob Sloan (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill, 1958), p. 312. In a ten week action ending in September, nearly 500,000 Polish Jews, including 310,000 from the ghetto of Warsaw, were "resettled" in concentration camps. By the end of the year, more than 1,270,000 Polish Jews were dead. See Meczenstwo Walka, Zaglada Zydow w Polsce 1939-1945 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, undated), pp. 218-221.


17 Morse has an excellent chronicle of Riegner's work in this period, While Six Million Died, pp. 16-19.
On the 10th of February, however, Harrison received another cable signed by Welles for Hull which ordered, not merely recommended, that all further communications from Riegner be barred from official correspondence. Bearing the Code number 354, this cable read:

In the future we would suggest that you do not accept reports submitted to you to be transmitted to private persons in the United States unless such action is advisable because of extraordinary circumstances. Such private messages circumvent neutral countries' censorship and it is felt that by sending them we risk the possibility that steps would necessarily be taken by the neutral countries to curtail or forbid our means of communication for confidential official matter. 18

Who actually devised this cable and why he was so concerned about Swiss sensitivities on the matter of genocide cannot be determined. Two months after it was sent, Welles cabled Bern again, asking for additional reports from Riegner, precisely the kind of material Harrison had been ordered not to send earlier. From discussions with Hull, Henry Morgenthau concluded that neither the Secretary nor Mr. Welles had been responsible for Cable 354. 19 Nevertheless, this cable, issued two months after the United States had officially condemned Nazi genocide, typified the desultory manner in which the State Department treated news of Jewish persecution during the war.

Twice, on February 16 and 23, 1940, Assistant Secretary Berle, basing his claim of brutal deportations of Jews to concentration camps

19 Ibid., p. 23.
on reports from Alexander Kirk in Warsaw, tried to rouse Hull to action. Said Berle, "I am of the opinion that after prior consultation with Welles, we should register a protest. We did so during the far less significant, though more dramatic, riots of a year ago November; and I see no reason why we should not make our feelings known regarding a policy of seemingly calculated cruelty which is beginning to be apparent now."

Berle stressed the fact that the U.S. had protested Nazi oppression in 1933 and 1938, had even spoken out in the face of violations of American commercial rights by the British blockade in the early days of World War II. All the more reason, he argued, to register an impartial protest in the face of the current pogrom. 20

Berle's request for such a protest was squelched by Breckinridge Long. In a two-page memorandum to Hull, initialed by the European Division's E. H. Hickerson, Long expressed "every sympathy with the poor people involved," but went on to point out that such a formal protest would in effect be redundant. The United States had through its admission of "a great many of these poor people" already registered its tacit disapproval of this persecution. "It is hardly necessary," said Long, "for us to make public expressions of our feelings. Everyone in this country already knows, and the civilized governments of the world are already cognizant of, our feelings in the matter." Far from doing any good, he reasoned, such a protest would only embarrass the U.S.

20 Berle to Hull, February 16, 1940, and Berle to Hull, February 23, 1940, State Department Records, 862.4016/2/62% and 862.4016/2190.
would be applauded in the Allied camp as a condemnation of Germany for political purposes and would impair any opportunity the U.S. might still have to help the victims. He noted further that Germany might take offense at what he, Long, conceded was a purely internal affair. "We have known since the publication of Mein Kampf, and since the accession of Hitler to power, that these poor people would be subjected to all kinds of improper treatment," he added.21

If the State Department was cognizant of Hitler's apparent plan to persecute European Jewry in 1940 upon the mere reading of Mein Kampf, it is difficult to explain the Department's skepticism when verification of genocide was produced in 1942. Even before the first Riegner message had been relayed in August, sufficient evidence had been amassed to establish at least a prima facie case for the existence of a plan to exterminate the Jews. On June 2, 1941, Jan Ciechanowski, Ambassador of the Polish Government-in-Exile in Washington, delivered a White Paper to Secretary Hull, charging the Nazis with "compulsory euthanasia" against the Jews.22 A year later, in June, 1942, the same Polish Government in London, basing its information on reports smuggled out of occupied territory by underground channels, broadcast the news that 700,000 Jews

21 Long to Hull, February 23, 1940, State Department Records, 862.4016/2/198. Long's timidity may be comprehensible in view of Nazi power in 1940, but it is hardly consistent with diplomatic precedent, as the U.S. had repeatedly intervened in the "domestic questions" of the Tsarist and Ottoman Empires to protest abuse of Jews. See Cyrus Adler and Aaron Margolish, With Firmness in the Right: American Diplomatic Action Affecting Jews, 1840-1945 (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1946).

had been murdered in Poland and Lithuania that year. On the 17th of June, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency announced the execution of hundreds of Jewish and Russian war prisoners in poison gas experiments at the Liebenau Monastery in Württemburg. In July, the same agency confirmed that 20,000 French Jews and over 100,000 Austrian Jews had been deported to the East, half of them dying en route to Poland. On July 17, Dr. Israel Goldstein, President of the Synagogue Council of America, submitted a long report to Hull, detailing the slaughter. Goldstein supplied the Secretary with information on the machine-gunning of masses of Jews in Galicia, of mobile gas chambers used to exterminate thousands "in a less painful fashion" in the region of Lublin, of the forced starvation of a half million Jews in Warsaw; of 25,000 Jews murdered in the Pinsk-Vladimir-Vitebsk region of Russia, of another 25,000 dead in Odessa, of the cleansing of Slovakia of its last several thousand Jews. Four days later, Herschel V. Johnson of the American Legation in Stockholm sent Washington a resume of a discussion held with Wieclaw Patek, Director of the Consular Section of the Polish Legation in Stockholm. According to Patek, 60,000 Jews in Vilna, another 100,000 in Kiev, 84,000 in White Ruthenia had been massacred by special Nazi battalions

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23 Goldstein to Hull, July 17, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2230.
25 ibid., pp. 429 and 528.
26 Goldstein to Hull, July 17, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2230.
of death. Patek's figures were corroborated by Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov in an official note to the Allied governments that summer. Then, on August 6, 1942, four days before Riegner met with Elting, the reliable American Friends Services Committee, through its operatives in Vichy France, reported that thousands of Jews were being transported from occupied regions of France to southeastern Poland, "where conditions of life are such that few can survive." Through the summer of 1942, scores of reports poured into the State Department from refugees, Swedish businessmen, the WRN (the leading Polish underground newspaper), the Jewish Telegraph Agency; the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee in Kubyshev, even monitored radio broadcasts from Berlin, all telling of the same thing—that the Jews were "spurols" (missing), that they were being transported to Poland in the most inhumane of conditions, that "their fate was no mystery." Far from publicizing such communications, the State Department consistently elected to suppress them.

27 Johnson to Hull, July 21, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2237.
29 Bulletin on Refugees Abroad and At Home, #12, October 16, 1942, American Friends Services Committee Library, p. 1. Records of the American Friends Committee left little doubt that the deportees were being shipped eastward not as a part of Vichy's labor supply arrangements with the Nazis, but to their deaths. French slave labor was not herded into cattle cars while machine guns destroyed the stragglers. Nor were women, aged persons or children included in the labor agreements. And finally, such slave laborers were generally not sent to concentration camps in Poland. They were used in the industrial heartland of the Rhine and Ruhr.
30 For additional data along these lines, see Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 5-12.
On September 1, 1942, Jacob Mendelsohn, representative of the American Jewish Congress in London, tried to contact Rabbis Wise and Perlszweig by cable to urge them to hold a press conference at which the rabbis would confirm the existence of the Nazi extermination plot. Mendelsohn suggested that the Allies issue a formal condemnation of this genocide, that the Vatican be asked to intercede on behalf of the captive Jews, and that, failing all this, Hitler be warned that the Allies would engage in reprisals against the person and property of German nationals abroad. The cable was stopped at the desk of Foreign Activity Correlation in the State Department. Appended to it were two notes. The first read, "We will suppress if you approve." The second read, "Here is a cable message somewhat in line with ones I have previously referred to you. Pass or suppress?" These queries were directed to Assistant Secretary Berle, the man who had wanted to speak out against Nazi persecution two years before. For unknown reasons, the Mendelsohn cable was never sent.

Even after American officials in Stockholm verified the existence of the death camps in the so-called Lublin Reservation on November 25, 1942, the American Government issued no formal pronouncement on the extermination of the Jews for three more weeks. The reason for this procrastination, implies Morse, was anti-Semitism rampant in the State

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31 Mendelsohn to Hull, September 1, 1942, State Department Records, 862.4016/2238.
32 Ibid.
Department. Such an answer is, however, an over-simplification of the problem, as well as an insult to many officials engaged in the decision-making process. Morgenthau's memoirs leave little doubt that the Secretary of Treasury considered Hull, Welles and Long genuinely sympathetic to the plight of the Jews, if somewhat incompetent to meet the problem. If some of the lesser officials at State harbored anti-Jewish feelings, such personal feelings may have been of secondary importance when compared with other factors that led to a suppression of atrocity reports.

For one, the nation had already waged one great crusade in this county and suffered extreme disillusionment in that humanitarian cause. Only too late did the American public realize that stories of German rapine and death factories in Belgium were propaganda tales spun by the British. The historical revisionism of the 1920s had left Americans with a greater sense of skepticism where atrocity stories were concerned. It is noteworthy that in January, 1943, a month after the Allies condemned Nazi genocide, fewer than half of the American people believed the Nazis were deliberately killing the Jews. As late as December, 1944, when Allied troops had already overrun some camps, most Americans still clung to the belief that fewer than 100,000 Jews had been exterminated.

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35 Ibid., p. 141. Finally in May, 1945, with pictures of Belsen and Auschwitz available to all, 84% of those polled conceded that perhaps more than one million Jews had been massacred.
Even if the reports coming from Europe were, in part, true, what difference could that make to people hardened by the massacre of 500,000 Armenians in World War I, 150,000 Ukrainian Jews during the Russian Civil War, millions of Russian Kulaks who starved to death or were exterminated in Stalinist purges in the Thirties, thousands of Spanish Republicans bombed to death in 1937 and 1938, and millions of Chinese victimized by the Japanese since 1931? In this war, it was held generally, the Jews enjoyed no monopoly on suffering. As late as July 10, 1942, the London Times charged that the Germans were "aiming at extermination" of Poles, whereas what the Jews were suffering was a "plight." The idea that the Nazis would truly attempt to eliminate six to ten million people in a concerted plan of human slaughter, however, seemed absurd. That it was rejected as implausible by staid government officials six thousand miles from the death camps should not seem remarkable. The victims did not even believe it to the very end.

Through 1942, the Nazis took extraordinary precautions to guard against any disclosure of the truth about "resettlement in the East." Forged postcards from relatives long since gassed were sent to the ghettos of Poland, telling of the glories of non-existent pastoral wonderlands. It is a testimonial to Nazi security that few persons succeeded in escaping from the death camps. Those who did failed to rouse the remaining Jewish populations, lacking in arms and will, to resistance. The doomed Jews, programmed for their own destruction by centuries of social antipathy and abuse, broken by disease and hunger, but still dedicated to the principle
of the essential goodness of man, simply would not believe that such an inhuman program could spring from German civilization.36

The State Department alone cannot be faulted for failing to condemn Nazi genocide in 1942, when everyone in the world had already witnessed a decade of this same brutality; when Dachau was transformed from a quaint village in Bavaria to the symbol of concentration camp ruthlessness, when the world had witnessed three years of Nazi rule in Poland where Jews were rationed fewer than 200 calories in food rations per day, when the world had known for one year of Nazi slaughter in Russia and Rumania where, Ambassador Franklin Gunther had reported to Hull, thousands of Jews were massacred and strung up on meat hooks.37

The final act of the Jewish tragedy in Europe was being performed in the open, and yet the global audience seemingly needed a printed libretto in hand to comprehend this fantastic scene.

The cautious bureaucrats who surrounded Cordell Hull in 1942 reasoned that nothing could be done to help Europe's Jews. Publication of such unconfirmed reports could only evoke frustration and hysteria, 


and ultimately detract from the war effort. Too late, with several hundred thousand Jews dead, did these functionaries realize that they had miscalculated in their evaluations of the reports. Too late did they realize that they had over-rated the emotional level and preparedness of the American Jewish community. Nothing had to be concealed, nothing feared, from this relatively docile group, for it had already received piecemeal confirmation of Nazi genocide plans, Rabbi Wise had received Riegner's message long before December, 1942, and they and he had remained silent.

To argue that the American Jewish community and Rabbi Wise had deliberately been kept uninformed by the State Department, that Jewish organizations operating independently of official cable lines had gathered sufficient data to submit a 20-page report on German atrocities to the White House on December 8, 1942, and that this report ultimately impelled the government to take action in concert with its allies would make relatively pleasant reading—if true.

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38 This petition was presented by Maurice Wertheim, President of the American Jewish Committee; Henry Monsky, President of B'nai B'rith; Adolph Held, President of the Jewish Labor Committee; Israel Goldstein, President of the Synagogue Council of America; Rabbi Israel Rosenberg, Chairman of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, and Wise, in his capacity as President of the American Jewish Congress. Report to Roosevelt, December 8, 1942, Roosevelt Library, Church Affairs, Jewish, OF 76-C, Box 18.
But it is indisputable that Wise, like many other Jewish leaders in America, not only knew about the death camps in the summer of 1942, five months in advance of the forementioned petition, but actively collaborated with the State Department in keeping verified accounts of mass murder from the public. Wise admitted as much when he wrote Roosevelt a "Dear Boss" letter on December 2, 1942. Requesting a word of solace and hope for the Jews, Wise said, "I have had cables and underground advices for months, telling of these things. I succeeded, together with the heads of other Jewish organizations in keeping them out of the press, and have been in constant communication with the State Department, particularly Under-Secretary Welles".  

The Rabbi had been equally well-informed, though somewhat less laconic, earlier that summer when he addressed a cheering throng at Madison Square Garden in one of the now-famed "Stop Hitler" rallies. Three weeks before Elting had his first meeting with Riegner in Switzerland, Wise and other Jewish leaders protested the murder of "more than a million Jews already brutally done to death by the Nazis." Hitler, they argued, would not be satisfied till every Jewish community in Europe was transformed into a vast cemetery, and they even detailed his scheme for gassing the Jews in a resolution which concluded "The Jewish people will not permit itself to be exterminated." The resolution read, in part:

In the whole long history of man's inhumanity to man, there is no record of persecution more charged with brutality and horror than the record of the special persecution of the

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39 Wise to Roosevelt, December 2, 1942, American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, Correspondence Between FDR and Wise, 1929-45, File 89.
Jews by the Nazis. The extermination of the Jews has been the first goal of Hitler in his mad race to dominate the world. He has waded through Jewish blood and tears. Jews have been branded, segregated in ghettos, made the inevitable victims of hunger and plague, deprived of all possibilities of life and labor. Multitudes have suffered the agonies of a slow and painful death by the methods of forced labor, in concentration camps, or as victims of experiment in poison gas factories.\(^4\) (Italics mine.)

Such comments were not mere exercises in rhetoric. The choice of the word extermination was deliberate, for the very first sentence of the underground report of the Jewish Socialist Party in Poland smuggled out of Europe in May, 1942, read: "From the day the Russo-German war broke out, the Germans embarked on the physical extermination of the Jewish population on Polish soil, using the Ukrainians and the Lithuanian fascists for this job."\(^41\) This report went on to detail the massacres of 50,000 Jews in Vilna, 30,000 in Lwow, 25,000 in Lublin, 15,000 in Stanislawow, Rowne and Brzezany, 9,000 in Slonim, 6,000 in Hancewicze, 5,000 in Tarnopol, in the fall of 1941. It indicated the first primitive forms of execution: men driven to cemeteries or fields were they were forced to dig trenches and then were shot by machine guns, women and children shot down in the streets. And it detailed the gassing operations of Nazi death camps at Chelmno ("twelve kilometers from the town of Kolo") and Maidanek ("Majdanek Tatarowy, a suburb of Lublin ").\(^42\)


The report so startled Shmul Zygelboim and Dr. Ignacy Schwarzbart, Jewish representatives on the Polish National Council in London, that they pressed the Exile Government and Great Britain for a condemnation of what Schwartzbart called "the threatened annihilation of European Jewry." On July 9, 1942, Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, Minister of Home Affairs in the Polish Government in Exile, finally told the press of the systematic destruction of the Jewish population of Poland, but his announcement of 700,000 deaths was not readily accepted by other segments of World Jewry. Yitzhak Gruenbaum, head of the Jewish Agency's Department for the Diaspora in Palestine, discounted the stories of mass murders in Poland and Lithuania because the numbers reported were larger than the known number of Jews in those areas.43 At a conference of Jewish publicists held in August, 1942, under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress, Dr. Leon Kubowitzki of the WJC dismissed the report of the Bund saying, "Such things do not happen in the twentieth century."44 A week later, the editorial board of the militant Jewish Frontier also rejected the idea of a Nazi extermination scheme as "the macabre fantasy of a lunatic sadist."45 Professor Marie Syrkin of Brandeis later labelled this reluctance of American Jews to

43 Bauer, "When Did They Know?" p. 51.
recognize genocide in the face of overwhelming testimony "a monument to our gross stupidity." 46

Long before December, 1942, however, Rabbi Wise was in possession of the Jewish Bund report and more. He actually received the first of Gerhart Riegner's messages on August 28th, shortly after Elting's letter relating the discussions with the World Jewish Congress representative in detail reached Washington by mail pouch. Riegner had taken pains to contact Labor MP Sidney Silverman, Chairman of the British Jewish Congress. He then relayed Riegner's information to Wise while officials in the State Department debated the merits of notifying the Rabbi. 47

According to Lillie Shultz, Riegner's "incredible" news was discussed in a closed session of the AJ Congress executive board. It was decided that Wise should go to Washington and attempt to verify the news from Riegner through the State Department. 48 In his autobiography, Wise indicates that he did consult Welles shortly after receipt of the Riegner message and was asked not to release the story until the Allies checked further into the matter. On November 4, 1942, Welles called

46 Ibid., p. 62. Professor Syrkin angrily asserted that criticism of the efforts of the American Jewish community during wartime only contributes to the anti-Semitic canards of Jewish collaboration in the extermination plot, now the "familiar stock-in-trade" of neo-Nazis and Polish anti-Semites.

47 The autobiography of Stephen Wise, p. 274.

48 Interview with Lillie Shultz, January 8, 1969.
in the Rabbi "to confirm and justify your deepest fears."49 Ten weeks
had lapsed since Wise first received Riegner's report. Another month
would go by before the Jewish leaders would request some formal con-
demnation by the American Government.

Wise agonized between his responsibility to inform humanity
that Jews were being singled out for expeditious slaughter and his
promise to Welles to keep silent about it. In September, 1942, he
poured out his grief in a letter to longtime comrade John Hayes Holmes,
minister of the Community Church in New York City:

I do not know what has come over me, but I cannot write
letters. I am ashamed to think that I haven't written to you
before this, but it has not been possible. I haven't been in
the spirit or mood for writing to anyone, not even to you, best
and dearest of friends.

I have had the unhappiest days of my life. Please
remember, dear Holmes, that in addition to all your suffering
over everything connected with the war, I have something
more, namely the uniquely tragic fate of my people. You will
be tempted at once to ask, why do I think of it as "uniquely
tragic?" "Is it any worse than the fate of the Czechs or
Yugoslavs or Poles?" Yes! Think of what it means to hear,
as I have heard, through a coded message--first from Geneva,
then from Berne, through the British Foreign Office--that
Hitler plans the extermination at one time of the whole Jewish
population of Europe; and prussic acid is mentioned as the
medium.

The other day something came to me which has left me
without sleep: that 100,000 Jews within the Warsaw Ghetto
have been massacred by the Nazis and their corpses used to
make soaps and fertilizers . . . Moreover, Jews, unarmed
and defenseless, have been unable to do anything for them-
selves; and the world has done little if anything for them.

. . . I don't want to turn my heart inside out, but I am
almost demented over my people's grief.50


50 The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise, ed. by Justine Wise
160-61.
In November, 1967, Elie Wiesel, author of several volumes relating to the Holocaust (Night, The Town Beyond the Wall, The Gates of the Forest) and himself a graduate of the Nazi concentration camp system, addressed the 49th General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and asked: "How could he (Wise) pledge secrecy when millions of lives were involved? How was he not driven mad by the secret? How could other Jewish leaders pledge silence? How is it they did not cry out in despair?" And when Welles released Wise from his pledge, what happened then? Wiesel continued. "Not much. Not much at all. Did he and the other Jewish leaders proclaim hunger strikes to the end? Did they organize daily, weekly marches to the White House? They should have shaken heaven and earth, echoing the agony of their doomed brethren; taken in by Roosevelt's personality, they, in a way, became accomplices to his inaction."51

Lillie Shultz dismisses Wiesel's arguments saying that no person who lived through the experience of incarceration in concentration camp can have the remotest patience or objectivity in dealing with the record of Jews who were not caught in the death-trip of Europe. "Human beings have only so much capacity," she stated recently, "and Wiesel and his kind cannot understand that. We were heroes, fighting Hitler. It is horrifying that we did not succeed, but wrong to judge us."52

52 Interview with Lillie Shultz, January 8, 1969.
One Jew, not caught in that death-trap, would have disagreed. Hayim Greenberg, editor of Jewish Frontier, was one of those like Kubowitzki, Syrkin and Wise who originally dismissed the reports of genocide as rumor. Subsequently, however, he altered his view and authored a scathing indictment of American Jewry for the Yiddisher Kemptfer. This article, entitled "Bankrupt," appeared in the February, 1943, issue of that journal, but was not translated into English until 1964. Hence, much of the hoped-for impact upon Greenberg's contemporaries was lost.

Like Wiesel, Greenberg wondered how American Jews had managed to maintain their sanity in the face of the news from Europe. "A homy shell seems to have formed over the soul of American Jewry to protect and defend it against pain and pity," he wrote. "We have become so dulled that we have even lost the capacity for madness and--may God not punish me for my words--the fact that in recent months Jews have not produced a substantial number of mentally deranged persons is hardly a symptom of health." 53

Greenberg chronicled the failures of all segments of the Jewish community in America to do its elementary duty toward the millions of Jews who were captive and doomed to die in Europe. Chief among these was the failure of American Jewry to organize some kind of General

Staff, to bridge the gaps between cliques of Zionists and anti-Zionists, Congressists and anti-Congressists, Orthodox and Reform, synagogue Jews and secularists, labor and management. "Every 'Committee,'" he wrote, "cherishes its own committee-interests, its sectarian ambitions, its exclusively wise strategy and its 'power position' in the teapot of Jewish communal competition." 54

Greenberg blasted the American Jewish Committee which had held its annual conference in January, 1943, and passed a number of resolutions, but said nothing about the extermination of the Jews in Europe. He blasted the Jewish Labor Committee for its "non-cooperation, non-action, and keeping apart from common attempts to accomplish something." He blasted the Orthodox Jews who refused to collaborate with other groups unless one of their members was assigned an important post. 55 But most of all, he reserved his chief criticism for the American Jewish Congress and Rabbi Wise.

It was true, Greenberg noted, that the American Jewish Congress had established a special planning committee to deal with rescue activity and had assigned an emissary to stay in Washington on a more or less permanent basis, to maintain contacts with various government departments. But the rescue committee itself had delegated responsibility to a sub-committee (chairied by what Greenberg called "a very

54 Ibid., p. 8.
55 Ibid., p. 6.
busy man") which had met only once in more than two months, and
the emissary in Washington was "a foreigner who cannot always exert
the necessary influence in our capital." Although one stated goal of
the rescue committee was to enroll Christian clerics in the struggle to
save Jewish lives, Greenberg pointed out that there had been little
effort along this line in the United States, and no effort whatever to
seek the intercession of the Vatican to stop the slaughter. Concluded
Greenberg, "The AJ Congress, the only Jewish organization which did
not remove the subject of the extermination of the Jews of Europe from
its agenda has proven to be criminally slow and lacking in tempo and
temperament in its rescue work." 56

Indeed, Rabbi Wise had had much difficulty in balancing his
responsibilities as an American with his duties toward the Jewish
people after 1938. Till then, he had been the Young Turk among Jewish
leaders, the most outspoken radical in condemning Hitler. But in June,
1938, he altered some of the procedures and toned down publicity
campaigns for the World Jewish Congress elections at the request of
President Roosevelt and Assistant Secretary Messersmith who worried
that the affair might be construed by "someone in Des Moines" as proof
of the existence of the Elders of Zion. 57 Later that year, on the heels

56 Ibid., pp. 8-9.

57 Among other things it was suggested by Washington that the
WJC tone down questions "loaded with dynamite" which pertained to
Polish and German persecutions and that the Rabbi shift the election
day from Sunday, as this would constitute an insult to Christians in
this country. Memorandum of Wise to Lipsky and Shultz, June 7, 1938,
Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, VII.
of Kristalnacht, Wise wrote Holmes, saying, "I am trying to keep Jews silent until after tomorrow's funeral of the victim of the crazed Polish Jewish boy." And, of course, during the debate over the Wagner-Rogers Child Refugee Bill in 1939, Wise again counseled silence on the part of the Jewish community.

It was as if Rabbi Wise preferred to direct his verbal darts against other Jews, like "the Warburg Gang," "Skunkolsky" George Sokolsky, and Jerome Frank, who, Wise argued, was suffering from "dementia assimilata," rather than speak up on behalf of the troubled millions in Europe. At the same time, Wise expressed concern that he too might be suffering from the malady which he claimed afflicted Frank. To Felix Frankfurter, he wrote on September 16, 1942, "I don't know whether I am getting to be a Hofjude, but I find that a good part of my work is to explain to my fellow Jews why our Government cannot do all the things asked or expected of it." Wise's actions throughout 1943 and 1944 did little to relieve him of that particular anxiety.

Wise was helpful in bringing about a short-lived unity among Jewish groups in the United States, much on the order suggested by

58 The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise, p. 252.
59 Supra, p. 136.
60 Wise to Bernard Richards, Secretary of American Jewish Committee, September 3 and December 10, 1941, Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, VII.
Greenberg, by the end of the summer of 1943. But his domineering leadership of the American Jewish Conference (Greenberg had already chided the American Jewish Congress for its "own prestige ambitions" and its jealous attempts to corner all "credit" for relief and rescue operations) resulted in the collapse of this united front in a name-calling debacle two months later. When the Conference took a strong stand in support of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, Judge Joseph Proskauer of the American Jewish Committee announced that body's intention to withdraw. Because this decision had been reached by the AJ Committee's Executive Council without consultation of the full membership, other Jews announced the severance of their ties with the AJ Committee. Thus, within two months of its formation, the American Jewish Conference had witnessed one act of secession within another act of secession. Such episodes typified American Jewish cooperation during the war.

Even more distressing from the viewpoint of the Jews in Europe was Rabbi Wise's consistent opposition to the American Friends of a

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62 Henry Monsky of B'nai B'rith first suggested that the AJ Congress, B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee, Synagogue Council of America, and AJ Committee join forces in January, 1943. Preliminary discussions among the various leaders took place in February, but it was not until August that the Conference was actually organized. See The American Jewish Conference: Its Organization and Proceedings, August 29-September 2, 1943, ed. Alexander Kohanski (New York: American Jewish Conference, 1944).

Jewish Palestine, the Committee for an Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews, the American League for a Free Palestine, and the Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People of Europe. These committees all were organized in the United States after 1939 by two Palestinian Jews, Peter Bergson and Samuel Merlin. Members of the terrorist Irgun Zvai Leumi, these men succeeded in gaining the nominal support of 33 Senators, 109 Representatives, 14 reigning governors, 14 ambassadors, 60 mayors of important American cities, 400 rabbis of various degrees of orthodoxy, twice that number in Christian ministers, 500 university presidents and professors, a score of American generals, colonels, admirals, and rear admirals, hundreds of stage and screen personalities, and even several members of Roosevelt's Cabinet by 1943.64

Nevertheless, Wise's American Jewish Conference condemned the leaders of these groups (including Ben Hecht, Max Lerner, Dr. Emil Lengyel, Louis Bromfield, Pierre Van Paassen, and Will Rogers Jr.) as "opportunists" who represented a small political party, in constant friction with the constituted Jewish leadership of the country, and whose only purpose was to spread chaos and demoralization in Jewish life.65

For Rabbi Wise, who shared the Jewish Agency's distaste for the Irgun's


methods, Bergson's manifold operations in this country were a distinct embarrassment, "a wretched plot" he told Sol Bloom.  

In this manner, Wise served to buttress the State Department in its unwillingness to accede to the request of Bergson's Committee for an Army of Stateless Jews to send a field representative of this body to Turkey to help with Jewish relief in the Balkans. Through the summer of 1943, Hull and Long tried to put off Bergson, Dean Alfange and Joe Davidson with such excuses as the impossibility of dispatching a civilian to the Middle East when military priorities were yet to be handled or the argument that the U.S. already had a qualified ambassador in Turkey (Steinhardt) and didn't need someone else peering over his shoulder. All the while, the State Department was busily checking out Bergson's background to see if he should be deported.

Ultimately, in October, 1943, Assistant Secretary Long did agree to send a Jewish representative to Istanbul to unclog the flow of refugees. The excellent work which Bergson's choice, Bloomingdale

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66 Wise to Bloom, December 30, 1943, Wise Papers, American Jewish Congress File, XI.B. At the time, Hayim Greenberg expressed the same skepticism of plans to raise a Jewish army of 200,000 stateless Jews, pointing out that no such number of stateless or Palestinian males existed in the free world. Greenberg, "Bankrupt," p. 7.

67 Bergson's group had harasssed the State Department since August, 1943. This prompted Long to request a security clearance through General Strong. This check failed to turn up anything against the Palestinian and he remained in the country. See Long to Brandt, August 12, 1943, Strong to Long, August 26, 1943, and Long to Hull, September 1, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202.

Vice-President Ira Hirschmann, did in this regard was accomplished in the face of undermining by Emanuel Celler, Wise, and Nahum Goldmann of the World Jewish Congress. On October 6, 1943, nine days before Hirschmann's papers were approved, the last two men sat in the offices of Breckinridge Long, and, in the Secretary's words, "excoriated" Bergson's group as "a body composed of a lot of persons, many of whom were not Jews," and all of whom failed to represent the thinking of most Jews in this country. 69 That the State Department did finally approve Hirschmann's mission is less a testimony to the efforts of Wise and his colleagues than it is to the discomfort caused by Bergson's provocative newspaper advertisements, for when Long agreed to send Hirschmann, he asked if the newspaper campaign, principally through the New York Times, would now cease. The Palestinian gave no guarantee that it would. 70

This affair did not mark the first time that Wise and other reputable Jewish leaders in the United States had attempted to derail a rescue scheme proposed by activist-minded pressure groups. In February, 1943, Ben Hecht, the well-known playwright who served as co-chairman of the Committee for a Jewish Army, received information

69 Long to Hull, October 6, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202. Earlier, Representative Celler had also exploded in a tirade against Bergson in a conference which originally had been designed to explore the deficiencies of the State Department in rescuing Jews, Long to Hull, September 1, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202.

from Switzerland that the Rumanian Government had offered to allow 70,000 Trans-Dniester Jews (the survivors of a pre-Nazi population of 130,000 Jews in this region) to leave Rumania at a cost of 20,000 lei ($50) each for transport to the border. The total sum involved, $3,500,000, could easily be raised by several Jewish organizations. Hecht had Bergson and Merlin confirm the report through underground sources and then authored a four-column advertisement in the New York Times of February 16, 1943, which blared in two-inch high letters: "FOR SALE to Humanity. 70,000 Jews. Guaranteed Human Beings at $50 apiece." 71

Hecht's advertisement was addressed to "the Four Freedoms, in care of the United Nations." He argued that Rumania's offer was bona fide "for this month only," that it had been endorsed by the prestigious Manchester Guardian on February 9, that the inhabitants of Palestine (both Jews and Arabs) would welcome these troubled people, that no spies had been found among the 300,000 German Jews who had emigrated to Palestine since the rise of Hitler. If any spies were included in the number in Rumania, said Hecht, "You can shoot them." In fact, the only persons who could possibly object to the transaction were the Nazis and the Arabs who were collaborating with the Nazis in Berlin. 72

One week later, on February 23, 1943, an angry Rabbi Wise released the following statement to the press: "The American Jewish

72 Ibid.
Congress, dealing with the matter in conjunction with recognized Jewish organizations, wishes to state that no confirmation has been received regarding this alleged offer of the Rumanian Government to allow seventy thousand Jews to leave Rumania. Therefore, no collection of funds would seem justified. 73 To Reverend Holmes, Wise wrote a longer letter in which he referred to the publicized sale of Rumanian Jews no less than three times as "a hoax on the part of the Hecht group." According to Wise, even if such a proposal had been made, the costs were prohibitive. Not $3,500,000, but a minimum of $30,000,000 would have been required to assemble these Jews in Bucharest, put them in trucks and send them on their way. 74

In this judgment, Rabbi Wise was wrong. Bergson telephoned Assistant Secretary Berle for the desired confirmation and Berle admitted that the State Department had received news of such an offer from its reliable source in Bern, Gerhart Riegner, on February 10, 1943. 75 Despite its knowledge of what was transpiring in Eastern Europe, the State Department, for reasons which are unclear, did not act on the offer in the summer of 1943. One result of this delay was the development of a bitter rivalry between the State Department and the Treasury Department, in the course of which officials at the State Department ripped off

73 Hecht, Perfidy, p. 192.
74 The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise, p. 265.
75 Hecht, Perfidy, p. 192.
caustic memoranda charging the Treasury Department with over-reacting to the crisis, while Morgenthau and his associates charged the State Department with hypocrisy when it argued that ransoming the Trans-Dniestr Jewish would aid the Nazi war effort. Harkening to an earlier conversation with Hull in which the Secretary of State had indicated that such funds would remain blocked in Switzerland until the end of the war, Morgenthau recalled bitterly, "The State Department was usually among those who scoffed at economic warfare in other connections." 76

While the subject of the Trans-Dniestr Jewish was being debated behind closed doors, Rabbi Wise came to Washington in July to propose an amplification of the rescue scheme. Aware of the Riegner message since March 31, he became a last minute convert to the thought of purchasing safe conduct for Jews of Eastern Europe. Where only months before he had done irreparable harm to the Trans-Dniestr proposal by belittling the efforts of the activists, now he called for the removal of Jews from Poland to the relative safety of Hungary and Rumania upon payment of large sums of money deposited to blocked accounts in Switzerland. In his meeting with Roosevelt Wise emphasized that the Nazis could not use the money during the war and that the victorious Allied armies would prevent them from using it after the war. According to Wise, Roosevelt called in Morgenthau to give his

76 "The Morgenthau Diaries," pp. 23 and 62. For a complete exposition of this tragic affair, see Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 73-86.
assent to the scheme and encouraged the Rabbi to rouse public support saying, "Stephen, why don't you go ahead and do it?" 

On August 14, 1943, Roosevelt officially notified Wise that financial arrangements to save the Rumanian Jews had been made. It took the State Department 17 more days to get a cable to Harrison in Bern saying that Washington desired to issue a license to the appropriate authorities in Europe. By now, however, the British had gotten wind of the negotiations and requested time to study the matter. It was not until December 17, 1943, that the State Department received a cable from its embassy in London giving the British view on this rescue proposal. The British Foreign Office, ever mindful of the explosive Palestine situation, was said to be concerned with the difficulty of disposing of large numbers of Jews, should they be released from enemy territory. For this reason, the Foreign Office was reluctant to approve of preliminary financial arrangements with the Nazis, "though these were now acceptable to the Ministry of Economic Warfare." Commented Morgenthau, "The letter was a satanic combination of British chill and diplomatic double-talk, cold and correct, and adding up to a sentence of death."

78 Roosevelt to Wise, August 14, 1943, Roosevelt Library, Church Matters, Jewish, OF-76-C.
80 The Morgenthau Diaries, p. 62.
That the State Department did not need the sanction of the British Government in this affair was clearly indicated by John Pehle, Director of the Treasury Department's Division of Foreign Funds, in a telephone conversation with Breckinridge Long in October. Pehle noted that the British had not asked our prior consent to spend L3000 to feed British subjects on the captive Guernsey Islands. If the negotiations fell through, he charged, "The State Department will be held responsible for their failure."\(^{81}\) Evidently the State Department agreed, for on December 18, the day after the British made known their opposition to the Trans-Dniester rescue plan, Assistant Secretary Long cabled Riegnner that he could proceed with his operations in enemy territory drawing on a fund of $25,000, one-tenth the amount of money Riegnner had originally requested.\(^{82}\)

Because of this eleven month delay, most of the Jews who might have been extricated from Rumania were exterminated. Subsequently, Rabbi Wise was to blame the State Department. "Let history, therefore, record for all time," he wrote, "that were it not for State Department and Foreign Office bureaucratic bungling and callousness, thousands of lives might have been saved and the Jewish catastrophe partially averted."\(^{83}\) The passage of years apparently had exculpated Wise and

\(^{81}\) Memorandum of Long for Hull, October 28, 1943, Long Papers, Relief File, Container 209.

\(^{82}\) Long to Riegnner, December 18, 1943, Long Papers, Relief File, Container 209.

\(^{83}\) The Autobiography of Stephen Wise, p.279.
other Jewish leaders who had scoffed at the Bergson-Hecht group and denied the existence of a bodies-for-cash proposition for six vital weeks in the spring of 1943. Ben Hecht, however, challenged the statements of Wise when he wrote, "But in 1943, we, who called out the plight of the Rumanian Jews to the world, were discredited by the Zionist unions, the established Zionist leadership and their associated philanthropies, as scandalmongers. Our attempt to get the Jews out of Rumania before the Germans came was scotched."  

It would seem that Wise's worst fears, that he might become a "court Jew" or shtadlan for the Administration, were realized. This could, in part, be attributed to the concentration of so many chairmanships in his person. Wise more than any other figure represented American Jewry and as such he was patronized by Roosevelt, Hull, and other top-ranking government officials. Because of his longtime friendship with the President and Roosevelt's nodding approval of virtually everything Rabbi Wise suggested, because Wise was privy to confidential information that smacked of policy-making, Wise naturally considered himself both a person of importance and responsibility. In these crucial years to European Jewry, Wise believed his larger responsibilities compelled him to silence.

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84 Hecht, Perfidy, p. 192.
Never a notably humble man, Wise had continually saluted himself for appreciating the true menace of Hitler long before others had gloatingly recalled the mob scenes that greeted his near-messianic appearance in Warsaw's ghetto in 1936, had carried on a running feud with his ZOA co-chairman Abba Silver, which according to intimates of the latter, was as much a conflict of ego as anything else. When Silver called Wise "senile" in 1943, the latter retorted, "How charming it is. Working for a great people is to work by the side of the littlest men."  

No less an authority than Sigmund Freud had commented once, partly in gest, on Rabbi Wise's self-image. Asked by Freud to name the five most important Jews in the world Wise rattled off the names of Freud, Einstein Weismann, Brandeis and Bergson. When Freud asked him, "What of you?," Wise replied, "Oh, no, no, no, no." Freud then commented, "I would have believed you if you had said no--but not 'no, no, no, no.'"  

86 Interview with Miriam Laikind, Temple Historian, the Temple, Cleveland, Ohio, October 15, 1968.
87 The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise, p. 266.
It is still questionable whether Wise could have been as influential in shaping government policy as he or Elie Wiesel would have desired him to be. Certainly he was no more successful in keeping the gates of Palestine open to the Jews during wartime than he was in his belated efforts at rescue of the Jews of Poland and Rumania. Moreover, his decision to play down the persecution of Jews after 1938 and to cooperate with the State Department in suppression of the news of Nazi extermination plans are decisions open to legitimate challenge. They certainly confirmed government officials from Roosevelt through lower State Functionaries in the view that Wise had no intention of creating public ripples during wartime.

Why didn't Wise endure a hunger fast, or lead a march on Washington, or devise some other appropriate expedient, perhaps even suicide as Wiesel suggests, to dramatize the need for action for his people? Such alternatives must be assessed in their historical and cultural perspective. Were they feasible in 1943? Were they even considered by Rabbi Wise? Certainly Gandhi and A. Philip Randolph had indicated that fasts and mass marches were within the range of possibility at the time. And the suicide of Shmul Zygelboim, one of

89 Hayim Greenberg lamented this preoccupation with pressing at the diplomatic level for the creation of a Jewish homeland before taking steps to ensure that there would be Jews to populate it. "A home for whom?" he asked in 1943. "For the millions of dead in their temporary cemeteries in Europe?" Greenberg, "Bankrupt," p. 7. For the negotiations of Brandeis, Wise, and Silver with the President and Secretaries Hull and Stettinius over a Jewish state in Palestine, see American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Documents Concerning Jewish Matters During Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, File 700.
two Jews serving on the Polish National Council in London, on May 11, 1943, was supposed to dramatize the passivity with which the world permitted the extermination of the Jews.  

But what were the practical results of these actions? Gandhi was thrown into prison by the British as a Japanese sympathizer, and Randolph's threatened march on Washington, before the United States entered the war, never reached fruition, as his Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was bought off by tokenist concessions from the A.F. of L. Wise could hardly have expected to achieve much more in an America which was at war in 1942-43, where anti-Jewish sentiment was regenerate, where racism had resulted in the mauling of Mexican-American "Zoot Suits" in Los Angeles and the killing of 25 Negroes and nine whites in Detroit. Civil disobedience on the scale advocated by Wiesel, regarding these events twenty-five years later, when such behavior is not uncommon during peacetime, would have been regarded by contemporary Americans in 1942-43 as seditious behavior designed

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90 Zygelboim sent his final letter to Polish President Wladyslaw Raczkiewics and Prime Minister Wladyslaw Sikorski. In it, he said, "The murderers themselves bear the primary responsibility for the crime of extermination of the whole Jewish population of Poland, but indirectly this responsibility also weighs on all humanity, on the peoples and governments of the allied nations, because they have not made any attempt to do something drastic to stall the criminal deeds. By looking on indifferently while helpless millions of tortured children, women, and men were murdered, these nations have associated themselves with the criminals." Philip Friedman, Martyrs and Fighters: The Epic of the Warsaw Ghetto (New York: Lancer Books, 1954), pp. 219-220.

to immobilize the government and thereby jeopardize the lives of American fighting men abroad.

As for the possibility of suicide, intimates of Wise indignantly reject the notion that this was ever seriously entertained by the Rabbi. For one, the concept of self-immolation, an oriental concept to begin with, was not as widely-known in 1942 as it is today. Moreover, the idea of taking one's own life is not merely a violation of the Mosaic Code, but of subsequent Halakic pronouncements, known well to Wise, against self-destruction except in times of grave personal peril. And finally, Wise could note that Zygelboim's suicide was a senseless act, one which failed to elicit any outpouring of sympathy from the democracies, let alone force marked changes in Allied policy toward the Jews of Europe.

What then was left for Wise? Personal intervention with the President, public rallies, fund-raising drives, and Zionism. That these were not enough was not necessarily the fault of Rabbi Wise, who may or may not have been gullible in his dealings with government officials. Rather the fault lay in the force of circumstances, the deep-rooted divisions in the Jewish community among Socialists, capitalists, assimilationists, Zionists, revisionists, reform and orthodox, which produced the feelings of distrust and antipathy epitomized by Wise's relations with the Hecht group and the American Jewish Committee. Perhaps even more valid, the fault lay in a society which created an atmosphere in which a leader of a minority did not feel free to speak the terrible news he had learned of persecution abroad for fear of generating that same persecution at home.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BERMUDA CONFERENCE

By the end of 1942, the world knew that Hitler's shrill railings against the Jews were no longer vain threats. At first the reaction was one of sorrow and pity. In Jerusalem, rabbis congregated at the Wailing Wall to recite Psalms 73, 79 and 142, and to read the Yizkor Prayer composed on the occasion of the Chmielnicki massacre in 1648. In New York City, several thousand persons gathered at the aged B'nai Jeshurun Temple, where American Jews had protested the Damascus pogroms of 1840, to hear the shofar, the ritual ram's horn, sounded, as a reminder of fearful days. In Sweden, Apostolic Vicar Bishop Johannes Mueller designated December 20 as a day of prayer for the Jews. In Costa Rica, Chile, and several other South American countries where Jews had not been wanted before the war, the Confederacion Trabajadores Latino-Americanos proclaimed a fifteen minute work shutdown on December 11. In Britain's House of Commons, the source of the baneful White Paper, M.P.'s stood in silent tribute to the Jews for one minute on December 17.

It did not take long, however, before the shock of this news was transformed into anger, as pressure mounted from all sides to rescue the remnants of European Jewry. Protest demonstrations were
organized in London, Tel Aviv, Johannesburg, Melbourne, New York, and Chicago. In the vanguard of these demonstrations were Gentile churchmen, the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales, Bishop William Manning of New York, Archbishop Michael Curley of Baltimore, Denis Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia. The leading newspapers in the United States, including the Los Angeles Times, Miami Herald, New York World-Telegram, Boston Traveler, Cleveland Plain Dealer, New York Times, and Philadelphia Bulletin among others, and a few journals in Great Britain (particularly the Manchester Guardian) clamored for something to be done to stay what the Charlotte Observer termed "Hitler's beastly, bloody-handed followers."  

During the winter of 1942-43, the President, State Department, and Congress were subjected to a ceaseless barrage of inquiries and suggestions from Jewish and non-Jewish organizations like the Refugee Economic Corporation, 2 the American Friends Services Committee, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the Union for the Protection of the Rights of the Human Person (among whose members were former French Premiers Paul Reynaud and Edouard Daladier, the economist Sidney Hook, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Harry Lorin Bisse, managing editor

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2 The REC was founded by Felix Warburg in 1939 and had been instrumental in liberalizing Australian and Argentine refugee quotas during the war. All 20 of its directors were Jewish. See Report of the Refugee Economic Corporation and Emigro Charitable Fund (Refugee Economic Corporation, April 15, 1942).
of Commentary). Groups such as these demanded immediate action by the Allies, something dramatic, that would truly polarize the belligerents and demonstrate how morally superior was our cause.

The most intriguing proposal, however, was that raised by Bergson's Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews. Chaired by the Dutch author and philo-Semite Pierre van Paassen, this group called for the creation of a special Jewish Legion, numbering anywhere from 80,000 to 200,000 soldiers, to serve under the Supreme Allied Command in the Middle East. Such a proposal could not merely be written off as a flight into fancy. There was a precedent for such an army in the Zion Mule Corps, a Jewish unit commanded by Joseph Trumpeldor and Vladimir Jabotinsky, which had distinguished itself at the battles of Gallipoli and Jerusalem during the First World War. There was much support for the idea in Palestine where 85,800 men and 50,400 women volunteered for active duty with the British when the war broke out. There was a great deal of support for the idea in this country among Senators Edwin Johnson (Colorado), James Davis (Pennsylvania), William Smather (New Jersey), Robert Taft (Ohio), and William Green, Father Flanagan, Paul Tillich, Cedric Hardwicke, Lowell Thomas, Rear Admiral H.E. Yarnell, Melvin Douglas, and William Allen White, all of whom served on the Advisory Board of the National Committee for a Jewish Army.

Ultimately 27,208 Palestinian Jews served with the British. 1.3 million Jews served the Allies under different national colors during the war. See Frank Cervasi's The Case for Israel (New York: Viking Press, 1967), p. 64.
Despite the ceaseless abuse heaped on the Committee for a Jewish Army and its sister organization, the Emergency Conference to Rescue the Jews of Europe, by Wise and other leading Jews in the country, these groups waged extensive propaganda fights in the press, emphasizing the strategic worth of a Jewish fighting force to the Allies. Operating in the Middle East, a region which was home to many of them, these Jews would release British troops for use elsewhere. They would serve to protect Britain's vital oil supply, to patrol lines of communication to India and the Far East. They might even help to stabilize an area which had been the source of great trouble for the Allies in 1941 and 1942.

4Indicative of this weekly agitation was the full-page advertisement in the New York Times of February 8, 1943, which began: "ACTION--NOT PITY CAN SAVE MILLIONS NOW!" The Committee went on to emphasize how the Nazis had backed down on persecution of Norwegians when the Swedes interceded, how they stopped chaining up British POWs after protests were issued through the International Red Cross, how they had not repeated the mistake of Lidice in the face of world condemnation. All the Jews were asking, the Committee indicated, was a chance to defend themselves, in the hope of forcing the Nazis to relieve the persecution of their brethren. New York Times, February 8, 1943, p. 4.

5The British had been engaged in a war with the Vicy French in Syria-Palestine until July, 1942, had been startled when the nationalist regime of Rashid al-Gailani in Iraq declared war on the Allies in May, 1941, and had even been compelled to join with the Russians in ousting the pro-German Shah of Iran from his throne in August, 1941. Between April, 1941, and May, 1942, when the Afrika Korps of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel pushed a salient across North Africa to within seventy miles of Alexandria, the main British naval base in the Mediterranean, none of the British-subsidized Shaykhs in the Middle East offered so much as a camel by way of assistance to the Allies. Instead, in Egypt, extremists of the Muslim Brotherhood, a fanatical anti-British terrorist group founded by Hassan al-Banna, were rioting in the streets. Onetime Premier Ali Maher and General Azia Alid Misri were
In the summer of 1942, National Committee Executive Chairman Alfred Strelsin volunteered to go to Britain as an official emissary of the American Government to broach the subject of a Jewish Legion. The idea was vetoed at the time by Assistant Secretary Berle, who noted that this government had never sanctioned such an army, and who then went on to evaluate Strelsin as someone who "does not strike me as a heavyweight." It is doubtful that anyone associated with the Bergson-Hecht groups would have been welcomed by the British anyway, since the militants had harassed the British Government with speeches, pamphlets and advertisements criticizing that government's stringent implementation of the White Paper on Palestine.

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preaching open sedition against the British, who, it appeared, were bound to lose. King Farouk was under virtual house arrest in his palace. And the Egyptian Chief of Staff was caught flagrante delicto, attempting to board a plane with military secrets bound for a rendezvous with the Axis High Command in Robruk. See Sydney N. Fisher, The Middle East: a History (New York: MacMillan, 1959), pp. 482-3 and Pierre van Paassen, The Forgotten Ally (New York: Dial Press, 1943), p. 251.

6 Berle to Marvin McIntyre, August 11, 1942, Roosevelt Library, Church Matters, Jewish, OF 76-C, Box 18. Eventually, in 1944, such a legion was incorporated into the British army and distinguished itself on the battlefields of Italy.

7 Among their complaints were: (1) the British refusal to waive White Paper quotas in the case of 20,000 Polish and 10,000 "Balkan" Jewish children, who were subsequently deported to Auschwitz and Maidanek; (2) the British suspension of all Jewish immigration to Palestine between October, 1939, and March, 1940, and again between October, 1940, and March, 1941; (3) the statement accompanying these suspensions that the Jews should "save up permits for German Jews," since these were "better" types than "Balkan Jews"; (4) British obstreperousness in barring the way to Palestine to Jews who came in unseaworthy vessels and without proper landing credentials. See "Palestine Problem and Proposals for Its Solution; Abridged Version of a Memorandum of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine to the General Assembly of the United Nations," Nation, Vol. CLXIV (May 17, 1947), p. 593.
Such criticisms of British policy in the Middle East, even if the opinion of private citizens, worsened the diplomatic chill which had developed between the United States and Great Britain in January, 1943. The two nations were already feuding over proper treatment of Vichy French officials in North Africa, and the British Government felt that any attack on its Palestine policy was especially inappropriate, coming as it did from the United States, which had stolidly refused to drop its own immigration barriers in wartime. By way of contrast, London boasted that 400,000 refugees had been welcomed into the Empire since the rise of Hitler, and challenged the United States to prove that it had done as much.

It was in this testy atmosphere that Lord Halifax issued an aide-memoire to the State Department on January 20, 1943, calling for an Anglo-American conference on refugees. The idea was not new. Jewish leaders ranging from Hecht to Wise had long called for such a special meeting. The idea had even been endorsed by Herbert Emerson in his capacity as chief of the somnambulant IGCR. The Halifax note was significant, however, in that it set the tone for all future negotiations.

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9 Emerson to Myron Taylor, August 11, 1942, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 50, Folder 151.
between the two governments. While maintaining that the refugee problem could not be regarded as solely Jewish in nature, Halifax did ascribe a special position to the Jews. The Germans, he charged, might seek to embarrass the West, whose absorptive capacity was allegedly strained to the limits, by releasing "a flood of Jews." There was, therefore, "a distinct danger of stimulating anti-Semitism in areas where an excessive number of foreign Jews are introduced." The British suggested that areas of refuge be restricted to neutral countries in and near Europe and that efforts be made to discourage "false hopes among the refugees."\(^\text{10}\)

The Department of State was amenable to holding a conference on refugee matters and leaned over backwards in an effort to mollify Great Britain the next few weeks. On the 25th of February, Hull issued a three-page note to the British Ambassador, proposing that such a meeting be held in Ottawa, Canada. The Secretary omitted any reference to the Jews, preferring to iterate the view held by Halifax that the refugee problem transcended the confines of any particular group of people. As if to match the British claims about their humanitarianism, Hull pointed out that American consular officials had issued 547,775

visas to nationals of countries presently dominated by the Axis. He agreed that "temporary sanctuaries" for refugees should be located as close to the refugees' native lands, if for no other reason than the shipping problem facing the Allies. Moreover, the Secretary emphasized that this conference should be "exploratory," should make its recommendations to the nearly defunct IGCR.¹¹

In many ways, this note was a microcosm of the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees which finally met at Bermuda in April, 1943. First, Hull's statement, like the conference itself, was cautious, even defeatist in tone. Little could be expected of discussions which did not commit either government, which were heavily underwritten with rationalizations about shipping shortages or the lack of appropriate refugees, and which officially attempted to ignore the special situation of the Jews in Europe. Hull's note, moreover, contained statistics which, as shall be seen, were both misleading and inaccurate. And finally, the release of the note to the press on March 3, before the British had had an opportunity to digest its contents or make an official response, provoked the first of several procedural hassles between the two allies before the conference even began. Because of the publicity given the Hull note, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden found himself peppered with questions in Parliament about "the conference at Ottawa."

¹¹ U.S. Department of State Bulletins, VIII (March 6, 1943), pp. 202-4.
The British were angered by this diplomatic faux pas, but instead of contrition, Ambassador Ronald Campbell received a lengthy dressing down about British mistakes from a turgid Under-Secretary Welles on March 4.  

Through the next few weeks, the British remained extremely sensitive about untoward publicity and the prospect that unnamed pressure groups might descend en masse upon the conferees at Ottawa or some other site in North America. For this reason, at the end of March they suggested shifting the conference to Hamilton, Bermuda, some 1500 miles out in the Atlantic. The State Department, already belabored by the Polish-American Council, the National Council of Women, the American Committee for Zionist Affairs, Wise's American Jewish Congress, and the Bergson-Hecht group, to allow one of their representatives to participate in the upcoming discussions, readily agreed to the switch.

That Bermuda was "hermetically sealed," as Representative Celler charged later, was evident. There was no approach to the

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12 Welles to Campbell, March 4, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G/63. A more benign explanation that the Hull note was merely a working memorandum and by no means binding on the two countries was offered Canadian Prime Minister W. L. MacKenzie King to relieve him from the pressures of his own Parliament.

13 Morse makes much of the "Stop Hitler Rally" staged by Wise at Madison Square Garden on March 1, 1943. While it is true that such luminaries as Senator Wagner, Weizmann, LaGuardia, Norman Angell, Thomas Dewey, and William Green spoke to the assemblage, the rally did not prompt the Bermuda Conference as Morse intimates. Negotiations had been going on for several weeks. Morse; While Six Million Died, p. 46.

island, save by air, and then only to a closely-guarded airstrip. F.
Goodwin Gosling, the man in charge of accommodations at the Horizons
Hotel, announced on April 7th that the hearings would definitely be
"private." Distressed over this situation and the failure of either
government to accord delate status to a representative of a legitimate
relief organization, C.I.O. President Philip Murray publicly expressed
his dismay on the 24th of April. Quoting from a letter written to Under
Secretary Welles, Murray asked that "the voice of the people's organi-
zations" be heard lest the Bermuda meetings "behind closed doors"
recreate the errors of "the future Evian Conference." Similar senti-
ments were expressed by the Massachusetts State Senate which passed
a resolution calling on Hull to permit officials of the Joint Distribution
Committee to appear at Bermuda, and by former Czech Minister Jan
Masaryk who said, "Because the Jews have been singled out more than
the rest of us . . . the voice of the Jewish people should be heard when-
ever some plans or some hopes are being discussed." The State


16 U.S. Department of State Bulletins, VIII, May 1, 1943,
p. 201. Welles' immediate and cordial response consisted of a rejec-
tion of Murray's evaluation of Evian (the Under Secretary conceded that
the war had made the work of the IGCR difficult, but not futile), a con-
demnation of Nazi mass murders, and an invitation to "any organization
which desires to present a communication to the conference at Bermuda"
to submit its proposals to the State Department which would then cable
them to the delegates. ibid., p. 201.

17 *New York Times*, April 21, 1943, p. 27.

Department did not relish such advice as Breckinridge Long clearly indicated when he wrote, "One danger in it all is that their activities may lend color to the charges of Hitler that we are fighting this war on account of and at the instigation and direction of our Jewish citizens." 19

Actually, any chance of unofficial representation being accorded to a Polish, Quaker, or Jewish group was killed by the British on April 7. On that date Embassy First Secretary George Hayter in Washington informed Long's executive assistant George Brandt that the Foreign Office had rejected such a bid from the Jewish Board of Deputies in London. The British position was that to allow this would be to compel the two governments to accommodate virtually every organization that had a view on the refugee problem. This would create precisely the division and rhetoric that the British had hoped to avoid when they suggested remote Bermuda. The British demanded, and received, assurances that the Americans would not embarrass them by taking an opposite position. 20

Today, the chief of the American delegation, Harold Willis Dodds, while admitting he took on personal records of the conference, claims that there were "several highly emotional" representatives of Jewish organizations aboard the plane that carried the Americans to

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20 Hayter to Brandt, April 7, 1942, *State Department Records, 548.Gl/152.*
Bermuda. According to Dodds, then President of Princeton University, another American delegate, Sol Bloom, was so upset by the presence on the flight of these persons that Bloom said he would not have agreed to participate in the conference if he had known "they" were coming. Says Dodds, "Jewish organizations were heavily represented at Bermuda." 21

In fact, there was no "they." Perusal of State Department Records discloses that Hull and Consul General William Beck in Hamilton were extremely punctilious about expenses, travel arrangements, and accommodations for the American contingent in 1943. 22 Only five representatives of the press—Robert Vivain of Reuters, H. O. Thompson of the United Press, Richard Massock of the Associated Press, Ida Landau of the Overseas News Agency, and Lee Carson of the International News Service—were permitted to travel with the official delegation. 23 And while these individuals may have been sympathetic to the Jews, they hardly constituted official representation for Jewish pressure groups.

The only Jewish official to offer personal testimony at Bermuda, and then merely before the American delegation in a vapid Sunday session, was George Backer, a member of the board of the Refugee Economic Corporation and President of ORT, the Society for the Propagation of Artisanal

21 Interview with Dodds, June 3, 1968.


and Agricultural work among Jews. And Backer's dignified replies to a barrage of hypothetical questions are a testimonial to an admirable restraint and not the hyper-emotionalism of the Jews Dodds recalled at Bermuda.

In that American delegation, along with Dodds and Bloom, were Scott Lucas, the powerful Democratic Senator from Illinois; R. Borden Reams, Long's special assistant on Jewish Affairs; Robert Alexander, the member of the Visa Section who had drafted many of Long's statements on refugee matters; George Warren, Executive Secretary of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees; Brandt, and nine other minor assistants, code clerks, stenographers, and typists.

The American contingent could not be labelled overly-sympathetic to the Jewish cause. Reams, Brandt and Alexander all were openly hostile to further Jewish immigration to this country. At the same time, the delegation's principal spokesmen, criticized by Republican leaders as "partisan" selections, lacked any real eminence in the field of foreign affairs. Dodds had served as a special adviser to the governments of Nicaragua, Chile and Cuba, but he had not held a diplomatic post in seventeen years, was virtually uninformed about

24 For a good analysis of the work of ORT in Poland and France as late as 1943 see 80 Years of ORT: Historical Materials, Documents and Reports (Geneva: ORT Union, 1960).

25 Minutes of Meeting of American Delegates, Sunday, April 25, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, pp. 25, 59, 61, 65. Among other things Backer was asked what the United States was to do if Hitler suddenly dumped 100,000 Jews into Genoa for the allies to rescue. "Should we allow American boys to die to save these people?" asked Lucas.

the intricacies of the Jewish question. His selection as chairman of the delegation was something of a fluke, coming as it did only after Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts, Myron Taylor, Yale University President Charles Seymour, and Dr. Isaiah Bowman of Johns Hopkins all had begged off this task.27

In like manner, Lucas was selected because he was the Senate floor leader of the Democratic Party, a man eager to enhance his reputation for a possible Vice-Presidential bid in 1944. Again, however, he was not the first choice of the government in the list of prospects drawn up by Long in March. Senator Claude Pepper, the Florida liberal, headed that list.28

But it was Bloom's nomination that especially aroused the wrath of Jewish groups in this country. The son of an immigrant Polish Jew, Bloom had risen through the ranks of Tammany to become Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on the basis of seniority. Bloom enjoyed first name relationships with Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull and Stephen Wise. A man of limited means, Bloom had established a reputation as a faithful Democrat, a faithful American. Co-author of the "relative rule" legislation of 1941, he would subsequently serve as a delegate to the United Nations Charter Conference at San Francisco in April, 1945.29 As Harold Dodds put it, "He was as loyal Jew as I've

ever met. For Breckinridge Long, who had so much difficulty in finding senators or professors to man the delegation to Bermuda in 1943, there was only one choice from the House of Representatives and that was his old friend, Sol Bloom.

Why, then, did many American Jews object to Bloom's selection? The Independent Jewish Press Service stated that he had been picked "solely because he is a member of the Jewish faith." Most Jews would have preferred either Cellier or Dickstein to Bloom. The IJPS summed up their displeasure when it said:

Congressman Bloom is known as an amenable Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who could be relied upon by the State Department to go along with any program it would offer. Thus, in the case of Bermuda, when the report is made public, Congressman Bloom can be trotted out to stifle the criticism that will be forthcoming from responsible American Jewish public opinion. To the country at large, the State Department can say: "Now, look here! The Jews are unreasonable. Their criticism of Bermuda is unfounded. A fine, upstanding Jew in the person of Sol Bloom was part of the Conference. Surely he could be counted on to defend the interests of the Jewish refugees. And he says that Bermuda was just fine. You see, American Jews are much too unreasonable and unfair. 'White' Jews who are real Americans know that we are doing the best we know how."

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30 Interview with Dodds, June 3, 1968.

31 Long to Welles, March 13, 1943, State Department Records, 548.GI/112.

32 IJPS Bulletin, May 21, 1943, p. 2A.

33 Dickstein did volunteer on April 2, 1943, pointing to his long record of service as Chairman of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, and also to his close contacts with the Orthodox Jewish community. He was informed that the delegation had already been selected. Dickstein to Long, April 2, 1943, State Department Records, 548.GI/141.

34 IJPS Bulletin, May 21, 1943, p. 2A
The IJPS admonished Bloom "not to permit himself to become the stalking horse he was intended to be when the debate on the Bermuda Conference takes place in the House or elsewhere." According to Dodds, Bloom proved his dedication to this country by agreeing that nothing should be placed above winning the war, not even rescue plans for Jews in Europe. "With tears on his face," Dodds recalled, Bloom "emphasized the importance of winning the war first." Because of this patriotic zeal, Dodds maintains the U.S. delegation at Bermuda was never divided on a single issue. Subsequently, Bloom never broke step with this picture of unanimity. In so doing, he earned the most contemptuous abuse of the Jewish militants who labelled him "a shabbos goy for the State Department," "a party to the conspiracy of silence about the catastrophe that had befallen your brothers." Snapped a spokesman for the Nation Committee for a Jewish Army:

We would not be happy in your place, Mr. Bloom. We would have nightmares; our ears would be split by the cries of all the Jews that have perished since Bermuda; and we would feel blood, Jewish blood on our hands.

Blood on your hands, Mr. Bloom?

What those who freely condemned Bloom did not know was that alone among the two delegations at Bermuda, Sol Bloom attempted to keep

35 Ibid., p. 2A.

36 Interview with Dodds, June 3, 1968.

the door open on possible negotiations with the Nazis for the release of
great numbers of Jews. Only Bloom tried to force the conferees into
serious discussions on the prospect of trans-blockade feeding of Jews. Only Bloom felt compelled to ask the question that was in every Jew's mind—what would the British do in March, 1944, if all 75,000 landing permits for Jews had not been used when under the terms of the White Paper Jewish immigration to Palestine should cease?

In every instance, Bloom was quashed in no uncertain terms by
the chief of the American delegation, Harold Dodds. On three occasions, Dodds all but told the Congressman to stop asking about negotiations with Hitler. Bloom's proposal to feed persons in concentration camps was dismissed as "wholly outside the realm of the conference." His questions about Palestine were intercepted by Dodds, who tried to apologize to the bemused British, saying for them that such matters were purely internal in nature.

38 Confidential Memorandum for the Chairman, Morning Conference, April 20, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 2.

39 Ibid., p. 5.

40 Memorandum, Afternoon Conference, April 21, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 4.

41 Confidential Memorandum for the Chairman, Morning Conference, April 20, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 2.

42 Ibid., p. 5.

43 Memorandum, Afternoon Conference, April 21, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 4.
Examination of the minutes of these initial sessions destroys any illusion about unity among the Americans. What is left is the impression that Bloom very correctly asked the questions that the American Jewish community wanted asked. That he did not have the stamina to sustain his position is regrettable, but it is questionable whether Celler or Dickstein could have fared much better.

If the American delegation was not all that Jews might have wished, it was the result of deliberate choice. Hull and Eden originally agreed to send "top rank" emissaries to the conference, but the Secretary's ready acceptance of Richard K. Law as the chief of the British delegation at the end of March created another diplomatic tangle.\(^44\) Law, the son of former Prime Minister Bonar Law, was merely parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a post which British Ambassador Campbell pointed out was not strictly speaking "top rank." Campbell expressed the fear to Long that the U.S. might designate someone of higher rank and thereby embarrass the British once more. Long assured him that the State Department would keep the delegates on a par with one another.\(^45\) A month in advance of the exploratory

\(^{44}\)Long to Hull, March 24, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/188.

\(^{45}\)Ibid.
conference to deliberate the fate of millions, both sides were committed to sending less than their best-qualified men to Bermuda.\footnote{Accompanying Law were George Henry Hall, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Admiralty; Osbert Peake, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State and the Home Office; Sir Bernard Reilly of the Colonial Office; Sir Frank Newsom of the Home Office; A. W. G. Randall of the Refugee Department of the Foreign Office, Mr. Pickett from the Transport Division of the Ministry of War; and Hayter from the Embassy in Washington. \textit{Foreign Relations of the United States}, Vol. L, 1943, p. 151.}

The problem of delegates apparently resolve, it remained for the United States and Great Britain to agree upon a working agenda. In this, again, a large number of humanitarian organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, eagerly volunteered suggestions to the State Department. Rabbi Wise, still a bit uncomfortable about the choice of Bermuda as the site of the conference and the government's reluctance to permit Jewish delegates to attend, sent Welles a lengthy proposal from the American Jewish Congress, World Jewish Congress, and the abortive Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs. After pointing out that the world community was rapidly becoming disillusioned with the inaction of the Allies, Wise recommended that: (1) negotiations be opened with the Axis through neutral sources to secure the release of Jews; (2) sanctuaries be established in Sweden, Switzerland, North Africa, and Jamaica among others; (3) U.S. immigration laws be revised to permit the entry of additional numbers of refugees; (4) transport be provided by thousands of troop and cargo vessels returning from England and North Africa with empty bottoms; (5) a new Nansen passport be devised for the stateless; (6) the U.N. undertake to feed the Jews,
whose death rate was ten times that of any other conquered people. 47

Virtually identical recommendations were made by the Fellowship of
Reconciliation Refugee Committee, 48 Clarence Pickett of the American
Friends Services Committee, 49 the Union for the Protection of the
Human Person, 50 the National Boards of the YWCA and the Federal
Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S., 51 the National Negro Con-
gress, 52 and some 203 scholars who signed a petition addressed to
President Roosevelt urging action in the face of genocide that spring. 53

Two weeks after Wise wrote Welles, the Under-Secretary
received another intriguing letter, this time from Harry Fleischman,

47 For the complete draft, see Program for the Rescue of Jews
from Nazi Europe, unpublished memorandum of the Joint Emergency Com-
mittee for European Jewish Affairs, April 19, 1943, YIVO, 3/48486.

48 Fellowship of Reconciliation to Hull, April 13, 1943, State
Department Records, 548.G1/71\frac{1}{2}.

49 Pickett to Hull, April 15, 1943, State Department Records,
548.G1/34.

50 Union for Protection of Human Person to Hull, April 15, 1943,
State Department Records, 548.G1/100.

51 These groups asked that the U.S. and Great Britain provide
financial guarantees to neutrals for the care of refugees. They also
endorsed the policy of repatriating refugees at the end of the war. YMCA
and Federal Council to Hull, April 13, 1943, State Department Records,
548.G1/27.

52 "Chronicles," Contemporary Jewish Record, VI (June, 1943),
p. 277.

53 "Petition of American Scholars to the President Concerning
Nazi Persecutions of the Jews," Newsletter of the YIVO, #1 (September,
1943), p. 3.
National Secretary of the Socialist Party of America. Fleischman indicated that the Socialist National Executive Committee favored abrogation of U.S. immigration laws for the duration, to permit Jewish refugees to come to this country to be interned in "humanely conducted camps." The Socialists also favored opening Palestine "where possible" to Jewish immigration. 54

For the New Zionist Organization of America, a Bergson-Hecht front, distinct from the venerable ZOA of Wise and Silver, such settlement of Jews in Palestine was not merely possible—it was desirable. The New Zionist Organization took out several full-page ads in the New York Times and quoted extensively from James McDonald who favored Palestine as a solution to the Jewish refugee problem. According to McDonald, the head of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees and hence a man whose word carried much authority, transportation to Palestine presented little obstacle since the distance from Eastern Europe to the Holy Land was relatively short. McDonald noted that Jewish refugees would face minimal adjustment problems in this region because of their common linguistic and religious ties with Palestinian Jews. The climate was moderate and existing social service, industrial and farm enterprises were eager to absorb the new population. As for any fear that the Arabs might object to this new influx of Jews, McDonald said, "The war emergency has tended to lessen, to some degree, the points of acutest friction. The great overshadowing danger to Palestine threatens all alike in such a way as to dwarf

54 Fleischman to Welles, April 28, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/118.
One recommendation of the militants not swiftly embraced by non-Jews was the idea of retribution, with the United Nations vowing to mete out punishment to the Nazi murderers at the end of the war. The idea had been bandied about diplomatic circles in Washington and London for nearly a year, without much definition. Now, in 1943, some Jews expanded the concept to include direct threats against Germans no matter where they lived. Even after the Bermuda Conference opened, the State Department was receiving letters calling for retaliation against German citizens and pro-Nazi sympathizers in Allied countries, demanding the use of poison gas or massed bombing assaults on civilian population centers in Germany itself unless the massacres were halted.

If any of the petitioners, Wise, Fleischmann, Pickett, or Bertson, hoped to influence the State Department they were sadly mistaken. Generally, such letters were handled by subordinates in the Division of European Affairs. A form letter, accompanied by Hull's original statement on the conference back in February would be sent, explaining how grateful the Department was for the suggestion, how it would be given every consideration, how the secrecy of the negotiations precluded any fuller exposition at this time.

This is not to say that the recommendations were totally ignored. On April 20, 1943, Assistant Secretary Berle submitted a resume of all

55 New ZOA to Hull, April 14, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/133.

56 Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 26-28.

57 There are several letters in the Bermuda File which suggest this method of treatment of German civilians. See especially the letter of the American Representatives of the General Jewish Workers Union of Poland to Hull, April 23, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/170.
these proposals to Long. According to Berle, they could be broken down into three categories: (1) reprisals against a German city as each new massacre was reported; (2) a solemn declaration by the U.N. that the German people would be held accountable for the massacres when the war was over; (3) rescue of the surviving Jews through Spain and the Balkans. Berle rejected the first scheme on the basis of discussions with Air Corps officials who felt that the Allies needed to concentrate all available strength on purely military objectives. To divert any air power for costly reprisal raids, it was felt, would inevitably slow up the war effort. Added Berle, "It also puts us on a moral plane with the Germans, which I think we should not wish to do." As for the prospect of moving refugees through Spain and the Balkans, Berle was not too optimistic, but indicated that perhaps Cyrenaica could be used as a refuge if the refugees could obtain transport on their own. The only point that the Assistant Secretary felt merited instant approval was the denunciation of genocide. By holding the German people as a whole responsible for the atrocities, he reasoned, this would force a mass protest in Germany which could "force stoppage of the massacres." Long agreed with all that Berle had said except that last point. When he passed the resume on to Hull, he commented that any Allied declaration referring to German responsibility would impel all Germans to fight on with renewed unity and desperation. As a result, it would be another

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59 Ibid., Long to Hull.
year before the Allies would issue such a threat.

Thus as the American delegation flew off to Bermuda on the
16th of April, it left with vague instructions about considering the plight
of "unfortunates" still within Nazi control and those in danger of being
overtaken and subjected to persecution once more.60 A last minute resolu-
tion, introduced by Senator Johnson of Colorado and the National Com-
mittee for a Jewish Army, which would have charged the delegates with
"immediate and stern action to save the remaining millions of the Jewish
people of Europe," was tabled by Administration forces in the Congress.61
At LaGuardia Field; just prior to takeoff, Dodds and Bloom expressed what
was to become the dominant tone of the negotiations when they told the
press, "If the Nazis let anybody out of Europe, it will be for good military
reasons only."62

On Monday, April 19, 1943, the clandestine Polish National Army
(AK) Radio transmitted the following message to the Allied governments in
London and Washington:

A few hours ago armed contingents of the S.S. with
armored cars and artillery began the total massacre of the
survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto. The Ghetto put up a
desperate and heroic resistance. This resistance was led

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60 Hull to Dodds, April 20, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/30.
by the Jewish Combatant Organization to which nearly all the fighting groups adhered. From the Ghetto a continuous bombardment and loud explosions can be heard and the whole area is covered with a ball of flame. A few aircraft are circling above the scene of the massacre. The result of the battle has naturally been discounted. The whole city is in a great state of excitement. This evening, a banner has been flown with the inscription: "We shall fight to the end." The people of Warsaw are following this unequal struggle with admiration and with manifest sympathies for the Ghetto in its death throes. Appeal immediately to the International Red Cross to visit the ghettos, the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzietz, Sobibor and many other concentration camps in Poland. 63

Thousands of miles from the scene where S.S. General Jurgen Stroop commenced a 28-day operation against the ragged survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto, the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees opened at Bermuda. Despite the obvious urgency in the situation, the handful of newspapermen present at Hamilton soon took to calling Bermuda "the no-news conference."

The daily press briefings, for example, deteriorated into little more than exercises in platitude. After the opening session Dodds said, "There can be no doubt of the good will and intention of the British and American Governments, nor of the delegates representing these Governments. What can be done, will be done."64 The next day, he and Law emerged from an eight-hour session behind closed doors to announce glumly that they were "unable to give immediate succor" to the refugees.65

64 U.S., Department of State Bulletin, VIII, 1943, April 19, 1943, p. 351.
The two did, however, testify that agreement had been reached "on several salient points" and that "substantial progress" had been made in the first day's discussions, which had been "entirely harmonious."66

"We are getting to the heart of the problem now, after an analysis, trying to decide what is practicable," Dodds told newsmen on the 22nd. Though the conference, chiefly at his instance had already rejected the possibility of any mass transfer of refugees by this time, the chief American delegate exuded confidence about the outcome of the deliberations. "I think we all feel we are making progress and that we shall not have lived in vain," he said.67

This is not to say that the press was kept uninformed about the actual course of the negotiations. Throughout the ten days of the conference they were titillated with the prospect that Palestine, North Africa, 68 Madagascar, Mauritius, French Equatorial Africa, the Diredawa section of Ethiopia, Kenya, Mogador, Argentina, Mexico, Jamaica or the Isle of Man might serve as a haven for refugees.69 These reports were dutifully transmitted to the United States and Great Britain. They were designed to impress the populations of both nations with the humanitarianism and energy of the conferees, and were inevitably shrouded in vagueness for reasons of security. Once more, it was said that fuller exposition

68 At various times this meant Cyrenaica, Libya, Algeria, and/or Morocco.
of proposed rescue schemes might jeopardize such plans. Alexander Uhl represented the views of skeptics when he commented that it was "unlikely that the conference will pull anything out of its hat that will embarrass anyone." 70

Uhl's statement reflected the growing impatience of a concerned world with the Bermuda Conference. Dodds had barely finished reading his opening remarks, extolling the hospitality and clime of Bermuda, when the New York Times lashed out against the conference calling it "pitifully inadequate." The editors went on to say, "It would seem that even within the war effort, and perhaps even in aid of it, measures can be devised that go beyond palliatives which appear to be designed to assuage the conscience of the reluctant rescuers rather than to aid the victims." 71

On the same day, April 19, Colonel Morris J. Mendelsohn, President of the Revisionist New Zionist Organization of America, charged that the only reason why the British suggested holding a refugee conference was to divert attention from their failure to open Palestine to the Jews. 72 The Washington Post agreed that Palestine was the crux of the Jewish question in a particularly intemperate editorial which stormed: "Upon the British rests the onus as a result of the stupid White Paper policy of having prevented a large number of refugees from getting to the

70 PM, April 27, 1943, p. 10.
72 New York Post, April 9, 1943, p. 42.
one nearby place where they would have been welcomed and needed."

To Frank Kingdom, once Co-Chairman of the Emergency Committee to Save the Children of Europe and presently head of the International Relief and Rescue Committee, Bermuda was "a shame and a disgrace." He argued that vigorous action could not be expected from an American delegation which included "no individual who has shown any valid interest in refugees." To Rabbi Israel Goldstein, President of the Synagogue Council of America and head of the Jewish National Fund, Bermuda was "not only a failure, but a mockery." He charged that nothing had come out of the meetings "because the democracies do not want the victims of Hitler's charnel houses." "The job of the Bermuda Conference apparently was not to rescue victims of Nazi terror," added Rabbi Goldstein, "but to rescue our State Department and the British Foreign Office from possible embarrassment." 75

The most scathing indictment of the conference while it actually was going on came from the pen of Ida Landau. Writing in the New York Post on April 23, she charged:

The Bermuda Conference is foundering in its own futility ... We did not need an international conference to tell us about the difficulties of the job. We needed one to take a positive approach toward the admittedly difficult problem of rescuing now, while there is still time, as many as possible of fascism's tortured captives

74 New York World-Telegram, April 28, 1943, p. 2.
If the delegates to the Bermuda Conference are going to pursue their deliberations in an attitude of doleful defeatism, we say they might better go home now. They can make a better contribution to the war effort by puttering in their victory gardens.76

Criticism of this sort was not limited to one side of the Atlantic. While the London Times and Daily Worker applauded the intent of the negotiations, they both doubted that much could be expected in view of existing circumstances in the world. On the 22nd of April, however, the Manchester Guardian, long the British gadfly on refugee questions, blasted the excuses emanating from Bermuda as "all too familiar."77 Still more heated were the verdicts of Jewish Journals in Palestine. To the labor daily Davar and its sister paper Haboker, the conference was "a screen to conceal inactivity," "a second version of the Evian Conference," though without Jewish suppliants at hand.78 At the same time, the New Zionist daily Hamashkif and the moderate Hatzofeh bemoaned the absence of Jewish representatives from the conference and suggested that by its silence, the conference might actually encourage the Nazis to proceed with their massacres.79

If the Americans and British had hoped to pull off a propaganda coup by calling such a conference, and indeed, reading of communiques from Reams to Hull and the eagerness with which the State Department officials devoured newspaper commentaries from across the nation indic-

76New York Post, April 23, 1943, p. 4.
77Manchester Guardian, April 22, 1943, p. 20.
78Translation of these editorials, printed on April 12 and April 14, 1943, respectively, appear in the State Department Records, 548.G1/180.
79Ibid.
ated that this was so,\textsuperscript{80} then they were understandably disappointed by the near universal anathema passed upon Bermuda.

Three factors account for the tremendous outpouring of abuse heaped on the delegates as they went about their delicate work at Hamilton: (1) the refusal of the American delegates to discuss the possibility of changes in this nation's immigration laws to accommodate refugees; (2) the British refusal to consider Palestine as a haven for Jews; and (3) the reluctance of either side to give vent to a public expression of sympathy for the singular condition of the Jews in Europe.

In 1943, immigration to the United States totalled 23,725, the lowest figure in 110 years, with the exception of 1933. In 1943 alone, 130,000 legal entry certificates went unused. While thousands of Jews were gassed daily in Europe, only 4,705 of their brethren entered the United States.\textsuperscript{81} It had frequently been suggested, therefore, that the unused visas, particularly the 65,000 assigned to the British and the 27,000 to Germany be reassigned to other nationals seeking refuge.\textsuperscript{82} Faily this, Congress might be persuaded to make some other special dispensation for the Jews. Such an action would not have been without precedent, for it was generally assumed that Section 3 of the Immigration Act of February 5, 1917 (providing for literacy tests for all immigrants to

\begin{itemize}
\item See Reams to Hull, April 20, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/41.
\item Mimeographed Report on Admission of Hebrew Race, Statistical Section, Division of Research and Education, Department of Immigration and Naturalization, May 14, 1948, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
this country) had specifically exempted Jews from its restrictions. Moreover, Congress had indicated its willingness to amend the Johnson Act whenever the need arose. On May 26, 1926, a special act (44 Stat. 657) permitted Spanish nationals to enter Puerto Rico in excess of the 1924 quota. On June 13, 1930, Chinese waves of American citizens were granted similar immunities (46 Stat. 581). On April 29, 1943, and again on December 23, 1943, Congress passed a series of laws enabling agricultural workers from Latin America to enter the country to assist in food production. Under these provisions (57 Stat. 70 and 57 Stat. 643) 300,000 Mexicans were temporarily admitted to the U.S. to help with the harvesting of crops. And finally, on December 17, 1943, Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Acts which had set America on the road to restrictionism back in 1882. Although all of these actions were tokenist in nature and responsive to America's self-interest, they did indicate that given proper direction, Congress need not be recalcitrant in changing the nation's immigration laws to accommodate what small number of refugees were able to flee Europe.

Even within existing limits of the Johnson Act, the United States might have offered to do more than it did. Refugees might have been welcomed under a series of non-quota loopholes in the law which provided for the admission of "ministers, professors, their wives, and unmarried

children under eighteen, and students at least fifteen years of age." This would have entailed a liberal definition of what constituted a minister or student. Any such relaxation of screening procedures was, as we have seen, to Hull and Long out of the question. Instead, upon his arrival at Bermuda, Chairman Dodds received oral instructions not to permit the slightest mention of the subject of America's immigration laws.

Dodds is naturally reluctant to identify the individual who so informed him (there is no mention of this instruction in any of the Bermuda records), but affirms that the ultimate source of his informant's authority was Roosevelt himself. "We got direct word from the White House that we could not discuss increasing the quotas with the British," Dodds has stated. Dodds realized that this stopped him of his major bargaining lever, by which he hoped to persuade the British to open the Dominions, colonies or Palestine. Moreover, such instructions were a direct contravention of what Jewish leaders who had conferred with Roosevelt early in April had been led to expect of Bermuda. On the eve of his departure for the conference, Dodds met with the ubiquitous Rabbi Wise and was told how the Jews "expected great things" from the refugee conference. Thoroughly disillusioned even before the serious negotiations began, Dodds decided to do his best, to go through the motions of serving the interests of his country and of the refugees. But he vowed never to work for FDR again.

85Interview with Dodds, June 3, 1968.
That the President and Secretary Hull were responsible for removing the subject of America's immigration laws from the agenda, there can be no doubt. In a letter prepared for Roosevelt one week after the conference ended, Hull again affirmed his belief in the sanctity of existing quotas. "I cannot recommend that we open the question of relaxing the provisions of our immigration laws and run the risk of a prolonged and bitter controversy in Congress on the immigration question," he wrote. "I cannot recommend that we bring in refugees as temporary visitors and thus lay ourselves open to possible charges of nullification or evasion of the national origins provision embodied in the quota law." 86 Roosevelt's terse response registered complete accord with the Secretary's analysis. "I do not think we can do other than comply strictly with the present immigration laws," wrote Roosevelt. "I agree with you that we cannot open the question of our immigration laws. I agree with you as to bringing in temporary visitors. We have already brought in a large number." 87

Hull was swayed by the fear, almost endemic to the State Department by this time, of a horde of aliens, all potential saboteurs, swarming into the country to damage the war effort. Roosevelt, on the other hand, may have been motivated more by the distressing public opinion soundings taken during this period which indicated that Jews

86 Hull to Roosevelt, May 7, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/165A.
were the most unpopular racial or religious group in this country, fully four times as unpopular as German or Japanese hyphenates. In July, 1942, months before the government officially acknowledged the existence of the death camps in Europe, but well enough into the war for Americans to know of the sufferings of the Jewish people, one American in six told pollsters that Hitler was "doing the right thing" to the Jews. Other analysts, noting the criticism of Jews as draft dodgers and wartime profiteers, suggested that perhaps as many as 40% of the adult American population would have supported a hypothetical anti-Semitic movement, or at least sympathized with it, during the war. Basically, then, little should have been expected from Bermuda because many Americans were unconcerned about what happened to the Jews. Government policies in a democracy, after all, reflect the needs, aspirations, and desires of its constituency.

Harold Dodds was to serve as a convenient mouthpiece for government inaction and little more. His position was demonstrated in his opening address to the delegates at Bermuda, an address which was merely a rehash of Hull's innocuous letter of February 25. Dodds paid tribute to Great Britain for the burden it had assumed toward the innocent

88 Stember, Jews in the Mind of America, p. 128.
89 Cantril, Public Opinion, p. 383.
90 Stember, Jews in the Mind of America, p. 9. For an explanation of this phenomenon, see Gordon Allport's "Bigot in our Midst," Commonweal, Vol. XL (October 6, 1944), pp. 582-86. The author blames wartime tensions and frustrations directed at the Jews who allegedly were responsible for starting the war.
victims of "the cruel Nazi philosophy," but in the same breath he felt compelled to cite America's humanitarian achievements as well. Among other things, the United States had: (1) condemned the racist policies of the Axis governments; (2) appropriated large amounts of public and private funds for the relief of the oppressed; (3) applied American immigration laws "in the utmost liberal and humane spirit of these laws"; (4) called the first intergovernmental conference on refugees at Evian in 1938; (5) granted 547,775 visas to natives of Axis-dominated lands since Hitler's rise to power; and (6) made special provision through the International Red Cross for the care of several thousand refugees then in Spain awaiting evacuation. 91

Today, Dodds admits his speech was little more than a smokescreen. "Frankly," he has stated, "a bit of it was phoney. We tried to make the case that we were doing nicely. But they the British were doing better, though, proportionately. We also were encountering some restless public opinion." 92 The only novel proposal which Dodds made to the British was for the revival of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. 93 This, too, had been authorized by Hull, who reminded the chief of the American delegation, "The IGCR is the result of President Roosevelt's thought and a development out of his original policy, and it seems appropriate that in view of his present and continuing interest in

91 U.S., Department of State Bulletins, VIII (L943), p. 352.

92 Interview with Dodds; June 3, 1968.

93 Memorandum of Morning Meeting, April 22, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 1.
the same objective that this product of his thought should be used as
the agency for refugee relief." Hull maintained that there were al­
ready 32 nations which belonged to the IGCR and that any new program
of international action might result in the alienation of some of these.

Hull could speak of the IGCR as if it were a healthy creature,
but, in fact, many of the 32 nations he mentioned were under Nazi dom­
ination and in no position to give aid to the Committee. Many others,
particularly the South American nations, having once expressed official
horror at the news of Nazi genocide, maintained barriers against "un­
derirable immigration" from Europe. Still others, like Switzerland and
Sweden already considered themselves saturated with 100,000 to 200,000
refugees and were getting no assistance from the IGCR for their support.

There was no IGCR in April, 1943, simply a token staff in London
whose Director had already conceded his Committee's incapacity to handle
any refugee problems at the time. Myron Taylor, who had chaired the
U.S. delegation to Evian and who normally followed the Administration line
in refugee questions, spoke out against the Committee's revival in 1943,
recalling the tremendous "covert dueling" between public and private
funding agencies which had hampered its earlier efforts and would un­

94 Hull to Dodds, April 21, 1943, State Department Records,
548.G1/80A.
95 Williamson to Hull, May 10, 1943, State Department Records,
822.4016/22.
96 Jacques Vernant, The Refugee in the Postwar World: Prelim­
97 Herbert Emerson, "Postwar Problems of Refugees," Foreign
The British also entertained serious doubts about the personal capabilities of Herbert Emerson, whom they would have replaced with a younger man.

Nevertheless, when Dodds made the suggestion concerning the IGCR, the British eagerly snapped at the bait. Here was precisely the kind of "concrete," yet harmless proposal which might salve the critics of its Palestine policy. If any land seemed most appropriate as a refugee haven, it was Palestine. Most of the refugees were Jews. Most of them wanted to get to Palestine. And Palestine had been rendered accessible by countless Jewish illegals aboard decrepit tramp steamers or along the primitive Turkish rail facilities.

The official British position on Palestine, repeatedly affirmed by the Churchill Government after the Struma affair, was that Jews fleeing the Nazi vise would be admitted to the Holy Land—but only in numbers up to 75,000, the maximum permitted under the White Paper of 1939. As late as April 7, 1943, Churchill, who once had suggested that the Chamberlain Government "file a petition in moral bankruptcy" when it enacted the White Paper, cleaved to that same policy, indicating that while no Jewish refugees would be turned away from Palestine, their numbers would be subtracted from the total permitted before March, 1944, when all Jewish immigration would have to cease. None of these emigrants, however,

98 Taylor to Hull, August 26, 1943, State Department Records, 548. G1/50.

would receive any assistance from His Majesty's Government in making their way to the Middle East. 100

Unlike the Americans, the British did permit some discussion of their Achilles heel, the Palestine situation, at Bermuda. According to Dodds, "Balfour (the Balfour Declaration of November, 1917, promising the Jews a 'national home' in Palestine) came up time and time again." Each time, however, the British stood firm. When, for example, it was suggested to Admiralty Under-Secretary George Hall that British victories outside Tunis had relieved the German threat in the Middle East to the point where Palestine might now serve as a refuge for Jews, Hall stated flatly that there would be no departure from his Government's execution of the White Paper. 101 When it was pointed out that 29,000 certificates for Jews were still available under that edict, the British responded that there was no feasible way by which the Jews could travel to Palestine. The few neutral sailing ships in the Mediterranean would simply be inadequate for the purpose even if they could be hired. 102 British experts, contradicting the ORT's Backer who spoke optimistically of bringing 500

102 During the meetings of April 19 and 20, shipping was discussed, but once more problems of safe conduct, cost and compatibility with the war effort resulted in the delegates dismissing this prospect of rescue. Memorandum of Afternoon Conference, April 20, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 3.
persons out of the Balkans on Turkish railroads, held that these facilities were also totally inadequate. 103

In reality, the British were not so much concerned about the problem of transport as they were about the kind of refugee who might come to Palestine. Through the war, Great Britain granted asylum in the Middle East to an unlimited number of non-Jewish refugees. Before the end of the war, some 45,000 Greeks, Poles, and Yugoslavs had passed through detention camps at El Shatt, El Arish, Khataba, Moses Wells, and Tolumbat in the Egyptian Delta and Sinai. Another 9,000 of these "Aryans" were granted outright sanctuary in Palestine, while 4,800 Greeks were admitted to Cyprus. 104

At the same time, the Foreign Office dreaded the thought that Hitler might actually release his captive Jews. A.W.G. Randall of the Refugee Department, himself a delegate to Bermuda, later betrayed the geopolitical dilemma of the British Government when he asked Moshe Shertok (Sharrett) of the Jewish Agency: "Where should we be if the Germans should offer to dump a million Jews on us? Where would we put them?" 105

103 Backer talked of rescuing 125,000 persons, most of them children, in this manner. Minutes of Meeting of American Delegation, Sunday, April 25, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 46. The British view was that this was impossible. Beck to Hull, April 21, 1943, State Department Records, 548, Gl/46.


The answer was Palestine, but this was precisely what the British hoped to avoid. With protests from every Arab state against further Jewish immigration already weighing heavy in London and Washington, with Arab sympathies to the Allied cause openly in doubt, and with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem preaching a Jihad for the Nazis from a Berlin radio station, the very last thing the British could afford was the heightening of tensions in the Middle East through the introduction of more Jews into that area.

At the same time, however, the British might be faulted for their discriminatory rescue operations. Instead of denying access to Arab countries to all refugees from Hitler, the British defended their acceptance of non-Jews with the rationalization that at least some persons were being saved. On April 20, Law proposed removing 200 Polish families from Iran to Cyrenaica and an additional 5,000 Greek refugees from Cyprus to the Gaza region of Palestine. No Jews were to be considered under


107 Haj Amin al-Husseini was a well-known anti-Zionist, one who had organized the Easter pogrom at Jaffa in 1920, the Wailing Wall riots of 1929, the Arab boycott of 1936, and the Gallani coup in Iraq in 1941. Eluding the British before and during the war, he took up residence in Germany where he maintained two villas, organized the Buro des Grosmufti (which operated schools of sabotage for Arabs in the Hague and Athens) and tried unsuccessfully to raise an Arab Legion for the Wehrmacht. After the war, the Mufti, who according to Abwehr Major General Erwin Lahousen was personally responsible for the extermination
The next day, Law suggested that relief be given to some 21,000 refugees who were detained in miserable camps like Miranda de Ebro, but who might be useful to the war effort. Approximately 12,000 of these were French nationals, 3,000 Poles and Czechs, and 6,000 stateless or "enemy national" Jews. Law proposed that all of those refugees except the Jews be assisted to North Africa. That was too much for Dodds, who wired Hull that such action would antagonize "pressure groups and humanitarians."

Actually, it is ironic that the Jews should have occupied so much of the attention of the delegates. Officially, they were non-persons at Bermuda. In his opening remarks about the work that the United States was doing, Dodds failed to mention the plight of the Jews at all. While

107 (Cont'd)


109 Memorandum of Morning Conference, April 21, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 3.

110 Dodds to Hull, April 24, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/54.
he praised the American consular services, the IGCR, and the Red Cross, he never saluted the vigorous relief operations of the World Jewish Congress, HIAS, the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Friends Services Committee, the Unitarian Services Committee, the National Refugee Service, or the Joint Distribution Committee, which alone had assisted 60% of all refugees from Europe, regardless of creed. 111

Nor was there a single reference to the Jews in the final public communique issued by the delegates to Bermuda on April 29, 1943. This bland document read:

The United States and United Kingdom delegates exam- ined the refugee problem in all its aspects including the position of those potential refugees who are still in the grip of the Axis powers without any immediate prospect of escape. Nothing was excluded from the analysis and every- thing that held out any possibility, however remote, of a solution of the problem was carefully investigated and thoroughly discussed. From the outset, it was realized that any recommendations that the delegations could make to their governments must pass two tests: would any recommen- dation submitted interfere with or delay the war effort of the United Nations and was the recommendation capable of accomplish- ment under war conditions? The delegates at Bermuda felt bound to reject certain proposals which were not capable of meeting these tests. The delegates were able

111 During the first four years of the war, the Joint assisted refu- gees in Stockholm, Teheran, Casablanca, Madrid, and Buenos Aires. JDC soup kitchens functioned in Warsaw to the very end. Seven thousand Jewish children, interned in camps in France, were fed through the Nazi occupation. More than 5,000 relief parcels containing shoes, clothing, tea, underwear, medicine, sugar, vegetable fats, and dried fruits were smuggled across the Iranian-Russian border each month, bound for the starving Jews in Eastern Europe. The Joint arranged for some descendants of Sephardic Jews, whose ancestors had been expelled from Iberia 500 years before, to return to Spain and Portugal. All the while, the Joint was spending $100,000 per month in Spain, $150,000 in Switzerland, and $300,000 in Sweden to aid refugees of all faiths. See JDC in a World at War (New York: American Joint Distribution Committee, 1944) and Aspects of Jewish Relief, ed. Norman Bentwich (Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad, 1944), YIVO 8/50130.
to agree on a number of concrete resolutions which they are jointly submitting to their governments and which, it is felt, will pass the tests set forth above and will lead to the relief of a substantial number of refugees of all races and nationalities. Since the recommendations necessarily concern governments other than those represented at the Bermuda Conference and involve military considerations, they must remain confidential. It may be said, however, that in the course of discussion, the refugee problem was broken down into its main elements. Questions of shipping, food, and supply were fully investigated. The delegates also agreed on recommendations regarding the form of intergovernmental organization which was best fitted, in their opinion, to handle the problem in the future. This organization would have to be flexible enough to permit it to consider, without prejudice, any new factors that might come to its attention. In each of these fields, the delegates were able to submit agreed proposals for consideration of their respective governments.112

At the time of the conference the only group of people who were being detached by force from their homes and occupations, segregated physically as well as socially from their neighbors, marked for annihilation were the Jews. At the time, only the Jews were being killed for no better reason than that they existed. As Senator William Langer later put it, "While singled out for suffering and martyrdom by their enemies, they seem to have been forgotten by the nations which claim to fight for the cause of humanity."113

In 1939, 8,324,500 Jews lived in European states that were to be overrun by the Nazis. By September, 1943, fewer than 3,000,000 of these remained. 1,995,600 had emigrated or "been evacuated," 1,800,00 had been "removed" to the interior of the Soviet Union, and 3,000,000 were

Yet when the British delegates Peake and Hall were queried as to the number of refugees involved in these discussions, they said there were only 80,000 in the perimeter of Axis-dominated Europe—30,000 Poles in Iran, 15,000 Greeks in and around Cyprus, 20,000 mixed Europeans in Spain, 18,000 in Switzerland, and several thousand more in Sweden. These figures do not differ substantially from those sent to FDR by Hull on May 22, 1943.

Once more, as at Evian, the governments of the two great democracies could be accused of failing to come up with any practical rescue proposals, of underplaying the extent of the refugee problem, of refusing to acknowledge the special persecution of the Jews under Nazism. Once more, as with the suppression of the news of genocide, this was done, not in malice, but in the belief that special efforts on behalf of the Jews would signal vicious reprisals against them in Europe. This feeling is what reduced Sol Bloom to silence. As he wrote later:

The announcement that we were going to aid a particular group might lead to intensified persecutions, perhaps to demonstrate that meddling from the outside could only intensify its wretchedness, perhaps to induce the payment of a huge ransom; or, quite possibly, the enemy would take unusual pains to sink a ship filled with helpless men, women, and children, thus hoping to discourage further attempts at rescue.

115 Baltimore Sun, April 24, 1943, p. 2.
The reluctance of the Allies to risk such a voyage was regarded by most critics of the Bermuda Conference as a ruse to conceal the basic shortcoming of this meeting. "What lies behind Bermuda?" asked Alexander Uhl of PM. "Are we really as charitable and generous as we like to think we are?" His questions were answered by Freda Kirchwey, who wrote:

In this country, you and I, the President and the Congress and the State Department are accessories to the crime and share Hitler's guilt. If we had behaved like humane and generous people instead of complacent, cowardly ones, the two million lying today in the earth of Poland and Hitler's over-crowded graveyards would be alive and safe. We had it in our power to rescue this doomed people and yet did not lift a hand to do it—or perhaps it would be better to say that we lifted just one cautious hand, encased in a tight-fitting glove of quotas and visas and affidavits and a thick layer of prejudice.118

"The problem is too mighty grown
For our democracies alone.
We do not solely hold the keys
To open doors to refugees.
In war we must decline to give
Admission to the fugitive."  

By the spring of 1943, the War had taken a decided turn in favor of the Allies. In the Far East, supplies were rolling regularly over the Hump to Chiang Kai-Shek's headquarters in Kunming. Orde Wingate's Chindits and Frank Merrill's Marauders were causing havoc behind Japanese lines in Burma and Indo-China. General MacArthur was planning the first Allied assault upon territory which had belonged to Japan before the war in the Pacific began—Rabaul and the Bismarck Archipelago. The Russians had repulsed the Germans from Kharkov, and Stalingrad stood as a scarred headstone to the 1,000,000 men lost Nazi legions on the Eastern Front that year. On May 12, the Mareth line broken, the Afrika Korps in disarray, Americans pouring across North Africa from the west and the British ripping into Tunis and Bizerte from the east, Erwin Rommel ordered the capitulation of 300,000 troops rather than emulate the suicidal fight of von Paulus at Stalingrad as Hitler ordered. By summer, the Allies


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were poised to strike at Sicily, the first step preparatory to the liberation of Europe.

In the midst of rising optimism and oft-sounded phrases about the necessity for unity, some Americans were startled to open the pages of the New York Times on May 4, 1943, and see a six-column headline in two-inch block letters which sneered, "To 5,000,000 Jews in the Nazi Death Trap, Bermuda was a Cruel Mockery." The article, actually another advertisement purchased by the National Committee for a Jewish Army, went on to accuse Great Britain and the United States of giving Hitler carte blanche with his extermination plans. "Wretched, doomed victims of Hitler's tyranny!" it went on. "Poor men and women of good faith the world over! You have cherished an illusion. Your hopes have been in vain. Bermuda was not the dawn of a new era, of an era of humanity and compassion, of translating pity into deed. Bermuda was a mockery and a cruel jest."²

Two days later, Scott Lucas, fresh from his labors at the refugee conference, rose to harrangue his colleagues in the U.S. Senate about the inflammatory advertisement. The Democratic Majority Leader attempted to make three points in his speech: (1) that it was presumptuous for anyone to judge the conference before a complete report could be issued; (2) that the advertisement was purchased without the knowledge of the illustrious personages; including 36 Senators, whose names were appended to the text; and (3) that he, Lucas, was a lifelong friend of the Jews and resented any aspersions that he was not.

As far as publicity was concerned, the final communique from Bermuda made it evident that for the moment nothing would be divulged to the press that had not previously been cleared through diplomatic channels. The cables which passed back and forth among Long, Hull and Dodds on the last two days of the conference indicate an American sensitivity to "heavy pressures" and "public relations" at home, but a willingness to go along with the British demand for secrecy. Apparently the British were concerned that the Americans would babble freely, tell everything, as Hull had done with his memo of February 25, and thereby expose the dearth of achievements at Bermuda. Dodds also shared this feeling, for he advocated keeping the results confidential for as long a time as possible. Thus, while Lucas was assuring his comrades in the Senate that additional clarification of the final communique would be forthcoming "shortly," it was not until 1963 that the public was fully enlightened as to the nature of the discussions, with the opening of the State Department Records on this conference.

Lucas' second point, concerning the illegitimate exploitation of names of notables to lend an air of authority to the advertisement, led to some interesting soul-searching on the part of his colleagues. Lucas claimed to have polled all the Senators involved and ascertained that none had prior knowledge of the contents of the celebrated ad. To emphasize the point, he read a letter from Senator Edwin Johnson,

Chairman of the National Committee for a Jewish Army, to Peter Bergson, the group's publicity director. In this note, Johnson rather paternally admonished Bergson for impugning "an esteemed colleague," and urged greater care in framing future releases. After reading this, Lucas was asked to yield by a battery of Senators, including E. H. Moore of Oklahoma, Albert Chandler of Kentucky, Harry Truman of Missouri, Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, James Davis of Pennsylvania, and Burnett Maybank of South Carolina, all of whom wished to disassociate themselves from the advertisement and to express confidence in the senior Senator from Illinois. The integrity of the Senatorial club had to be preserved.

Just three weeks before, this same group of Senators (along with Mississippi's Theodore Bilbo and Ohio's Taft) had made no outcry when the National Committee for a Jewish Army splashed an eight-column headline which read "What is the Shocking Truth About Saving the Lives of the European Jews and What are the Untruths?" across the pages of the Times. No one objected then, even though the Senators again were unaware of what they had endorsed, because the intemperate language of that first advertisement had been directed solely against the British Government which was charged with deliberate inaction and wanton ineptitude where Jewish lives were concerned.

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As for the third of Lucas' points, his alleged philo-Semitism, his declaration on the Senate floor might be construed as somewhat misleading. In questionable taste, the man who had nagged Backer with hypotheticals about the prospect of Hitler's dumping Jews on the west, who had fretted for the "aching hearts" of American mothers whose boys were dying on the battlelines, now affirmed:

I yield to no man, regardless of his race, creed, or color, in my humane sympathy for those people who are now locked on the inside of Europe's conquered lands. I believe that I understand the heartbeats of the underdog. I believe that I understand what it means to make one's own way in this life. I believe that I understand something about suffering in the early days of life. Some of my best friends I have in this country, Mr. President, are members of the Jewish faith.®

Commenting on this sorry affair, which apparently was resolved with Bergson's public apology to Lucas on the 8th of May, the Independent Jewish Press Service decried the fact that Jewish bungling of the episode had permitted Lucas and the Government to assume the role of the wronged innocents, to gain the offensive in stifling criticism of the Bermuda Conference. Perhaps, the IJPS noted sarcastically, this incident would serve as a warning to Jewish organizations that actively solicited Senatorial signatures for semi-weekly advertisements, without first briefing the Senators as to the nature of the press release. Looking to the upcoming American Jewish Conference to rectify the situation and coordinate the efforts of Jewish organizations in the United States, the wire service added, "Perhaps one of the first achievements of the American

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Jewish Conference will be to force suspension of letters to Senators asking them to approve the Skidolsky Unterstitzung Society in its latest card party and bazaar of the Organized Association for Upholding Jewish Honor.

Despite its rather facile handling of this incident, the U.S. Government, like its partner across the Atlantic, remained under heavy attack from Jewish and non-Jewish sources in the next several weeks. The Jewish National Conference, World Jewish Congress, Palestinian Zionists, American Polish-Jewish Federation, American Synagogue Council, and Sons of Zion all roundly scored what they considered to be the failures of Bermuda. Governors of seven states set aside May 2 as a "day of compassion" for the Jews of Europe, and protest demonstrations were staged in cities from Boston to Oakland. Writing in the monthly publication of the School of Social Work of the University of Chicago, Ben Hecht grieved:

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.

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.

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7IJPS, May 21, 1943, p. 2A.


Still more eloquent was the anonymous poet "Sagittarius" who blasted the conference in Britain's Socialist journal The New Statesman and Nation. Writing for a magazine which months before the conference was convened had warned that history would one day censure the Allies for their inaction, their sanity, in the face of such horror, Sagittarius concluded:

Where the Bermudas ride remote
This noble (but uncheerful) note,
Voice of inaction and delay
Echoes beyond the Mexique Bay,
(From whence a more inviting strain
Welcomes Republicans from Spain),
And may (perhaps) be heard afar
In Poland's steaming abattoir,
Where (doubtless) those about to die,
Would (were it possible) reply,
Approving of the long-term plans
Of would-be good Samaritans.

Such expressions of condemnation in Great Britain were not totally anomalous. While most British newspapers endorsed the Government's refugee policies, the sardonic Manchester Guardian continued to

11 "We should be ashamed to array the arguments for rescue," wrote the editors in January, 1943. "If in front of our eyes a Jewish child came running to any of us with a Nazi butcher after him, we would fling open the doors of our homes at any cost and at any risk. Before the test very few of us would fail. Are we simple-minded, if we assume that the United Kingdom, which is merely all of us, with our native humane impulses, embodied as a Power, ought to act in the same way? The only difference is that there is much more it can do, besides opening its doors, and even this it has not done." See "Our Part in Massacre," New Statesman and Nation, Vol. XXV (January 9, 1943), p. 19.

12 "Bermuda," p. 271.
flail away at Churchill's refusal to open Palestine with unlimited immigration for Jews. And on May 19, 1943, the House of Commons subjected Anthony Eden, Peake and Law to a torrent of barbed questions while accusing the ministers of having failed to appreciate the urgency of the refugee problem and of having draped the conference with "the dreadful spirit of defeatism and despair."

It is hardly coincidental that on May 19, 1943, the American Government, with the approval of the British, released the long-sought clarification on the outcome of the Bermuda Conference. This new State Department bulletin repeated what had been said previously about wartime security and the requirement of strict secrecy about certain matters. But it did relate that the delegates at Bermuda had: (1) agreed upon financial measures to cover the cost of maintaining refugees in neutral nations; (2) discussed a number of temporary havens to which refugees could be transferred and maintained "if and when shipping could become available"; (3) declared their intention of providing for repatriation of refugees, upon termination of hostilities; (4) submitted a plan for an expanded and more

13 The Times noted that "the painful and heartbreaking fact is that the saving hand cannot reach the majority of the refugees." London Times, May 20, 1943, p. 13. The News Chronicle, Daily-Herald, Daily Express, Daily-Telegraph, and Sunday Observer all rallied to the defense of the government saying that critics of Bermuda were doing a grave disservice to the war effort. For the Guardian's position, see May 20, 1943, p. 6.

14 For the complete debate, led by Miss Eleanor Rathbone on one side and Eden on the other, see Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) CCCXIX (1943) pp. 1117-1203.
efficient intergovernmental refugee organization with increased authority to meet problems created by the war; (5) rejected any consideration of negotiations with Hitler "since his entire record has left no doubt that he would agree to such solutions as would be of direct aid to the Axis war aims." 15

The State Department must have felt rather self-satisfied as a result of this amplification of the Bermuda protocol, for when it received a four-page letter from Rabbi Wise in June, a letter which outlined a host of rescue proposals and pointed to a growing passion in the Jewish community for revenge against the Germans in one form or another, Assistant Secretary Long dismissed the note as indicative of "a considerable degree of acquiescence in the recommendations of the Bermuda Conference."

As for Wise's rescue suggestions, Long, who never took the Rabbi seriously, claimed they were "now of less emphasis." 16 The next day, the Assistant Secretary wrote happily in his diary that even though "the recommendations of the Bermuda Conference have not been carried forward," the refugee question had calmed down. "Out information indicates that pressure groups now see the correctness of the position we have maintained from the beginning," he noted. 17

If anything, pressure continued to mount through the summer and fall of 1943 to force the Government to take more decisive action to rescue

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17 The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, June 23, 1943, p. 316.
the Jews of Europe. Gigantic rallies sponsored by the revisionist Emergency Conference to Save the Jews of Europe packed Madison Square Garden and Carnegie Hall in June and July. State legislatures in Connecticut, California, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Texas passed resolutions calling for freer immigration to Palestine. Norman Thomas, Chairman of the Executive Commission of the Postwar World Council, wrote Roosevelt to complain of "the small and sorry results of Bermuda as contrasted with accomplishments at the recently concluded food conference." Later Thomas told the press, "We are willing to fight Hitler partly because of his anti-Semitic cruelty, but we have not been willing to take any bold and aggressive action to rescue Jewish refugees or even temporarily to modify our immigration laws in this historic land of asylum." This was exactly what the governing boards of both the National Democratic and Republican Clubs urged in September. Appearing before a news conference on September 9, Democrat William Pullen and Republican Thomas Curren recommended a suspension of immigration restrictions for all aliens fleeing religious persecution. The White House received numerous letters from rabbis, governors, and laymen of all faiths who demanded an end to what Pierre Van Paassen termed "the scandal of Christiandom," "the driving of an ancient people to haunt the

18 Thomas to Roosevelt, June 17, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/165.
19 Fleischman, Norman Thomas, p. 209.
corridors of time as ghosts and beggars and to wander about, waifs in every storm that blows."\(^{21}\)

To silence such critics, the Administration articulated its standard rationalization—the war effort. Time and time again its spokesmen hammered home at the theme that everything must take a back seat to the primary task of defeating the Nazis and the Japanese. In a recent interview Harold Willis Dodds made reference to this rationalization no less than five times. The same was true of conversations held with Presidential adviser Benjamin Cohen. Lillie Shultz, when defending Rabbi Wise, also felt constrained to speak of actions compatible with winning the war. In May, 1943, Adolf Berle, addressing a throng of 20,000 in Boston, gathered to pay tribute to the Jews of Europe, said, "The only cure for this hideous mess can come through Allied armies."\(^{22}\) So, too, did Hull emphasize the importance of ultimate victory in his July message to the Emergency Conference to Save the Jews of Europe. "You will readily realize," said the Secretary," that no measure is practicable unless it is consistent with the destruction of Nazi tyranny; and that the final defeat of Hitler and the rooting out of the Nazi system is the only complete answere."\(^{23}\) In September, 1943, the Secretary

\(^{21}\)Van Paassen to Roosevelt, September 4, 1943, Roosevelt Library, Church Matters, Jewish, OF 76-C, Box 20. Boxes 19 and 20 are filled with similar remonstrances dating from the fall of 1943.


tried to assuage the Zionist Organization of America Convention in Columbus, Ohio, by using this same approach, promising that the government would take "every feasible step" consistent with winning the war to ameliorate the plight of the Jews in Europe.  

Some Congressmen, however, did not feel that pursuance of the war and rescue of the Jews were mutually exclusive. On Capitol Hill, Representatives Dickstein and Celler lashed out against the Government's inaction since Bermuda. In the Senate, North Dakota's lightly-regarded junior Senator William Langer repeatedly clamored for more information about what had transpired at Bermuda and what was being done for the Jews six months after Bermuda. In October, Langer charged, "I submit that by doing nothing, we have acquiesced in what has taken place over there." Finally, in response to these verbal recriminations, and against the recommendation of the State Department, Senator Guy Gillette, joined by fellow senators Clark, Ellender, Guffey, Van Nuys, and Taft, and Congressmen Baldwin and Rogers introduced a series of


25 "Are we," asked Dickstein, "the people of the United States, going to become the unwitting accomplices of this blood-thirsty gutter-snipe, as Winston Churchill so aptly called this modern Hun?" U.S., Congressional Record, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., 1943, LXXXIX, Pt. 11, A3316.


27 U.S., Congressional Record, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., 1943, LXXXIX, Pt. 6, 8125. See also Pt. 3, 4139.
resolutions calling for the establishment of a special commission to save the Jews of Europe. 28

On November 26, 1943, Breckinridge Long was summoned before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (chaired by his friend Sol Bloom) to defend the Government's refugee policy. The Assistant Secretary nearly overwhelmed his inquisitors with statistics indicating the many achievements of the Roosevelt Administration in refugee work during the war. Beginning with a recitation of Hull's oft-cited figure of 547,775 refugees who, Long claimed, had been admitted to the U.S. since the rise of Hitler, the Assistant Secretary went on to tell how the U.S., with Britain, had (1) welcomed scores of persons, including the complete faculties of yeshivas, who had made their way across Siberia to Japan before the war broke out in the Pacific; (2) arranged for the transport of 1,200 stateless persons from Spain to North Africa in 1943, and persuaded the Franco Government to keep Spain's borders open as a way-station for refugees escaping to permanent havens; (3) found asylum for 6,000 Poles in Persia and 5,000 French children in neutral Sweden and Switzerland; (4) sought shipping through neutral nations like Spain and Portugal; (5) requested the International Red Cross to investigate atrocities against

28 U.S., Congressional Record, 78th Cong. 1st Sess., 1943, LXXXIX, Pt. 6, pp. 9305 and 9371. The bill did not emerge from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee until December 20, 1943.
the Jews; (6) issued warnings to Nazi puppets in the Balkans not to assist in the extermination process; and (7) undereenwritten the expenses of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees on a 50-50 basis with Great Britain.29

Under Congressional examination, Long once more revealed his insensitivity to the suffering of the Jews. Questioned by South Dakota's Karl Mundt about the Struma incident, he said, "It was a terrible thing to happen, but it was one of those things that do happen."30 The Number Two Man in the State Department added hastily, "I do not consider it the refugee question as concerned with the Palestine question."31 Long went on to imply that Jewish pressure groups in this country had actually hampered rescue operations and exaggerated the sufferings of Jews to the exclusion of other racial and religious groups which were under the Nazi heel. When Congressman Mundt suggested that any new rescue commission be chartered to aid Jews and non-Jews alike, Long, who opposed the idea of a new commission, allegedly because it would


30 U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings, Resolutions Providing for the Establishment by the Executive of a Commission to Effectuate the Rescue of the Jewish People of Europe, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., 1943, p. 44.

31 Ibid., p. 44. Long's attitude could hardly be distinguished from one of the bill's sponsors, Congressman Rogers, who four days earlier rejected a plea from Wise to solve the Jewish question by establishing a homeland in Palestine. Said Rogers, "I would doubt the wisdom of injecting this ancient and acrimonious dispute on this resolution." The Conference Record, Vol. I, #6 (January 15, 1944), p. 3.
duplicate the work of the IGCR, said, "The State Department has maintained that attitude all through, but the situation has come to a state of publicity where I think the Jewish interests have emphasized the fate of Jews as such." 32

That last statement was made almost a year after Nazi genocide against the Jews had been confirmed. It did not take the American Jewish community long to react. The Commission of Rescue of the American Jewish Conference issued its own statement that the Assistant Secretary's testimony "can be read only with mixed feelings in which bewilderment and regret dominate over satisfaction." 33 The Conference chided Long on his attitudes toward Jews, the accuracy of his immigration statistics, the worth of the IGCR, the possibility of feeding refugees in Nazi-dominated lands, the availability of shipping and the availability of havens, and in the words of AJ Conference Secretary I.L. Kenen, concluded that he was not only a bigot, but an inaccurate one at that. 34

Like all Jews, the Conference was offended by Long's innuendoes about Jewish pressure to secure preferential treatment for their


34 Kenen, a former newsman for the Cleveland News, served as Secretary for the Conference during this critical period. Presently he is editor of Near East Report, a monthly journal issued in Washington, and is affiliated with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. He made this statement during an interview, June 5, 1968, with Saul S. Friedman in Washington.
brethren in Europe. The delegates, from the largest Jewish bodies in the United States, called for aid to all victims of Nazism regardless of race, but again emphasized the uniqueness of the Jewish tragedy. They added, "It is difficult to understand Mr. Long's repeated implication that specific aid to Jews excludes help to other people or that there is no distinction between the problems of rescuing Jews from Hitler Europe and rescuing refugees in general."

The Rescue Commission of the Conference challenged Long's statement that 547,000 refugees had been admitted to the U.S.A. since 1933. Such a figure warranted no place in discussions about the rescue of Jews, as its use in conjunction with repeated phrases about State Department efforts on behalf of yeshiva students, Jewish children and stateless persons, created the illusion that the United States had saved a half million Jews from the Nazi death trap. Statistics indicate that only 163,843 Jews reached the United States between 1933 and 1943. Of these, 43,089 were admitted under visitors permits and had to re-enter the country under regular quota restrictions. In the process, some were counted twice by overzealous government officials. If Long sought to give a true picture of American immigration, he could have spoken of the needlessly cumbersome regulations which had limited immigration in 1943 to 5.9% of the number permitted under the 1924 law.  

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35 Ibid., p. 3.

36 Ibid., pp. 3 and 43.
Earl G. Harrison, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, conceded that Long's figures were misleading when he later told refugee relief banquet that no more than 200,000 refugees, as such, had been admitted to the United States in the previous decade. Even Long subsequently admitted that he had erred in his testimony on this point. Writing Visa Division Chief Travers in December, he affirmed his belief that 547,000 visas had been issued, but added, "Which of those persons actually entered the United States is a matter that is not apparent from the records of the Department of State, as we do not keep such records." Long attempted to defend himself by having his subordinates draw up lengthy memoranda on the technical problems involved for European emigrants who were supposed to use their visas within the allotted calendar year. The Assistant Secretary would not, however, retract his testimony, save to issue a short note to Representative Bloom conceding that he had made an innocent mistake and "more properly should have said, 'We have authorized visas for 547,000 persons to come to this country' instead of 'We have taken into this country 547,000 persons.'"

37 Transcript of Harrison Speech, February 18, 1944, Chamberlain Collection, YIVO, 3463. Proudfoot's estimates are substantially the same. Of 799,651 "refugees" accepted by this nation during wartime, Proudfoot estimates that only 230,343 technically were refugees or persons fleeing for their lives. Proudfoot, European Refugees, pp. 76-77.

38 Long to Travers, December 29, 1943, Refugee File, Container 202.

Long's optimistic expectations for the IGCR were equally unrealistic and perhaps even insincere. To speak of turning over the refugee question once more to an agency which had been described by its director as "moribund, honorary and not competent in its present form," was an action which could hardly be viewed with jubilation in the Jewish community. Myron Taylor had cautioned against its revival. Emerson himself had called for the establishment of a new international refugee authority the previous year. Jews could not be expected to have confidence in a man who was criticized at Bermuda as incapable of handling the expanded duties of the IGCR, a man who as late as August, 1942, was still speaking in the pre-war jargon of the danger of "flooding countries with large numbers of Jews" and of the necessity of resolving the Jewish problem through minority treaties with Central and East European nations. 40

Twenty-nine countries sent representatives to the new organizational sessions of the IGCR at London in August, 1943. Grandiose pledges of funds were made and an American, Patrick Malin, lately of the American Friends Services Committee, the International Migration Service, and OFRRO, was named Vice-Director. 41 For all its grand talk, however, the IGCR was without much practical value for the remainder of the war. Three weeks before Long informed the House Committee on Foreign Affairs of

40 Emerson to Hull, August, 1942, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 50, Folder 151.

the potential of the IGCR, Emerson had informed Hull that the Committee had no authority to negotiate with anyone but neutral or Allied states, a statement which held out no hope for those behind barbed wire in Europe.\footnote{Emerson to Hull, October 14, 1943, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OP 3186.}

Long's implication that it could rescue refugees from occupied lands drew a swift denial from the head office of the IGCR in London to the effect that the Assistant Secretary's statement was "absolutely incorrect."\footnote{Jewish Telegraphic Agency, December 21, 1943, in Tartakower and Grossmann, The Jewish Refugee, p. 419.}

Until it was superseded by the International Refugee Organization in July, 1947, the IGCR continued to function, engaging in some token relief work, but concentrating on planning for the postwar disposition of refugees.\footnote{In 1945, the IGCR spent less than $300,000 on relief projects in the Balkans. Its 1947 budget for resettlement of displaced persons was more than $10,000,000. As such it naturally collided with UNRRA for allocations of funds. See Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees: Report of the Director, 30 May, 1947 (London, 1947).}

A third point in Long's testimony which rankled many Jews was his insistence that the democracies were powerless to send food or other supplies into Nazi-dominated lands to assist the Jews. The idea of trans-blockade feeding had been broached on several occasions by Jewish groups before the Bermuda Conference, but had been rejected by the American delegation as "wholly outside" the realm of that conference.\footnote{Report to the Governments of the United States and United Kingdom from Their Delegates to the Conference on the Refugee Problem Held at Bermuda, April 19-29, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 203, Section I, unpaginated.}
A suggestion from World Jewish Congress President Nahum Goldmann in September, 1943, that the Government might cooperate in a $10,000,000 food relief project through the International Red Cross was similarly rejected. The State Department, however, objected to this form of relief for European refugees for reasons, which on the surface, appeared valid. A special departmental memorandum on refugees prepared for Under-Secretary Stettinius by R. Bordon Reams in October, 1943, noted that such a food project would (1) destroy the effectiveness of the Allied blockade of Europe; (2) lead to the feeding of European Jews, "many of whom were actually enemy aliens"; (3) contribute to the Nazi war effort as there would be no effective control over the disbursement of food parcels.

The fear that the Germans might, in fact, confiscate relief supplies was the most powerful deterrent to any trans-blockade relief scheme. According to Sol Bloom, attempts to send along $50,000,000 in supplies to Greece and other Nazi-held lands in 1941-42 had ended in abject failure, with the Germans taking most of the goods. Even Long had to admit that this was something of an over-statement. The U.S. continued to ship 18,000 tons of wheat and vegetables to Greece each month in 1943, but only because Greece lay beyond the limits of the

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Atlantic blockade and the Germans had granted safe conduct to the eight Swedish cargo vessels carrying this produce. While these supplies continued to flow into German-controlled ports in the Aegean, the Allies would not trust the Germans elsewhere in Europe. "If you send food to Antwerp," Long told Representative John Vorys of Ohio, "the Germans will take it and you contribute to the welfare and fighting strength of the German Army." Why the Germans in Belgium or Poland would be more inclined to steal medicines and food from the sick and underfed populations of those countries than their comrades in Greece, Long did not explain.

In fact, already before Long testified, the U.S. had sent along 20,000,000 units of insulin for distribution in France. Countless ragtag garments had also been passed to the persecuted through neutral intermediaries. The American Red Cross, through its international affiliate, had spent more than $340,000 on drugs and pharmaceuticals for Belgians since the United States became embroiled in the European War. Many thousands more had been spent by the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross and the Swedish Relief Commission to feed and clothe refugees in Poland, Yugoslavia, Norway, the Netherlands, and


50 Hearings on Establishment of Commission to Rescue Jews of Europe, p. 36.

51 Memorandum on the Findings of the Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People of Europe, YIVO, 3/25195, pp. 11-12.
and even in some of the worst "detention camps" like Terezin, Gurs, and Vittel. Doubtless, some of this relief was confiscated by the Nazis, but Jewish leaders like Wise, Goldmann, and Hecht felt that the risks involved were justified, if merely on a trickle down theory that eventually some Jewish lives might be preserved. The State Department, regarding the matter much more impersonally, could not agree.

Perhaps that part of Assistant Secretary Long's testimony which was most unacceptable to Jews, however, concerned the availability of shipping. After telling Bloom's committee of efforts to secure neutral vessels for the transport of refugees to places of relative safety, Long lamented, "There just is not any transportation." According to the Assistant Secretary, fewer than 200 persons per month could be accommodated on available shipping. What had happened to the 40-odd passenger vessels belonging to neutrals which had been the subject of serious discussions at Bermuda several months before, Long did not say.


54 More recently, President Dodds supported this view, saying, "Locations were academic. We were constantly up against the problem of shipping. We got some. Visas were issued in excess of available shipping. But no one could have gotten the millions out who should have been taken out." Interview with Dodds, June 3, 1968.

55 See Confidential Memorandum for the Chairman, Morning Conference, April 20, 1943, and Afternoon Conference, April 20, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203.
Nor did he explain how it was that the Swedes, Spanish, Portuguese and Turks, eager to profit from what Jews in this country estimated to be a potential traffic of 50,000 persons per month in August, 1943, were no longer interested in such fares in November, 1943. Nor did he enlarge upon the situation which existed aboard those vessels which continued to ply the Atlantic trade through 1943. On June 22, 1943, the Serpo Pinto, out of Lisbon, arrived at Philadelphia carrying 30 passengers. Its capacity was 600. Other steamers from neutral nations, the Yasa, the Magallenes, the Gripsholm came to the United States in 1943, carrying less than ten per cent of their potential human cargoes.

The explanation for the failure to obtain neutral shipping lay in the American Government's reluctance to subject these vessels and their passengers to the "insuperable" hazards of German U-Boats. Jews could reply that by the spring of 1943, the Mediterranean was open to Allied shipping at Gibraltar and Suez, and that the U-Boat menace in the Atlantic which had accounted for nearly 1,000,000 deadweight tons of Allied shipping sunk per month in 1942 was virtually extirpated by the summer of 1943. During the first half of 1942, 220,000 tons of shipping

56 The Swedish-American line had two liners with a combined capacity of 10,000 ready to make the Atlantic journey. Both remained idle for eight months in 1943. In like manner, large vessels belonging to the Compania Trans-Mediterranea were also tied up in Barcelona for the better part of the year, awaiting passengers. See Memorandum on the Findings of the Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People of Europe, pp. 9-10.

57 Ibid., p. 10.

had been lost for every U-Boat sunk. But already by May, 1943, that ratio had, as a result of improved radar, wider range of Allied aircraft operating out of Newfoundland, Reykjavik, and Londonderry, and the presence of escort carriers in convoys, dropped to a mere 5,500 for every German sub sunk, the equivalent of one ship lost for every U-Boat lost. 59

Already on May 20, 1943, Winston Churchill was telling Congress that the submarine menace in the Atlantic was dead. 60 And while his evaluation may have seemed a bit headstrong at the time, subsequent tallies proved him correct. 61 In June, 1943, the Nazis lost 21 U-Boats in return for sinking 20 Allied vessels. The following month 33 German submarines were destroyed while the Allies lost only 45 surface vessels. Thereafter, the German High Command considered itself fortunate if it sank 100,000 tons of shipping in any month. Short on fuel, forced to stay underwater for great lengths of time, and then to give battle to convoys supported by air power, the average life expectancy of all U-Boats was two or three sorties. Concludes Vice-Admiral Friedrich Ruge, "Admiral Doenitz thus had no option but to give up the main theatre of


61. Naval Fleet Commander in Chief Admiral Ernest King later commented, "By the spring of 1943, the war against German submarines in the Atlantic had turned in our favor and we were fully on the offensive in that area." Chester Wardlow, The Transportation Corps: Responsibilities, Organization and Operations in The United States Army in World War II: The Technical Services (Washington: Office of Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1951), p. 151.
operations in the Atlantic. Those that remained were of little use. "62 The Germans lost 725 submarines during World War II, including 237 in 1943 and 241 in 1944 (up from 35 sinkings in 1941 and 85 in 1942), but to FE-Day, the Allies remained fixated by the fear of a mythological "U-Boat Offensive."63

If the American Government was unwilling to risk the sinking of neutral vessels in the face of this alleged U-boat menace, what then of the availability of American vessels? Both the Navy and the Army operated their own transport services during the war, amphibious transport ships, luxury liners, converted Liberty ships, which carried 8,000 Americans overseas between December, 1941, and December, 1945, and which were allegedly returning with their primitive quarters empty. Then there were the American merchant vessels, bound for Europe with tons of supplies, returning again with what many believed to be empty bottoms. Jewish leaders like Emanuel Celler and Stephen Wise clamored for these vessels to be placed under flags of the Red Cross to ferry refugees back across the Atlantic.64

62 Ruge, Sea Warfare, p. 238.


The idea of using military craft for such an operation was rejected by the office of Naval Operations in February, 1943. Apart from the obvious slowdown in making such vessels available for new troop shipments (American staging areas were chaotic enough at the time), the proposal raised questions concerning reception, quartering, and surveillance of refugees. The matter of passengers on cargo ships presented even greater problems. Most of the Liberty Ships were of the C-1 class, with accommodations for fewer than 50 persons, including the crews. Criticized for their lack of speed, with only a top range of eleven knots, these vessels had been streamlined down to the substitution of a steel bell in place of the heavier, standard brass bell, to give them an added fragment of maneuverability on the high seas. To load them down with refugees, either housed in inhuman cargo holds, or in compartments requiring repeated conversions of the vessels, would have been, in the words of Harold Willis Dodds, "unthinkable, absolutely impossible." As a result, the subject of transporting civilian passengers

65 Captain Struble, ONO, to Berle, February 10, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/110. Perhaps the release of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Papers in 1970 will disclose who actually made this decision.


67 Interview with Dodds, June 3, 1968.
on cargo vessels was dropped in the summer of 1943 when the Navy, Army and War Shipping Administration, unable to agree upon any set policy since the subject was broached in mid-summer, 1942, failed to receive the necessary Presidential go-ahead. 68

None of these objections—availability of transports, safety of passengers, humanitarian accommodations, compatibility with the war effort—had interfered when the Americans shoe-horned their soldiers into four tiers of bunks, two to a bunk, if bunks were available, on every conceivable type of vessel (including the squalid Liberty ships) for the fearful journey across the Atlantic. 69 None of these objections had been raised when the British undertook to transport thousands of Muslim pilgrims from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea to make the Hajj to Mecca in the spring of 1943. 70 None of these objections had been raised when Great Britain undertook the transport of 100,000 Prisoners of War to Jamaica, Kenya, Tanganyika and the British Isles in 1943. 71 Nor had


69 All told some 225 Liberty ships, rigged with temporary accommodations for anywhere from 450 to 3,800 persons were used during the war. Ibid., pp. 146-47.

70 On April 7, 1943, Itzhok Ben-Zvi, Chairman of the Jewish General Council in Palestine, and later to become second President of Israel, reported that the British had made this pledge to Muslims in what is now Pakistan. On the 15th of May, the Manchester Guardian testified that this operation had been carried out, with no apparent detriment to the war effort.

these objections been raised when the U.S. transported 146,246 civilians, government officials, dependents, contractors, and their employees, and Axis POWs, who constituted 41% of that figure, back to the United States in the month of September, 1944.  

In 1943, when fewer than 25,000 immigrants were admitted to the United States, when fewer than 5,000 Jews were admitted to this haven, more than 200,000 German and Italian Prisoners of War were ferried across the ocean.  

At a time when military planners and the State Department fretted over the cost of setting up camps for refugees from Hitlerism in this country, the War Department was busily constructing 155 base camps and 500 branch camps in 45 states, which would ultimately hold 371,000 German, 50,000 Italian, and 5,400 Japanese POWs by the end of May, 1945.  

There were, then, few "empty bottoms" among the vessels returning to the United States, as available shipping was used for the transport of prisoners as well as the sick, wounded, or soldiers returning on leave. Such movement of prisoners was defended on the grounds that it relieved theater commanders of the burden of housing, feeding, and guarding the captured enemy near the front lines, where they might be freed through some counter-attack to fight again.  

It was, however, difficult to explain  

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73 In December, 1942, there were only 1,975 POWs in the United States. Ibid., p. 79.

74 Ibid., p. 79.

75 Ibid., p. 78.
to some Americans how it was that some Nazi POWs rode in Pullmans on the way to their detention camps in this country, while American troops leaving for San Francisco or New York used coaches. The Jewish Agency in Palestine summed up the attitude of most free Jews who would have advocated feeding the Nazis nothing and transporting them in the same type cattle car used to expedite the slaughter of the Jews in Poland when it noted acidly that the Allies seemed more concerned about the well-being of the enemy than the persecuted peoples of Europe.

Actually, the question of shipping should have been academic in 1943. Apart from Palestine, which undeniably was accessible to Jews fleeing the Balkans on foot, aboard leaky tankers, or via the much-debated Turkish railroad system, another sanctuary lay within a few hours ferry service of the European mainland. This was French North Africa. Since Roosevelt announced the invasion of North Africa on November 8, 1942, allegedly to prevent "the systematic plunder of the French by Italians and Germans," the British had constantly pressed for its use as a refugee haven, perhaps as much to relieve them of pressure for the opening of

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76 Ibid., p. 80. Such generous treatment could always be defended by pointing out that the Germans held many Americans prisoner and might take reprisals.


78 Roosevelt to Pétain, November 8, 1942, Roosevelt Library, France-U.S. File, OF 203.
Palestine to Jews as anything else. The Spanish also desired to be relieved of the congestion of displaced persons fleeing France once the Germans completely occupied that nation on November 11, 1942. Portuguese vessels were available for transport. And already in January, 1943, General Eisenhower and his civilian adviser Robert Murphy had given their assent to a scheme to remove 4,000 refugees, who might be useful to the Allied war effort, from Spain to North Africa.

That last statement was especially significant, for it indicated that from the beginning Herbert Lehman's Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO), created by the President on November 18, 1942, to develop relief policies in territories occupied by U.S. forces, was subordinated to military control. At best, the military high command was committed to a policy of highly selective immigration

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79 The War Diary of Breckinridge Long, p. 316.


81 Minutes of Meeting of American Delegates, Sunday, April 25, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 38.


83 In December, 1942, Myron Taylor, Roosevelt's emissary to the Vatican, affirmed this fact for IGCR Director Emerson. Taylor to Emerson, December 14, 1942, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202. The result was that Lehman complained that the military authorities would only take "military personnel" or "civil servants useful to the joint war effort" out of Spain. For Lehman's difficulties with the military, see Lehman to American Embassy in Madrid, January 25, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202.
to Algeria and Morocco. On April 22, 1943, the War Department backtracked on its earlier offer to rescue some of the refugees in Spain by listing several objections to the presence of refugees, principally the Jews. Such persons, it was argued, would only complicate military operations in a war zone not yet secured from the Nazis. Their presence would divert personnel, material, and shelter at a time when every last man was needed for combat and when many American soldiers themselves were without adequate supplies or shelter. The War Department cautioned the State Department against making any commitments to the British, Spanish, or Portuguese without first consulting "the French," who nominally, at least, controlled North Africa. And finally, General Strong, author of this memorandum which reached Long’s desk during the Bermuda deliberations, emphasized, "The Transport of Jewish refugees into the Moslem country of North Africa is of such military concern to the War Department that it should preclude any further consideration of the matter."84

By the time Strong submitted his resume to Assistant Secretary Long, the Allies were walking a diplomatic tightrope between Charles DeGaulle in Algeria and Henri Giraud in Morocco, both apparently representatives of various factions to be involved in a French government. To spare either man the onus of refusing to help refugees, Secretary Hull had issued instructions to the American delegation at Bermuda to strike

84 Strong for Long, April 22, 1943, State Department Records, 548.GL/44.
North Africa from consideration as a haven and to substitute instead Madagascar or French Equatorial Africa. 85

As noted previously, however, the Axis war effort in Africa had collapsed by the first week of May, 1943. At the same time, General Giraud notified General Eisenhower that he would be amenable to admitting most of the 20,000 refugees backed up in Spain to areas under his control. No mention was made either way about Jews, but Giraud underlined the fact that he would welcome any emigrant from Central Europe who might aid the Allied war effort. 86 Hull, so fastidious in shunning the word "Jew" in official parlance till now, sought out the opinions of the Joint Chiefs and Eisenhower on the wisdom of introducing Jewish refugees to the area. 87 Neither the Joint Chiefs nor Eisenhower shared Giraud's optimism. Like Hull, they believed that refugees, particularly Jewish refugees, would have a disruptive influence upon North Africa. 88

The principal rationalization used against the movement of Jews to this region was that their very presence would incite their age-old enemies, the Muslims, to riot and revolution, again to the detriment of the Allied war effort. On November 14, 1942, the Adjutant General

85 Hull to Dodds, April 28, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/89A.

86 Hull to Roosevelt, May 7, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/165A.

87 Hull to Brigadier General Deane, Secretary of Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 23, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/44.

88 Hull to Roosevelt, May 7, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/165A.
of the War Department received a troubled cablegram from Allied Head-
quarters in London, warning that "any further trouble in Morocco will
stir up tribes with disastrous effect."  

Although Walter Lippmann three
days later reported to Hull that Eisenhower himself had questioned the
reliability of intelligence reports on North Africa, military and diplomatic planners in Washington were still concerned about the earlier report
which had also warned that "a huge army of occupation" might be needed
in the area.

In February, 1943, another civilian adviser, Thomas Lamont,
warned Hull that the surest way to stir up the Arab tribes was to introduce
more Jews to North Africa and repeal anti-Jewish laws instituted by the
Vichy Government. The Muslims, wrote Lamont, were heirs to an anti-
Jewish tradition that went back centuries and any attempt to aid the Jews
"would provoke a grave crisis which would interfere with the speedy
outcome of the military campaign."  

On the 20th of March, Lt. Colonel Harold Hoskins of Army Intel-
ligence reinforced Lamont's analysis when he also warned that a huge
army of occupation would be required to secure North Africa if Jews were

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89 Eisenhower to War Department, November 14, 1942, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 50, Folder 152.

90 Lippman to Hull, November 17, 1942, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 50, Folder 152.

91 Lamont to Hull, February 1, 1943, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 51, Folder 153.
introduced there. Hoskins linked Arab hatred of the Jews with the problem of Palestine and the Holy shrines of the three major faiths. Zionism purportedly aroused the entire Arab world, including the natives of North Africa, who recognized that Jews would only temporarily be detained in this region before going on to Palestine, where they would threaten other Arabs and the sacred shrines as well. As a solution, Hoskins recommended de-Zionizing the Middle East situation by creating a Jewish haven in the desolate and virtually uninhabited Jebel Achdar region of Cyrenaica. His recommendations received the most favorable attention from Hull and Rosenman, the latter laboring at this time in conferences with Jewish leaders and government officials to defuse the Palestine situation.

For such reasons, then, were the American delegates at Bermuda instructed to strike North Africa from discussions as a potential haven, and work instead for Cyrenaica, Angola, or some other remote spot in Africa. The American Government, Hull noted, was concerned about "any matter which might disturb the political situation" in North Africa, and would be unwilling to discuss the subject of refugee transfers to that area even when military considerations permitted.

92Hoskins to Hull, March 20, 1943, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 51, Folder 54.
93Rosenman to Hull, undated, Spring, 1943, Hull Papers, Personal Correspondence, Box 51, Folder 157.
94Hull to Dodds, April 27, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/44.
For such reasons, also, did the American military authorities permit discriminatory legislation against the Jews, drawn up by the Vichy Government in Algeria and Morocco, to remain in force months after the Allied invasion. Declasse as citizens, Moroccan Jews were permitted no sugar, butter, soap, cereals, potatoes or fresh milk, and little clothing in the official rations established by the Allies. To appease French authorities, the Americans made no protest when the Free French banned Jewish officers and non-commissioned officers from combatant units, when Jewish soldiers were denied reinstatement in the Free French army unless they had been previously wounded or decorated for valor, when the Free French established quotas for Jewish physicians and other professionals in North Africa.

As late as January, 1944, the Joint Chiefs were cautioning against opening North Africa to additional refugees (Jews) because of the danger of flooding the area with unpopular immigrants. Under-Secretary Stettinius, however, objected most strenuously to this policy of sacrificing the Jews for the sake of expediency. Writing Hull on the 8th of January, he said, "If that is a true expression of military policy, and I question if it can represent the considered opinion of high military leaders, we might as well 'shut up shop' on trying to get additional

95 Rabbi Selwyn Ruslander, "Report on Discrimination Against Moroccan Jews," (Dayton, 1943), unpublished manuscript in American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, File 1027.

refugees out of occupied Europe. "97 Stettinius urged Hull to have Roosevelt suggest to the military that the rescue of refugees was "extremely important and something which should not be brushed aside."98

Stettinius might not have written the above memorandum if he had seen Roosevelt's earlier letter to Hull on North Africa. The President, who had found the region sufficiently safe to visit for discussions with the British and Free French at Casablanca in January, 1943, was convinced that the introduction of "large" numbers of Jews could not fail but be disruptive. He wrote the Secretary of State on May 14, 1943: "I agree that North Africa may be used as a depot for these refugees from Spain, but not a permanent residence without full approval of all authorities. I know, in fact, that there is plenty of room for them in North Africa, but I raise the question of sending large numbers of Jews there. That would be extremely unwise."99


98 Ibid.

99 Roosevelt to Hull, May 14, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/201. Subsequently the President was to reverse his position after discussions with Churchill in July of that year. With the approval of Giraud, Roosevelt directed War Secretary Stimson to take steps to bring 6,000 Jews from Spain to North Africa, preferably to the region of "Mogador." Orders along these lines were issued to the Joint Chiefs and General Eisenhower. Yet the operations of Camp Lyautye were so inadequate as to prompt Stettinius' concerned outcry months later. See Paraphrase of Message #339, June 30, 1943, from Churchill to Roosevelt; Telegram #308 of July 9, 1943, from Roosevelt to Churchill; Roosevelt to Stimson, July 18, 1943; and Memorandum prepared by Major General Thomas Handy, Assistant Chief of Staff, for the Joint Chiefs, July 29, 1943, Modern Military Records, CAB File, North Africa, National Archives, Washington, D.C. In none of this correspondence, it should be noted, does the name of Charles deGaulle appear.
The people of North Africa traditionally had prided themselves on their tolerance of Jewish dhimmi. One of Algeria's best governors, Maurice Viollette, once told the French Senate, "If there is anti-Semitism in Algeria, be sure that it is Europeans who fan it." As recently as 1962, French historian Harvey Goldberg was telling American audiences that the Algerian rebels harbored no antipathy toward the Jews or Zionists. And even today, the phrase that Jews have always lived in peace among their Arab cousins has almost become bromidic.

To assume then that the totally disorganized tribes of North Africa, still a generation removed from the contagion of nationalism that would lead to their own independence, would have risen in revolt because of the appearance of a few thousand more Jews in detention camps of the Maghrib or as far away as Palestine is questionable. Likewise, those who attempt to telescope events of recent years into the 1940s and impute strong anti-Zionist feelings to the Moroccans and Algerians then also err for such feelings were probably minimal twenty-five years ago.

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100 Hannah Arendt, "Why the Cremieux Decree was Abrogated," Contemporary Jewish Record, Vol. VI (April, 1943), p. 121.

101 Speech of Harvey Goldberg, Hillel House, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, May 6, 1962. In informal discussions a few months later, Goldberg indicated that his analysis probably had been too optimistic.

What eliminated North Africa as a haven for the Jews was the tendency put military matters foremost. While this is understandable, indeed necessary, persons broader and more humane views might have found some leeway to relieve Jewish suffering.
CHAPTER NINE

NEW AGENCIES: OLD RATIONALIZATIONS

There were 28 nations fighting Hitler by the end of 1943, and yet not one, including Great Britain and the United States, said, "We will undertake the rescue of the Jews." In the eighteen months which had elapsed since the confirmation of Nazi genocide began to trickle in to the time that Congress passed limp resolutions praising Allied efforts on behalf of the refugees in December, 1943, an additional two million persons had been gassed in the new death factory of Birkenau-Auschwitz.¹

To the long list of stated reasons precluding effective rescue operations were now added the cost of such operations and accessibility of refugees. The expense associated with any venture, including the bribing of Nazis, cost of transport, food, clothes, housing, etc. were always of great concern to Mr. Hull. On May 7, 1943, he wrote Roosevelt: "The unknown cost of moving an undetermined number of persons from an undisclosed place to an unknown destination, a scheme advocated by certain pressure groups, is, of course, out of the question."²


²Hull to Roosevelt, May 7, 1943, State Department Records, 548.G1/165A.
Even if such funds could be raised, the State Department was committed to the view that the Allies could not negotiate with the Nazis over one particular group of people to the exclusion of other captive nationalities in Europe, could not negotiate with the Nazis over the release of civilian internees, in short, could not negotiate with the Nazis at all. 3 In his special resume on refugees prepared for Stettinius in the fall of 1943, R. Borden Reams argued that the unconditional surrender formula agreed upon at Casablanca precluded any deal with the Germans over refugees. 4 While Reams worried about the prospect that the Nazis might unload 3-5,000,000 Jews on the Allies and thereby transfer "the onus for their continued persecution from the German Government to the United Nations," 5 Assistant Secretary Long and IGCR Vice-Director Patrick Malin wrote off the fate of the Jews, charging that there was nothing the Allies could do to get refugees out of Europe in large numbers, as the Germans seemed bent on eradicating, rather than exporting Jews. 6

3 Report to the Governments of the U.S. and U.K. from Their Delegates to the Conference on the Refugee Problem Held at Bermuda, undated, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 203, Section I.

4 Reams to Stettinius, October 8, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202, p. 3.

5 Ibid., p. 3.

Hull later summarized these objections to ransom negotiations with the enemy when he wrote:

The inescapable fact was, however, that Jews could not leave German-occupied Europe unless they escaped across borders into neutral Spain, Switzerland, or Sweden, or unless the German authorities permitted them to leave and the Germans permitted Jews to leave only when they were amply paid to do so. We were reluctant to deposit sums of money to the credit of the Nazis even though the deposits were to be made in Switzerland, were to be liquidated only after the end of the war, and apparently could not be used by the Nazi leaders. Moreover, the State Department did not have the large amounts of money and the personnel needed to carry out a plan of reaching and bribing the German officers in charge of the extermination program.\(^7\)

Even allowing that the expenses of the war were astronomical (by the spring of 1943, it was costing the United States more than $40,000,000 per day), the cost involved in transporting and maintaining what refugees might be ferreted out of Europe were, in the words of Assistant Secretary Long, "not so large . . . perhaps $2,000 to $5,000 per person per year."\(^8\) The Government was spending at least that, or more, in the care and feeding of prisoners of war.\(^9\)

But even allowing that the American Government did not have the funds to underwrite mammoth rescue operations, there were other sources available which were eager and willing to help the Jews in Europe. Apart


\(^9\)The War Department estimated it cost $1.49 daily to feed, clothe and guard POWs in the U.S., exclusive of costs involved in transporting them to this country or constructing camps for them. See Strong to Hull, February 10, 1943, State Department Records, 548.GI/110.
from the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Friends Services Committee, or the American Jewish Conference, all of which would have gladly supplied needed millions, the Danish Ambassador to the United States, Henrik de Kauffmann, wrote Hull in the fall of 1943, offering to support any measure the American Government might attempt on behalf of Danish refugees, particularly 8,500 Jewish refugees in Sweden. Wrote Kauffmann, "As far as financial responsibilities may be involved, I undertake the guaranty towards your government or any other government that may incur expenses in the effort to bring help to Danish Jews or other Danish nationals persecuted by the Nazis, to reimburse such expenses out of the Danish public funds under my control in this country." 10

Though Kauffmann had more than $20,000,000 credited to the Danish National Bank at his disposal at the time, the State Department suppressed the contents of his letter since, it was felt, publication "would work to the disadvantage of the Jews." 11

Officially, then, the Allies felt it would be unwise to involve themselves in ransom projects. But unofficially the British and Americans did negotiate, frequently and poorly, first with Nazi collaborators like King Boris in Bulgaria, Antonescu in Rumania, Laval in France, and eventually with the Nazi warlords themselves.

11 Ibid., p. 240.
The 170,000 Jews in France had been of some concern to the Allies since the collapse of the Third Republic in 1940. Until the invasion of North Africa, representatives of ORT, JDC, OSE, HICEM, and the American Friends continued to function in the unoccupied southern regions of France, continued to describe the horrors of detention camps and of Drancy, the deportation center for Jews from France. They told of mass suicides among Jews, of monthly fines of as much as 6,000,000 francs which were levied against the Jewish community, of the deportation of large numbers of Jews to slave camps in the East. They also told of thousands of Jewish refugee children from Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia, who were being loaded 60 to a cattle car, without adult supervision, without the most primitive sanitary facilities and sent to certain death in the death camps of Eastern Europe.12

On August 13, 1942, James McDonald, Paul Baerwald, and George Warren of the President's Advisory Committee pleaded with Welles to intervene with Vichy to halt the deportation of the rachitic and emaciated children.13 A month went by before Secretary Hull, reacting to

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13 Memorandum for the President's Advisory Committee, September 9, 1942, Wise Papers, Advisory Committee File, VI.
what he called "this revolting and fiendish persecution of children" cabled consuls in Marseilles, Lyons, and Nice to prepare visas for 1,000 children. Breckinridge Long also was touched by the plight of these young innocents as he noted in his diary, "The appeal for asylum is irresistible to any human instinct." But the Assistant Secretary added, "We cannot receive into our own midst all, or even a large fraction, of the oppressed."

Long and Welles tried to convince Roosevelt to limit the number of child immigrants (all of whom were to fall within the confines of their respective national quotas) to 1,000, but the President indicated that he favored the number of 5,000 recommended by his Advisory Committee. Any fewer might serve to embarrass the U.S., especially in view of the fact that Dominican Foreign Minister Arturo Despradel had announced the willingness of the Trujillo regime to accept 3,500 children. The President was also under heavy pressure from the National Coordinating Committee, HIAS, the Joint, and the Committee for the Care of European

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16 Ibid., p. 282.
18 Telephone Conversation of Taylor and Long, September 10, 1942, Long Papers, Refugee File, Container 202. See also Memorandum of President's Advisory Committee, September 9, 1942, Wise Papers, Advisory Committee File, VI.
Children, whose one effort to rescue British children in 1940 had been scuttled by government dilettantism, but which still packed a powerful punch in the form of its co-chairman Eleanor Roosevelt.

On November 7, 1942, the Portuguese liner Mouzinho left Baltimore, bound for Europe with doctors, nurses, and child care experts. In a matter of weeks, the volunteer relief organizations had collected $908,000 for the initial wave of one thousand children. One hour after the Mouzinho set sail, however, French Premier Laval cancelled the exit visas of the children.\(^{19}\) The official American view was that the Nazis had vetoed the scheme for Laval with an announcement through the German Transoceanic News Agency that "Vichy may not allow these children to leave unless inimical propaganda against France and Germany ceases in America."\(^{20}\) The United States certainly could not abide by such an instruction. Here supposedly was positive proof that the Nazis would not permit any rational negotiations, even through their underlings.

\(^{19}\) See Minutes of the National Refugee Service, December 9, 1942, Chamberlain Collection, YIVO, 3223.

\(^{20}\) "Chronicles," Contemporary Jewish Record, Vol. V (December, 1942), p. 634. Franco-American relations, never good in 1942, deteriorated rapidly in the fall. Roosevelt had withdrawn the American Ambassador when Laval once more became Premier, and had further outraged the collaborationist regime by issuing a congratulatory message to the Free French forces on Bastille Day. In it he expressed the hope that the people of France might soon enjoy the blessings of liberty, equality and fraternity. The American invasion of North Africa, coming less than 24 hours after Laval's precipitate action on the children was symptomatic of that deterioration.
As a result, only 32 of the projected 5,000 children ever made their way to the United States by the spring of 1943.21

Such an evaluation of the facts, however, may have been inaccurate. Abbe Glasberg, a Catholic priest active in the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants, recently told Morse that more enthusiasm, more visas, more money, could have saved the lives of all of the 60,000 Jewish children in France who were exterminated by the Nazis.22 While this estimate may have been overly optimistic, it is true that four months of precious time were lost before the United States finally got around to clearing the Mouzinho for passage. Six weeks before the vessel sailed for Europe, Roosevelt had already written the children off, telling Celler, "Unfortunately, we have to face the disagreeable fact that most of the damage has already been done."23 The sole palliative the President could offer distressed persons in this country was the news that for the time being the American Red Cross would be distributing free milk among needy children of all races and religions in unoccupied France.24

Negotiations with the Rumanians in 1943 were also hesitant and unfruitful. Apart from the major rescue operation to save 70,000 Trans-

21 Minutes of the Meeting of American Delegation, Sunday, April 25, 1943, Long Papers, Refugee File, Bermuda Folder, Container 203, p. 4. Some 45 children were still stranded in Spain at the time of this conference.

22 Morse, While Six Million Died, p. 70.

23 Roosevelt to Celler, October 21, 1942, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OF 3186.

24 Ibid.
Dnistrian Jews (considered above in chapter xi), another Rumanian enterprise was discussed by the British and Americans at Bermuda. This called for the transport of 4,500 Jewish children from Constanza to Palestine aboard two vessels chartered by the Allies. The British Government was willing to accept the children in Palestine under terms of the White Paper. The Antonescu regime was willing to usher them out of Rumania. Yet the scheme fell through, and Assistant Secretary Long blamed the Nazis. "The Germans got wind of it and stopped it," he told Congress in November. 25

What Long did not relate was that State Department procrastination over several months had delayed the project long enough to permit the Gestapo to intervene and veto the project. The American share of expenses was to be no more than $150,000. 26 The Bureau of the Budget had notified Assistant Secretary of State G. Howland Shaw that such monies could readily be obtained from the President's Emergency Fund (containing more than $500,000 in April, 1943). 27 And the State Department also misled the British for weeks, saying that funds necessary for the project would have to be allocated by Congress before any guarantees could be made. 28


26 Dodds to Long, April 22, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/46.

27 Bureau of Budget to Shaw, April 23, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/57.

28 Dodds to Hull, April 21, 1943, State Department Records, 548.Gl/46.
At the same time, Long, Reams and Brandt squelched a Swedish offer to negotiate with the Germans for the release of 20,000 Jewish children from the continent. Under this proposal, the children would have been detained in Sweden till the end of the war, with Great Britain and the United States sharing the costs of food, shelter, medicine and supervision. On May 19, 1943, the Foreign Office cabled its acceptance of this scheme and awaited American confirmation. It was not forthcoming. Long and his associates in the European Division sat on the proposal for six months, arguing that while Jewish philanthropists were prepared to underwrite the full cost of the operation, it was wrong to limit the plan to Jewish children alone. The State Department, invoking an old rationalization, added that singling out the Jews for special treatment might well boomerang against this oppressed people, as the Nazis might only intensify their persecution. When the British suggested broadening the rescue operation to include Norwegian children as well, the Americans finally agreed. By that time, however, it was December, 1943, more precious time had been lost, and neither the Swedes nor the Germans expressed much interest in the scheme anymore. 29

29 For a complete resume of this incident, see Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 66-67.
One man who grew increasingly horrified by the indifference of the State Department was Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. A longtime associate of the President, who jokingly commented that Morgenthau was trying to over-compensate for the militantly anti-Zionist attitudes of his father, Morgenthau was privy to all refugee negotiations in 1942 and 1943. He knew that the official State Department line ruling out the possibility of direct talks with the Nazis was constantly violated. Since October, 1943, the Allies had maintained a regular exchange of civilian internees, merchant seamen, medical personnel, disabled prisoners, and sisters of the German Red Cross with the Axis. Morgenthau knew also that the State Department made no special effort to honor Breckinridge Long’s pledge of $4,000,000 aid to the International Red Cross for relief purposes. Morgenthau knew of the negotiations for the Jewish children in France, the Jewish children in Rumania, the Jewish children in Poland (bound for Sweden), had issued the necessary licenses for funds in each of these cases, and was inevitably frustrated when these rescue schemes went awry due to

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30 Between October, 1943, and January, 1945, no fewer than ten such exchanges took place, at Gothenburg, Barcelona, Oran, and Kreuzlingen. All told, more than 15,000 Germans were returned in these operations. Obviously the thinking of American Jews was that these persons could have been exchanged for concentration camp inmates as well. See Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross, pp. 378-82.

31 Although the Assistant Secretary made this pledge in November, 1943, almost a year later it still had not been honored and the IRC was complaining that its operations had been slowed up for months by the reluctance of the Allied governments to approve concrete relief proposals. The Conference Record, Vol. 1 (August 4, 1944), #13, p.5.
State Department fumbling. When Cordell Hull informed him that the British had vetoed the long-delayed proposal for the rescue of the Trans-Dniestrian Jews on December 20, the Treasury Secretary had had enough.

On January 16, 1944, Morgenthau, accompanied by the Treasury's General Counsel Randolph Paul and Foreign Funds Division Chief John Pehle, tramped over to the White House to protest State Department inaction. Morgenthau presented the President with an eighteen page memorandum entitled "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews." The product of the labors of Paul, Pehle, and Josiah Dubois Jr., this report charged that unnamed State Department officials had: (1) "utterly failed to prevent the extermination of Jews in German-controlled Europe"; (2) "hidden their gross procrastination behind such window dressing as intergovernmental organizations to survey the whole refugee problem"; and (3) "suppressed reports to the State Department on German atrocities after publication of similar reports had intensified public pressure for action." In demanding immediate action on behalf of the Jews, the report charged:

There is a growing number of responsible people and organizations today who have ceased to view our failure as the product of simple incompetence on the part of those officials in the State Department charged with handling this problem. They see plain anti-Semitism motivating the actions of these State Department officials and, rightly or wrongly, it will require little more in the way of proof for their suspicion to explode into a nasty scandal.  


33Morse, p. 91. Morse includes the complete report, which, he maintains, was obtained from a private, unnamed source. See Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 88-91.
Roosevelt must have been stung by criticism that his administration was actually using its machinery to prevent the rescue of Jews. The President could argue that much had been done, specifically at his instance, to aid refugees of all faiths. Apart from Evian or Bermuda, there was the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, chartered in November, 1942, under Governor Lehman, a Jew. There was the Foreign Economic Administration, again chaired by Lehman, which in September, 1943, had absorbed the Offices of Lend-Lease, OFRRO, Economic Warfare and Foreign Economic Coordination. There was FEA’s successor, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, again the direct product of Roosevelt’s thinking, again with-Lehman as Director-General, which was chartered in November, 1943, with the express purpose “to plan, coordinate, administer, or arrange for the administration of measures for the relief of victims of war in any area under the control of the United Nations, through the provision of food, fuel, clothing, shelter, and other basic necessities, medical and other essential services.”

Like so many other steps that Roosevelt took in the area of human planning, those actions were neither concerted, popular, nor particularly effective. Rather, they were tardy, visceral reactions to spontaneous crises, Topsy-like decisions which could not compensate for the Government’s lack of foresight. Since the middle of 1941, even before America’s

entry into the war, the British had pressed for the establishment of a joint board between the Allies, empowered to handle problems of economics and relief. OFRRO was not born until the end of 1942, and even then, the idea of extending relief to refugees while some in this country still went hungry was heavily criticized by Claire Hoffman, Arthur Vandenberg and Tom Connally in Congress, and "Cissy" Patterson's *Washington Times-Herald* which lambasted "world planning, WPA-ing, and World Spending of U.S. Money."35

OFRRO Director Lehman, never popular with Hull, who was given no prior notification of the appointment, did not receive clarification of his duties from the State Department till March, 1943, five months after Roosevelt dropped his announcement about the creation of a purely American relief agency among comments about problems in South and Central America. Lehman fought "the Battle of the Potomac," the battle for priorities among the War Department, Office of Lend Lease, State Department, Shipping Adjustment Board, Food Board, etc., and lost. He went to plead with Admiral William D. Leahy, Roosevelt's chief military adviser, and was told:

> Now look here, young man, I want you to know just one thing. I've no doubt you need the supplies, and I'm very sorry that people are suffering. But I'm here to look after the Army, and I'm going to see that the Army gets everything they want. No use your coming and arguing with me any more, because that's my position, and I'm going to stick to it.36


36 Ibid., p. 226.
Lehman continued to labor in vain for another six months, hampered by a lack of supplies for the few miserable refugee camps which were set up in North Africa, subordinate to the demands of the military (who, he grumbled, oversubscribed everything for their own use), committed to the official view that trans-blockade feeding was impossible, and undermined by Hull's favorite, Dean Acheson, who continued to work toward an international body to supplant OFRRO. It was, therefore, no great surprise when the totally inadequate OFRRO gave way to FEA in September, 1943, still less a surprise when this organization demonstrated a greater zeal for pre-emptive purchases of the world's supply of tungsten, corundum, cinchona bark, rubber, chromium, ball bearings, and nickle, than the saving of human lives. 37

But it was the much-ballyhooed UNRRA, with 44 adherents, representing 80% of the human race, by Roosevelt's calculations, 38 that raised the most doubt about the effectiveness of government relief measures for refugees in 1943-44. Like the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees, whose work it was not to duplicate, but which it could not help but duplicate, 39 UNRRA was to have authority to deal only with "displaced persons" (a new euphemism coined to describe the 21 million Europeans who had been uprooted and enslaved by the Nazis),

38 Ibid., p. 505.
but only in "liberated areas." Once more, there was to be no attempt at negotiations with either the Nazis or their lackeys, no attempt to rescue DPS in concentration camps. In fact, in the areas which were liberated, UNRRA's charter provided that the cost of caring for the victims of Nazi oppression was to be borne by the enemy itself, however this might have been accomplished before the war was won. 40

Once more, ultimate victory was the principle which determined all UNRRA policy. From the very beginning, those officials at Supreme Allied Command Headquarters in London charged with planning the invasion of Europe were committed to the view that the Nazis would use refugees as a shield, much as they had done in 1940, to disrupt Allied lines with masses of terrified civilians or to infiltrate saboteurs. 41 In such an instance, UNRRA officials would have to be extra-meticulous, extra-hesitant in extending aid even to those persons who fled to the Allied lines. According to the United Kingdom's John Llewelin, "We have unanimously decided that war needs come first and that it would be wrong to do anything to impede the quickest liberation of all countries overrun by the Axis." 42

Like the IGCR, UNRRA did not envision any mass movement of refugees during or after the war. 43 Like the IGCR, UNRRA could not

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41 Proudfoot, European Refugees, p. 107.
43 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 469.
foresee the outbursts of anti-Semitism in Central and Eastern Europe, the many pogroms and individual assaults on Jews from Kielce to Frankfurt, after the war was over. Like the IGCR, UNRRA was committed to the return of displaced persons to their lands of birth, regardless of the traumatic effect that such a return might have.

Far from complimenting the work of the IGCR, UNRRA actively competed with Emerson's Committee for available funds and material resources. In 1944, the United States authorized $1,000,000 for the IGCR and $2,150,000 for UNRRA. But UNRRA did not receive a cent of its Congressionally-approved credit till March 28, 1944. Since the United States contributed 82.36% of UNRRA's funds between 1944 and 1947, it is fair to say that the international relief organization was still inoperative five months after its charter had been signed at the White House. Great Britain, which operated its own Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration (for Gentiles only) from July, 1942, did not merge MERRA with UNRRA until April, 1944. Even then UNRRA was hard-pressed to claim any accomplishments until the spring of 1945 when the European war was all but won. Lehman noted the hapless

44 Hull to Roosevelt, January 15, 1944, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OF 3186.
condition of the body when he wrote in his diary on December 3, 1944, that unless something spectacular were done to help the refugees, "UNRRA is going to suffer very greatly in prestige." 48

Thus, while Roosevelt tried to content himself in January, 1944, that he had done everything possible to help the refugees through the establishment of a legion of anagrammatic agencies; he could not take pride in the results. In reality, by this time, those elements which had consistently clamored for a more vigorous refugee policy through 1943 were already consolidating their forces to establish an extra-governmental commission to aid the Jews in Europe. 49 With the initiative slipping

48 Nevins, Herbert Lehman and His Era, p. 256. Apart from encountering difficulty in Washington in securing supplies for OFRRO and later UNRRA, Lehman was frustrated further by his relative impotence before military authority in North Africa in 1943 and was not pleased by the token relief extended to refugees in that region. Subsequently, he also encountered severe difficulties with SHAEP's Refugee and Displaced Persons Section which extended priorities to twenty million internally displaced Europeans as the Allies pushed across France in 1944. Until the Allies broke the German line at the Rhine in 1945 Lehman had to content himself with anxious tours of inadequate detention camps in France and the Lowlands. Ibid., pp. 230-60 and Proudfoot, European Refugees, pp. 110-115.

49 During the first days of February, Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy announced the formation of the National Committee against Nazi Persecution and Extermination of the Jews. The purpose of this committee, which had been organizing since December, 1943, was to rally public opinion to prompt sustained action by the United Nations to rescue those Jews still alive in Europe. Enrolled in what Murphy termed "a test of civilization" were Henry Wallace, Willkie, Gov. Leverott Saltenstall of Massachusetts, Gov. Walter Goodland of Wisconsin, Gov. Herbert Maw of Utah, Gifford Pinchot, Henry St. George Tucker, Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church and President of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, Bishop Bernard Shiel of Chicago, Eric Johnston, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, President of the Union Theological Seminary. See "America Speaks," Jewish Comment, Vol. XI (February 11, 1944, pp. 1-2.
from him, extremely sensitive to the spectre of anti-Semitism in his Government, Roosevelt responded to Morgenthau's memorandum by violating another of his sacred precepts of government—that barring duplication of agencies. By Executive Order 9417, issued on January 21, 1944, he authorized the establishment of yet another commission empowered to deal with refugee problems—the War Refugee Board.

Hull insisted that if the President went through with his plans for such a commission, "I want this out of the State Department. I want it outside." The Secretary had his wish fulfilled, as responsibility for saving the victims of Hitlerism was now transferred to a board consisting of the Secretaries of Treasury, War and State, along with an Executive Director appointed by the President. Roosevelt originally wanted some well-known personality to fill the last position and Morgenthau suggested the name of Wendell Willkie. However, the likeable and cooperative Republican was dismissed in an early planning conference as someone who already had had a sufficiently big public buildup. Because the Secretaries could not agree upon any prominent figure, the manifold tasks of the War Refugee Board fell to Acting Director John Pehle. No more fortunate choice could have been made.

51 Ibid., p. 63.
What Pehle lacked in charisma, he made up in vigor and sincerity. A deceptively quiet, compassionate man, Pehle had gone directly from Yale Law School to the Treasury Department in 1934. A brilliant and dedicated worker, he consistently demonstrated a deep interest in the plight of the refugees while administering the Department's Foreign Funds Division. Now, as Director of the WRB, he was in a position to make good the basic instruction of the Board "to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."\(^{52}\)

At first glance, that statement might be interpreted as little more than a repetition of the mandates of the IGCR and UNRRA. The instructions that Pehle was to consult with other agencies of the government for information relative to supplies and shipping, that he was to accept financial aid from all interested volunteer relief agencies, that he was to report and make recommendations to the members of the Board and the President, all might be read as duplicates of the principles of the Intergovernmental Committee and UNRRA. Beyond this, however, Pehle was exempted from the provisions of the Trading with the Enemy Act, was empowered to appoint special attaches, with diplomatic status, to go wherever assistance to refugees might be rendered, to negotiate

\(^{52}\)U.S., Congressional Record. 78th Cong. 2d Sess., 1944, SC, Pt. 1, 703-704.
with any foreign power for the rescue of these people.

Pehle set to work by assigning a number of able assistants to vital posts in Europe and the Middle East. Department store executive Ira Hirschmann, a man who had served as the financial guarantor of hundreds of Austrian Jews during the pre-war period, and who would subsequently become chief of the State Department's Refugee Division, was assigned to Turkey, just as Peter Bergson had suggested six months previously.\(^53\) Dr. Robert C. Dexter of the Unitarian Services Committee was sent to Lisbon, Ivor C. Olsen to Stockholm, Leonard Ackermann to Egypt, and Roswell McClelland, a 30-year-old Quaker from the American-Friends-Services Committee, to Switzerland.\(^54\)

These WRB operatives readily merged their activities with those of Joint Distribution Committee representatives like retired lace manufacturer Saly Mayer in St. Gall, Switzerland, the unassuming economist Moses Amzalak in Lisbon, the Kadoorie brothers in China, and Joseph J. Schwartz, the Russian-born Rabbi who had served as Director General of the JDC since 1942.\(^55\) It is no coincidence that

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of $20,000,000 spent by the War Refugee Board in its brief existence, more than $16,000,000 came from the Joint and associated Jewish groups in the United States. 56

Because of the energy and capability of his professionals, Pehle could report to Morgenthau five weeks after his appointment that:

(1) The Balkan bottleneck has been broken. Because of American guarantees of maintenance made to the Turkish Government, rail transports carrying 150 children every ten days were crossing through Bulgaria and Turkey bound for Palestine. Within 24 hours after Hirschmann learned that Rumania would permit 1,000 Jews to leave Constanza if the Allies supplied the necessary vessels, Hirschmann punctured the myth of a shipping shortage by obtaining the necessary commitments from Myron Black, Field Director of the War Shipping Administration and Admiral Land of the Mediterranean Fleet Command.

(2) The Spanish-North African bottleneck had also been broken. As in the case of Turkey, the French Government had been persuaded to keep its borders open to transient refugees passing through to Camp Marochal Lyautey near Casablanca.

(3) Neutral intermediaries, including the Vatican, had been drawn in to refugee work to press Nazi puppets in Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, and Slovakia to refrain from deporting Jews. The International

56 Morse presents an excellent study of the War Refugee Board in While Six Million Died, pp. 313-85. Proudfoot, European Refugees, pp. 64-65, and Wlschnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, pp. 228-55, also discuss the WRB in detail.
Red Cross was cooperating with the Board in bringing persons from Poland and Slovakia, where they faced certain death, to places of relative safety like Hungary and Rumania, or to Switzerland.

(4) At the same time, the WRB was successful in getting the Office of War Information to step up its propaganda to Germany and satellite countries, emphasizing the pending retribution that the Allies would seek for the heinous crime of genocide. 57

The most important contribution of the War Refugee Board, however, was one which could not adequately be expressed in the formal language of diplomatic reports. It was the hope that this organization gave to the unfortunates in Europe. Ira Hirschmann told how all of the refugees coming through Turkey knew of the President's order creating a war refugee board, and that a representative of that commission was in Turkey to aid them. "Some of it was embarrassing to me," he wrote Isador Lubin in the spring of 1944, "as they tried to thank me, and I was only a privileged instrument of the President's Board. Apparently it has become a symbol for salvation to these lost people." For Hirschmann, the time was "five minutes to twelve . . . the witches' sabbath that spells doom for European Jewry," but the Jews in Europe could not see that. For people who, in Hirschmann's words, had become "so demoralized and desperate that they stopped trying for themselves," the WRB offered "a new hope to fight on for themselves." 58

57 Pehle to Morgenthau, March 6, 1944, Roosevelt Library, Refugee Folder, 1944, Box 58.

58 Hirschmann to Lubin, April 20, 1944, American Jewish Archives, Political Refugee File, File 700.
This jubilation of the refugees was matched by their brethren in the United States. The Roosevelt files literally are packed with congratulatory messages from twenty-five Jewish organizations, claiming to represent nearly one million members, all of them exulting in the President's message of January 22, which established the War Refugee Board. Like the enthusiasm of the refugees, however, such rejoicing was premature. 59

From the start, the Board was harassed by the State Department whose attitude was basically unhelpful. Supposed disparagements flew through Washington that the principal figures on the Board's staff, including Pehle, Dubois, McClelland and others without a trace of Hebrew lineage, were, in fact, Jews. Once, Mrs. Ruth Shipley, head of the State Department's Passport Division, called Pehle to inquire if the Board employed any "Americans," because it cables "just aren't worded like our cables." 60 When the Board attempted to have the International Red Cross upgrade the status of Jews in concentration camps from that of persons in protective custody to that of internees in order to gain equal treatment with citizens of belligerent nations in the distribution of Red Cross parcels, the State Department vetoed the idea, implying once more that such supplies might be confiscated by the Nazis. 61 And when

59 See Refugee Folder, 1944, Roosevelt Library, Box 58, PSF.
60 Morse, While Six Million Died, p. 324.
61 Ibid., p. 325.
public pressure in the United States to force the British to extend the cutoff date of Jewish immigration to Palestine beyond May, 1944, began to mount, the State Department, which had consistently regarded Palestine as primarily an internal question for the British Empire, welcomed the statement of Secretary of War Stimson to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, delivered on March 17, 1944, which read: "Without reference to the merits of these resolutions, further action on them at this time would be prejudicial to the successful prosecution of the War."63

Sol Bloom's committee heeded this stern advice and promptly tabled the Palestine resolutions. Official Jewish immigration to the Holy Land was to be halted that spring despite the fact that there were still more than 22,000 visas available under the original terms of the White Paper.64 Though the State Department continued to affirm that the Palestine and refugee questions were unrelated, the closing of Palestine to Jewish refugees could not fail but have repercussions on the total refugee picture.

62 The Committee was conducting hearings on the merits of several resolutions calling for "the free entry of Jews into Palestine" and the reconstitution of Palestine as "a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth."


The Latin American states once more were demonstrating their traditional indifference to the fate of the European Jews, refusing or cancelling visas even when deportation and certain death awaited refugees applying for or possessing such papers. This made Palestine all the more crucial to the operations of the War Refugee Board. Lacking that haven, the Board would be increasingly hard-pressed to convince Turkish authorities to keep their borders open to Jews who had no place to go. In turn, this would create a backup of refugees, not only in the Balkans, where there were ominous rumblings of plans for massive deportations under S.S. Colonel Eichmann, but also in North Africa which depended upon Palestine to siphon off its Jewish refugees, in Italy where 1800 arrivals from Yugoslavia each week were glutting existing UNRRA facilities, and in Spain where the WRB was having enough difficulty trying to convince U.S. Ambassador Carleton Hayes of the urgency of the situation.

Groping desperately for some stopgap solution, Pehle latched on to an amazing scheme, first suggested by the American Jewish

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65 Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 343-7.
66 Pehle complained to Hull, "Not only has Ambassador Hayes refused to ask the Spanish government to cooperate in implementing the President's policy with respect to refugees; he has even refused to explain the President's policy on the subject to the government, although requested to do so by the Board and the State Department." Representative Celler was even more blunt. He accused Hayes, a man who worried about German agents slipping into Spain in the guise of refugees, of "cruel recalcitrance" and argued that thousands could have been saved, but for his inaction. Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 333-34.
Conference in September, 1943. This "free port" proposal called for adapting to human beings the practice of letting merchandise lie duty free in certain ports while awaiting transshipment. The new "human cargo" would be permitted to enter the United States without complying with the formalities of American immigration laws. Nativist sensitivities would not be offended, however, since such "cargo" would be destined for the duration to abandoned army posts along the eastern seaboard or in those camps recently vacated by the Japanese out west. At the end of the war, if possible, they would be repatriated to their native lands.67

This scheme fired the imagination of several Representatives on Capitol Hill, and no fewer than twelve bills were introduced in the winter of 1943-44 calling for the establishment of free ports in this country.68 Pehle's associate, Josiah Dubois argued that this was the least the U.S. could do, unless it wanted to supply Hitler with an excuse for exterminating the Jews by failing to give them shelter. Pehle also found Under-Secretary of State Stettinius receptive to the plan. As a result, he laid a proposal calling for free ports before Hull, Morgenthau and Stimson on May 8, 1944.69

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67. The Conference Record, Col. IX (April, 1944), p. 3.

68. Twelve bills were introduced, but no action was taken on any of these measures. All of them died in committee. See Edward J. Shaughnessy, "Immigration and Naturalization Legislation in the 78th Congress," Monthly Review of the Department of Immigration and Naturalization, Vol. II (July, 1944), p. 12.

69. Morse, While Six Million Died, pp. 340-41.
The Secretaries agreed that something had to be done to relieve the congestion of refugees in liberated zones. But now the principal objection to bringing these people to the U.S. was not that the nation might be flooded with potential saboteurs. Rather, the Secretaries were troubled by the reaction of the American people and Congress to this obvious flouting of immigration laws. When Attorney General Biddle guaranteed the constitutionality of such a scheme and emphasized its temporary nature, the Executive Board of the WRB put its reluctant stamp of approval on the creation of free ports. Stimson cautioned, however, against "inundation by foreign racial stock out of proportion to what exists here." 70

Roosevelt discussed the matter with Pehle and the Secretaries on the 18th of May, but did not give his assent till the 1st of June. Then, he directed Morgenthau to locate an appropriate camp within 24 hours. Finally, on June 9, the President announced that he had instructed Robert Murphy in Algiers to arrange for the shipment of a number of "mixed European refugees" to Camp Ontario at Oswego, New York. Ultimately, perhaps as many as 2,000 persons might be accommodated in the eighty acres of converted campground and barracks in the richly historical north woods of upper New York State. 71


Public response to this announcement was overwhelmingly favorable, even in Congress, when Roosevelt submitted his plan for approval three days later. William Green of the A.F. of L., Vito Marcantonio, Lessing Rosewald, David Dubinsky and the Jewish Labor Committee of New York, Ben Hecht and Peter Bergson, the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Jewish Conference, the New York Times, New York Herald-Tribune, Washington Post, and Washington Evening Star all came out in support of the scheme. Letters praising the idea poured into the White House. Even those persons most affected by this threatened "inundation," the residents of upper New York State, rallied to the defense of the refugees. The Association of New York State Canners in Rochester wired the War Refugee Board, offering to employ all of the immigrants in food processing plants. And Harry Mizon, Chairman of a special Fort Ontario Citizens

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72 See Jewish Immigration File, American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College, File 700. The most curious opposition to the proposal came from the American Federation of Polish Jews, which mimeographed letters to leading Senators outlining its views. Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum indicated that his group felt the establishment of such camps would be detrimental to the concept of Palestine as a Jewish national home where Jews would enjoy complete freedom. Internment of Jews in camps where their personal freedom was restricted would not only be a violation of traditional American principles, he argued, but also would "be a serious violation of the Jewish national conception." See letter of American Federation of Polish Jews to Senator Wagner, September 1, 1944, Wagner Papers, Palestine File, 1927-49, A-8. A year later, the Federation had changed its position somewhat, continuing to affirm that Palestine was the chief hope for European Jewry, but demanding that the U.S. open its doors to more displaced persons. See Joseph Tenenbaum's Let My People In (New York: American Federation of Polish Jews, 1946), p. 9.

73 New York State Canners to Roosevelt, June 10, 1944, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OF 3186.
Committee, wrote the President to say:

I wish to extend to your Excellency our thanks for your selection of Port Ontario for this humanitarian objective, and to assure you of the deep appreciation of Oswegonians, and of our willingness at all times to cooperate with our government in the vast problems which confront it. 74

This much-heralded move, like so many of Roosevelt's intermittent gestures on behalf of refugees since 1938, turned out to be more propaganda than prodigy. What had been anticipated as the beginning of a mass transfer of the unfortunates was actually the end. A mere 984 refugees, most of them Jews, representing 18 nationalities, were selected out of 36,000 persons in Italian detention camps to come to this country. They were well-behaved, their children did well in American schools, and they showed every sign of being good material for citizenship. The Oswego newspapers, citizens groups, and teachers all testified to their excellent adjustment despite the trying circumstances of their transfer to this country. 75

From the start, however, Roosevelt was committed to "keeping faith with Congress." Repeatedly, through the summer of 1944, and as late as January, 1945, he confirmed that these refugees "ought definitely

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74 Fort Ontario Citizens Committee to Roosevelt, June 22, 1944, Roosevelt Library, Political Refugees File, OF 3186.

to go back as soon as we find places for them to go in physical
safety."76 As far as Attorney General Francis Biddle was concerned,
the 984 had never legally been "in" the U.S., so there was no question
about returning them to Europe at war's end.77

The first of the Oswego refugees did not arrive until August,
1944. They were also the last. By that time, apparently, the Presi-
dent no longer considered the need for free ports especially pressing.
At a time when the U.S. was transporting 200,000 Axis POWs back to
this side of the Atlantic annually, and Lehman's UNRRA organization was
proving incapable of handling the refugee problem in Europe, Roosevelt
wrote a lady constituent in Albany, "We do not need any more free ports
at the present time because of the physical problems of transportation,
and we are taking care of thousands of others in North Africa and
Italy."78

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77 Allen Froehling, "The American Jewish Community's Reaction
to the Fluctuating Immigration Policy of the U.S. Congress," (unpub-
lished Rabbinical thesis, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1967),
p. 68. Ultimately, the 984 were permitted to stay in the U.S. and to apply
for citizenship under a special directive issued by Harry Truman on Decem-
ber 22, 1945. A legal fiction was applied, whereby the group voluntarily
departed for Canada, then re-entered the U.S. with full immigration status.
The organization chiefly responsible for sparing these few fortunes de-
portation was HIAS. See "Current and Postwar Immigration Problems,

78 Roosevelt to Mrs. Mary Hun, August 14, 1944, Roosevelt
Library, Political Refugee File, OF 3186.
Roosevelt called off the free port projects at the very moment that 500,000 Hungarian Jews most needed help. In May, the American Jewish Conference disclosed that Jews in Hungary were being herded into segregated quarters of towns (ghettos), where they were most exposed to air raids. By mid-June, the Conference had formally protested a decision of the Horthy regime to place Jewish manpower at the disposal of the German Reich, an agreement which in essence meant the deportation of Jews to concentration camps in Poland/Germany. 79

As the summer of 1944 drew on, Jewish appeals to the American Government became more frenzied. On the afternoon of July 31, 60,000 persons flocked to Madison Square in New York City to protest the shipment of 12,000 Jews daily from Hungary to their deaths in Poland. 80 About the same time, Johan Smortenko, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People of Europe appealed to Roosevelt to have the Allies blow up railroad lines carrying the Jews to their death, or to bomb the crematoria in the concentration camps and thereby give the inmates an opportunity to attempt mass escapes, or to threaten the use of poison gas against German civilian populations unless the killings ceased. 81


81 Smortenko to Roosevelt, July 24 and August 3, 1944, American Jewish Archives, Jewish Immigration File, File 700.
Roosevelt was hardly oblivious to developments in Hungary. Along with his Presidential rival, Thomas Dewey, the President issued a note of sympathy to the groups protesting this new massacre. The serenity with which the President conducted himself through this period, first approving havens for escaping Jews, then cancelling the order, then issuing condolences to those persons directly involved in the holocaust, is all the more interesting in view of the fact that Pehle had kept the President well-informed about developments in Hungary. On the 5th of June, the WRB's Director wrote FDR, "We are reliably informed that negotiations already are being concluded for deportation to Poland of 300,000 Jews." A month later, Pehle reported that Horthy would be amenable to halting the deportation of all Jewish children under the age of ten, provided sufficient guarantees for their removal and maintenance could be secured through the Red Cross. This last offer was quite similar to the tantalizer made by Eichmann to Joel Brand, a spokesman of the Hungarian Jewish community, earlier that Spring, and its fate was identical as well.

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82. The Conference Record (September, 1944), Vol. I, p. 33.
83. Ibid., p. 33.
84. Originally Eichmann offered Brand 100,000 Jews in exchange for trucks and other war material. Subsequently, he altered the demand, asking for soap, coffee, cocoa, tea and money. Brand was released to seek the approval of the Allies. Unfortunately, his travels took him to British lines and the frustrated intermediary was detained in Cairo by officials who would not countenance another wave of Jews in the Middle East. See Alex Weissberg, Desperate Mission: Joel Brand's Story (New York: Grove Press, 1958).
Late in 1944, Saly Mayer of the Joint Distribution Committee showed Eichmann's assistant Kurt Bocher a telegram from Hull, authorizing the transfer of $5,000,000 to rescue the Hungarian Jews. As usual, the State Department, which no longer pleaded inadequate funds or the immorality of ransom, had acted too late. Hull had known of Eichmann's initial offer to Brand since May, but instead of negotiating with the German in terms of cash, the Secretary permitted the Russians to review the proposal, originally calling for the exchange of military equipment to be used on the Eastern Front. Quite obviously, the Russians wanted no part of such a scheme and vetoed it. This kind of diplomatic boondoggling cost the Jews another six months, during which time Roosevelt tried to soothe Rabbi Wise with the comment, "We are trying to do something about it." By the time something was done, that is, by the time Mayer presented the bribe to Becher, more than 150,000 Hungarian Jews had been exterminated.

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87 Roosevelt to Wise, October 25, 1944, Wise Papers, Roosevelt File, File XI.A.7. Wise again demonstrated his timidity when he wrote David Niles about the struggle to save the Jews of Hungary. "I haven't troubled you with the details of the fight, which has been as nasty as it can be," he wrote. Wise to Niles, January 8, 1945, Wise Papers, Presidential Advisers File, XI.A.7.
According to Secretary Morgenthau, "The War Refugee Board made an impressive record in spite of tremendous difficulties." This statement is indisputable. The Board was instrumental in getting thousands of Jews out of the Balkans in 1944 and 1945, did impede somewhat the flow of Jews from this region to the death camps through warnings to petty tyrants like Antonescu and King Boris. Its operatives ferried refugees across the Baltic to asylum in Sweden. It smuggled funds into France to sustain Jews in hiding there, subsidized those in camps in North Africa, Italy and the U.S., secured passports for many in Switzerland to travel to South America. Despite the oft-expressed phobia of contamination through dealings with the Nazis, the Board did deal with high-ranking Germans, among them Himmler, and was helpful in detouring a few death trains from their destinations late in the war.

The final report of the WRB, contradicting virtually everything that Hull had said, or was to say, about the feasibility of negotiating with the Germans, stated that the Board had "purchased" 50,000 Jewish lives from the Nazis before the European War ended in May, 1945.

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89 There is some dispute as to whether the WRB was responsible for the rescue of 22,000 concentration camp inmates, including Danes, Norwegians, Belgians, Poles, Frenchmen, and Jews between February 19 and May 5, 1945. Proudfoot points out that the credit actually should go to Count Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross, who had four special meetings with Himmler during this period and who secured the release of prisoners from Ravensbruck, Dachau, Matthausen, and Theresienstadt more as a token gesture on Himmler's part to defray war criminal proceedings than anything else. Proudfoot, European Refugees, pp. 308-309.

Thereafter, however, the Allies did little to distinguish themselves by their actions toward the Jews who did survive the holocaust. Six million of their brethren were dead, fully 90% of a European culture that had grown up over two thousand years. Few of those had ever heard of Evian or Rublee, Wagner or Houghteling, Bermuda or Ibn Saud, Pehle or Breckinridge Long. For the saving remnant, the fact that they were Jewish and had been the special target of the Nazis, would mean no new-found liberties once the war was over. Those same persons actually found themselves the victims of Allied discrimination because of their very Jewishness.

UNRRA's mandate extended only to persons displaced from states which were members of the United Nations or former enemy nationals who faced possible persecution if they remained in their homelands. Under these guidelines, UNRRA aid was extended to Volksdeutsch Germans, Germans of the Polish Corridor and East Prussia, who had been dispossessed as a result of Poland's boundary shift westward, and to Ukrainian POWs, many of whom had served in the S.S. Nachtigall Division in Russia (a brigade which specialized in the extermination of Jews), while many Jews were denied assistance because technically they could not qualify as "allied nationals," nor were they regarded as enemy persons in danger of persecution. 91

91 The Allies welcomed 180,000 ethnic Germans, Balts, and Ukrainians who refused repatriation to their Bolshevik-dominated homelands by 1946. Proudfoot, European Refugees, p. 277.
Months after VE-Day, Jewish DPs were still living under guard behind barbed wire in some of the most notorious concentration camps of Germany, Austria and Poland. The sight of these people still wearing the striped pajama uniforms issued by the Nazis to concentration camp inmates, festering in idleness, disease and starvation so outraged Earl Harrison, President Truman's special delegate to the camps in the summer of 1945, that Harrison, assisted by Joseph Schwartz of the Joint Distribution Committee and Herbert Katzski of the War Refugee Board, issued a scathing denunciation of UNRRA efforts in August, 1945. Said the one-time Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, "As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them, except that we do not exterminate them. Beyond knowing that they are no longer in danger of gas chambers, torture, and other forms of violent death, they see—and there is—little change." 92

Truman received this report on August 1, but it was not until September 30, 1945, that he instructed General Eisenhower (who himself had seen a summary of the Harrison report as early as the 3rd of August) to make some sort of special accommodation for the Jews. As a result, twelve separate detention camps for Jews, supervised by the Joint, ORT, the Jewish Agency, HIAS, and other interested relief groups were established in the fall of 1945. 93 These proved incapable of handling the


93 Proudfoot, European Refugees, p. 344.
hundreds of Jews who fled westward from the death camps and postwar pogroms of Poland.

To handle the postwar exodus, Truman called on the British to admit 100,000 Jews to Palestine. This was exactly what the British did not want. On December 5, 1945, the British, treating the flight of Jews from Polish pogromschiks as a well-financed Zionist plot to relax restrictions on immigration to Palestine, prohibited further movement of Jews into or through their zone via Berlin, and subsequently ruled that those persons who did infiltrate would not be admitted to displaced persons centers, but be required to live with the civilian German population without any special assistance from the Allied authorities.

Meanwhile, Truman tried to help the refugees by ordering the Secretary of State to expedite emigration proceedings for DPs in Germany and by getting UNRRA to create a special classification for the Jews, that of "internal displacees," whereby all European Jews might qualify for international assistance. American policy in Europe, however, remained somewhat ambivalent. While the British subsequently mellowed and permitted assistance to Jews who had agreed to repatriation and found life in their homelands unbearable, American policy was

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94 Manchester Guardian, October 16, 1945, p. 18.
95 Proudfoot, European Refugees, p. 355.
to deny assistance to any individual who had agreed to return to Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and then decided to emigrate from Europe.\(^8\)

When Congress passed the Stratton Displaced Persons Bill in 1947, special priority was given not to Jews, but to refugees from the Baltic regions east of the Curzon Line. Fully 40% of the total number of 400,000 visas were to go to persons from this region, without regard to pre-war or wartime sympathies. Another 30% were to go to "agriculturists." Quite obviously, the Cold War had intervened to the advantage of substantial numbers of onetime Nazi supporters.\(^9\)

As for the Jews, the Stratton Act stated that only those persons for whom UNRRA camps had records as of December 22, 1945, were eligible for admission to the United States. But it was not until December 23, that Truman made his special appeal to the State Department on behalf of the Jewish refugees. It was not until that month that UNRRA even formally extended its coverage to all Jews. It was in that month that the British tried to cut off Jewish emigration through their zone. In December, 1945, only 18,000 of the 700,000 persons in UNRRA camps in Germany and Austria were Jews.\(^{100}\) Nine months later, however, on


\(^{9}\)For "humanitarian reasons," 8,000 Ukrainians and 15,000 German POWs were permitted to remain in the British Isles rather than return to Russian-dominated regions at the end of the war. For similar reasons, 54,000 Volksdeutsch Germans, the source of Hitler's provocations against Poland in 1939, were ultimately admitted to the United States under amended immigration laws between 1950 and 1952. Richard Robbins, "The Refugee Status: Challenge and Response," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. XXI (1956), p. 318.

the heels of the Kielce pogrom in Poland, that number had swelled to more than 130,000.\textsuperscript{101} These arrived too late to profit from America's modification of its immigration laws and only 2,499 of the 220,000 persons admitted to the United States under the Stratton Immigration Law were Jews.\textsuperscript{102} Victims of hypocrisy in 1938 and through the war years, the Jews were to be ignored even in time of peace,\textsuperscript{103} and this at a time when the sufferings of the Jewish people under Hitler were fully substantiated.

\textsuperscript{101}Ibid., p. 498.

\textsuperscript{102}Celler, \textit{You Never Leave Brooklyn}, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{103}Not until the passage of the Displaced Persons Act of June 25, 1948, were the discriminatory passages in America's postwar immigration laws eliminated, only to be reinstituted by the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act. Celler, \textit{You Never Leave Brooklyn}, p. 98.
CHAPTER TEN

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

Twenty-five years have passed and World War II has begun to fade in man's memory, its atrocities as meaningful to a generation which has grown up spared the necessity of sustaining life with Karo Syrup sandwiches or thin lentil soup as the horror stories of the catacombs of Rome or the skull pyramids of Tamerlane. An entire generation has grown up which knows next to nothing of the anguish and fear of those terrible years of Depression and War, but this has not deterred its constituents from expropriating the verbal legacy of those times. The world, they argue, has entered a new age, one in which men will never again passively countenance the debasement of his fellow man, one in which "ghettos," "genocide," "the Wall," "Nazis" and "racial purity" will have no existence. From the black saviours in the U.S. who cry that they will never be led to the slaughter like the Jews to the white anarchists in Germany who refuse to participate in "immoral wars," the world is alive with a feeling of commitment and concern, of uniqueness, newness, and reproach for the old system.

Indeed some things have changed. There is at present no worldwide depression offering a convenient excuse for people's inadequacies, fears or prejudices. Economists say that mankind will never
undergo an economic dislocation comparable to that of the 1930s, when the United States Government, not merely with the public's consent, but at its insistence, shut the doors of immigration to the doomed Jews of Europe. This most prosperous nation in history is enjoying its most prosperous times, and yet the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith can report, as it did on April 19, 1969, that based on a survey conducted over four years 37% of the American people still harbored negative images of Jews based on "old canards that Jews control international banking, engage in shady business practices, are too powerful, clannish or ambitious."¹ The Coughlins, Reynoldses and Pelleys are gone, but more than 50% of the Americans interviewed by ADL indicated they would vote for an anti-Semitic candidate in times of economic crisis.² And while this may only bode ill for the Jews in the event of a depression which economists have certified impossible, there are fearsome echoes of the past in the opposition to Cuban immigration into Florida. Just as many American nativists of the Thirties opposed German-Jewish immigration because it was feared that these skilled or professional persons would merely aggravate the employment situation for the unskilled, so Negro militants in the South are voicing discontent over the constant arrival of desperate Cuban refugees, allegedly because these new arrivals, many of them skilled craftsmen, may deprive American blacks of their menial jobs.

²Ibid.
There is no world war looming like a Mauldin-like figure in the background of all governmental decisions, shunting the refugee question to the back pages of the newspapers or the lower echelons of the State Department. But the old sense of priorities persists as the world attempts to adjust to a permanent state of non-peace. One is hard-pressed to fault Cordell Hull, sympathetically described as "harassed and weary" by Henry Morgenthau, distracted by a thousand world-wide exigencies between 1938 and 1945, for not doing more on behalf of the Jews during a global holocaust, when very little has been done to ameliorate the suffering of 100,000 Tibetan, 900,000 Vietnamese, 1,000,000 Arab, 4,000,000 Korean, 4,000,000 Chinese, or 4,000,000 German stateless wanderers, and when nothing has been done by the civilized community to forestall the racial eradication of thousands of Ibos in Biafra. With this in mind, Benjamin Cohen's defense of the Administration's wartime policy ("When you are in a dirty war, some will suffer more than others. The question was whether you could reduce

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3 At the time of Kristalnacht, the Secretary was planning for the 8th International Conference of American States at Lima. When the Nazis launched their extermination of the Jews in 1942, the Secretary was attempting to smooth over differences with the Allies, mollify the Latins and settle oil disputes with Mexico. In the winter of 1943, the Secretary was busily engaged in diplomatic work in Moscow, London, and Washington, had even gone abroad without obtaining the required inoculations. And by 1944, Hull was preoccupied with his vision of making the United Nations a viable instrument of world peace.

the suffering without a sacrifice on your part. Things ought to have
been different, but war is different, and we live in an imperfect world.") seems more palatable.

The lower echelon personnel at the State Department who evid-
ently disliked Jews and who at best treated the refugee question as an
irritant during the war are gone. The government of the United States
no longer considers it barbaric or medieval to ransom political prisoners
or persecutees from foreign concentration camps (as witness the negotia-
tions with Castro for the release of the survivors of the Bay of Pigs
incident). The government has moved rapidly to accommodate freedom
fighters and other refugees from communist oppression, the Hungarians
in 1956-7, 300,000 Cubans since 1959. And on July 1, 1968, the old
discriminatory provisions of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act were wiped
away, and a new law instituted, one which provided for a common
reservoir of 170,000 immigration certificates on a "first-come, first-
serve"basis.

This last act, lauded as one of the finest achievements of the
Kennedy-Johnson Era, was supposed to help peoples of southern and
estern Europe, India, and the Philippines. Instead, it perpetuates dis-
 crimination in another form. No nation can use more than 20,000 of the
certificates. If another racial or religious minority were to encounter
large-scale persecution again the law would only provide sanctuary for
20,000 of their number, unless another, special, Congressional act
were passed, just as in 1938 and 1945. For the first time, the United
States has a quota for the Western Hemisphere, 120,000 in all, and
special priorities for Cuban refugees within that number threatens to wipe out the entire allotment. And though some may have hoped that the statements of Breckinridge Long or Malcolm MacDonald about saving the best of the refugees and giving priority to those who may benefit our particular nation belonged to another era, this new bill establishes a system of six priorities, at the top of which are 17,000 permits reserved for professional or specially skilled persons whose admission has been adjudged beneficial to the U.S., and at the bottom of which are 17,000 certificates for unskilled persons with no close relatives in the U.S. Such a law would have helped few, if any, Polish or Hungarian Jews between 1938 and 1945.

"If in other lands the eternal truths of the past are threatened by intolerance, we must provide a safe place for their perpetuation." The man who said that to a New York audience in 1938, who sustained a frightened America through the Depression and cheered her through the dark days of 1942, is gone and the passing decades have no more illuminated the riddle of Franklin Roosevelt than his actions in his own lifetime. Jews who adored the man more than any other in the twentieth century, who showered him with kosher calendars and bogus checks guaranteeing him "365 days of happiness," the spastic children of the Jewish Sanitorium for Chronic Diseases in Brooklyn who notified him that a section of trees had been planted in his name in Eretz Israel,

the 75-year-old Jew who sent him a cabalistic amulet to protect him from harm, the usually retiring Albert Einstein who was moved to write poetry about him, and Charles Schwager, publicity director of the Jewish Forum, who eulogized, "I will predict that you were chosen by God to be the Savior for America and the rest of the world," would be entitled to their disappointment in Roosevelt's failure to address any special communique to Jewish suffering,\(^6\) to sanction the use of Allied shipping to rescue their brethren, or to order bombardment of the death camps to abort their suffering. But one must keep those failures within the perspective of the war years, when American soldiers by the thousands were dying, when Jewish blood, while of special significance to Jews, was of no especial importance to Gentiles in the United States.

And that is the crucial fact in attempting to understand the President's ambivalence toward the Jews during this period. Most of the people of the United States definitely wanted no more Jews admitted to their land. Guided, if not always controlled by public opinion, Franklin Roosevelt could go no further than the isolationists and restrictionists' would allow. So perhaps there is more truth than apology in Ben Cohen's defense of

\(^6\) Though repeatedly requested to commemorate special events associated with the martyrdom of European Jewry during the War, Roosevelt steadfastly declined. Instead, under an arrangement worked out by Charles Bohlen of the Division of European Affairs and Assistant Secretary of State Berle all requests were answered with a form letter which indicated either: (1) that the President was out of town or could not be reached; or (2) that Roosevelt had already given tangible evidence of his determination to give all possible assistance to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression. Bohlen to Early, March 24, 1944, and Berle to Hasset, August 4, 1944, Church Matters, Jewish File, Roosevelt Library, OF 76-C, Box 20.
the President: "To imagine that Roosevelt could come up with a magic wand to solve the Jewish problem might be expecting too much."

Jews, blacks and other minority pressure groups claim to have learned something from this tragic story. They have seen how improper organization, incompatible programs, and conservative leadership make pressure groups ineffective in crisis situations. They have also witnessed, in the case of Rabbi Wise, Representative Bloom, and others, how, as a corollary to Lord Acton's famous principle on power, proximity to power may compromise. And yet with the lesson of "no-man's land," Evian, Auschwitz, and Bermuda behind them, dissident Jewish groups in the United States continued to remain at odds with each other during times of peace in the Middle East and found themselves virtually impotent to rally Gentile support or influence the government when Israel was menaced with destruction.

But if the various religious and political segments that constitute the amorphous body known as American Jewry were unable to come to the assistance of their brethren in those anxious moments of May-June, 1967, how much more must be the responsibility of the western powers, who, in a moment of conscience had accorded diplomatic recognition to the survivors of the Holocaust and then stood by transfixed as this remnant faced extinction? In 1967, no less than 1938, national self-interest, the primal instinct of biological self-preservation, compromised the leaders of the democracies. What Arthur Miller had written of the Holocaust is no less applicable today:
Part of knowing who we are is knowing we are not someone else. And Jew is only the name we give to that stranger, that agony we cannot feel, that death we look at like a cold abstraction. Each man has his Jew; it is the other. And the Jews have their Jews. And now, now above all, you must see that you have yours—the man whose death leaves you relieved that you are not him, despite your decency. And that is why there is nothing and will be nothing—until you face your own complicity with this... your own humanity.
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