

University of Southampton Research Repository ePrints Soton

Copyright © and Moral Rights for this thesis are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder/s. The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given e.g.

AUTHOR (year of submission) "Full thesis title", University of Southampton, name of the University School or Department, PhD Thesis, pagination

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**NEARLY THE NEW WORLD: REFUGEES AND THE BRITISH WEST INDIES,
1933-1945**

Joanna Frances Newman, BA (Hons), MA

**Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in the University of Southampton
History Department
April 1998**

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS

HISTORY

Doctor of Philosophy

NEARLY THE NEW WORLD: REFUGEES AND THE BRITISH WEST INDIES, 1933-1945

by Joanna Newman

This thesis examines the role of the Caribbean as a place of refuge, internment and transit for Jewish refugees from Europe during the interwar and Second World War period. It approaches the subject from the different perspectives of the British Government, West Indian colonies, refugee organisations and refugees themselves. It is divided into three parts, the first examining local, national and international concerns of the British Government towards its colonies in the Caribbean. It explores how these concerns impacted on the development of immigration policy in the British West Indies, and how the Colonial Office managed to steer a course between protecting West Indian interests and following Government directives over its refugee policy.

The second section traces the vital role played by British, American and European Jewish refugee organisations. It explores their practical involvement in directing refugees to the West Indies, in negotiating entry for refugees with invalid travel documents, and in providing maintenance. It also explores how the West Indies took on greater significance for refugee bodies as the war progressed. Whilst concentrating on their involvement with the West Indies, this section analyses the achievements and limitations facing voluntary refugee bodies during this period.

The last section of this thesis considers the movement of refugees to the British West Indies, analysing how much choice was involved in their destination. Particular attention is paid to the experience of internment and attempts to establish Jewish communities. The reactions of British West Indians to the question of Jewish immigration, and to the presence of Jewish refugees is explored within the context of the social, political and economic situation of the British West Indies in the 1930s and 1940s.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following institutions for providing generous support: the University of Southampton for a three year Archive Studentship Award, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London University for a Junior Fellowship, the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati for a Fellowship in American Jewish Studies.

I thank staff at the following libraries and archives for access to their materials and for their helpful assistance: in Cincinnati, Kathy Spray, Kevin Profitt and staff at the American Jewish Archives, in New York, Dr Diane Spielmann and staff at the Leo Baeck Institute, staff at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the New York Public Library, the Yivo Archive. In Washington, Milton Gustafson and staff at the National Archives. In Berlin, staff at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung. In London, staff at the British Library, The British Newspaper Library, the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, the Institute for Historical Research, the Public Record Office, University College Library, the University of London Library, the Wiener Library. In Southampton, thanks to Karen Robson, Jenny Ruthven and Dr Chris Woolgar of the Parkes Library and University of Southampton Archive.

I thank Dr Tony Kushner for supervising this thesis, for his critical help in reading and re-reading drafts, and for his encouragement, good advice, patience (in abundance) and unstinting help and support. Also at the University of Southampton, I would like to thank Dr Neil Gregor and Mr Stephan Pavlowitich for reading early drafts and for their helpful comments. I thank Dr Louise London for the stimulating discussions, advice and encouragement she has given me throughout my research. In Cincinnati, I am grateful to Dr Abraham Peck for his help and support, and for giving me the opportunity to present my work at a seminar held by the American Jewish Archives. Professor Roger Daniels at the University of Cincinnati gave me early encouragement and good ideas. In London, Professor John Klier at University College London has always been supportive and encouraging, as has Dr Michael Alpert, who taught me the value of index cards!

During the course of this thesis I have many people to thank who took the trouble to help answer questions, share information and discuss their experiences with me. I would particularly like to thank Henry Altman, Bridget Brereton, University of the West Indies,

Alan and Hazel Delgado, Donah Farah, Lennox Honychurch, Aubrey Rose, Lore and Edward Schonbeck, Hans Stecher, Professor Herbert Strauss, Miriam Stanton and Professor Dr Fullberg-Stolberg, University of Hannover.

I would also like to acknowledge the friendship and support of family and friends, who contributed to the completion of this thesis in varied ways. For taking the time to read drafts, for their insightful comments and long telephone conversations, I thank my father, Dr Claus Newman and Adrian Harper. Love and thanks also go to Ruth, Erica, Becky and Charlie Newman, and Lizzy Bacon, Ursula and Fritz Beer, Leah Chapman, Gillian O Donovan, Bertrand, Eleonore and Jimmy James, Sarah Leigh, Lawrence Mockett, Peggy Vance, Dusty Wesker, Jeff Williams and Marijke Wolseley. Lastly I specially thank Uwe Westphal, who encouraged me to return to academic studies, and for his love and friendship.

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents, Alice and Franz Newman, Lore and Curt Rockwell and is in memory of the many known and unknown individuals who worked for refugee organisations and gave their time, energy and dedication to helping others.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	3
Abbreviations	7
Introduction	8
PART I: THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT	
Chapter 1: The British Government, refugees and the British West Indies	
Introduction	18
-I-	
Survey of British interests in the West Indies	20
System of government in the British West Indies	27
The Colonial Office	30
-II-	
Immigration regulations	32
- III -	
British Government policy towards mass and individual refuge	51
Conclusion	79
PART II: JEWISH REFUGEE ORGANISATIONS	
Chapter 2: Bound for Nowhere: Jewish refugee organisations and the West Indies 1933 - 1939.	
Introduction	80
-I-	
The development of Jewish refugee organisations	83
-II-	
The effect of Nazi policy on German Jewish emigration 1933-1939	92
-III-	
Jewish organisations in the 1930s	96
Jewish refugee organisations and the West Indies	102
Conclusion	118
Chapter 3: Jewish refugee organisations and the West Indies 1939 - 1945	
Introduction	121
-I-	
Jewish refugee organisations during the war	122
-II-	

Refugees and the British West Indies	135
Gibraltar Camp	143
-III-	
The importance of the West Indies	152
Conclusion	157

PART III: THE WEST INDIES

Chapter 4: Nearly the New World: Refugees and the British West Indies, 1933 - 1945

Introduction	159
-I-	
Refugee Arrivals	163
-II-	
Refugee Communities in the West Indies	177
-III-	
Internment and remigration	194
Conclusion	209

Chapter 5: A New Jerusalem? British West Indians and Jewish Refugees

Introduction	212
-I-	
The British West Indies	213
-II-	
“Lets give serious contemplation to the question of Jewish immigration”	230
-III-	
Refugee reception	243
Conclusion	258
Conclusion	261
Appendix	265
Bibliography	266

ABBREVIATIONS

AIU	Alliance Israelite Universalle
AJA	Anglo Jewish Association
AJAC	American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati
ACLS	Advanced Centre for Legal Studies
CBF	Central British Fund for the Relief of German Jewry
CO	Colonial Office
GJAC	German Jewish Aid Committee
HIAS	Hebrew and Immigrant Aid Society
ICA	Jewish Colonisation Association
ICS	Institute for Commonwealth Studies
JAT	Jewish Association Trinidad
JDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
JRS	Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad
JTS	Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
LBI	Leo Baeck Institute, New York
NA	National Archives, Washington
PRO	Public Record Office, London
SA	University of Southampton Archive
WL	Wiener Library, London
Yivo	Yivo Institute Archives, New York

INTRODUCTION

As the Holocaust becomes a more distant event, the emphasis of research on Allied responses to the Nazi regime has changed from focusing on blame to explanation. The first works to analyse British and American responses to the Holocaust tended to reflect anger and frustration at the failure of Allied powers to rescue Jews. In these works, the suggestion has been made that had Allied powers made the rescue of Jews a priority, more could have been done to save European Jewry. These works have also been preoccupied with the attitudes of Jewish communities in Britain and the United States, suggesting that they, too could have done more to help save Jewish lives.¹ More recently, research has shifted its attention from seeking culpability to understanding the context in which decisions were taken and attitudes were shaped. These works do not take issue with the fact that the rescue of Jews was not an Allied priority. Rather, they attempt to analyse why rescue was not a priority, the context in which Allied powers took decisions, and how citizens in Allied states reacted to those decisions.² Yet a recent work has attacked current scholarship, claiming that analysing the possibilities for rescue that were raised by refugee organisations, individuals and government officials is a pointless exercise, because the reality of Nazi policy ruled out any alternatives to Allied actions.³ This contentious approach shares much with earlier traditions of attaching blame to historical events and as a method does not lend itself to a greater understanding of the complexities of those circumstances.

This thesis examines the role of the British West Indies as a potential and real haven for refugees during the years 1933 to 1945. The possibilities of refuge in Britain's colonial Empire, and the West Indies specifically, were repeatedly raised by governments, individuals and refugee bodies throughout the 1930s and 1940s. That it did become a refuge for some, but not a place of mass refuge, is the subject of this study. This thesis belongs to the tradition which seeks to understand events in as broad a context as possible. Its subject crosses into several areas of research, shedding light on new aspects of these studies, which are not traditionally associated with each other. In the bibliography can be found works on British

¹ For example, two such approaches on the United States can be found in Arthur Morse, While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy, New York 1967 and David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, New York 1984.

² For a discussion of the historiography of research on Allied responses to the Holocaust, see the introduction to Tony Kushner's, The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History, Oxford 1994. See also Michael Marrus, The Holocaust in History, New York 1987.

³ See William D. Rubinstein, The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis, London, New York 1997.

colonial history, Caribbean history, the history of the Holocaust and Allied responses and refugee history. By examining the subject from different positions, a complex picture emerges which defies a singular polemical viewpoint. It is the first to cover the subject from the different perspectives of the British Government, West Indian colonies, refugee organisations and refugees themselves. As such, this thesis reflects a unique approach to the subject, ‘telling the story’ from a variety of conflicting angles. It aims to understand the context in which the British West Indies became involved in the refugee crisis of the interwar years and the wartime period and is divided into three main sections. The first is concerned with the relationship between Britain and its West Indian colonies.

Whilst few studies have been carried out on the reaction of Britain’s colonial Empire to the refugee crisis, several works have analysed the reaction of Dominion states to refugee issues. In the bibliography, reference is made to studies of Canada, Australia, Newfoundland and New Zealand. Whilst their relationship with Britain remained important, as self ruling Dominions, these countries were able to implement immigration controls and refugee policies free from British control. There has been general agreement that the record of refugee admittance to Dominion States was low, but in the case of Australia, recent debate has occurred between historians over the interpretation of the low entry figures.⁴ Regarding the colonial Empire, little has been done on the overall response of Britain’s colonial territories to the refugee crisis. In a recent essay, Paul Bartrop has called for more research into this area.⁵ This would be a difficult task, given the vastly different geographical, economic and political situations of each colony. In the 1930s, the British colonial Empire stretched between colonies in East and West Africa, colonies in the East, the Mediterranean and the West Indies. The conditions of development in these regions differed considerably and it is difficult to conceive of an approach which could find a common response to British policy initiatives.⁶

⁴See for example Michael Blakeney’s *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948*, Sydney 1985, and the edited volume by W.D. Rubinstein, *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Sydney, London, Boston 1987 which contains essays of dissenting views. See also Rubinstein’s more recent article on Australia, taking issue with previous accounts, “Australia and the Refugee Jews of Europe, 1933-1954: A Dissenting View”, *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Vol.10, part 6, 1989, pp.500-521.

⁵In Paul Bartrop’s edited volume, *False Havens: The British Empire and the Holocaust*, all the essays are devoted to Dominion responses, save the opening essay by Bartrop, “The British Colonial Empire”. He concludes that “This subject [on the colonial Empire], one of the last to be addressed in analyses of the Free World’s response to the Holocaust, awaits its historian”, see *False Havens*, New York, London 1985, p.15.

⁶In the 1930s the colonial Empire consisted of colonies in British West Africa: Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Colonies in British East Africa: Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, British Somaliland, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Colonies in the East: British North Borneo,

Yet as part of Britain's colonial Empire, the British West Indies were under the direct control of the Colonial Office, and subsequently the British Government, regarding immigration controls and the defence of the region. Therefore, it could be argued that decisions regarding refugee admittance can be seen as an extension of British policy. As such, the British West Indies has entered accounts of British responses during the Nazi era as an example to demonstrate aspects of governmental concerns regarding its refugee policies. This approach is reflected in two major studies detailing the response of Britain to the refugee crisis and the Holocaust from A.J. Sherman and Bernard Wasserstein (see bibliography for details). In these and subsequent works on Britain, attention has focused on the West Indies in two subject areas, the proposed mass settlement of refugees in British Guiana, and with less attention, to its role in accepting (or rejecting) refugees. Both Sherman and Wasserstein have used the British Guiana proposal to demonstrate the desire of the British government to offer alternatives to Palestine, and to deflect criticism from the United States that it was not doing enough to help solve the refugee crisis. This approach has also been taken in works by Martin Gilbert and Louise London.⁷ Regarding Britain's role in admitting refugees, these studies have also included a survey of the numbers of refugees admitted to Britain's colonial Empire and Dominion States. In both Sherman and Wasserstein, much attention has been given to the reluctance of Britain to accept refugees. Surveying the colonial Empire, both authors have concluded that the numbers of refugees admitted demonstrate the unwillingness of Britain to accept refugees to her own shores, or to her colonial territories. Thus, the turning away of two refugee ships from Trinidad and Barbados in early 1939 is described by Sherman, and the turning away of a refugee ship from Trinidad in 1941 by Wasserstein as examples of the above.⁸ More recently, in a study which closely examines the role of the Home Office and other government departments in administering British refugee policy, Louise London has examined the motives behind moving refugees from Lisbon to Jamaica

Sarawak, British Malaya, Brunei, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Seychelles, Fiji, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and New Hebrides. Colonies in the Mediterranean: Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta and Palestine. Colonies in the West Indies: Barbados, British Guiana, British Honduras, the Bahamas, Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago and the Windward Islands.

⁷British Guiana is treated as a subject throughout Sherman and Wasserstein's studies, see bibliography for details. See also Martin Gilbert, "British Government Policy Towards Jewish Refugees ((November 1938-September 1939)", *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol.XIII, 1979, passim; Louise London, "British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees, 1933-1942", unpublished PhD thesis for University of London 1992 (henceforth London PhD), passim, and particularly p.245 on pressure on the British from the United States. London has also mentioned the British Guiana plan in various articles, see bibliography for details.

⁸See A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge, Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939*, Great Britain 1973, p.251; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945*, Oxford 1979, pp.141-2, 346.

during 1942 as an example of British priorities and objectives during the wartime period.⁹

In these accounts, scant attention has been given to the effect that local opinion had on the implementation of British policy throughout its Empire. Whilst still an under-researched area, various studies have shown the importance of the region for Britain and the United States, particularly during the wartime period.¹⁰ By examining the local, national and international concerns of the British Government regarding its colonies in the Caribbean, the context in which decisions were taken over refugee issues can be seen more clearly.

Although decisions regarding immigration to the British West Indies were ultimately taken in London, part one of this thesis seeks to demonstrate how West Indian concerns impacted on British policy regarding the region. In fact, at times when Britain did encourage refugee migration to the West Indies, concerns from the West Indies governed the acceptance or rejection of these policies. This thesis looks closely at the role of the Colonial Office, and is in itself a study of how that department reacted to both West Indian and metropolitan demands throughout the period. As such, it adds to a volume of knowledge on the role of the Colonial Office in implementing British policy in colonial territories, of which Palestine and Africa has gained the most attention.¹¹ By focusing on two issues, immigration controls and British policy towards refuge in the British West Indies, the conditions under which refugees gained entry to the West Indies are explored.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, several waves of Jewish immigration resulted in refugees

⁹See London, PhD. See also Paul Bartrop's "From Lisbon to Jamaica: A Study of British Refugee Rescue During the Second World War", *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol.13, No.1, March 1994, pp.48 - 64.

¹⁰Most studies focusing on the British West Indies during the 1930s and 1940s have been concerned with an analysis of the emerging labour and nationalist movements, of which reference is made in the bibliography, and discussed in chapter five. Ken Post's *Strike the Iron, A Colony at War: Jamaica 1939-1945* analyses the effect of British wartime policies in the Caribbean, but is concerned with the impact of policy on West Indians. Fitz Baptiste's *War, Cooperation and Conflict*, Anthony P. Maingot's *The United States and the Caribbean*, Sir Harold Mitchell's *Europe in the Caribbean: The Policies of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands Towards their West Indies Territories in the Twentieth Century* are the main works focusing on the geo-political interests of Britain and the United States during the 1930s and 1940s. Bernard L.Poole's *The Caribbean Commission* also analyses American interests in the British West Indies, as a result of the presence of US bases. For details, see bibliography.

¹¹There are few works devoted to a history of the Colonial Office. For contemporary accounts and memoirs, see bibliography. A more scholarly work devoted to its history can be found in Lee and Petter's *The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy*, London 1982. The role of the Colonial Office in implementing British colonial policy is further investigated in the following work which does not include the British West Indies, R.F. Holland, *European Decolonization, 1918-1981*, London 1985. Several studies on Palestine have concentrated on the role of the Colonial and Foreign Office in implementing British policy: see for example Ronald Zweig, *Britain and Palestine during the Second World War*. London 1986 and on Africa, see again Holland, and Lawrence John Butler, "Economic Development and the 'Official Mind'": The Colonial Office and Manufacturing in West Africa, 1939 - 1951" PhD thesis, University of London, 1991.

arriving throughout the British West Indies. The mass migration from Eastern Europe to the West, resulted in some Eastern European Jews remaining in West Indian colonies, either on their way to, or from unsuccessful settlement in the American continent. Most settled in small groups throughout the British, Dutch and French West Indies once quota laws had been implemented in the United States in 1921 and 1924. During 1938, as the Nazi regime began to implement a policy of forced Jewish emigration, Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany began to appear in West Indian colonies, most notably in Trinidad. This movement continued until early in 1939, when immigration controls were implemented in British West Indian colonies to prevent further Jewish immigration. Subsequently, refugees were admitted under special conditions: family members of existing refugees were allowed entrance. Moreover, the Caribbean was used as a transit and detention station, and there was the presence of an evacuee camp in Jamaica. Between February 1939 and May 1942, refugee traffic between Europe and the western Hemisphere resulted in a continual stream of Jewish refugees temporarily admitted to British West Indian colonies. Those without valid travel documents remained for long periods, those suspected of enemy activity either interned or after inspection, allowed to proceed with their journeys. Between December 1942 and December 1943 refugees of Allied nationality were moved from Spain and Portugal to Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica under an agreement between the British Government and governments-in-exile. Underpinning the admittance of refugees after 1939 was the essential financial guarantees given by Jewish organisations and their promise to seek further destinations for these refugees.

Few accounts exist about these movements of refugees to West Indian colonies, or of their subsequent settlement or remigration.¹² In several histories of refugee organisations and in works on refugee movements, reference is made to the involvement of refugee agencies with refugees in the West Indies, but again, attention is cursory.¹³ In fact, whilst British

¹² There are no published studies of Jewish immigration to the British West Indies during the 1930s and 1940s. Paul Bartrop has written about the movement of refugees from Portugal to Jamaica, and has based much of this article on material supplied by a former refugee, Miriam Stanton. More recently Miriam Stanton has self published her memoirs, Escape from the Inferno of Europe, London 1996, which includes a section on her stay in Gibraltar Camp. On Trinidad, see the following: Donah Farah, "The Jewish Community in Trinidad, 1930s - 70s", Caribbean Studies undergraduate thesis, University of the West Indies, 1991. Tony Martin, "Jews to Trinidad", Paper presented at 23rd annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Santo Domingo, March 1991. For published sources, see Gordon Rohlehr's excellent Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad, Trinidad 1990, which devotes some space to Trinidadian reactions to the question of Jewish refugees in the 1930s.

¹³ For example, information on some individual "notable" refugees who came to the West Indies can be found in Herbert Strauss's Biographische Handbuch der Deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933. In Yehuda Bauer's American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945, the

Government documents provide evidence of British and West Indian concerns regarding Jewish settlement, in order to understand the nature of refugee migration to the West Indies, it has been necessary to investigate the records of a variety of Jewish organisations.¹⁴ By examining their archives, a complex picture emerges of how the West Indies became important for refugees, and what the West Indies meant to a diverse range of Jewish bodies who became involved, in some aspect, with refugees and the British West Indies. Part two of this thesis examines the significance of the West Indies for Jewish organisations, focusing on the role of refugee bodies, and their relationship to larger Jewish organisations.

In fact their involvement provides an important case study which throws light on the more general problems facing Jewish organisations during the 1930s and 1940s. During the interwar years, as a group, Jewish refugees could benefit from an experienced network of voluntary aid and migration agencies with some fifty years of experience in organising, selecting and directing immigrants. Yet the involvement of Jewish organisations with the West Indies provides a good example of the limitations of their influence in the interwar years. Because several organisations were involved at the same time, this study also focuses on how organisations with different outlooks and ideologies managed to cooperate in directing refugees to the West Indies, and how cooperation enabled refugees without valid travel documents entry to South American and Caribbean ports once entry as immigrants was prohibited. Whilst Jewish responses during the Holocaust have been well documented, most attention has been focused on representative bodies of American- and Anglo-Jewry. In the United States, the most notable accounts of American Jewish reactions can be found in David Wyman's indictment of American Jewry, challenged more recently by Henry Feingold's measured analysis of the limitations and achievements of American Jews. In Britain, attention has focused on the Anglo-Jewish community in works by Geoffrey Alderman and Richard Bolchover.¹⁵ In addition, work by Louise London and Tony Kushner have stressed the role that Anglo-Jewish groups played in formulating and processing British refugee

movement of Polish Jews to Jamaica in 1942 is mentioned on p.202. Wischnitzer's Visas to Freedom: The History of Hias, includes Trinidad and Curacao in a chart showing Hias sponsored emigration to Latin America. He also mentions the movement of Jews from Lisbon to Jamaica, see p.230 & p.184.

¹⁴An important amount of primary evidence for this study has been found in the archives of Jewish organisations, primarily in the United States and Britain, of which reference is made in the bibliography.

¹⁵Geoffrey Alderman, The Jewish Community in British Politics; Richard Bolchover, British Jewry and the Holocaust. See also Meier Sompolinsky, "Anglo-Jewish Leadership and the British Government: Attempts at Rescue 1944 - 1945", Yad Vashem, XIII, 1978.

policy.¹⁶ The connection between the activities of Jewish organisations and attitudes of the Jewish public towards rescue has been developed in works which have critically assessed the role of organisations and Jewish leaders during the Holocaust.¹⁷ Whilst refugee histories have examined the problems facing Jewish refugee organisations in a broad context, concentrating on their involvement with the West Indies provides a close focus to examine how diverse organisations worked together, or in conflict with one another. As such, it adds considerably to the knowledge of the problems and achievements of refugee bodies.¹⁸ Several historians were themselves former refugee workers, and have written emigration histories based on the files of their organisations. Mark Wischnitzer's pioneering work on the history of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (Hias) contained an invaluable survey of immigration from Eastern Europe to the West, but its focus was on the organisation's direct involvement with refugee movements and not its relationships with other Jewish bodies.¹⁹

The major themes that are explored throughout this section include the role of refugee organisations in organising refugee emigration, their involvement in settlement plans for refugees outside Palestine, and the general lack of power and influence of Jewish organisations. The fundamental role refugee organisations played in the arrival and support of

¹⁶ Tony Kushner, The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination ; Louise London, PhD; -, "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy, 1930 - 1940", The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry, David Cesarani, (ed.), Oxford, 1990. See also Ronald Stent, "Jewish Refugee Organisations", Werner E. Mosse, ed., Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom, Tübingen 1991; Norman Bentwich, They found refuge: An account of British Jewry's work for victims of Nazi oppression, London, 1956; Richard Bolchover, British Jewry and the Holocaust, Cambridge, 1993.

¹⁷ On the World Jewish Congress, see bibliography for works by Avi Becker, Elizabeth Eppler and most notably Monty Penkower (whose focus is on the activities of the WJC), "Dr Nahum Goldmann and the Policy of International Jewish Organisations", Organizing Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period. See also David Wyman, "The American Jewish Leadership and the Holocaust", Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era, R. Braham (ed.), New York, 1985.

¹⁸ Few critical studies of refugee organisations exist, the exceptions being Yehuda Bauer's two volume history of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1929 - 1939, Philadelphia 1974 & American Jewry and the Holocaust; Theodore Norman's, An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, 1985. Studies of German-Jewish emigration analyse the problems facing organisations within the Reich, see Werner Rosenstock, "Exodus 1933 - 1939: A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany", Leo Baeck Year Book, 1956; Herbert A Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (1)", Leo Baeck Year Book XXV, 1980 & "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (2)", Leo Baeck Year Book, XXVI, 1981. For general works on refugee movements in which the role of Jewish organisations is acknowledged, see Mark Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800, Philadelphia 1949; Michael Marrus, The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century, New York, 1985; Claudia Skran, Refugees in Interwar Europe: The Emergence of a Regime, Oxford 1995.

¹⁹ See for example, Mark Wischnitzer, Visas to Freedom ; Arthur Prinz, "The Role of the Gestapo in Obstructing and Promoting Jewish Emigration"; Werner Rosenstock, "Exodus 1933 - 1939.

refugees in the British West Indies provides an outstanding example of how attitudes towards refugee issues evolved. It also illustrates the dichotomy which existed between the formulation of policy and the practical actions and support they were actually able to give. The West Indies also became an important symbol for refugee organisations. During the wartime period, their role in aiding refugees in the West Indies has to be viewed within the context of calls for rescue. As the true extent of Nazi genocide was uncovered, the West Indies became one of several places where the work of refugee organisations in the field could be used to promote their work in occupied Europe.

Part three of this thesis is rooted in the Caribbean. It is in this final section that viewpoints from the Caribbean are heard, and the Caribbean itself becomes a focus of attention. For the British Government, the Caribbean was a distant colonial possession, useful for certain economic and political functions. For refugee organisations, it was one of several destinations that held potential and real consequences for their work with refugees. For refugees, however, the Caribbean may have been viewed from Europe as an exotic and unknown location, but once in the British West Indies, many were unable, at least temporarily, to move to further destinations. Yet, whilst it would seem that the West Indies was a place of transit, en route to the New World, surprisingly large numbers of refugees chose to remain and integrate into West Indian society.

The chapters' main focus is to examine how much choice was involved in the West Indies as a destination, how much this effected decisions to remain or remigrate, and how refugees attempted to start new communities. Historically, as Jeffrey Lesser has noted in his Brazil and the Jewish Question, historians have "tended to lump all but the largest numerical communities into the category of "exotica", and thus not worthy of careful study".²⁰ These 'unlikely' places of refuge, with the notable exception of Shanghai, have received little attention. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the refugees, refugee organisations and countries of reception, these movements were extremely important. From a more general point of view, each case study sheds light on aspects of the refugee crisis. The study of the emerging Jewish community in Trinidad says much about the problems of adaptation and integration, as well as on overcoming differences within the community, between Eastern and Western European refugees, from diverse backgrounds and religious experience. Whilst the study of Latin American Jewry is well-established, works on Caribbean Jewry have been

²⁰ See Jeffrey Lesser, Welcoming The Undesirables: Brazil and The Jewish Question, LA, London 1995, p. xv.

largely limited to studies of Sephardic communities, and their settlement during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The exception is Carol Holzberg's study of the Jamaican Jewish community.²¹ Whilst there are analogies between Latin American and Caribbean Jewry in the twentieth century, they are problematic. Firstly, South America had a continuous history of Jewish immigration and refugees were met by established Latin American Jewish communities. In the British West Indies, only Jamaica had a sizeable community of Sephardic Jews, and few refugees emigrated there. Secondly, South American states had their own governments and autonomous policies, although influenced by the United States and Britain over refugee issues. The West Indies, conversely, were neither autonomous nor homogeneous communities, nor even geographically cohesive communities.

Yet comparisons can be made, by looking at perceptions of Jewish refugees. Jeffrey Lesser's Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question has identified how established Jews in Brazil were viewed differently from potential Jewish immigrants. In this study, he has noted that, "the Jewish Question is as critical to understanding race and ethnicity in modern Brazil as Brazilian notions of race and ethnicity are to understanding the vision of Jews, by Jews and others".²² The final chapter is concerned with West Indian perspectives and how the question of Jewish immigration, and the impact of refugees, casts light on aspects of West Indian society during the 1930s and 1940s. A wide range of material is used to uncover public opinion in West Indian colonies, including the press, calypsoes, oral history accounts and primary material. Whilst controls against certain groups of immigrants were in operation throughout the 1930s, objections (or support for) Jewish immigration highlights aspects of West Indian concerns, about class, race and ethnicity. As such, it adds to the volume of works on West Indian identity during a period of tremendous change for British West Indians.²³ Combining British, Jewish and Caribbean perspectives, this thesis will

²¹See Haim Avni's Argentina and the Jews, a History of Jewish Immigration, Jeffrey Lesser's Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question, Robert Levine's Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish Experience in Cuba. Latin American Jewish history is a well developed field of research. For an initial exploration of the subject, see Judith Laikin Elkin & Gilbert W. Merckx, eds., The Jewish Presence in Latin America. For a general account of Jewish organisations in Latin America, see Haim Avni's, "Latin America and the Jewish Refugees: Two Encounters, 1935 and 1938", "Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust", Randolph L. Braham, ed. Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era. See also Moneke Kirsten, Die Emigration der Deutschen Juden nach Argentinien: Zur Rolle der Jüdischen Hilfsvereine 1933 - 1945. On the Jamaican community see Carol Holzberg, Minorities and Power in a Black Society: The Jewish Community of Jamaica. All works referred to in bibliography.

²²Lesser, Brazil and the Jewish Question, p.xv.

²³Chapter five of this thesis discusses various analyses of class and race issues in the West Indies. Of particular note are Morley Ayearst's The British West Indies and Gordon Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies.

provide an inclusive and challenging analysis of Jewish refugee movements during the Nazi era.

PART I: THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Chapter 1: The British Government, refugees and the British West Indies

Introduction

Up to the outbreak of war some 50,000 refugees gained admittance to Britain, many on a temporary basis pending remigration elsewhere.¹ In order to enter the United Kingdom, refugees were given no special consideration and had to satisfy existing immigration criteria, which demanded that immigrants could support themselves, or would be “guaranteed” financially by an organisation or individual.² At first, most refugees leaving Nazi Germany were able to meet the immigration requirements of their destinations.³ With the acceleration of persecutory measures against Jews in Germany and its annexed territories, emigration became more difficult as few countries altered these requirements. Instead, most maintained restrictive policies built on the belief that an influx of refugees would exacerbate domestic problems of unemployment and recession, and could, moreover, fan public hostility and antisemitism towards native Jewish communities and towards new immigrants.⁴ Indeed, an underlying concern of many governments was that unless a firm line on immigration was maintained, Germany, Poland, Rumania and other antisemitic regimes would receive the message that liberal democracies could, and would, absorb their unwanted Jewish populations.

During 1938 and 1939 however, the public outcry over persecutory measures in Germany

¹A.J. Sherman has estimated from official and refugee sources that some 50,000 refugees entered the United Kingdom up to September 1939. Sherman warns of the unreliability of these figures, see Sherman, Island Refuge, London 1973, Appendix I, ‘Migration Statistics’, pp.269-272. However, most historians have used Sherman’s calculations, see for example, Strauss, ‘Jewish Emigration from Germany: Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses’(I), Leo Baeck Year Book, XXV, London 1980, Table X, pp.354-5 (hereafter Strauss I); Louise London, “Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy, 1930 - 1940”, David Cesarani, ed., The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry, Oxford 1990. p.165, Bernard Wasserstein, Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939 - 1945, London 1979, p.7.

² To this effect, in 1933 Jewish organisations in Britain had guaranteed to the Home Office that no Jewish refugees admitted to Britain would become public charges. By March 1938 this guarantee was no longer tenable as funds were becoming exhausted with the increase of refugee arrivals.

³During 1933, large numbers of Jews fled Germany. However, during 1934 the numbers of Jews to leave Germany decreased for a variety of reasons: inability to find employment in adjacent countries, the belief that persecutory measures would decrease, and the difficulties involved in permanent emigration. Louise London has estimated that between 1933 and 1935 some 6, 194 refugees from Germany entered the United Kingdom, and a further four to five thousand would enter before Kristallnacht in November 1938, see Louise London, “British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees, 1933 - 1942”, unpublished PhD thesis for the University of London, 1992, p.142 (hereafter cited as London, PhD).

⁴ For example, following the Anschluss in March 1938, the Home Office instigated visa requirements in April 1938 for German and Austrian passport holders, in an attempt to stem the flow of refugees attempting to leave the German Reich. See Sherman, Island Refuge, p.88 and London, PhD, p.147.

led to an increasing pressure on governments to “do something.” Concessions were carried out in Britain and America, in Britain’s case resulting in some 40,000 refugees being admitted between November 1938 and the outbreak of war, but immigration regulations were not changed.⁵ Instead, both countries chose to focus their efforts on solutions that would generate positive attention and would deflect criticism from their domestic and, in Britain’s case, imperial policies (such as in Palestine). The West Indies, as well as other areas in Britain’s colonial Empire therefore became part of a protracted debate in Government and in public forums, on whether they were suitable as havens for refugees from Nazi Germany. Offering space in the colonial Empire may have been an attractive option for British policy makers, but other factors, such as the willingness of government to fund such ventures, conditions in colonial territories and the opinions of colonial Legislatures, played a decisive role in the success or failure of any of these plans. By examining British policy towards refuge and refugees in the British West Indian colonies, certain aspects of the relationship between Crown and colony can be revealed. This chapter will focus on two issues which highlight that relationship: immigration controls and policy towards individual and mass refuge in the West Indies. These issues reveal the conflicting interests which influenced policy decisions, namely, West Indian interests, international concerns, and different priorities within the British Government.

Despite having direct legislative control over West Indian colonies, the interests of those colonies profoundly affected policy decisions taken in London. Colonial demands for greater equality and economic improvement were treated sympathetically by all main political parties, thus making the British Government extremely sensitive to opinion emanating from its colonial Empire. As immigration of any further groups to the West Indies was greatly unpopular with colonial Legislatures, it had to be weighed against international considerations. These considerations included the desire to offer an alternative to Palestine, and to demonstrate to other powers, such as the United States, that throughout its Empire, Britain was taking more than her fair share of refugees from Nazi Germany. So, for example, whilst in international negotiations various options concerning refuge in the West Indies were

⁵ In 1939 America allowed a full quota of visas for Austrian and German immigrants to be used, a considerable change from the small percentage of quotas used up in previous years. In Britain, the events of Kristallnacht on the night of 9 - 10 November 1938, led the Home Office to compromise its stance over admissions and by issuing “block visas” enabled some 10,000 refugee children entry to Britain. This arrangement also enabled several thousand young men incarcerated in German concentration camps to gain temporary admittance to Britain, where they were housed in refugee hostels. A similar bill in the United States, called the Wagner - Roberts Bill to allow some 20,000 refugee children admittance failed. Before Kristallnacht, some eleven thousand refugees had entered Britain, but between November 1938 and the outbreak of war, some 40,000 were admitted.

being explored, the government gave approval to new legislation designed to prevent refugees from entering colonies, if this was against the will of the colony itself. Perhaps only in the case of Jamaica did the Government impose its will upon the colony, but as will be explored in this chapter, this was an exception with only very temporary effects.

The different interests of British government departments led to contradictory and complex relationships between the issues of refuge and rescue on the one hand, and the possible use of the West Indies on the other. As this chapter will demonstrate, the Colonial Office was drawn between guarding the interests of colonial territories and enacting policy dictated by home and international concerns. Therefore for the Colonial Office, specific conditions such as chronic unemployment, overpopulation, constitutional problems and labour unrest led to a general reluctance to allow political expediencies to obscure the problems that either mass settlement, or continued emigration would cause. But for the Home Office and the Foreign Office, factors such as economic depression, the wish to reduce refugee numbers to the UK, a simultaneous desire to demonstrate generosity over immigration policies, (particularly with the United States in mind), and the need to avoid criticism over immigration policy in Palestine, led to a desire to investigate alternatives for Jewish refugees in the colonial Empire. The chapter traces the implementation of immigration controls, and concerns over refugee policy chronologically, from the early 1930s to the wartime period. The chapter begins with a survey of Britain's attitudes towards its West Indian colonies during the 1930s and an explanation of the system of government in place and the role of the Colonial Office in administering the British West Indies.

- I -

Survey of British interests in the West Indies

During the 1920s the Dominion States of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa had gradually attained independence from Britain, ratified in the Treaty of Westminster in 1931. These countries now had equal status with Britain and maintained their own policies and government, although their legislative and executive systems were modelled closely on the British Parliamentary system. The colonial Empire, however, remained under British jurisdiction. By the 1930s, the Crown Colony system was installed in most colonies, protectorates and territorial possessions. Whereas the progression for the Dominions to equal status with Britain was seen as a natural development, the attitude towards the colonial Empire was entirely different. Writing shortly after the war, Sir John Shuckburgh, who had been Deputy Permanent Under Secretary at the Colonial Office from 1933 to 1942, illustrates

the prevalent attitude of Government towards its colonies and the Dominions:

The broad distinction between the Dominions on the one hand and the Colonial Empire on the other was obvious enough. The Colonial Empire was inhabited, so far as concerned the vast majority of its population, by people of non-European descent. Leaving aside the Mediterranean area, it contained scarcely any territory within any of its categories where the European element predominated, or indeed formed more than a small minority of inhabitants. In the Dominions, on the other hand, the European element was everywhere the all-important factor, and in two at least of them the great majority of them were not only of pure European stock but traced their origin back to ancestors born in the British Isles. Only in the Union of South Africa was the white population still outnumbered by the original coloured inhabitants. The development of the Dominions had proceeded on the lines of homogeneous European communities with inherited instincts of self-government and self-development. Their progress towards full nationhood, finally achieved in 1926 and confirmed by the Statute of Westminster (1931), had been natural and inevitable. The Colonial Empire presented an entirely different picture. There the Imperial power had had to deal with large numbers of people with habits, traditions and outlook upon life wholly alien to its own, and with people necessarily lacking the political instincts and practical experience which more advanced communities had acquired by a slow process of development.⁶

Such a paternalistic view did not rule out the ideal of self determination for the colonial Empire. During the 1930s, both the Conservative and Labour parties were in favour of a gradual move towards some form of self rule for Britain's colonies.⁷ However, as the administration of colonial territories was the responsibility of the Colonial Office, answerable to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Parliament paid little attention to colonial matters until the 1930s when labour unrest in the West Indies focused their attention. As a result of riots in many West Indian islands, the British Government gave increasing attention to colonial problems, appointing a Royal Commission to investigate West Indian conditions in 1938. The Royal Commission report, which published a summary of its findings in December 1939, advocated wide ranging changes to improve working conditions, adjusting legislative structures, and the establishment of a fund for development projects in the West

⁶Sir John Shuckburgh, Colonial Civil History of the War: Vol. 1, Unpublished typescript, Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library, London, p.6.

⁷Morley Ayearst has argued that the West Indies had as good a case as India and Ceylon in seeking self government, possessing good literacy levels, education and the existence of an educated middle class. He states that as long as colonies such as the West Indies were unable to pay their own way, consideration of self government was postponed. See Morley Ayearst, The British West Indies, London 1960, p.68. For the relationship between the Labour Party and the West Indies, see Neal R. Malmsten, "The British Labour Party and the West Indies, 1918 - 1939", The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, pp.173 - 205.

Indies.⁸ The report coincided with the enactment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. This Act demonstrated the importance that Britain placed on supporting its colonial Empire, and provided the sum of £5,000,000 annually for social and economic development of the colonial Empire over a period of ten years.⁹

The attention given to West Indian problems reflected specific concerns of the British government regarding the Caribbean during the interwar and war years. This was for several reasons; first, British sensitivity with regard to its record as an imperialist power. Britain was aware of continued criticism from the USA over its protectionist policies towards the Empire, embodied in the Ottawa Agreement signed in 1932 between Britain and the Dominions.¹⁰ It has been suggested that the Royal Commission and the Colonial Development and Welfare Act were both initiated partly in response to such criticism. Since conditions in the West Indies were already known by the Colonial Office and government, a prestigious commission could give valuable propaganda value. It served to indicate the importance and commitment that Britain wished to demonstrate towards the West Indies, at a time when Britain's record as an imperial power was under attack from Italy, Germany and to a lesser extent, the United States.¹¹ Similarly, the enactment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act gave a sign to critics of British imperialism that Britain was committed

⁸The results from the Moyne Commission were ready in December 21 1939, when a short summary of the Commission's recommendations were issued in 1940. The report was not published in full until 1945 "in order to prevent its possible use as Nazi propaganda". The main recommendations of the Moyne Commission were accepted, but instead of setting up a separate fund as suggested, funds were to come from the general Development and Welfare Act instead of creating a separate West Indian welfare fund. By the end of 1944 some 1,500,00 pounds had been spent and total grants of 7,500,00 had been approved. See Bernard L. Poole, The Caribbean Commission, USA 1951, p.147 and p.152.

⁹ Harold Mitchell points out that "To vote £1 million per annum for twenty years during a war situation showed an appreciation by all political parties of the urgency of problems in the colonial Empire, not least the West Indies", Sir Harold Mitchell, Europe in the Caribbean: The Policies of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands Towards their West Indies Territories in the Twentieth Century, California 1963, p.19.

¹⁰Howard Johnson argues that "During the depression years the traditional American hostility to the British Empire had been reinforced by the decision taken by the British and the Dominions at Ottawa in 1932 to establish preferential tariffs. By these Ottawa Agreements, American Manufacturers, who were searching for foreign markets, were shut out of the lucrative markets of the Empire. Thus a major objective of United States' foreign economic policy of the late 1930s was to prise open the British Empire to American trade", see Howard Johnson, "The Political Uses of Commissions of Enquiry (1): The Imperial - Colonial West Indies Context, The Forster and Moyne Commissions", Social and Economic Studies, Vol.27, 3, 1978, p.276, footnote 22.

¹¹ See Johnson, "The Political Uses of Commissions of Enquiry", p.268. Similarly, it has been argued that full publication of the report was delayed until postwar because of Chamberlain's concern of American criticism over Britain's role in the West Indies, see J.M.Lee & Martin Petter, The Colonial Office, War, and Development Policy, London 1982, p.39.

towards new policies of development and welfare in its colonial Empire.¹² Enacted in the wartime period, this showed the importance that Britain placed on its record as colonial power, as the USA, Britain's ally and critic of British imperialist policy, increased its involvement with West Indian affairs.

A second reason to focus on West Indian affairs reflected British concerns over sovereignty of the islands and other colonial possessions. At the outbreak of war, Britain was aware of much pro-Nazi feeling in neighbouring South American countries, which expressed itself in various hostile threats over the sovereignty of West Indian and other colonial territories. At the same time as the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, the Havana Conference took place in July 1940, of Foreign Ministers of South American Republics. The Conference discussed the repercussions of the war in Europe for European Caribbean possessions, debating what would happen if Germany won the war, the future of the Vichy held French West Indies, and their reaction to the Allied occupation of the Dutch West Indies, planned and executed by French and British troops following the fall of the Netherlands. The conference made plans for a "pan -American" trusteeship to occupy key European territories in the Western Hemisphere and the Caribbean, to prevent the danger of an Axis occupation of islands close to the American continent. Fitz Baptiste has suggested that the conference was seen as a "green light" by some South American republics, with their own territorial agendas. For example, Venezuela, upset at the allied occupation of Aruba and Curacao, hoped the conference would adopt resolutions to allow it sovereignty over Trinidad, whilst Argentina had claims over Belize and the Falkland Islands. Therefore Argentina backed a petition by the Jamaican Progressive League of New York for full determination for Jamaica, but at the same time refused to accord the same option for the Falkland Islands, which it claimed.¹³ With an American presence in the Caribbean, it was also important for Britain to signal to the West Indies that it did not wish to pass sovereignty of the islands to the United States, or to a PanAmerican trusteeship, as broached at the Havana Conference. It could be argued that Britain's signing of the Atlantic Charter on 14 August 1941, which included the principle of free determination for colonial peoples, was a signal to South America, and to the colonies themselves, of its commitment to colonial reform.

¹²R.F.Holland, European Decolonization 1918 - 1981: An Introductory Survey, London, 1985, p.53.

¹³See Fitz Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean 1939 - 1945, New York, London 1988, pp. 43 - 45.

The third and most important reason for focusing on West Indian affairs, was the importance of the region and its products for both Britain and the USA during the wartime period. Goods, especially crude and refined oils produced in the Caribbean region were vital to Britain during the war. As food became increasingly scarce, Britain depended on the Caribbean for exports such as sugar, and concentrated orange juice from Jamaica, British Honduras and Trinidad for British children.¹⁴ Crude oil from Trinidad's oil fields accounted for 62.8 per cent of the Empire's production in 1936, and refined oil fuels were manufactured under contract to the Air Ministry and Admiralty. Conditions for workers in the oil companies created wide spread strikes in 1937. The decision of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to support many of the worker's claims stemmed from an early realisation of the importance that Trinidad's oil production would have for Britain if cut off from other supplies.¹⁵ This forecast proved accurate, as during 1942 Britain needed four tankers of oil per day, the majority coming from the oil fields of Trinidad, Venezuela and Aruba.¹⁶

In addition to the importation of goods and oil from the Caribbean, it was the strategic position of the region which made its defence vital to Britain and the United States. Situated between the New World and Europe, ~~some~~ merchant shipping, carrying cargoes of imported goods to and from the American mainland, needed to pass through Caribbean waters and shipping lanes.¹⁷ From the outbreak of war, an allied patrol was sent to protect the region's sea lanes and oil producing territories from German attack.¹⁸ However, since American interests were also invested in the Caribbean, it was assumed by the British government that Germany would not risk provoking the United States by attacking the region.¹⁹ Whilst

¹⁴See Mitchell, Europe in the Caribbean, p.35.

¹⁵ See Johnson, "The Political Uses of Commissions of Enquiry", p.258.

¹⁶Gaylord T.M. Kelshall, The U-Boat War in the Caribbean, Maryland, 1994, p.13.

¹⁷ For example, "America relied heavily on Bauxite from the Guianas, which was vital to the expanding American aircraft industry, sugar, coffee, fruits, leather and beef were imported in considerable quantities. Nearly all the shipping carrying these American destined cargoes had to pass through the Caribbean, or the zone under its control". See Kelshall, The U-Boat War, p.18.

¹⁸The oil fields of Venezuela, Curacao, Aruba and Trinidad were also important to the Germans, 44 per cent of their oil imports coming from this area in 1938. In September 1939, a special Allied Oil Protection Force was deployed to protect this area Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict, p.9.

¹⁹Since the defence of the region was of such importance, there had been government support to increase defence spending in the region, but treasury objections and the pragmatic instinct that America would protect its own interests by guarding the waters around the Caribbean ensured that defence was left mainly to the Americans. Baptiste states that Britain's plans for the defence of the Caribbean were scaled down because it was assumed that the U.S would have a direct interest in the security of the Caribbean, and that the Germans would not want to

American activity in the Caribbean was viewed with suspicion by the Colonial Office and many colonial governments, decisions about that involvement and influence were taken at the highest levels of Government.²⁰ From the outbreak of war, the British assessment of American interests proved correct, as United States 'neutrality' was questioned by Axis powers over its policy in the Caribbean.

From September 1939, American ships patrolled the Caribbean sea, compromising their neutral status by informing Allied powers of German activity in the area. The establishment of United States bases in the West Indies, agreed at the Anglo-American Destroyers Bases Agreement on 2 September 1940, further signalled the United States's commitment to ensure both protection of its own shores, and the sovereignty of the West Indian islands, in case of German attack.²¹ The Trinidad base, in Mucurapo Pasture was a heavily used corridor for maritime traffic between South and North America, Europe and Africa via the Caribbean sea and the Atlantic ocean. The Corridor was used by tanker traffic from oil industries in Venezuela, Trinidad, Aruba, Curacao, and for transporting bauxite from British and Dutch Guiana, In addition, an Allied Oil Protection Force was deployed to watch the movements of German merchant seamen near the Dutch islands.

Axis powers condemned the agreement and one historian, perhaps employing a 'Caribbean-centric' point of view, has seen wide significance in Germany's response: "One result [of the Bases Agreement] was that Hitler began to look landwards and eastwards toward the USSR. Before 1940 was out, he issued Directive No.21, BARBAROSSA (sic),

¹⁹(...continued)

provoke the U.S into the war by attacking the Caribbean, see Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict, p.9.

²⁰Lee & Potter describe the general disapproval of the Colonial Office, and the opposition of Trinidad's Governor to United States involvement in the West Indies and specifically the bases agreement. See The Colonial Office, p.50 & 105.

²¹ The US had already been granted the right to establish bases in 8 British territories in 1939. In 1940 the new agreement allowed the US to install navy and army bases on Great Exuma Island in the Bahamas, in Jamaica, Antigua and St. Lucia, and Trinidad and British Guiana, creating a circle of bases around the Caribbean. See Gaylord T.M.Kelshall, p.4. The establishment of American bases was also to guard against a German move, either around Britain to West Africa, or across North Africa to West Africa and then across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, from where the US and the Panama Canal would be exposed. Kelshall, p.11. This agreement "belied U.S. neutrality" as Roosevelt agreed that the Patrol would assist allies by feeding them intelligence on movements of Axis ships in and around the proposed zone. See Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict, p.11.

for the preparation of a plan to attack the USSR".²² Again in July 1941, the Anglo-American declaration that the United States would resist any attempt to change the sovereignty of the territories, was seen as a virtual declaration of war against Germany. In 1942, the formation of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, ostensibly formed to promote economic and social advancement for the region, was a further signal of the importance attached to maintaining security in the region, at a time when the Caribbean was under considerable attack from German U-boats.²³

The U-boat war in the Caribbean was at its most intensive between February 1942 to August 1943. One historian sees its significance as thus:

During World War II seventeen U-boats were sunk in the Caribbean - 2 percent of the total U-boat losses for the entire war. But for each U-boat sunk in the Caribbean, the Allies lost 23.5 merchant ships. For the German navy, the Caribbean U-boat campaign was the most cost-effective campaign fought by Germany anywhere during World War II.²⁴

By the end of 1942 an estimated 36% of all world wide merchant shipping losses had occurred in the Caribbean. The main battle areas occurred around the mouth of the Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico, and around the Windward passage and the Trinidad area.²⁵ The result of the war was felt in Britain which was cut off from supplies and food, and in the Caribbean regions, where most colonies were dependent on imported goods. By 1942 a shipping and food crisis had occurred, as the sinking of one ship could result in colonies being without supplies for weeks at a time.²⁶

Thus Britain had many reasons to attach importance to West Indian problems: the need for good relations in the event of war, the need to pacify international opinion over its record as a colonial power, and the importance of defence of the region, through American and West Indian cooperation. However, the West Indies were Crown Colonies, which meant that in theory, policies decided in London, such as the Destroyers-Bases Agreement, could be

²²Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict, p.59.

²³Fitz Baptiste, "Caribbean Decolonization Caught Between the Manchester Principles and the Cold War", Presentation at the Conference "Africa in the World", 13 - 15 October 1995, p.27. See also Mitchell, Europe in the Caribbean, p.41.

²⁴Kelshall, The U-Boat War, preface by Dwight R. Messimer, p.XI.

²⁵See Kelshall, The U-Boat War, pp.XIV- XVI.

²⁶See Poole, The Caribbean Commission, p.181.

instigated whether colonial governments were in favour or not.

System of government in the British West Indies

By the 1930s most of the colonial Empire, including all British West Indian islands with the exception of Barbados, were ruled by the Crown Colony system.²⁷ In most cases, this system supplanted the old Representative system which had been installed in colonial territories by European colonialists during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This system had vested power in Legislative Assemblies, who were elected by the small minority of freeholders with franchise. With the abolition of slavery in the mid-nineteenth century, and a growing white and coloured middle class excluded from power (by lack of franchise based on property ownership) the Colonial Office favoured a new system of government which would give direct control to the Crown and would end the unrepresentative nature of the House of Assembly.

Crown Colony government saw effective power exercised by the Colonial Office through the medium of the Governor, appointed by the Crown. For Whitehall, the new system was more efficient, replacing elected members by a Government and Council entirely composed of civil servants and members nominated by the Governor. However, the new system was also welcomed by the ruling stratum as a way of preventing an elected majority of black West Indians from taking over colonial Government. Sir Alan Burns, former Governor of British Honduras describes how many in the ruling elite also began to favour the system:

Gradually, as the white population grew smaller and the number of coloured electors increased, the planters saw the danger of the coloured element securing a majority in the House of Assembly. Much as they disliked control from Downing Street through the Governor, they disliked still more the possibility of a coloured legislature, manned by the descendants of their former slaves. The British government was also anxious to secure control of legislature, by which means alone it would be possible to pass the legislation necessary to secure the social reforms which were the logical results of emancipation. But abandonment of old constitutions and substitution of Crown Colony government was not forced upon the West Indian colonies: it was the deliberate act of the white citizens of these colonies; who alone, in practice, controlled the political machine of those days.²⁸

The exact composition of Executive and Legislative Councils varied in each Crown Colony,

²⁷ With the exception of Barbados and Jamaica, under continuous British rule since the seventeenth century, the other islands had been possessed by various colonial powers from their European settlement to their Independence. Barbados retained its system of representative government and never became a Crown Colony.

²⁸ Sir Alan Burns, *Colonial Civil Servant*, London 1949, p.263.

but broadly speaking the Governor held the absolute majority in both the Executive branch, which was composed of the Governor and his Council, appointed by the Crown, and in the Legislative Council, which consisted of official members, nominated members and elected members. After the First World War, pressure for constitutional change from within the West Indies led the Colonial Office to favour policy that sought to replace nominated members with representatives elected on a wider franchise, thereby attaining a more representative system of rule in the colonies.²⁹ Change was to be introduced gradually, thereby progressing the ideals of legislative reform whilst maintaining political stability. New constitutions were enacted in several West Indian islands to increase the number of elected representatives in Legislative Assemblies. For example, in 1928 British Guiana's new constitution enabled the Legislative Council to contain a majority of elected representatives. However, alongside new constitutions in the Leeward and Windward Isles, Jamaica and Trinidad, was the legal proviso that the Governor was given "emergency powers" of action, which in effect gave him the power to veto any legislation with the concurrence of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.³⁰

In theory, the Governor had considerable powers to act upon his own authority. Supporting this view, Sir Alan Burns is of the opinion that the Governor was able to push through legislation, however unpopular:

In the Crown Colonies the Governor had only to satisfy the Secretary of State on any point of policy or development, confident in his power to carry the point in a Legislative Council which he controlled by the official majority vote. In the Bahamas he had to satisfy the Legislature which was always suspicious of his motives and determined to assert its independence.³¹

It has also been noted however that "in practice, the use of his arbitrary power is blocked by the known unpopularity of such action and the force of public opinion in the colonies".³²

This view is reinforced in the memoirs of Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Permanent Under-Secretary of State from 1938 to 1942, who wrote of the relationship between colonial legislatures and the British government:

²⁹For example, this was one of the wide ranging recommendations of the Wood Report of 1922. Many of its findings would be taken up and again recommended in the Royal West India Commission Report of 1940.

³⁰ Similar powers were given to the Governors of the Leeward Islands and Windward Islands in 1936, to the Governor of Trinidad in 1941 and to the Governor of Jamaica in 1944. See Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.143.

³¹Burns, Colonial Civil Servant p.266.

³²Poole, The Caribbean Commission, p.59.

It is sometimes supposed that the Secretary of State administers colonial territories. That is a complete misunderstanding of the position. Colonies are administered by colonial governments; that is the constitutional position and that is the factual position. But the Secretary of State is responsible to Parliament for colonial administration and all that happens in the colonies: and if anyone doubts the interest now taken in Parliament, let him look through the weekly questions which it falls to the Secretary of state to answer in the House, ranging over the whole field of colonial administration. Consequently, the Secretary of State must be kept fully informed of events in all the colonies. It is not a case of interference from head-quarters; indeed, during the war more authority has been devolved upon colonial governors in various respects, but there is a limit to what is practicable in the way of devolution.³³

Even though power ultimately rested with the Crown, colonial rule balanced pacifying and in some instances resisting the elected members block, made up of a small minority of the plantocracy, and advancing reforms that would enable the large majority a voice in colonial affairs. This meant that the Governor was receptive to opinion emanating from the colony, and was instinctively against enacting any laws or reforms that went against the majority of public opinion. The system had both positive and negative results for West Indians: on the one hand it was seen to perpetuate colonial rule by keeping political power away from the people it concerned, and on the other hand it was welcomed as a government able to institute colonial reforms, free from local economic and political pressures.³⁴

In effect therefore, the Crown Colony system enabled local legislatures to formulate policies and laws which would be enacted providing they gained the sanction of the Crown, as represented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor. The Governor was appointed by the Crown to be its representative in the colony, but the role of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was two fold. First, as the Crown's representative in the colonial Empire, his was the supreme authority, even though his powers varied according to individual constitutions.³⁵ Second, he was answerable to Parliament for the actions of the Colonial Office. As its head, he was responsible for ensuring that British imperial policy in the empire was being carried out satisfactorily, and for representing colonial concerns over that policy to

³³Sir Cosmo Parkinson, The Colonial Office Within, London 1947, p.63.

³⁴Poole, The Caribbean Commission, p.60.

³⁵ During the Parliamentary discussions over labour disturbances in the West Indies, the House of Commons debate on the Trinidad riots in 1938 exposed the problems of the Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore, whose powers varied from an absolute majority in Trinidad, to the position in Barbados where self government gave him no power to initiate any vote of money or any legislation nor to alter the franchise or Constitution except by introduction of a Bill in the House of Commons which would take away self government.

Parliament. A study of the Colonial Office during the war described his role as follows:

The Secretary of State legitimised the action of colonial governments by signifying the Crown's approval. All the powers of the Colonial Office stemmed from the basic constitutional fact that the colonies were subject to the Crown, not to the British Parliament. The relationships between the Crown and the colonies lay largely within the scope of the royal prerogative. The reference of business to the House of Commons was often a matter of courtesy...The Secretary of State had the doubtful privilege of being held responsible to Parliament for what ultimately happened in the colonies without always having adequate power to effect his wishes. Throughout most of the dependent Empire the principal authority in each territory was its Governor. He was constrained in the exercise of his duties by prerogative instruments. Governors were empowered by letters patent which, although they had the force of statute, were normally supplemented by Royal Instructions in order to establish that the form of laws to be administered in each territory might include some expression of local custom. The constitution of a colony, which determined how local laws were made, was only amended by Order in Council. The technical standing of the Secretary of State rested on his entitlement to intervene in any matter of administration which fell within the Governor's authority, and to consider all forms of legislation passed by the territorial legislature, if such existed.³⁶

Therefore Parliament was unable to directly influence laws which emanated from colonial territories, but certain areas of government overrode colonial concerns. For example, matters of defence were withheld from colonial legislatures and control was retained by Parliament, as the 1940 Anglo-American Destroyer Base Agreement illustrates. Discussions and final agreement of the decision was carried out in the highest levels of government with the active involvement of Churchill and Roosevelt, despite opposition from the Colonial Office and the Trinidadian Governor.³⁷

The Colonial Office

The Colonial Office, responsible for administering the Colonial Empire, bore the bulk of responsibility for ensuring that Crown policy was carried out in the Empire. From the 1920s, far more importance became attached to colonial affairs through the influence of Joseph Chamberlain, and in 1925 the Colonial Office separated from the Dominions Office to form its own government department. Its permanent members consisted of, in order of superiority, Permanent Under Secretary of State, Assistant Under Secretary of State and Deputy Under Secretary of State. Under these ranks were the Assistant Secretaries, Principals and Assistant Principals. Reflecting the new emphasis on development and welfare in the colonial Empire,

³⁶Lee & Petter, The Colonial Office, pp.14 &18.

³⁷ibid.

from the late 1920s reorganization to the Office saw the creation of subject as well as geographic departments. In the late 1930s a General and Defence Division, Personnel Division and Economics Division existed alongside the geographic departments: Middle East, West Indies, Far East, Ceylon and Mauritius, Gold Coast and Mediterranean, Nigeria, East Africa, and Tanganyika and Somaliland. In addition, the appointment of permanent advisers to the Secretary of State on development subjects in medicine, agriculture, labour and law further reinforced efforts to improve the social and economic aspects of colonial policy. The presence of geographic divisions did not prevent general questions relating specifically to the West Indies from being discussed amongst different departments. For example, questions regarding aliens, nationality and naturalisation, immigration and emigration were the concern of the General and Defence Division as well as the West Indian department. Whereas the Colonial Office was responsible for administering immigration controls in colonial territories, crossovers occurred with the responsibilities of other departments, such as the Treaty Department of the Foreign Office, who were responsible for passport controls, procedural aspects of international agreements, passports and visa questions, nationality, naturalisation and deportation. Although the Foreign Office took the lead in foreign affairs, during the war, the Colonial Office became involved in major policy areas such as supply and production and manpower for the armed forces.³⁸ Differences over implementing policy occurred between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, particularly over matters relating to refugees in areas administered by the Colonial Office. This was most clearly expressed in Palestine, where the Middle Eastern department of the Colonial Office and the Refugee Section of the Foreign Office clashed frequently over the interpretation of government policy.³⁹

Since the Secretary of State for the Colonies was also responsible to Parliament, the Colonial Office was a conduit between Colonial Governments and other British Government departments, such as the Home and Foreign Office. It functioned to inform and implement policy directives from London, and at the same time advise London of policy initiatives suggested by the Governor and Colonial Legislatures in the colonies. The essential split that this chapter examines is

³⁸See Lee & Petter, The Colonial Office, pp. 25 - 67.

³⁹ For a description of the battles between departments in the Foreign and Colonial Office over interpretations of government policy in Palestine, see Ronald Zweig, Britain and Palestine During the Second World War, London, 1986.

whether this two way relationship can be viewed as one of “divided loyalty” for the Colonial Office. On the one hand, it represented the interests of the colonial Empire. On the other hand, it was responsible for ensuring that the Secretary of State implemented government policy within the Empire, whether or not that policy countered colonial interests.⁴⁰

Therefore when examining policy decisions which affected refugees, the main focus of this chapter lies in the question: which took precedence, the interests of a specific colony, or the interests of the British government?

- II -

Immigration regulations

The following section charts the implementation of immigration controls in West Indian colonies from the 1930s and the impact they had on the refugee crisis in Europe. In turn, it examines how the effect of immigration controls in Britain and other countries led to attempts to formulate specific legislation against refugee admittance in West Indian colonies. Faced with representing both metropolitan and colonial concerns, it examines how the Colonial Office defended West Indian interests whilst under considerable pressure to allow refugee migration to the colonies.

By the 1930s, large scale immigration to the West Indies had ceased, and the attitude of the Colonial Office, with the active backing of colonial governments was to prevent further migration to the Caribbean. The last wave of massive immigration had seen thousands of Madeirans, Indians and Chinese migrate to the West Indies as indentured labourers, taking the place of freed slaves in the still profitable sugar industry.⁴¹ At the end of the nineteenth

⁴⁰Morley Ayearst describes this division as follows: “The Colonial Office has the duty of representing the colonies and their interests as they may be affected by the policies of Commonwealth countries, the various departments of the British government, other countries and international bodies. This is done by information and suggestions given to the Secretary of State for the Colonies who will then make the proper representations in Cabinet meetings. The other aspect of Colonial Office responsibility is seen in the general oversight of the Colonial governments to ensure that the policies of the British government are duly carried out by the Colonial Service”. See The British West Indies, p.138.

⁴¹Eric Williams has estimated that between 1838 and 1917 no fewer than 238,000 Indians were introduced into British Guiana, 145,000 into Trinidad, 21,500 into Jamaica, 39,000 into Guadeloupe, 34,000 into Surinam, 1,550 into St. Lucia, 1,820 into St. Vincent, 2,570 into Grenada. The majority of workers came from India, but thousands of Madeirans went to British Guiana and Chinese to the West Indies and Cuba. Between 1853 and 1879 some 14,000 went to British Guiana. In 1861 an estimated 34,834 Chinese were working in Cuba. By 1877 their numbers had increased to 53,811, some three per cent of the total population. See Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, p.348. The majority of Chinese immigrants to Trinidad arrived after the abolition of slavery, some 1,657 by 1865. Although some Chinese continued to arrive throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Jamaica and British Guiana (where the majority of Chinese labourers had gone to) and from China, their numbers were small. See Roy Dereck McCree, “The Chinese Game of Whe Whe in Trinidad: From Criminalization to Criminalization”,

century, with the sugar industry in decline, immigration began to be replaced with emigration, both seasonal and permanent, to South and North America, other areas in the Caribbean, to Asia and to Europe. Although the West Indian sugar industry received a brief boom during World War I, in 1929 it was again in crisis, caused by the general world wide depression and competition from sugar industries in other parts of the world. Since the majority of the West Indian population were dependent on wages from sugar estates, unemployment soared. In addition, seasonal migration, a source of employment for many West Indians, also ended as the depression hit industry in the Panama Canal, Venezuela, Cuba and other neighbouring countries. Because of the high unemployment, measures were taken to curb the influx of immigrants looking for work. Cuba began to repatriate workers, and British colonies began to adopt similar policies.

In 1931, a statement prepared by the Colonial Office mapped out the immigration restrictions in force in the colonial Empire. Generally, legislation existed in all British non-self-governing Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Territories to prohibit the entry of aliens unless they complied with certain conditions: possession of a valid visa and passport, that the immigrant was not a criminal, “of bad character”, a pauper or suffering from certain diseases, and that the immigrant possessed adequate funds for the cost of repatriation if unable to make a living in the territory. For this last condition, many territories demanded a deposit or proof of a certain amount of capital before entry was allowed.⁴²

Due, however, to the patchwork nature of legislation in the colonial territories, there were many exceptions, particularly in the West Indies, where no colony had exactly the same requirements. Most ideas for draft legislation concerning immigration came from the colonies concerned, where it would be discussed by the legislature and Governor, and then passed on to the Colonial Office for comment and approval. Once the Secretary of State for the Colonies had approved the format, the bill could become law. At other times the Colonial Office in consort with the Secretary of State for the Colonies would suggest legislation to the

⁴¹(...continued)

Caribbean Quarterly, Volume 42, Nos.2-3, June-September, 1996, p.3.

⁴²“Statement Showing the Immigration Restrictions in force in British non-self-governing Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Territories administered under the authority of His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom”, undated, but almost certainly written in 1931, Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO) CO 318/412/4.

Governor and if approved by the Legislative Council, it would then become law.⁴³

During the 1930s, a series of Laws were enacted in the West Indies to curb immigration. In 1931 only Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Windward Islands demanded passports, and no colonies asked for visas. All had legislation which demanded certain sums as deposits, and excluded immigrants on the standard grounds. The deposit required was generally higher in the case of a non-British citizen. For example, the entry requirements to British Guiana included a minimum deposit of \$24 for a British subject, and \$96 for a non-British subject. Some colonies had added further restrictions such as in the Bahamas and Jamaica. In the Bahamas an immigrant had to provide a certificate of good character and a valid medical certificate and in Jamaica, an immigrant had to pass a literacy test in any given language or deposit £100 with an immigration official.⁴⁴ The literacy test in Jamaica had been enacted in 1919, following an attempt to limit immigration to the United States with the addition of a literacy test to the Immigration Statutes in 1917.⁴⁵

By 1933 passports were required in all West Indian colonies with the exception of the Bahamas, but only Jamaica and British Honduras demanded visas.⁴⁶ These immigration restrictions were aimed mainly at preventing certain groups from entry by increasing the amount of deposit needed. Syrians and Chinese were singled out by colonial governments as “undesirable immigrants”, seen to compete against West Indians in certain sectors of the economy, particularly in trade and dry goods. In Jamaica for example, this issue had become a diplomatic problem between the Chinese Charge D’Affaires and the Colonial Office, when legislation was enacted with the specific intention of preventing further Chinese from

⁴³The Governor could pass legislation without the consent of the members of the Legislative Assembly, since the Governor held the majority in both the Legislative and Executive branches of colonial government but as already discussed, this would be unlikely.

⁴⁴ See footnote 42, statement showing immigration regulations in force in 1931. See also J. Simmens, internal memorandum on immigration requirements to West Indian colonies, 1 March 1933, PRO CO 318/412/4.

⁴⁵ See Mark Wischnitzer, *To Dwell In Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800*, Philadelphia, 1948, p.142. However, Roger Daniels has noted that the test itself had little impact on stemming immigration into the United States, see Daniels, “The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930 - 1945”, ed., Jarrell C. Jackman & Carla M. Borden, Washington 1983, p.64.

⁴⁶ In 1931 Trinidad enacted an Ordinance requiring a valid passport and deposit of £50. Jamaica enacted an Ordinance requiring both a valid passport and visa. In 1932 Barbados passed an Act requiring aliens to possess valid passports and British Honduras asked for visas and passports. See PRO CO 318/412/4; PRO CO 323/1604/3; PRO CO 323/412/4. For details on Barbados Passport Act see summary of replies to Circular of 11 August 1938, PRO CO 323/1604/3, and *Laws of Barbados, vol.III, Part IV, Session 1932 - 1933*, Barbados, 1933, Institute for Advanced Legal Studies (henceforth IALS).

immigrating to the colony.⁴⁷ In Trinidad, an immigration committee which advocated setting a deposit of \$50 identified “two outstanding classes of aliens, whose advent to the colony and methods of gaining a livelihood had attracted most attention of recent years...the Chinese and Syrians”. The report also found that amongst immigrants of British nationality were persons of alien race, Chinese from Hong Kong and Palestinians from TransJordan whose entry to the colony should also be discouraged.⁴⁸ Yet despite the accretion of various immigration Ordinances in the early 1930s, the West Indies, alongside other colonial territories remained relatively open to immigrants with means. Whilst Governors in some dependencies had power to prevent entry of all aliens who fell under the broad definition of “undesirable” immigrants, that definition excluded those possessing sufficient means for deposit or guarantee and / or passport and / or visas.⁴⁹

Early immigration legislation had been formulated in response to specific West Indian problems: overpopulation and unemployment. They concentrated on protecting West Indian workers by preventing certain groups, such as Syrian and Chinese immigrants from competing for work. These restrictions were introduced during the period when Britain and the United States had introduced anti-immigration legislation to curb the mass movement of refugees and migrants leaving Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ Yet reduced numbers continued to emigrate

⁴⁷For example, the changes to immigration in Jamaica in 1931 registered a protest from the Chinese Charge D’Affaires in London, PRO CO 351 Registers, 86135/31. Again in 1934, a Law, Number 32 of 1933, the Aliens Admission and Deportation Regulation which was enacted on 24.1.34 was sent by the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office, who were instructed to inform consular offices not to grant visas to persons of Chinese or Syrian origin without prior reference to the Jamaican Government, PRO CO 351 Registers, Acting Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies 27.4.34, file 36431/34 (destroyed).

⁴⁸Cutting from the Port of Spain Gazette, 21 May 1931, included in the American Vice Consul’s report on immigration to Trinidad to the Secretary of State, Washington, 27 May 1931, National Archives Washington, (hereafter NA), Record Group 59, Decimal File 1930 - 39, Box number 6222, file no.844G.55/4.

⁴⁹For example, the Barbados Passport Act of 1932 repealed the Aliens Restriction Act of 1916 and gave the Governor wide powers to prevent the landing of “of all immigrants bar those able to assist the economic development of the colony and temporary visitors”. It also made the production of passports mandatory. This law went further than any other colony. Most gave Governors power to ban those categorised as “undesirable” immigrants: indigents, paupers, criminals, the sick and those without passports and/or visas. For example, the British Honduras Undesirable Immigrants Ordinance of 1932 restricted the immigration of “undesirable persons”. Categories defining “undesirable persons” were standard as above. However, the Governor was able to admit them if they deposited the sum of \$ 100, had a valid engagement in the colony, or gave a security of \$100. See Ordinance No.18 of 1932, Ordinances of British Honduras Passed in the Year 1932, Belize, 1933, IALS and Barbados Passport Act 1932, Laws of Barbados, Vol.III, Part IV, Session 1932 - 1933, Barbados, 1933, IALS.

⁵⁰Immigration Statutes introduced in 1921 and 1924 transformed immigration policy in the United States, drastically limiting annual immigration to a quota system which militated against the entry of Eastern European refugees and immigrants. In Britain the 1905 Aliens Act was the first attempt to restrict immigration. This was followed in 1914 and extended in 1919 by the Aliens Restriction and Aliens Restriction (Amendment)Act, allowing the entry of immigrants only at the discretion of immigration officers. Laws in West Indian colonies appear to have been introduced only after alien restrictions were introduced in Britain and the United States. For example, in

westwards, many entering Central and South America, and the Caribbean, anticipating that from here, they would be eligible to re-apply for entry to the United States.⁵¹ In 1931 the Colonial Office began debating whether immigration restrictions were sufficient to prevent numbers of refugees from attempting to enter the West Indies, either on their own initiative, or with the aid of refugee organisations, able to fund their entry.⁵² In November 1931 the Foreign Office alerted the Colonial Office to a letter from their Passport Control Officer in France. He wrote that he had received... “A number of enquiries as to the conditions for entering Bermuda, Trinidad and other Islands, emanating from Russians, Poles, Palestinians and others of the immigrant type.” He felt that attention was turning to British West Indian possessions... “in view of the embargo on immigration, which has recently been extended to most of those countries formerly easy of access.” He had been advising applicants that it was unlikely they would find a welcome unless they were in a position to support themselves and their dependants and asked for guidance.⁵³ In response, the Colonial Office began to debate whether immigration regulations in the colonial Empire should be changed, particularly in the West Indies. A memorandum suggested that:

If the hungry multitudes of Central Europe hears of this, as they very well may . . . you might get a general invasion of Poles and heaven knows what! . . . Barbados, Windwards and Leewards are danger spots because of lack of restrictions. We have a fairly difficult problem in many of these places with existing over-population and prospects of returned emigrants from Central and South America. I doubt if there is any serious danger of a flood of Bohunks [sic] but we may as well be on our guard.⁵⁴

⁵⁰(...continued)

Barbados, the 1909 Paupers Prevention Act would appear to be the first law in force until 1916, when it was replaced by the Aliens Restriction Act, which in turn was replaced by the 1932 Passports Act. Jamaica introduced its first immigration Restriction Law in 1919, enacting a Control of Aliens Law in 1920 and a Passport Law in 1925. In 1933 the Aliens Admission and Deportation Regulation Law replaced the 1920 Law controlling the admission of aliens. Trinidad's first immigration Ordinance relating to aliens was passed in 1924 and amended in 1926 when it remained in place until 1931. For details on these Acts, Laws and Ordinances, see Laws of Barbados, British Guiana Ordinances, Ordinances of British Honduras, Laws of Jamaica, Ordinances Passed by the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, published annually by government printer in the colony of issue, IALS .

⁵¹See Haim Avni, “Patterns of Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust”, Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era, Braham, ed., NY 1985, p.89. During this period Eastern European Jews settled in many British West Indian colonies, most having been en route for South American countries.

⁵²Haim Avni has noted that in response to immigration restrictions in the United States, after 1928 “the combined Jewish emigration agencies HIAS-JCA-Emigdirect ... came to regard Latin America as a preferred destination for Jewish emigrants”. See *ibid*, p.89. Since these organisations helped emigrants with loans for deposits and travel, the Colonial Office may well have become worried that organisations would also fund entry to West Indian destinations.

⁵³Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7 November 1931, enclosing letter from M. Jeffes, Passport Control Officer, France to Major H E Spencer, Passport Control Department, Foreign Office, 5 November 1931, PRO CO 318/412/4.

⁵⁴Clauson to Beckett, internal memorandum, Colonial Office, 4 December 1931, PRO CO 318/412/4.

It was decided that the Passport Control Officer should “continue his present practice in the case of Eastern Europeans or Asiatics attempting to emigrate to British Colonies” and for the West India department to be asked to consider tightening up immigration laws in the colonies.⁵⁵

The General Department of the Colonial Office prepared a draft reply for the Foreign Office, listing existing immigration requirements. It advised that the Colonial Secretary was considering whether immigration regulations should be revised. In the interim, the Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, was informed that “In present conditions it is most undesirable that aliens from Central Europe should endeavour to emigrate to, and establish themselves in, these Colonies.”⁵⁶ The Foreign Office was asked to advise Passport Control Officers to “do everything possible to discourage emigration to the West Indies.” This advice laid the foundation of all future responses to enquiries about refugee settlement in the West Indies, although pressure from other departments and from outside agencies would begin to force a more active investigation.

In January 1933, an internal Colonial Office review of immigration noted that the potential danger of the West Indies being flooded by refugees from Eastern Europe had not occurred. Beckett wrote that since 1931 they had heard no more from Mr. Jeffes, the Passport Control Officer, and that no large scale flow of refugees had occurred. He noted that although the matter of immigration controls was not pressing, new legislation was needed to protect the West Indies from “undesirable immigrants.”⁵⁷ The Colonial Office would not hear again from Passport Control Officers until 1938, when the refugee situation in Europe had reached crisis proportions. Nevertheless, during the next few years, further immigration restrictions were enacted in West Indian colonies.

These immigration laws were not initiated in response to the refugee crisis in Europe, but would become important instruments in keeping refugees out of the West Indies. As the Colonial Office Review had noted in 1933, no refugee crisis had presented itself to Passport Control Officers in Europe or to immigration officials in West Indian ports. In addition,

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ R V Vernon, Colonial Office to Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 8 December 1931, PRO CO 318/412/4.

⁵⁷ D. Beckett, Colonial Office memorandum, 12 January 1933, PRO CO 318/412/4..

during the first few years of Nazi rule, emigration was slow and manageable, the majority of emigrants migrating to Europe, Palestine or the United States. Yet between 1933 and 1936, Ordinances were enacted in British Honduras, British Guiana, the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad which gave Governors further powers to restrict or in some cases ban the entry of indigent aliens.⁵⁸ As with adjustments to previous legislation, these new laws reflected the general world wide depression and were primarily designed to prevent workers from migrating to the Caribbean, and again specifically targeted Chinese and Syrian immigrants. Whilst these Ordinances gained the approval of the Secretary of State, he was unwilling to allow legislation which specifically targeted certain groups of immigrants. As would happen in later cases concerning refugees from Europe, Colonial Office policy sought to ban entry under “general” powers rather than enact legislation which could incur diplomatic repercussions and criticism of its policies. For example, in Jamaica, the Governor sought Colonial Office advice over drafting new legislation to prevent the entry of Chinese to Jamaica and in 1938 proposed to amend the Aliens Law.⁵⁹ In Trinidad, the Immigration Restriction Ordinance of 1936 did not explicitly mention Syrian and Chinese immigrants but its purpose was clear by making the deposits required of immigrants far in excess of the cost of their return passage.⁶⁰ The Ordinance, however, went further than legislation in other colonies and gave the Governor the power to temporarily extend the definition of “prohibited immigrants” to cover virtually any individual or group of persons by special Order in Council.⁶¹ As we shall see this had a major impact on refugee entry to the West Indies.

At the same time as new legislation was being introduced in the West Indies, Britain, alongside other countries, instigated a series of measures which further exacerbated problems for Jews attempting to leave the Reich. In 1936 Britain had begun to change her policy over

⁵⁸ For example, in British Honduras the 1936 Destitutes Act stated that in addition to a \$100 deposit, aliens could land only with the approval of the Governor. In Trinidad the Ordinance also gave the Governor wide ranging powers, and set different rates of deposits: \$250 for Europe, North and South America and the North Atlantic, \$100 from the British West Indies and \$500 from elsewhere. See PRO CO 318/440/5; PRO CO 123/376/6.

⁵⁹ See PRO CO 351, Registers, 68637/35 (destroyed), 68637/36, and 68637/38. In 1939 the Governor advised the Secretary of State that all alien Chinese should be debarred from entering Jamaica unless as tourists or with special permission granted by the government See PRO CO 351 Registers, 68637/39.

⁶⁰ Tony Martin writes that “Governor Sir Murchison Fletcher advised the Colonial Office confidentially in 1937 that the law was ‘frankly designed for the purpose of preventing entry into the colony, and [was] aimed more particularly at Chinese and Syrians, against whom the Labour leaders can readily incense public opinion”. See Tony Martin, “Jews to Trinidad”, Paper read at the annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Santo Domingo, March 1991, p.12.

⁶¹ See Immigration (Restriction) Ordinance, No.4 of 1936, Ordinances Passed by the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago During the Year 1936, Trinidad, 1937, IALS.

Jewish admittance to Palestine. Arab unrest during 1936 resulted in the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, announced by the Colonial Office on 18 May 1936. The Peel Commission report, in July 1937 placed the partition of Palestine and creation of a separate Jewish state on the political agenda. By July 1937 the number of certificates issued had been reduced to a trickle, although immigration on "A" certificates, that is those possessing sufficient capital, remained unchanged.⁶² As Nazi persecution increased, measures were also introduced to prevent a large influx of refugees arriving in Britain. After the annexation of Austria in March 1938, forced Jewish emigration from Greater Germany became the main plank of Nazi Jewish policy. Consequently, between March 1938 and the outbreak of war, a refugee crisis was pushed onto the international agenda as thousands of destitute refugees were sent from Greater Germany. From this point onwards, "panic migration", in the phrase of the Joint Distribution Committee in America, would see hundreds of refugees forced to board ships across the Atlantic without the necessary documents to allow them entry. In March 1938, in response to the Anschluss, a decision was taken to introduce visas for Germans and Austrians. Since Jewish refugees were made to sign undertakings never to return and had their assets and property seized by the State, this proved an effective means of preventing many from emigrating to Britain.⁶³

On 28 April 1938 the Foreign Office issued a Circular which gave details of the new visa requirements and their relevance for the colonial Empire. It informed Consular officials that visas were now necessary for Austrian passports and would be required for German passports from 21 May. It stated that :

It is not proposed at this stage to issue any special detailed instructions regarding colonies but in any case in which there is doubt whether the applicant will be in possession of adequate means on his arrival in a colony, or as to his readmission to German or Austrian territory, or in any case of doubt, visas should not be granted without prior reference to the authorities in the territory concerned.⁶⁴

Since, however, visas were not required in many parts of the colonial Empire, these instructions were not sufficient for Passport Control Officers at the receiving end of the

⁶²Herbert Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (2)", Leo Baeck Year Book, XXVI, London 1981, pp.343 - 409, p.353 (hereafter Strauss 2); For a detailed analysis of British policy regarding Palestine, see Ronald Zweig, Britain and Palestine during the Second World War, London 1986.

⁶³See Sherman, Island Refuge, p.88 and for a detailed background to the decision to instigate visas, see London PhD, pp.147 - 193.

⁶⁴Circular S.12994, Passport Control Department, Foreign Office, 28 April 1938, PRO CO 323/1603/3.

refugee crisis. Daily, Consular offices in Europe were besieged by thousands of enquiries from refugees and organisations acting on their behalf, asking for information regarding areas in the British Empire which might take individuals, or large numbers of refugees.

In April 1938, the Passport Control Officer in Vienna, Kendrick, wrote to the Foreign Office asking for guidance concerning policy to be adopted regarding the emigration of Jews to various parts of the British Empire. He wished to draw to their attention the “desperate situation of the Jews in this country”, and stated that “large numbers of Jews are now trying to obtain permission to proceed [to parts of the British Empire]... and we are now endeavoring to discourage such people from making the attempt until we are in possession of more detailed instructions. It is certain, however, that many are already on their way there.”⁶⁵ His staff had no specific instructions regarding those countries and were discouraging applicants from proceeding. He asked how many settlers each part of the British Empire would be prepared to consider, what qualifications were needed, and whether Jews in large numbers would be accepted anywhere.

The Colonial Office sent their response on 21 May to the Foreign Office for distribution to Passport Control Officers throughout Europe. Regarding individual applications, it again gave the basic requirements of entry to colonial dependencies, stating that provided applicants obtain the necessary passport facilities and complied with existing immigration requirements there were no restrictions on entry. However, immigrants would need to show either substantive means or definite prospects of employment. Regarding settlement prospects in the colonial Empire, the draft stated that although enquiries were proceeding, no area had been found. Turning to refugees with qualifications, it informed the Foreign Office that recent enquiries of Colonial Governors had yielded negative results and that “with the exception of one or two possible openings for individuals with special qualifications, there is no prospect for such refugees in these territories”. The draft ended with the advice that “Mr MacDonald regrets that he sees no alternative to instructing the British Passport Control Officer in Vienna that he should strongly discourage Jewish refugees from attempting to go to

⁶⁵Kendrick, PCO Vienna to Foreign Office, 26 April 1938. Passed on to Colonial Office 4 May 1938, see PRO CO 323/1605/2. Sherman has described the strain that Kendrick and his staff were subjected to in coping with the immense numbers of refugees. Foreign Office correspondence has revealed that “... his staff are so overwrought that they will burst into tears at the slightest provocation and every means must be found of easing their burden’, Gainer to Hutcheson, August 2, 1938, FO 372/3284, T 10774/3272/378”, cited in Island Refuge, p.134.

any of the Colonial Dependencies unless they have definite offers of employment".⁶⁶

In fact, the reply deliberately excluded possibilities for Jewish settlement in British Honduras, where in response to recent enquiries the Governor had indicated that he would look favourably on a plan for Jewish settlement there. Hibbert, who drafted the reply for the Colonial Office, had advised MacDonald that "it would be a mistake to indicate in our letter to the Foreign Office that possibilities exist in British Honduras. The Governor presumably has in mind a very small number of settlers. If we pass the information on to Vienna there will be a rush of Austrian refugees, some possibly of a very undesirable type".⁶⁷ Written at a time when Britain was under mounting pressure to help assuage the refugee crisis, Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Permanent Under Secretary in the Colonial Office commented of the reply that it:

In effect says that we can do nothing. I am afraid that no other reply is possible; but, regarded as a response to such an appeal it is not one of which we can feel particularly proud, or which will bring us any credit in the eyes of the world. People will find it hard to believe that in all the wide expanse of the colonial Empire there is really no corner where some of these wretched victims of persecution could find shelter. However, this has been gone into before, and the conclusion reached is always the same.⁶⁸

Alerting the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Dufferin, about the contents of the letter, he justified its response, explaining that a Colonial Circular sent in 1937 had provoked negative replies from Colonial Governors asked about possibilities for individual refugees and for mass settlement projects. With the exception of a possible small settlement in British Honduras, he felt that the Colonial Empire would have to be ruled out. In regard to the possible repercussions of such a reply, he stated that:

It is all very well for the British Passport Control Officer in Vienna to write as he does: everyone here will have sympathy with the wretched Jews in Austria, and everyone would like to help them. But, while doubtless there will be a good deal of pressure, it is not specially [sic]for His Majesty's Government to find homes for Jewish refugees.⁶⁹

Yet as negative as this response was, it reflected accurately colonial attitudes towards refugee

⁶⁶F.J. Howard, Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 21 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1603/1.

⁶⁷Hibbert to Parkinson, internal memorandum, 13 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

⁶⁸Sir Cosmo Parkinson, internal Colonial Office memorandum, 11 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

⁶⁹Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Lord Dufferin, 16 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2. A further note in Colonial Office minutes (unsigned) read that "I suppose that it is better to be as brutal as the draft than to hold out false hopes". See PRO CO 323/1605/2.

admittance. In February 1938 Britain had signed a League of Nations Convention in Geneva, which was designed to extend the rights of refugees made stateless from Germany and Austria. The Convention became virtually meaningless, as objections by signatories including Britain exempted them from altering existing immigration controls.⁷⁰ At the time of signing, the British colonial Empire had been excluded from the Convention because there had been insufficient time to consult colonial governments over any objections that they might have. In August 1938 a Circular was sent to the colonies, including the text of the Convention and asking whether amendments needed to be made.⁷¹ Replying, most colonies agreed to the Convention with the proviso that Britain's objections would also apply to them, thereby retaining individual control over the entry of any alien refugees. Barbados refused to sign the Convention, arguing that it would have to amend its 1932 Passport Control Act which was contrary to the spirit of the Convention, as it "wishes to continue its policy of keeping out all immigrants other than those with considerable funds and to make entry of refugees in any case dependent on the possession of a travel document entitling the holder to return to the country of issue of the travel document".⁷² Since most refugees were unable to return to their country of origin, the 1932 Act is a good illustration of how existing legislation was able to prevent large numbers of refugees from entering colonies such as Barbados.

As refugees began to be forcibly removed from Greater Germany, the numbers of refugees either applying to enter colonies, or arriving at colonial ports increased dramatically. With large numbers of refugees attempting, and in Trinidad's case, arriving in the West Indies, many Colonies now submitted to the Colonial Office for approval a series of new legislation specifically designed to barr refugee entry. Whilst these proposals created policy dilemmas for the Colonial Office, during 1939 legislation was passed which gave Governor's wide ranging powers to prohibit individual immigration. Refugees who were able to comply with the new conditions continued to be admitted, but the legislation effectively protected the West Indies from a massive influx of refugees.

⁷⁰See Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp.81 - 84 and London, PhD, pp.170-172.

⁷¹Extract from Official Report, Intergovernmental Conference for the adoption of legal status of refugees from Germany, 27 April 1938, PRO CO 323/1604/2.

⁷²It further noted that "even to allow refugees temporarily to reside in the colony while making arrangements for permanent residence elsewhere would cause difficulty as the local Immigration Laws do not provide for temporary permits and a person given permission to land could not be compelled to leave." See Summary of replies to Circular of 11 August 1938, undated, PRO CO 323/1604/3. Since Barbados was not a Crown Colony, the legislature had the power to reject signing the Convention.

Trinidad was the first colony to specifically ban refugee immigration. From 1938 onwards, refugee organisations had been sending refugees to Trinidad, where no visas were required and the deposit of \$250 was paid for by refugees or organisations on their behalf. In December 1938 the Colonial Office had contacted the Acting Governor, informing him of the increased number of enquiries received by them, and warned him to expect “ a considerable influx of individual immigrants in December.”⁷³ During the first month of January, the Governor informed the Colonial Office that he wished to take action under the 1936 Immigration Ordinance and create an Order in Council, prohibiting refugee immigration for a six month period. He justified the legislation in view of the steady flow of refugees into the colony, mainly directed there by refugee organisations aware of the lack of visa requirements. He reported that during the first week of January, a Red Star liner, chartered by a Jewish organisation, was hoping to land with some 297 refugees on board. During that week he claimed some 461 Jews had arrived, and a further number were expected on two steamers, the Caribia, of the Hamburg Amerika Line due to arrive at the end of January, and the Koenigstein, specially chartered to bring 300 refugees to Trinidad. He considered it impossible to accept further refugees and therefore wished to prohibit the immigration of refugees for a period of six months from 15 January 1939.⁷⁴

In view of the “special circumstances” existing in Trinidad, the Secretary of State allowed the legislation, which was enacted on 15 January 1939. The Order declared that alien refugees would be deemed on economic grounds to be undesirable immigrants, and would be prohibited from entering Trinidad from 15 January 1939 until further notice. In a defensive memorandum which only served to highlight the contradictions in the legislation, the Colonial Office noted that “Although there had been no suggestion that the Order should discriminate in terms against refugees from particular countries, the term “alien refugees” has been defined to mean refugees from certain named countries”, namely, Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Danzig, Memel, Lithuania, Romania and Italy.⁷⁵ Henceforth, only those refugees who had set sail before the Order of 15 January would be admitted to the

⁷³“Immigration General Policy 1939”, Colonial Office memorandum summarising immigration regulations, (undated and unsigned), PRO CO 318/440/5.

⁷⁴Colonial Office memorandum, undated and unsigned, PRO CO 318/440/5 and Colonial Office memorandum by J.G. Hibbert explaining the history of the Koenigstein and Caribia, 3 February 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6.

⁷⁵ See Colonial Office memorandum on immigration regulations in West Indian colonies, 1939, (unsigned and undated), PRO CO 318/440/5.

colony.⁷⁶

The effect of the Trinidad ban was immediate. Once the intention to ban refugee immigration was communicated to Consulates and refugee organisations in Europe, applications to other West Indian colonies increased dramatically. The Governors of British Guiana, British Honduras, Barbados, the Leeward Islands and Jamaica all contacted the Secretary of State for the Colonies to inform him that they had received increased numbers of applications to enter their colonies, and desired to enact similar legislation as had been introduced in Trinidad.⁷⁷ These requests posed problems for the Colonial Office. Considerations included the need to protect the West Indies from a large influx of refugees whilst following policy directives from London which discouraged the introduction of legislation which would be seen as discriminatory. During 1938, the Colonial Office had sent on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Colonies a series of Circulars to the colonial Empire, stressing the need for the Empire to play a part in solving the refugee crisis. For example, in December 1938, Colonies had been informed that given the “desperate” situation of the Jews in Germany, the Intergovernmental Committee, formed after the Evian Conference, was continuing efforts to place refugees, in either small or large scale settlements. The Colonial Secretary was “anxious that the Colonial Empire should play its part in furnishing a contribution towards the solution of this grave and most urgent problem”. The Circular did, however, note that the West Indies and the Mediterranean areas were not suitable at present for small or large scale refugee settlement, although he urged that they consider the admittance of suitably qualified individuals, asking them to give “sympathetic consideration” to any schemes of organised settlement and also to any applications from individual refugees. Colonial Governments were informed that whilst immigration regulations should not be relaxed in favour of foreign refugees, the Secretary of State “did, however, greatly deprecate the introduction of any restrictions expressly designed to render the entry of refugees from Germany more

⁷⁶ See Colonial Office memorandum on immigration regulations in West Indian colonies, 1939, (unsigned and undated), PRO CO 318/440/5. Between January and September 1939 relatives and fiancées of refugees were allowed into the colony. With the outbreak of war, all permits issued were rescinded, but in March 1940 were revalidated.

⁷⁷ Governor British Honduras to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 14 January 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6; Memorandum by K Robinson referring to telegrams from British Guiana and British Honduras, 17 January 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6; Memorandum by K Robinson regarding Jamaica, Barbados and Leeward, 24 January 1939, PRO CO 318/440/5.

difficult.”⁷⁸

Given the above instructions arriving concurrently with requests to tighten immigration controls, Colonial Office staff faced a dilemma over policy. During January, the Colonial Office discussed how to respond to requests to shape new legislation whilst not acting against the spirit of the December Circular. Commenting on the instructions contained in the Circular, Beckett, from the West India department noted that “The Circular certainly deprecates the introduction of legislation expressly designed to render the entry of refugees from Germany more difficult, but it does not follow that there is the same objection to a general tightening up of immigration restriction in Colonies which have an overpopulation and unemployment problems”.⁷⁹ There was general agreement that the legislation enacted in Trinidad was unsatisfactory, leaving the Colonial Office open to accusations of discrimination. Whilst the Secretary of State had concurred with the Trinidad legislation, justified in his view because of the large numbers present in the colony, he was unwilling to allow other colonies to specifically exclude certain groups by introducing new legislation. Existing legislation had already provoked protest from Chinese and Indian governments (over the amounts of deposits asked for) and given the international attention focused on Britain’s part in solving the refugee crisis, specific legislation barring refugees would provoke criticism from refugee bodies and foreign governments. Yet most colonies had requested that similar legislation be enacted. For example, British Honduras had sent draft legislation for approval which raised the deposit to \$1000 and prohibited the entry into British Honduras of “any alien who is a native or who has been ordinarily resident in, any part of Europe”, excepting that the individual could make the deposit and would undertake to engage in no employment other than agriculture.⁸⁰ This Order was rejected by the Colonial Office on the grounds that the Governor already had sufficient powers to barr immigrants under existing powers. The Secretary of State advised the Governor that although he appreciated the Order was based on the recent Trinidad model, it exposed the Government to a “charge of discrimination against nationals of particular countries” and that “as far as there are refugees with reasonable funds and agricultural experience, it is agreed that it is desirable that they

⁷⁸Circular from Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies 1 December 1938 , PRO CO 323/1604/1.

⁷⁹A.Beckett, Colonial Office Memorandum, 5 January 1939, PRO CO 318/440/5.

⁸⁰William Johnston, Governor of British Honduras, draft Statutory Rules and Orders 1939, No.51, Order, “Prohibiting the entry of certain kinds of aliens into the Colony”, PRO CO 123/376/6.

should be admitted”.⁸¹

Summing up the Colonial Office position, K.E. Robinson of the West India department noted that the Colonial Office “must make it quite clear that while we approve a policy of selection, we are not in favour of wholesale restriction, except in special circumstances”.⁸² In a further note, he stated that “in general, our line has been to consider whether there were any special circumstances in a particular colony which would justify the restriction of immigration or whether the Governor possessed the necessary powers to deal with individual applications on their merits”.⁸³ Therefore the Colonial Office advised Governors to continue, under their existing legislative powers to individually assess entry, under the normal policy: namely the right to exclude “undesirable” or “destitute” aliens; passport and visa restrictions; and the amount of deposit required to admit or reject applicants individually.

Yet since many refugees were able to fulfil immigration requirements, (often by possessing the necessary deposit), communication to the Colonial Office showed that Governors were unable to prevent refugee entry under existing legislation. Therefore, in a policy favouring uniformity, the Colonial Office introduced new legislation which gave Governors further powers to prohibit the entry of any alien whilst avoiding specifically naming refugees as prohibited immigrants. New Ordinances were introduced to this effect in British Guiana in February, Barbados in May and British Honduras in June and in September, Trinidad also amended its legislation, adding the same clause that the Governor may, “at his absolute discretion”, prohibit the entry of any alien into the colony.⁸⁴

On 10 January 1939 the Trinidad Order was communicated to the British Ambassador in

⁸¹Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor of British Honduras, Telegram No.66, 7 April 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6. See also minute by Robinson to the Secretary of State for the Colonies 30 March 1939, which advised him that it “would be very difficult to rebut charges of national or racial discrimination, and we should certainly, I think, get protests from the Chinese, and above all the Government of India, if the clause was used in the manner suggested”, PRO CO 123/376/6.

⁸²Memorandum by K.E. Robinson, 17 January 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6. The same objections were used to block similar legislation in British Guiana. Whilst the Governor asked for an amendment to legislation similar to that imposed in Trinidad, the Secretary of State for the Colonies advised that “it would be preferable that legislation should enable the power of prohibition to be exercised individually and not collectively against persons coming from particular countries”. PRO CO 318/440/5.

⁸³Memorandum by K.E. Robinson, 24 January 1939, PRO CO 318/440/5.

⁸⁴British Guiana, Ordinance No.9 of 1939, passed February 1939; Barbados, Law No.23, passed May 1939; British Honduras, Ordinance No.14 of 1939, passed June 1939; Trinidad, Ordinance No.21 of 1939, passed September 1939. Source: IALS.

Berlin, who was instructed to notify immediately all shipping agencies, refugee organisations and British Consular Officers.⁸⁵ The Foreign Office were also informed of the new legislation in Trinidad and forthcoming legislation in other West Indian colonies and were asked to warn Consular and Passport Control Officers of the new regulations. However, in a reply on 28 February, it was pointed out that the new legislation would be insufficient to prevent further refugee immigration. The Foreign Office argued that without the requirement of visas, British Officials would be powerless to prevent refugees from purchasing, or shipping companies from selling tickets, despite any “restrictive legislation” in place. An official explained that:

The persons concerned make a point of finding out which colonies they can reach without being subject to any sort of control in the country from which they are being ejected, and the shipping companies are encouraging them to book passages. Naturally neither the refugees nor the shipping companies are going to consult British officials abroad if they think in the one case that they will be dissuaded or prevented from travelling and in the other that they will lose their prospective customers. In the circumstances we are not disposed to pass on information about these restrictive regulations to Consular and Passport Control Officers unless we can at the same time say that travellers to the colonies concerned will, in future, require to obtain a visa as a preliminary requirement for their intended journey.⁸⁶

Replying, the Colonial Office agreed in theory with the introduction of visas but argued that without keeping Consular Officials up to date, refugees refused admittance would have justifiable complaints against the Foreign Office, for withholding current information. This, they contended, would “make it more difficult for the Colonial authorities to consider the immigrants case impartially”.⁸⁷

An immediate result of the new legislation was to force the Colonial Office to address the problems of refugees who had set sail for Trinidad after the ban of 15 January had been enacted. Refugees aboard the steamship Koenigstein were refused admittance to Barbados whilst those aboard the steamship Caribia were refused landings in Trinidad and British

⁸⁵ Colonial Office Memorandum, J.G.Hibbert, 3 February 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6.

⁸⁶ W.L.M. Dunlop, Foreign Office to A.H. Poynton, Colonial Office, 28 February 1939, PRO CO 318/440/5.

⁸⁷ A.H.Poynton, Colonial Office to W.L.M. Dunlop, Foreign Office, 3 April 1939, PRO CO 318/440/5. Although in favour of the introduction of visas, the question related to the Empire as well as the West Indies, and was passed from the West India to the General Department. It is probable that the outbreak of war prevented the issue from being acted upon.

Honduras before eventually finding refuge in Venezuela.⁸⁸ In line with the new legislation, the Governor of Trinidad had refused to allow the refugees entry, with the exception of “wives and dependent children” of refugees already in Trinidad (this amounted to four persons). He felt justified to exclude their entry on the grounds that the ship had set sail five days after the terms of his Order had been shown to the German authorities. Once banned entry to Trinidad, the Caribia attempted to sail to British Honduras, where the Governor informed the agent of the Hamburg Amerika line that the refugees would not be allowed to land. Subsequently, however, he was approached by the American National Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees who agreed to deposit the sum of \$20,000 to be used to maintain the immigrants until they could support themselves. On 3 February the Governor cabled the Colonial Office with this information and informed them that with their agreement he was disposed to allow the entry of any refugees who would undertake not to engage in any work other than agriculture.⁸⁹

Just as refugee organisations would assess their policies regarding the expulsion of refugees on boats “bound for nowhere”, the Colonial Office took the British Honduras request as an opportunity to discuss their reaction to forced emigration.⁹⁰ Whilst Jewish refugee organisations felt compelled to continue to arrange for and fund refugee admittance, the Colonial Office decided that the only way to prevent Germany from expelling further numbers of refugees would be to take a “firm line” against tactics seen as blackmail, and to send those already expelled back. In a note explaining the background to the decision taken, Hibbert, head of the West Indian section argued that :

It is a rather difficult decision to make. It is more than probable that hardly any of the refugees on board will be agriculturalists by profession, but they will certainly all say that they are prepared to engage in agriculture simply in order to avoid the risk of being taken back to Germany...Moreover if the Governor admits even a few of them, it will be seized upon as a precedent by the Germans to send another shipload to Belize. At the present time they are using peaceful persuasion to push out Jewish refugees on German, Italian and Japanese ships to any port where they can at present be admitted upon payment of £50 or so. They have sent thousands to Shanghai. My rather extensive knowledge of the Germans enables me to say at once that there is only one argument which will appeal to the German mentality, and that is to refuse to

⁸⁸ Their temporary entry to Venezuela was effected through international appeals and the coordinated efforts of Jewish refugee organisations.

⁸⁹ J.G.Hibbert to Brooks, 4 February 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of how Jewish refugee organisations reacted to forced emigration, see chapter 2. “Bound for Nowhere” was the title of an American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), report on forced refugee migration.

allow these refugees to land and to send them back to Germany. That may seem a cruel thing to do, but it may be a kindness to other refugees in the long run.⁹¹

The draft advised the Governor to prohibit their admittance for the above reasons, as well as for another: that whilst the Royal Commission was investigating whether British Honduras could prove suitable as a settlement area for West Indians from overpopulated colonies, their needs should take priority.⁹² Before drafting the reply, however, news reached the Colonial Office that the refugees had been admitted to Venezuela. With the outbreak of war, no further immigration legislation was enacted, and hereafter, new legislation focused more on matters of defence than immigration.

During the war, very few refugees were admitted on an individual basis, with the following exceptions. Many refugees came to the Caribbean “accidentally” during the war. By June 1940, in line with general British policy, internment camps had been established in most British and Dutch West Indian colonies. These camps were used by the British Government in cooperation with the Dutch Government in Exile, based in London, to house suspected spies, captured merchant seamen, Nazi sympathisers and refugees of enemy alien nationalities. In addition, the camps were used to intern suspects passing through the Caribbean region en route to North, South and Central American destinations. Refugees with enemy nationality, expired visas or invalid documents were taken from the ships and interned whilst security fears were investigated, and until further destinations could be found.

Some refugees were able to emigrate to British Dominions and colonies, including the West Indies, as a result of revalidating permits issued before the outbreak of war. In Trinidad an agreement had been made between the Governor and Jewish organisations in Trinidad, Britain and the United States. This scheme to enable relatives of existing refugees entry to the colony had been instigated in January 1939, but by the outbreak of war, only a few had been able to arrive. In September 1939, under instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Governor rescinded all landing permits previously issued.⁹³

Whilst the phoney war period continued, regulations were relaxed and in many parts of the

⁹¹J.G. Hibbert, 3 February 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6.

⁹²J.G.Hibbert to Brooks, 4 February 1939, PRO CO 123/376/6

⁹³This episode is explored more fully in chapter five.

British Empire, and Britain itself, certain pre-war applications for permits that had been granted and then rescinded were reconsidered. In Britain, a scheme to allow visas to wives and children of refugees already in Britain had been discussed by the Home Office in December 1939 and in February 1940 the issue was taken up by Eleanor Rathbone. In a letter to John Anderson, the Home Secretary, she requested that he reconsider admitting refugees issued with prewar visas. The response from the Home Secretary was negative, citing both reasons of national security, and fear that the admittance of further refugees to Britain would fuel antisemitism towards those already there.⁹⁴ In the British Empire, a certain number of permits were reissued. In March 1940, an Anglo-Jewish refugee report stated that Australia, Canada and New Zealand were revalidating some permits which had been issued prior to the outbreak of war, but only for single women or men not between the ages of eighteen and forty-six. It also stated that other parts of the Empire, excluding Palestine, would reconsider certain pre-war applications and applications from dependents or residents.⁹⁵ In line with this policy, Trinidad re-validated entry permits for some forty relatives still in Germany and Austria, but by March 1941 none had arrived and they were again revoked. With the above exceptions, the West Indies was virtually closed to individual migration during the wartime period.

This section has traced the instigation of immigration controls in the West Indies, and how the Colonial Office managed West Indian demands for tighter immigration restrictions. In most cases, the Colonial Office agreed to legislation, and in some cases discouraged colonies from enabling refugee migration. Whilst legislation in the early 1930s was concerned with preventing Indian, Syrian and Chinese immigration, after 1936 it concentrated on preventing refugee immigration from Europe. The Colonial Office constantly sought a balance between guarding West Indian interests, whilst at the same time preventing legislation which contradicted broader British governmental directives in operation throughout Britain and the colonial Empire. As the refugee crisis worsened, the dual role of the Colonial Office, representing both metropolitan and colonial concerns, would increase. By the time that the British government began to discuss policy relating to refugees from Nazi Germany, restrictions already existed to make refugee entry difficult. Yet, as the following section will

⁹⁴ See Louise London, "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees 1933 - 1945", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol.23, no.4, 1989, p.7; Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, Oxford 1994, p.149-150.

⁹⁵ *Jewish Refugees Committee Report*, March 1940, p.5, MS 183 289/2, AJA, University of Southampton Archive (hereafter SA).

explore, metropolitan concerns began to place increasing pressure on the Colonial Office to investigate the West Indies as a possible solution to the refugee crisis.

- III -

British Government policy towards mass and individual refuge

Whilst the Colonial Office supported most attempts to restrict immigration in the West Indies, British interests forced increasing attention on the West Indies as a place of potential immigration for individuals and group settlement. The following section examines the motives behind placing increasing pressure on the Colonial Office to open up possibilities in West Indian colonies to refugees and refugee organisations. It charts attempts to investigate the West Indies from early in 1933 and shows how the Colonial Office was able to prevent the West Indies from being discussed at the Evian Conference, arguably one of the most important events or potential opportunities regarding refugees that took place before the war. With the subsequent acceleration of Nazi pressure, Britain changed its policy and admitted larger numbers of refugees to Britain. With this came renewed pressure to examine possibilities in the West Indies, and this section examines how for all governmental departments, a specific scheme in British Guiana was welcomed. It extends the discussion to the wartime period and examines how Jamaica became home to a large refugee camp - despite stringent immigration restrictions which had prevented refugee admittance before the war and consistent arguments from the Colonial Office that the West Indies could not provide such facilities.

It is not surprising that from the outset of Nazi power in Germany, the Colonial Office ruled out the possibility of European refugee migration to the colonial Empire, and the West Indies in particular. Yet from the beginning, British governmental refugee policy included examining whether possibilities existed there, for both individuals and large groups. At the first Cabinet Committee discussing Jewish refugees coming to Britain, the question was put to the Colonial Office representative, who stated flatly that "no prospects of settlement could be expected in the colonies" although "arrangements were made to facilitate the early settlement of Jewish refugees from Germany in the mandated territory of Palestine." As in early 1933, both Government and Jewish organisations alike were of the opinion that Palestine would play an important role in solving the Jewish refugee problem, this statement

did not meet with as much incredulity as would be the case in the future.⁹⁶

Part of the reason behind a flat rejection of colonial possibilities in 1933 was because of ongoing and mainly fruitless investigations on behalf of Assyrian refugees. By 1935 these investigations had been abandoned but during 1933 and 1934, on behalf of the League of Nations, the Foreign Office had put repeated pressure on the Colonial Office to explore whether settlement would be possible in Cyprus, East Africa, Ceylon, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, British Guiana, Nyasaland and Uganda for some 10,000 Assyrian refugees, forced to flee from Iraq. Despite repeated rejections of these suggestions as impractical, as well as a general reluctance to pressurise Colonial Governors with requests which they viewed as unrealistic, the Foreign Office had insisted on several Circulars to individual colonies, resulting in a peevish Colonial Office minute that noted "The Foreign Office are still not satisfied that the Colonial Office knows enough about the Colonial Empire to be able to express an opinion on this matter without consulting Colonial Governments."⁹⁷ By 1934 enquiries were still ongoing concerning British Guiana, and coincided with the first Jewish interest in settlement possibilities for refugees there.

Whilst the majority of refugees leaving Nazi Germany were able to secure passage to destinations of their choice in South and North America, Europe and Palestine, pressure on the Colonial Office to investigate possibilities in the colonies remained low. However, a steady stream of letters from refugees in Europe continued to arrive, as well as more official enquiries from refugee bodies and influential individuals.⁹⁸ To individuals, the Colonial Office followed a standard formula of replying with the list of immigration requirements, and the advice that in the first place the colonial government should be contacted, and that it would be highly unlikely to secure employment because of local conditions. To the more influential bodies, the Colonial Office was forced to respond in a more proactive way. In

⁹⁶The Cabinet Committee on Alien Restrictions was made up of the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, the Colonial Secretary, the President of the Board of Trade, the Minister of Labour, and the First Commissioner of Works. The bulk of the discussion centered on policy decisions regarding the entry of refugees to Britain, and discussion over Anglo-Jewish initiatives concerning refugees. The question of refugees was discussed twice by the Cabinet in April 1933 but not formerly discussed again until after the Anschluss in March 1938. As war approached, it became more involved, two separate Cabinet Committees being established. The Cabinet Committee on the Refugee Problem met 7 times in 1939. In 1942 the Cabinet Committee on the Reception and Accommodation of Refugees was formed, and met until mid 1945. See London, PhD, pp. 68, 78, 90 & 102 - 103.

⁹⁷23 July 1934, Colonial Office memorandum from J. Paskin, PRO CO 323/1296/13.

⁹⁸For example, many letters came from Jews both in Germany and in Britain, asking whether possibilities existed in the colonial Empire, see PRO CO 323/1271/2.

1934 and again in 1937, Colonial Governors would be circulated with lists of individual refugees and asked whether possibilities existed for them.

In March 1934, Leonard Montefiore, on behalf of the German Jewish Emigration Council (GJEC) sent the Colonial Office a list of refugees with professional qualifications in nursing, biochemistry and medicine, asking whether employment could be found for them in the colonial Empire.⁹⁹ At first, officials were unwilling to send the list to Governors, Sir John Shuckburgh noting that:

It is very unlikely that any of the Governors concerned will respond favourably, and the majority of them will probably not thank us for putting them to what they may well regard as unnecessary trouble. On the other hand, the Jews are very persistent in matters of this kind, and have powerful means (as we know to our cost) of exercising political pressure. I doubt whether it would be wise to refuse even to make enquiry.¹⁰⁰

Senior Colonial Office officials discussed the letter and agreed to send it as a “demi-official” circular to Colonial Governors in the West Indies, the East African Territories, Ceylon, The Straits Settlement, Mauritius, Hong Kong and Fiji . Replies to the circular seemed to concur with Shuckburgh’s opinion. Of the West Indian Governors contacted, the majority were unable to help. Indeed, the Governor of the Bahamas stated that an “antisemitic bias” existed in the Colony. He noted that the tourist business was the Bahama’s principal source of revenue and that their winter visitors were mainly “Americans of the better class, whose antipathy to all Jews is a by word [sic] in their own country.” He felt that local residents were inclined to adopt the same attitudes towards the “Hebrew people.” Although Montefiore had enquired about openings for qualified nurses, bio-chemists and doctors, the Governor felt that it would be unwise to discriminate between the “professional and labouring class Jew, as to admit the former would render it difficult to exclude the latter, who are regarded as undesirable. There are, as a consequence of past policy, very few Jews in the Bahamas.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹2 March 1934, Leonard Montefiore, German Jewish Emigration Council to Colonial Office, see PRO CO 323/1271/1.

¹⁰⁰10 March 1934, Colonial Office memorandum from Sir John Shuckburgh, Deputy Permanent Under Secretary to Sir John Maffey, Permanent Under Secretary , PRO CO 323/1271/1

¹⁰¹ Governor of the Bahamas to Sir John Maffey, 20 April 1934, PRO CO 323/1271/1. Given these sentiments, it was somewhat appropriate that the Duke of Windsor, whose pro Hitler announcements had caused embarrassment to the British government, was appointed as Governor of the Bahamas after the Fall of France, and arrived there in August 1940 . Presumably to keep him out of the way of active politics. During January to March 1941, correspondence between an American Lawyer based in New Jersey and the Colonial Office suggests that hotels in the Bahamas carried out a “restricted clientele” policy, which the lawyer protested was antisemitic. Officials in the Colonial Office noted that “This is rather awkward. There is undoubtedly discrimination against

The Governors of Jamaica, Barbados, the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands all responded by stating that no openings existed for refugees, and that any positions would be filled by British or British West Indian applicants. In addition, the Governor of Jamaica stated that the local branch of the British Medical Association was pursuing a bill to prevent the entry of refugee doctors into Jamaica.¹⁰²

Whilst the Governor of British Guiana also responded that few possibilities existed for individuals, he informed the Colonial Office that an approach had been made by an American Zionist organisation, interested in purchasing land in the Rupunini district for a Jewish agricultural settlement for German Jewish refugees. In his letter to the Colonial Office, he indicated that the Government (of British Guiana) would be likely to look favourably on enabling German Jews with sufficient funds to form an agricultural colony, and asked for guidance from the Secretary of State for the Colonies.¹⁰³ The Colonial Office discussed their response, stating that “as regards Jews, British Guiana must (so long as there is a chance for Assyrians) be treated as not providing a possible opening.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the reply to Sir Douglas Homes stated that priority should be given to settling Assyrian refugees in the Rupunini District.¹⁰⁵ Although the suggestion continued to be discussed throughout 1934 and 1935, Colonial Office opinion remained against any large settlement, believing that since the majority of Jewish refugees were town dwellers, their prospects as agricultural settlers were not good.¹⁰⁶ During the early years of Nazi Germany, the Colonial Office had

¹⁰¹(...continued)

Jews in some of the hotels in the Bahamas, as I understand there is in Bermuda”. See minute by P.Rogers, Colonial Office, 9 October 1941, PRO CO 23/755.

¹⁰²Governor of Jamaica to Sir John Maffey, 30 April 1934; Colonial Office memorandum by R.V. Vernon, (undated); see PRO CO 323/1271/1. The British Medical Association also pursued measures to limit the numbers of refugee doctors allowed to practice in Great Britain, see Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.48, and London, PhD, p.132.

¹⁰³Governor of British Guiana, Sir C.D. Douglas -Jones to Sir John Maffey, Colonial Office, 6 June 1934, PRO CO 323/1271/1 and for full text of same letter see PRO CO 323/1296/13.

¹⁰⁴Paskin, Colonial Office Memorandum, 13 March 1934, PRO CO 323/1271/1.

¹⁰⁵ Colonial Office to Sir Douglas Jones, 11 July 1934, PRO CO 323/1271/1.

¹⁰⁶Once the Assyrian scheme had fallen through, Colonial Office personnel began to look more favourably on Jewish settlement in British Guiana, although nothing was done to further the suggestion made in 1934. See Sir

not restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine, and faced little pressure to explore such options. Furthermore, once the Assyrian settlement scheme in British Guiana was abandoned, overpopulation and overcrowding in West Indian colonies caused the Colonial Office to favour a new policy. Whilst space was available in the West Indies, the Colonial Office consistently argued that West Indians should have priority over Jewish refugees for any further settlement ideas.

A year later, in 1935, the Colonial Office was again asked to investigate openings for refugees in the colonial Empire, on behalf of the League of Nations.¹⁰⁷ The refugees concerned included Jewish, Assyrian, Turkish, Armenian, Russian and Saar refugees. The Colonial Office was asked to provide a draft reply for Sir Samuel Hoare, Foreign Secretary to send to the Secretary General of the United Nations. Colonial Office officials discussing their response rejected circularising Governors again, because of the results of their enquiries on behalf of Montefiore in 1934. Although aware that any refugee with sufficient funds could secure entry into most British Overseas dependencies, the draft reply emphasised the difficulties involved, stressing that no colony would be expected to fund or admit destitute refugees. It stated that there “appears to be no present prospect of settlement in British overseas dependencies of refugees who are without definite prospects of employment or means of subsistence,” moreover, “Any refugee, who has definite prospects of employment or means of subsistence should, however, subject to compliance with the regulations enforced in the territory in question, have no difficulty in securing admission to any of those dependencies”. Nevertheless, that in general, appointments in those dependencies are filled by persons of British nationality.¹⁰⁸ This reply was sent by the Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 29 November 1935. But perhaps aware that an explanation would be called for, Sir John Shuckburgh alerted his immediate superior, Sir John Maffey, of its contents, warning that the Secretary of State should be

¹⁰⁶(...continued)

John Maffey to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 22.5.35; Minute by J.St.J.Rootham, 31.5.35: “In general, one may say that settlement [in Rupunini and Pakaraima districts in British Guiana] ...would have to be very gradual indeed, ...would be little scope for the exiled intellectuals and town dwellers who form such a large proportion of these refugees...prospect not good...”, see PRO CO 323/ 1345/6.

¹⁰⁷ In March 1935, at the seventh session of the Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission for Refugees, under the auspices of the League of Nations, it was agreed to approach Governments over the question of settling refugees in their territories, and that if possible solutions were found, for the Nansen Office to be informed. For full report see “Work of the Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission for Refugees - Seventh Session March 1935”, PRO CO 323/1347/8.

¹⁰⁸Sir Samuel Hoare, Foreign Office to Secretary General, League of Nations, Geneva, 29 November 1935, PRO CO 323/1347/8.

notified in case of adverse comment:

... The proposed reply amounts to a non possumus, so far as the Colonial Empire is concerned. I do not say that it is not the right answer: but it may expose us to some criticism abroad, where people are slow to believe that, in all our vast overseas possessions, we could not if we choose find a corner in which to settle some of these unfortunate refugees. I confess that foreign incredulity on the point seems to me not wholly unreasonable; but our experience over the Assyrians showed that the practical difficulties are almost insuperable, and I agree that it would serve no useful purpose to circularize Colonial Governments again.¹⁰⁹

Yet two years later, colonial governments were again contacted. Despite having sound reasons for not sending further enquiries, by the end of 1937, under pressure from the Foreign Office, an Official Circular was sent to sixteen Colonial governments, including all West Indian colonies. The Circular had resulted from constant reminders from the Office for the High Commissioner of Refugees to the Foreign Office that no assistance was being given to investigating possibilities for refugees in the colonial Empire. At the League Meeting in Geneva in September 1937, Sir Neill Malcolm had reported that since immigration restrictions were being enforced in many countries, no progress was made in the settlement of refugees.¹¹⁰ Indeed, by September 1937 immigration to Palestine was being restricted and many countries were enforcing stricter legislation, making emigration increasingly difficult. The Circular informed Governors of the following information:

As you know, the position of the Jews in Germany and elsewhere in Europe has rapidly deteriorated during the last four years. It has caused great anxiety to the League of Nations, which decided in 1936 that a High Commissioner should be appointed for the purpose of liquidating so far as possible the problem of refugees coming from Germany, and that, as regards emigration, and final settlement, his duties should include the encouragement of initiative on the part of private organisations and giving such initiative support by negotiations with the Governments of the countries of refuge, and if necessary, arranging to have definite plans for colonization and emigration studied on the spot in agreement with the Governments concerned. ...[Sir Neil Malcolm the High Commissioner] recently called upon Mr. Ormsby Gore [the Secretary of State for the Colonies] and asked his assistance in bringing this part of his task to the attention of any Colonial Government in which possibilities might exist for certain of these refugees to settle and make a living.¹¹¹

The Circular asked whether opportunities existed for refugees possessing capital of £500 -

¹⁰⁹ Sir John Shuckburgh to Sir John Maffey, 20 September 1935, PRO CO 323/1347/8. The reference to Assyrians was about the proposed settlement in British Guiana for Assyrian refugees, which was investigated, and then rejected in 1933. Sir John Maffey was Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies until 1938 when he was succeeded by Sir Cosmo Parkinson.

¹¹⁰ See Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp.80-82.

¹¹¹ Circular, December 1937, See PRO CO 323/1605/2.

£600, and enclosed a list, compiled by the Jewish Refugee Committee in London, of Jewish refugees with specific occupations. Governors were asked whether any of the refugees on the list could be found employment.¹¹² Responses to the Circular were slow in coming and in the meantime, preparations began for the Evian Conference, called for by the personal initiative of President Roosevelt in March 1938.

The initial invitation called for the formation of a “special committee” to meet in the summer of 1938 and to discuss measures to alleviate the refugee crisis. The invitation had not been greeted with great enthusiasm by the Foreign Office, who noted that it seemed an ill-conceived idea. Indeed, the proposal included two caveats which proscribed any optimistic outlook from the beginning. The proposal stated that “no country would be expected or asked to receive a greater number of emigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation” and that “any financing of the emergency emigration... would be undertaken by private organisations.”¹¹³ In order to prepare the British Delegation for the Conference, an interdepartmental meeting was held at the Foreign Office to discuss and incorporate the demands of the different government departments. Home Office concerns regarding the Conference included the desire to maintain sovereignty over immigration controls and it signalled that whilst it was willing to review its procedures of admittance, by no means would it change existing legislation. Foreign Office objections included the fear that publicity surrounding the conference may encourage some Eastern European countries to accelerate antisemitic attacks and expel their Jewish populations, thereby exacerbating the refugee crisis. Furthermore, since 1936 Poland had been considering a large scale (and mainly forced) settlement plan for Polish Jews in Madagascar.¹¹⁴ Therefore, any discussion of large settlement plans at Evian could be seen as a green light for Poland and Rumania to expel their Jewish populations, with the expectation that Western Governments would financially aid their remigration.¹¹⁵

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ Memorandum communicated by the United States Embassy on March 24 1938 & Memorandum communicated to the United States Government, April 6 193, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹¹⁴ See Leni Yahil, “Madagascar - Phantom of a Solution for the Jewish Question”, Bela Vago and George L. Mosse, eds., Jews and Non Jews in Eastern Europe, 1918 - 1945. New York 1974, pp.315 - 334; Mark Wischnitzer, Visas to Freedom: The History of Hias, United States, 1956, p.141 on the involvement of Hias, an American Jewish organisation; See also plan announced by the French Foreign Minister in January 1937 in “Analysis of Group Settlement Projects Since 1933”, Appendix A, Future of European Jewry, Anglo-Jewish Association, London 1946.

¹¹⁵ See Sherman, Island Refuge, p.101.

Yet the Foreign Office were also “deeply concerned with avoiding any action which might be regarded by America as a rebuff.”¹¹⁶ Indeed, Louise London has pointed out that the American proposal for the Conference was greeted as an opportunity by the Foreign Office to strengthen Anglo-American bonds at a time of impending war, and was welcomed as a sign by America that its isolationist stance over Europe might be changing.¹¹⁷ With these objectives, both the Foreign Office and the Home Office hoped for a positive response from the Dominions Office and Colonial Office. Whilst it was agreed by all departments that no concessions regarding policy in Palestine should be made, it was hoped that some space, somewhere, in the British Empire would be made available at the Conference. Sherman has described how Makins, of the Foreign Office, “argued forcefully that the United States Government probably looked to the British Empire for substantial assistance on the refugee problem”.¹¹⁸ Since the Foreign Office already believed that the Conference would not offer any positive solutions, given America’s vagueness over its objectives and American and British constraints over immigration control and Palestine, it was felt important that the British government could offer “something” in the British Empire as a way of escaping blame if no other positive results were achieved. Therefore, as far as the colonial Empire was concerned, the Foreign Office hoped that Britain might offer facilities for the emigration of refugees to some British colonial territory, and leasing land at a peppercorn rent, or to support some scheme for financing emigration through an international loan. Despite these suggestions entailing a reversal of British policy (that demanded no funding of refugee projects), the plus side would be to alleviate pressure over Palestine, and to be seen to take a lead in solving the refugee problem.¹¹⁹

Therefore, during the months leading up to the Evian Conference in July 1938, the Colonial Office would be put under increasing pressure to offer some form of settlement possibilities in the colonial Empire. Pressure was not restricted to Government departments. Whilst preparations for the conference continued, individuals and refugee organisations sent volumes of correspondence to the Colonial Office, suggesting settlement schemes for

¹¹⁶Memorandum by J.G.Hibbert of Foreign Office meeting to discuss the American proposal, 28 March 1938, see PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹¹⁷See London PhD, pp.174-175.

¹¹⁸See Sherman, Island Refuge, p.103.

¹¹⁹ Sherman notes that previous reversals of British policy had been made concerning financial contributions towards Armenian and Russian refugees, see Island Refuge, p.102.

refugees. Suggestions ranged from the ludicrous to the credible, but all would founder on Government determination not to provide financial assistance, local and Colonial Office opposition, and lack of refugee organisation funds. The decision not to fund refugee initiatives came under increasing attack, and in the House of Commons on 23 May 1938 Eleanor Rathbone attacked Government policy, asking why no space in the Empire could be made available to refugees. Colonial Office awareness of such criticism is evident from defensive comments made by Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Lord Dufferin, Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Office. As we have seen in an earlier section, a reply to the British Passport Control Officer in Vienna in May 1938 informed him that no possibilities existed for refugees in the colonial Empire. Commenting on the reply, Sir Cosmo Parkinson told Lord Dufferin that despite pressure, there was little that the government could do.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, the Colonial Office discussed policy for Evian. At first, the Colonial Office position offered few prospects. At the first meeting to discuss the British Delegates instructions, held at the Foreign Office on 28 March, the meeting was informed that generally speaking, regarding individual entry to colonial territories, there were no restrictions in force against the admittance of European refugees, provided they complied with existing regulations. However, the results of the two circulars were explained and had shown that there were 'negligible' opportunities for refugees with specific skills or capital.¹²¹ Regarding mass refuge, Hibbert claimed that:

So far as the British Empire is concerned, the position was exceedingly difficult. The Colonial Empire would have to be ruled out so far as any kind of mass immigration was concerned, as had been clearly shown during the investigations into the possibility of re-settling the Assyrians. Apart from Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, the Colonial Empire lay almost entirely in the tropics and at present supported a population of 55 million natives compared with 55 thousand Europeans. It might be possible to absorb a few professional men, but that was all. It must also be

¹²⁰Sir Cosmo Parkinson, internal Colonial Office Memorandum, 11 May 1938 & Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Lord Dufferin, 16 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2. See also pp.24 - 27 of this chapter. For details about Rathbone's campaign, see Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.111.

¹²¹Barbados replied that unemployment and overpopulation prevented the colony from admitting any refugees, see G.D. Owen, Governor of Barbados to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 14 January 1938. The Governor of Trinidad enclosed copies of favourable replies from some businesses in Trinidad., amounting to positions for 5 or 6 refugees. There were few opportunities in agriculture for Jewish refugees with capital. He also noted that the local Chamber of Commerce was "strongly opposed to the engagement of Jewish refugees for work in the colony." Governor of Trinidad to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 14 March 1938. The Jamaican Governor replied on 18 March by stating that there were no openings and any that existed would be given to Jamaicans. The Governor of British Guiana stated that apart from the occasional opening for an "enterprising" individual in such trades as baking, photography or optical work very few opportunities existed. Governor of British Guiana to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 24 March 1938. The Governor of British Honduras replied in the same vein on 19 May 1938. See PRO CO 323/1603/1.

remembered that there was considerable anti-Jewish feeling in some areas.¹²²

Under mounting pressure, the Colonial Office would eventually pursue some possibilities in Northern Rhodesia, Kenya and Tanganyika for inclusion at the Evian Conference, but from the outset, Colonial policy dictated that no mention of either the British West Indies or Palestine should be made.¹²³ Of British Guiana and British Honduras, the two West Indian colonies where climatic conditions were good, land was available for settlement, and no overpopulation existed, two overriding objections existed. Firstly, British Guiana had been investigated and rejected for Assyrian settlement in 1934, and there was no desire to reinvestigate for Jewish refugees. Colonial Office staff felt that local opposition to the settlement of Assyrian refugees would apply equally to Jewish refugees. Secondly, concerning both colonies, given conditions in the West Indies in 1938, the Colonial Office felt first priority must be given to resettlement of West Indians in these areas.

This meant that when a West Indian settlement proposal was received during preparations for the Conference, the Colonial Office kept the information from the Foreign Office. The Governor of British Honduras contacted the Colonial Office in April with the proposal to settle some twenty-five refugee families from Germany on private land, funded by an American Jewish organisation. As the Colonial Office was unwilling to allow the Governor to go ahead, the suggestion was stalled by sending him a lengthy reply, asking detailed questions about the organisation, and more importantly, requesting that he ascertain how refugees could be repatriated if the scheme did not work out.¹²⁴ In a memorandum

¹²²Note from Hibbert on approach to take at interdepartmental meeting, 25 March 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2. & Revised Record of interdepartmental meeting, Foreign Office, 28 March 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹²³In the case of Northern Rhodesia, the Secretary of State for the Colonies had initially asked for justification of why the area could be used for Jewish settlers when it had been rejected for Assyrians. He noted that "if the Secretary of State for the Colonies should suggest the possibility of finding a settlement place for Jews in Northern Rhodesia, someone may turn round and say that if there is room for Jews then there is room for Assyrians, and as you know, there are many critics of Government here who maintain that it is an absolute duty of the British Government to find a home for the Assyrians" Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Sir Hubert Young, Governor, Northern Rhodesia, 19 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1603/1.

¹²⁴The Governor stated that "I should welcome such immigrants and I see no objection other than difficulty of repatriation if for any reason this should be necessary. I should be grateful for your advice". Telegram No.37, Governor of British Honduras to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 April 1938 & the reply from Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Sir Alan Burns, Governor British Honduras, 22 April 1938, PRO CO 323/1603/1. On 10 May the Governor replied positively to nine questions asked by Sir Cosmo Parkinson, but stated that it would be impossible to find out whether the refugees would have further migration prospects. In a subsequent note, the Governor had indicated that the inability to be repatriated would create a positive incentive for the colony to be a success. See PRO CO 323/1603/1. Despite this reply, in a note by Hibbert to Parkinson, on 11 May 1938, it was advised that the scheme should remain hidden from the Foreign Office, see note by Hibbert to Sir Cosmo Parkinson,

discussing the Governor's proposal, a general policy concerning refuge and the West Indies was put forward. Assuming that the twenty-five families were successful, they "may prove the forerunners of a considerable invasion." It asked, therefore, whether "as a matter of policy when many of the West Indian islands such as Jamaica and Barbados especially are complaining of a rising population and serious unemployment, utilise the empty spaces of British Honduras for the accommodation of European Jews?" Therefore, no mention of the scheme was given to the Foreign Office whilst discussions for the Evian Conference continued.¹²⁵

Preparations continued to formulate policy for the British Delegation at Evian.

On 3 June an official letter from the Foreign Office informed the Colonial Office of an interdepartmental meeting to discuss the proposals. Regarding the position of the Colonial Empire it urged the Colonial Office to consider that:

The United Kingdom Delegation will further require to be in a position to state the contribution which His Majesty's Government are prepared to make to the solution of the problem both in respect of the United Kingdom and in respect of the Colonial Empire. Lord Halifax considers that the instructions given to the Delegation on this point should be as full and detailed as possible and should represent a generous and constructive contribution, more particularly in respect of the colonies.¹²⁶

At the meeting, held on 8 June at the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office again stated that few opportunities existed in the colonies, barring possibilities being explored in Northern Rhodesia, Kenya and Tanganyika. The Colonial Office "regarded these three territories as offering the least unhopeful prospect for the admission of a certain number of refugees." Whilst "it may be possible to deal with individual cases, the colonies were not in a position to make a serious contribution to the problem."¹²⁷ In a personal letter from Lord Halifax to Sir

¹²⁴(...continued)

11 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹²⁵ See memorandum from Hibbert to Sir Cosmo Parkinson on preparations for the Evian Conference, 23 June 1938., PRO CO 123/370/2. It was also decided not to give this information to the Foreign Office for the Passport Control Officer in Vienna, see Hibbert to Parkinson, internal memorandum, 13 May 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹²⁶Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office to Under Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 3 June 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹²⁷"Record of an inter-departmental meeting held at the Foreign Office on June 8th 1938 for circulation to the representatives of the Departments for amendment or approval", PRO CO 323/1605/2. Sherman has also summarised this meeting, describing the attitude of the Foreign Office towards the failure of the Colonial and Dominions Office to offer more positive responses for the Evian Conference. See Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp.103-105.

Malcolm MacDonald, the Colonial Office was again urged to “consider very seriously whether the Colonial Empire can offer more extended facilities for the entry of refugees than it has been possible to give hitherto.” MacDonald replied a few days later explaining that at the interdepartmental meeting of 8 June the Colonial Office representative had stated their position, and that “there are serious difficulties in the way of any large scale settlement in the Colonies, and I cannot hold out any hope that the Colonial Empire will be able to contribute much to the settlement of the problem.” Nevertheless, responses from Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Kenya were still forthcoming and it was hoped would be ready before the Conference took place.¹²⁸

On 13 June the Colonial Office received the skeleton draft of instructions that the Home and Foreign Office departments would give to the British Delegation. It was now up to the Colonial Office to complete the draft with their instructions.¹²⁹ During the next few days discussions revolved around the contents of the note which would be sent to Evian.

Regarding British Honduras, an Official asked:

May I have instructions' whether any mention of British Honduras should be made in the statement which will have to be furnished in the course of the next few days to the Foreign Office regarding the possibilities offered by the Colonial Empire for the settlement of Jewish and Austrian refugees, and which the Foreign Office will embody in the instructions to the United Kingdom delegation to the Evian Conference? Personally I do not think this should be done. We have not told the Foreign Office anything about this scheme to settle 25 Jewish families on private land in British Honduras. The Governor has indicated that there is room elsewhere in the colony for a substantial number of West Indian migrants and the possibility of settling some of the surplus population of such colonies as Jamaica and Barbados is apparently under consideration in the West Indian Department. In these circumstances it seems to me that we ought to consider our own people first and to let the question of settling German Jewish refugees take second place.¹³⁰

In reply, the official was told that no decision could be taken regarding British Honduras until a response had been received from the Middle East Department over what line to take regarding additional immigration to Palestine and a return had been received from Northern Rhodesia.¹³¹ A further objection to placing Jewish refugees in West Indian colonies

¹²⁸Halifax to MacDonald, 9 June 1938, and MacDonald to Halifax, 14 June 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2. See also Sherman's description of this correspondence, p.105.

¹²⁹Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 13 June 1938, PRO CO 323/1605/2.

¹³⁰Memorandum from Hibbert to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 23 June 1938, PRO CO 123/370/2.

¹³¹Memorandum from Mr Creasy, Colonial Office, 24 June 1936, PRO CO 123/370/2.

concerned immigration legislation being enacted concurrently. Reviewing the results of the two circulars, (sent in 1934 and 1937) a memorandum noted that “It would be extremely difficult on general lines to defend such a policy [of encouraging Jewish immigration] when we are about to discourage Jamaica and Trinidad from allowing the entry of Chinese and Syrians into these Islands on the grounds that they would compete unfairly with the already unemployed West Indian population. The Bahamas, like Bermuda is very strict and jumpy over immigration questions, while the old established Spanish Jews in Jamaica is not too popular as it is [sic].”¹³²

On 30 June instructions to the British Delegate were transmitted to the Foreign Office. Their contents were bleak. Regarding any settlement plans, the following policy had been decided. The West Indies would be ruled out, as “if there are any areas in the West Indies or neighboring colonies suitable for settlement, we ought, in the present circumstances reserve them for possible migration from Barbados or other overpopulated West Indian Islands.”¹³³ It therefore advised the delegate that the West Indies should not be referred to at Evian. The note drew attention to the negative replies received from the 1937 Circular and advised that:

It is desirable that the question of any possibilities of Jewish immigration into the West Indian Colonies or the adjacent territories, namely, British Guiana and British Honduras, should be excluded from the discussions. One of the causes of the numerous recent disturbances is overpopulation, and if suitable schemes can be devised for settlement in that area, prior consideration must be given to the needs of the surplus population of the more overcrowded West Indian Islands. This is a matter which will come within the purview of the proposed Royal Commission on the West Indies.¹³⁴

Regarding Palestine, it continued, all references to immigration should be avoided. It advised that only two territories may be able to make a contribution, Northern Rhodesia and Kenya, but since investigations were still ongoing regarding Northern Rhodesia, it was “highly desirable that as little as possible should be said on this subject by the United Kingdom Delegate, in order that false hopes may not be aroused and that embarrassing publicity may be avoided. The same considerations apply to information supplied by the Governor of Kenya.” The note also stated that neither of the two Governments mentioned,

¹³²Memorandum to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 24 June 1938, (author’s signature illegible), PRO CO 323/1604/4.

¹³³Creasy to MacDonald, 30 June 1936, PRO CO 123/370/2.

¹³⁴“Note for Evian Conference”, 30 June 1938, PRO CO 323/1603/1.

nor any other Colonial Government, was in a position to contribute financially towards the settlement or upkeep of any German Jewish refugees.¹³⁵ Regarding individual emigration, the statement giving entry requirements to colonial dependencies was attached for circulation.

Viewed from the perspective of the Colonial Office, the Evian Conference was a success. No reference was made to possibilities existing in West Indian colonies. Reference to Palestine was avoided until the last day, when after repeated criticism, Lord Winterton, the British representative justified as “temporary” restrictions on Jewish entry because of the “acute” problems in the region.¹³⁶ In the statement read out on admission to colonial dependencies, the line regarding individual entry was reiterated and mention was made of “the question of the admission of a limited number of refugees into certain East African territories” which was still being investigated.¹³⁷ This was greeted with a fair amount of post-conference publicity, which again could be seen as a positive result for the Colonial Office and British government; any publicity concerning areas outside of Palestine relieved pressure, no decisions had been made, and any financial undertakings would have to be provided by private bodies.¹³⁸

Most historians have viewed the Evian conference as a failure, and an important sign to Nazi Germany that no country would be willing to admit large numbers of Jewish refugees. Whilst many have viewed Evian as a cynical exercise, it may have been a genuine attempt to change attitudes, laying an initial groundwork which did not threaten existing concerns. Countries were willing to meet at Evian because of agreements made before the conference: sensitive issues would not be discussed, sovereignty over immigration controls would not be challenged, and financial initiatives would remain the province of private organisations. There were many legitimate reasons behind reluctance to alter immigration controls: world depression, unemployment, domestic anti-alienism. British fears over upsetting Arab opinion in the Middle East cannot be dismissed as wholly unreasonable, at a time of impending war and increasing unrest in Palestine. It is possible to argue that rather than wholly cynical in

¹³⁵J.A. Calder, Colonial Office to Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, enclosing “Note for Evian Conference”, 30 June 1938, PRO CO 323/1603/1.

¹³⁶See Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.116.

¹³⁷Ibid, p.118.

¹³⁸For example, at the Cabinet meeting to discuss Winterton’s report, the Colonial Secretary thanked him for “the skill with which he had looked after the colonial interests involved at Evian”, see Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.121.

approach, the diplomatic intent was that by convening the conference without setting conditions, through discussion, new or altered provisions for refugees would be made. Yet since neither Britain nor the United States were willing to take a lead at the conference, other countries followed their examples. Limited concessions were made, however. The United States fully utilised the visa quota for that year. An Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (IGCR) was set up with a wider remit than existing intergovernmental refugee organisations, such as the High Commissioner for the League of Nations.¹³⁹ The IGCR was to be a permanent body with the immediate aim of negotiating with Germany and countries of reception to organise an orderly emigration from Germany and Austria.

Whatever hopes may have been attached to Evian, following events showed the conference to have been a failure in reacting to the crisis. Whilst most attention at the conference focused on ways to proceed with ordered emigration plans, Nazi Germany had begun to pursue a policy of forced and chaotic emigration. The inadequate response of the Conference is illustrated by the amount of hope attached to the statement regarding admission to colonial territories, which at best, was to admit some hundreds of settlers to either Kenya or Northern Rhodesia. The offer made at Evian was soon shown to be illusory. In September 1938, the Foreign Office asked on behalf of the IGCR for more information about the possibilities in the colonies mentioned at Evian, and were told that few existed, save the ongoing investigation into Kenya, which at any rate would be for some 150 settlers. Despite an intervention from Lord Winterton, the reply remained the same. Sherman notes that the Foreign Office was unwilling to allow the IGCR to see the contents of the letter, which would show “the tiny contribution of the Colonies to the refugee problem would only be emphasised if we cannot give the Committee more information than this.”¹⁴⁰

In fact, as Sherman has shown, the IGCR “exerted consistent pressure on the British Government, as a great colonial power, to explore settlement possibilities...[and] to state the numbers of refugees it would be prepared to receive. The view of the IGCR, that Britain’s contribution, with the exception of Palestine, was poor, was impressed on the Colonial Secretary by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Winterton, in a personal letter asking him to review

¹³⁹This refugee body was scheduled for liquidation in 1938 but in May it was agreed to extend its life. However, its activities were still confined to giving legal assistance to refugees, once they had left Germany. In January 1939 Sir Herbert Emerson was appointed High Commissioner.

¹⁴⁰Howard to Under-Secretary of State, September 10, 1938, FO 371/22534, W 12178/104/98, quoted in Sherman, p.135.

the contribution of the Colonial Office. MacDonald's reply again reiterated that many colonies were unsuited climatically to European immigration, and that "others, such as the West Indies, were already over-populated".¹⁴¹ In an attempt possibly to avoid further criticism, a Circular was sent in October to colonial governors, who were asked to give information of the numbers of German and Austrian refugees who had entered their territories for the five year period and a six month period ending in March 1938. Governors were informed that the purpose was to give the British representative of the IGCR information on "the contribution already (my emphasis) made by the various parts of the British Empire towards the solution of the problem".¹⁴² By February returns had been collated but were of little use. Since the sending of the Circular, Nazi violence had intensified, most significantly and massively during the night of 9-10 November 1938, referred to by the Nazis as 'Kristallnacht'. A memorandum noted that:

The figures are more or less valueless, because we know for a fact that since the Grynspan business and the rabid anti-Semitic drive in Germany which followed it, many hundreds of Jews have enquired regarding the possibility of entering one or other of the Colonies, and that a considerable number have actually got in - for example, into territories such as Trinidad, and I believe, Kenya.¹⁴³

In response to the plight of Jews in Greater Germany, Britain revised her refugee policy. Despite repeated Colonial Office insistence that the West Indies would not be able to play any part in solving the refugee crisis, either in terms of individual immigration or mass settlement, by November 1938 the scheme for a settlement of Jews in British Guiana had again been raised. This turnaround in policy had been forced upon the Colonial Office by the momentum of public opinion following Kristallnacht. Concurrent with the offer to investigate British Guiana, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika was the revision of British

¹⁴¹Sherman, *Island Refugees*, .163.

¹⁴²Circular from Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies , 7 October 1938, PRO CO 323/1602/17.

¹⁴³J.G. Hibbert to Sir John Shuckburgh, 6 February 1939, PRO CO 323/1602/17. The numbers given as a result of this circular (some 350 Germans and Austrians classified as refugees unable to return to their country of origin), were unreliable as most refugees entering colonial territories were not classified separately from other European immigrants. Whilst the Colonial Office noted that the figures were "valueless", they were given to refugee organisations for information. Although their accuracy was doubted, they were included in Sir John Hope Simpson's estimates in a report published in August 1939. See Sir John Hope Simpson, *Refugees: A Review of the Situation Since 1938* , London 1939, p.109. Subsequent historians have also used these figures, producing a distorted picture of the actual numbers of refugees admitted. For example, Paul Bartrop uses these figures to illustrate how few German and Austrian refugees found sanctuary in the colonial Empire. The source, from Dominion Office files was taken from information given the Dominions Office by the Colonial Office. See Paul Bartrop, "The British Colonial Empire", Paul Bartrop, ed., *False Havens: The British Empire and the Holocaust* , New York, London 1995, pp.2 - 3. Similarly, Martin Gilbert has reproduced these figures, see "British Government Policy Towards Jewish Refugees (November 1937 - September 1939)", *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. XIII, 1979, p.165. An analysis of the numbers of refugees to enter the British West Indies is in Chapter 4: Refugees and the British West Indies.

policy concerning the admittance of refugees. Between November 1938 and the outbreak of war, some 40,000 refugees entered Britain, mainly on 'block visa' agreements. Furthermore, Britain would expand its role as a temporary refuge, by offering some form of settlement in its colonial Empire.¹⁴⁴ In a statement to the House of Commons on 21 November 1938, the Prime Minister announced that the possibility of loan of land in Tanganyika or British Guiana at a peppercorn rent was being investigated. There is no need here to repeat in detail the story of the British Guiana settlement plan, which has been exhaustively documented by Sherman. In terms of the subject matter of this chapter, however, it deserves a brief summary. As a senior Foreign Office official, Makins noted prophetically in December 1938, "the offer of British Guiana and Tanganyika is largely an illusory one, and this must inevitably become apparent in due course".¹⁴⁵ A major stumbling block included the fact that at no time did the government intend to fund the initiative, which would fall on private organisations. Since Anglo-Jewish organisations were now virtually without funds, an Anglo-American Commission, mainly sponsored by American Jewish organisations, set off to investigate British Guiana in February 1939. In April the Foreign Office received its report, which recommended an initial settlement for some 3,000-5,000 young people, over a period of two years and at a cost of \$3 million.¹⁴⁶ Even this figure was disputed. In July 1939 Sir Herbert Emerson was informed that at no time did the British Government intend to permit mass settlement there, but it would allow for scattered groups of "50 here and 50 there interspersed throughout the territory".¹⁴⁷ Before publishing the Commission's findings, the views of the Royal Commission investigating conditions in the West Indies were sought. On 5 May they stated that they held "grave misgivings":

Even on the most favourable view the undertaking is likely therefore, ... to need continuing financial support. If any large part of a subsidy was provided from British funds, there would be legitimate grounds for complaint from the people of the overcrowded island of Barbados and from those natives of British West Indian islands who are now destitute in Cuba and Central America. If on the other hand the experiment is unsuccessful and the settlers are unable even to supply their own needs of food, the grave problem will arise of finding means of support for an alien

¹⁴⁴See London, PhD, p.237.

¹⁴⁵Makins, minute, 1 December 1938, FO 371/22538, W 15621/104/98, cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.188.

¹⁴⁶See Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.231.

¹⁴⁷Winterton to Sir Herbert Emerson, IGCR meeting, 13 July 1939, cited in Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p.253.

population or of providing them with an alternative place for settlement.¹⁴⁸

Despite this advice, the report was greeted as opportune by the Foreign Office, who were in the process of publishing the White Paper on Palestine. This contentious piece of legislation allowed for a total of 75,000 Jewish immigrants to be admitted during the first five years of the White Paper, at a maximum rate of 10,000 per year. An extra 25,000 would be admitted at the High Commissioner's discretion during this period, but the numbers of illegal immigrants entering would be deducted from the yearly quotas.¹⁴⁹ The Foreign Office welcomed the British Guiana report. Just as the announcement at Evian regarding possibilities in East African territories, this announcement was seen as a chance to deflect criticism over policy in Palestine. The findings of the British Guiana Commission were made public on the 12 May, five days before the White Paper on Palestine was introduced in the House of Commons.¹⁵⁰ The scheme never took place. Since adequate funding of the project did not materialise from American or private sources, during July the British government considered retracting its offer of land. The issue was never resolved as the outbreak of war interrupted discussions.¹⁵¹ On 18 October 1939 at an IGCR conference, Lord Winterton stated on behalf of the British government that regarding the scheme for settlement in British Guiana:

Private organisations sponsoring this scheme were unable to proceed with the proposed two year experimental settlement, owing to the outbreak of war, and it must therefore be regarded as indefinitely suspended.¹⁵²

Sherman has demonstrated that the British Guiana scheme was lacking in realism and practicality. At no time did the Government intend to fund the project, and of course the doors to Palestine were being firmly closed. The only thing to add, is that from the start, the

¹⁴⁸"Confidential West India Royal Commission. Views of Seven Members on Proposed Jewish Settlement in British Guiana", sent by TK.Lloyd to Malcolm MacDonald, 5 May 1939, PRO CO 950/248. Furthermore, on 9 May 1939 Malcolm MacDonald reported these views to a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Refugees, adding a further reason against the scheme, that if refugee settlers became British subjects, they "would acquire the right to migrate into the United Kingdom if they wished". He also stated that the Commission were "sceptical" to the possibility of "extensive white settlement" being a success in British Guiana. See MacDonald to Cabinet Committee, 9 May 1939, cited in Martin Gilbert, "British Policy towards Refugees", p.147.

¹⁴⁹Zweig, Britain and Palestine during the Second World War, p.44.

¹⁵⁰Sherman states the report was made public simultaneously in Britain and America on 10 May, but Zweig states it was made public on 12 May. See Sherman, Island Refugee, .233 and Zweig, Britain and Palestine, p.46.

¹⁵¹See Sherman, Island Refugee, .254.

¹⁵²Conference of the InterGovernmental Committee on Political Refugees, 18 October 1939, Document 8, Mendelsohn, John & Detwiler, Donald, S. (eds), The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes. 6. Jewish Emigration 1938 - 1940, New York, London 1982, Volume 6, p.93.

Colonial Office were opposed to any such scheme, on the basis that priority should be given to West Indian settlement plans. One could argue that it was a lost opportunity. Two views would support the supposition that a settlement plan in British Guiana may have been of benefit to the West Indies as well as to Jewish refugees. Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the TUC and member of the Royal Commission, sent under separate cover a note explaining that whilst he shared many of the Commission's reservations about Jewish settlement in British Guiana, he did feel that :

The experiment is justified and that at some stage it will have to be undertaken, barren as the prospects appear to be, if only to provide an outlet for the overcrowded population of some parts of the West Indies. The proposed Jewish experiment, in my opinion, may afford a valuable guide to the possibilities, and it is for that reason that I am reluctant to oppose the recommendation of the Refugee Commission that an experimental settlement should be established in British Guiana.¹⁵³

The second view is of Roger Makins of the Foreign Office, who in the same minute which noted that the offer of British Guiana was an illusory one, added that as well as the benefits accruing from diverting attention from Palestine:

Lastly, though this may be thought to be mainly a Colonial Office point, we shall be increasing the prosperity of the Empire. I have suggested...that it might also be open to HM Government to assist in the development of a territory or settlement by making loans from the colonial development fund for road making, railway building, etc. We appear therefore in a position to make an offer which may turn out to be a major stroke of policy, but we are being held up by the opposition of a handful of settlers.¹⁵⁴

During the war, the Colonial Office were under far less pressure to come up with possibilities in the colonies than they had been throughout the 1930s. British policy had changed, and it was no longer necessary for the Colonial Office to defend its position regarding immigration to the West Indies. This was mainly a reflection of British aims. During the war, both Britain and the United States consistently argued that the only way to effect the rescue of European Jewry was by placing all faith in the winning of the war, and in order to do this, rescue schemes would have to take second place. This effectively relieved the government of the kind of moral pressure it was subjected to during the 1930s, when it felt obliged to consider various refuge schemes, particularly in response to criticism over its policies in Palestine. Therefore, the Colonial Office were under no pressure from the government to investigate options in other colonies even though Palestine itself remained a constant source

¹⁵³Walter Citrine to Malcolm MacDonald, 8 May 1939, PRO CO 950/248.

¹⁵⁴Makins, Minute 1 December 1938, cited in Sherman, Island Refuge, p.189.

of friction both within government departments, and between the British government, the United States and refugee organisations.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, there were legitimate reasons (just as there had been in the 1930s) over whether the West Indies could accommodate further refugees. Shipping problems, extreme food shortages in the colonies and German U-boat activity all lent weight to arguments against sending refugees to the region.

Therefore it is ironic then that despite Colonial Office attempts to prevent the West Indies from becoming a refuge, during the war, Jamaica housed large numbers of refugees who were placed there as a result of British demands. The background to the decision to build a camp in Jamaica is complicated, and results from the importance placed on Gibraltar, which throughout the war was seen as a key military and strategic point, guarding the entry to the Mediterranean.¹⁵⁶

In April 1940 it had been agreed to evacuate the civilian population of Gibraltar to French Morocco.¹⁵⁷ During May and June some 13,000 Gibraltarians had been evacuated there but after the fall of France, discussions took place over where the evacuees could be rehoused. Investigations were made in South Africa, the West Indies and other parts of the colonial Empire. The chief objective being to avoid their admittance to Britain.¹⁵⁸ Whilst negotiations continued, during July, the Vichy French authorities forced the evacuees back onto ships which returned them to Gibraltar. From there, it was decided that there was no choice but to proceed with their evacuation to Britain, and from there to further destinations. Meanwhile, it had been agreed that Jamaica would house those evacuees sent on from Britain and that

¹⁵⁵There was constant tension between the Refugee Department of the Foreign Office and the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office over its handling of illegal immigration to Palestine during the war. In addition, mounting American pressure on Britain resulted in a change in attitude towards the White Paper, which by the beginning of 1943 it had been agreed to replace. See Zweig, Britain and Palestine, pp.168 - 174 & Wasserstein, Britain and the Jews of Europe, pp.330 - 331.

¹⁵⁶A.J.P. Taylor has questioned whether this was ever a necessary part of British strategy, and has suggested that the British desire to guard the Mediterranean stemmed from the traditional importance placed on guarding the Suez Canal. From Italy's entry into the war, the British were "committed to a campaign in the Mediterranean on an ever increasing scale", but Taylor comments that "The British were in the Mediterranean because they were there". See A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914 - 1945, Oxford 1965, p.520 - 522. During September and October 1940 Hitler considered plans to send troops through Spain to Gibraltar but on meeting with Franco on 23 October, dropped the idea. A further reason for British sensitivity has been suggested by Fitz Baptiste, who states that in retaliation for the Anglo-American Bases Agreement, Hitler was advised by Grand Admiral Raeder, chief of the German Navy, to retaliate by seizing Gibraltar, French North West and West Africa, and the Spanish and Portuguese Atlantic Islands off the African coast. See Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict, p.59.

¹⁵⁷The Governor of Gibraltar was given compulsory powers to evacuate the civil population on 30 April 1940. See PRO CO 91/518/14.

¹⁵⁸Note prepared by the Colonial Office for the War Office, undated, see PRO CO 91/518/14.

Madeira would accept some two thousand. During June, July and August 1940, some 11,000 Gibraltarians were sent to London where they were maintained in hotels, hostels and blocks of flats. A further three thousand remained in Gibraltar and in August it was decided to move some of them directly to Jamaica, where a refugee camp had been hastily constructed.¹⁵⁹

Concurrent with plans to move Gibraltarians from Britain to further destinations, the Governor of Jamaica received instructions on 19 July 1940 to build a camp to house some four thousand evacuees.¹⁶⁰ By the end of the seventh week the camp was ready for their reception but on 15 September 1940, instructions were received to increase the accommodation to receive an additional three thousand, making a total of seven thousand evacuees. Despite the original plan, no Gibraltarians were reevacuated from Britain, and so by November 1940 some 12,000 remained in Britain, 2,000 in Madeira and 1700 in Jamaica, where they had arrived the previous month.¹⁶¹

It is not clear whether Jamaica was forced to accept the project, but it is certain that the British government exerted "continuous pressure" on the colony to allow the scheme to go ahead.¹⁶² In any case the scheme had attractive benefits for the colony. Since the costs of the project and the maintenance of the evacuees fell on the British government, the project provided work for Jamaicans, and was welcomed for that reason.¹⁶³ In addition, at no time did any refugee or evacuee in Gibraltar Camp have the option of working in the colony, or remaining after the war. Therefore there was no infringement of Jamaica's strict immigration controls.

Despite various efforts to reevacuate Gibraltarians from Britain, the camp remained empty

¹⁵⁹Undated Colonial Office report to the War Cabinet, PRO CO 91/518/14.

¹⁶⁰The Director stated that "The time factor was considered one of very great urgency. It was necessary to build a camp for 2,000 evacuees in one month. Six days were used in making the preliminary arrangements, leaving only 25 days for actual construction. At end of one month it would have been possible to accommodate the 2,000 evacuees, but the kitchen arrangements were not quite complete, and were completed a week later. At the end of three months accommodation was ready for 4,000 evacuees." See Interim Report on the Construction works carried out at Camp Gibraltar, Mona, Jamaica, Director of Public Works Office, Jamaica to Colonial Secretary, 13 February 1941, PRO CO 91/515/12.

¹⁶¹Undated report, Colonial Office to War Office. The report states that although various reevacuation schemes were considered, "for one reason or another they were considered impracticable". PRO CO 91/518/14.

¹⁶²Syers, Colonial Office to Acheson, Treasury, 14 June 1941, PRO CO 91/515/12.

¹⁶³See Interim report of Construction of camp, PRO CO 91/515/12.

save for some 1700 Gibraltarians until the end of 1942. The costs to the British government were high. In a note explaining to the Treasury Department, a Colonial Office official estimated the total cost at £330,000, or £66 per head. In justifying the costs to the Treasury, he explained that :

We have no material here on which to form any opinion as to whether these figures are open to criticism. The camp was constructed at very great speed under strong pressure from this end to use the utmost expedition, and that may well have increased the cost. In the circumstances, it is little short of lamentable that we should only have been able so far, to arrange for some 1,500 evacuees to occupy the camp. It may be that the proposal to send some of the evacuees from this country to the West Indies will be revived. We can only hope that by these or other means the vacant accommodation will, sooner or later, be turned to practical advantage¹⁶⁴

That practical advantage became clear in December 1941 when an initial arrangement to send Polish Jewish refugees from Lisbon to Jamaica was decided upon by the British government, the Polish government in Exile and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). In January 1942 a group of some 200 Polish Jewish refugees arrived in Gibraltar Camp, Jamaica, their maintenance paid for by the JDC. In November 1942 the Polish Legation in Lisbon requested that further numbers of their Jewish nationals be evacuated to Jamaica. They informed the British Consul that whilst evacuation for non- Jewish Polish refugees in Lisbon was “proceeding fairly satisfactorily, ...the Jews present a problem because of lack of destination”. Sir R. Campbell, the British Consul in Lisbon passed on the Polish request to the Foreign Office, informing them that the Polish Legation:

Attach importance to the matter as they anticipate that a considerable number of Poles will now try to escape illegally from France to Portugal, and they consider that the attitude of the Portuguese Government towards such illegal refugees will be affected by the number of Polish refugees already in Portugal, of whom Jewish refugees constitute the hard core.

Sir Campbell asked whether these Jews, and “others who may arrive in due course” could be given asylum in Jamaica.¹⁶⁵ The entry of these refugees to Jamaica rested on the British imperative of clearing Lisbon of a surfeit of refugees, and a promise to the Jamaican legislature that none would seek employment or citizenship. In her study of British immigration policy, London has shown that the motivations behind the British Government’s decision to house the refugees in Jamaica stemmed from a desire to clear the bottleneck of refugees that existed in Lisbon. Without evacuating those refugees without visas, who had no

¹⁶⁴Acheson, Colonial Office to Syers, Treasury, 1 April 1941, PRO CO 91/515/12.

¹⁶⁵Sir R Campbell, Lisbon to Foreign Office, 11 November 1942, PRO CO 323/1846/6.

hope of emigration to some other destination, it would be difficult to persuade Spanish and Portuguese Consuls to issue further visas to refugees needed by the Allies for the war effort.¹⁶⁶

For Britain and Allied powers, keeping the Spanish and Portuguese borders open remained of crucial importance throughout the war. Their geographical position made Spain and Portugal the main escape route from occupied Europe for refugees, political opponents of Nazism and escaped prisoners of war and allied personnel. Thousands of refugees had entered Spain and Portugal from the Spring of 1940, but by 1942 the proportion of Jewish refugees able to reach the Iberian Peninsula had decreased significantly, whilst the numbers of non-Jewish allied nationals had increased.¹⁶⁷ Following the Fall of France some 50,000 refugees crossed the Spanish frontier, the majority crossing to Lisbon and other ports from which they embarked on ships to the United States. Throughout the war Spain kept her borders open to refugees as long as they possessed transit visas to further destinations. Very few caught without proper papers were returned to Vichy or German authorities, although many were interned in a concentration camp, the Miranda del Ebro. During the summer and autumn of 1942 the numbers of illegal entries had increased, consisting of Jewish refugees escaping from Vichy France, refugees escaping the German occupation of Southern France, and in early 1943 thousands of French nationals escaping conscription to German factories and increasing numbers of political refugees from Vichy willing to fight in Britain or North Africa. In February 1943 some 12,000 French refugees were estimated to have arrived in Spain.¹⁶⁸ Spanish and Portuguese Officials continued to issue transit visas as long as the numbers of refugees in both countries remained fluid, but came under increasing pressure from Nazi and Vichy authorities to close borders against further immigration of “illegal” entries. With wartime shipping problems, lack of destination and visas and immigration restrictions, large numbers of refugees became “stuck” in Spain and Lisbon. Whilst ways could be found to transport those refugees able to fight for the Allies, the groups of Jewish refugees gathered in Lisbon had no destination. Thus allowing their entry to Jamaica was an

¹⁶⁶London concludes that . . . “the incentive for British involvement in such schemes was often that the removal of refugees from neutral countries, such as Portugal, Spain and Turkey, appeared important to maintain such countries readiness to function as escape routes”, see London, PhD, p.438.

¹⁶⁷ Marrus states that some 30,000 Jews crossed through Spain between the outbreak of war and September 1942. As late as October 1941 Nazi officials actively sought their emigration to Spain and Portugal. See Michael R. Marrus, The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century, New York, Oxford 1985, p.259 & p.264.

¹⁶⁸Marrus, The Unwanted , pp.258 - 260.

Allied solution to persuading Spanish and Portuguese officials to continue to allow immigration. During 1942 and 1943 further small groups of Jewish refugees were sent from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp, their maintenance undertaken by Allied governments and Jewish organisations.¹⁶⁹

Therefore, during 1942 and 1943, facilities at Gibraltar Camp began to be utilised. Between its establishment in December 1940, however, and the first group of refugees from Lisbon to be sent there in January 1942, it had remained virtually empty, its capacity to house seven thousand refugees unused save for the original Gibraltarian evacuees. It is difficult to understand why and how this information was not used for the advantage of Jewish refugees attempting to leave occupied Europe. There are many possible reasons. Jamaican reluctance to allow individual entry is one. British expectations during 1940 that Gibraltarians would be reevacuated from London to Jamaica is another. In addition there were difficulties involved in finding shipping to take refugees from occupied Europe to the West Indies. It is likely that there was no knowledge of the camp's existence amongst refugee organisations prior to December 1941, as they would have certainly pressed for use of the camp for refugees. By 1942 knowledge of the camp was widespread amongst refugee organisations, partly because of their role in maintaining refugees at the camp. But by this time, accommodation had been drastically reduced and the Colonial Office were no longer disposed to enable refugee entry unless it was imperative. In December 1942 the Foreign Office approached the Colonial Office about a request from the High Commissioner:

The High Commissioner for Refugees Sir Herbert Emerson is now faced with the problem of finding asylum for refugees escaped and escaping from France into Spain and Portugal. The President of Hicem, Max Gottschalk, has asked whether room can be found for them in British colonies. Emerson has enquired whether we can let him know the position particularly in regard to Jamaica where a statement has been made to him that there is room in existing barracks for about 4,000 persons. . . In view of the unfavourable insinuations about Jamaica which certain Jewish ex-internees have been spreading on reaching the United States it may seem odd that the Jewish organisations should appear to want more accommodation in the Colony, but if we can truthfully tell Sir Herbert Emerson that the island's accommodation is entirely used up, so much the better.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ The Polish request for further evacuations of Polish Jews to Jamaica did not happen, although groups of Dutch, Czech and Luxembourg refugees were evacuated from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp, their maintenance shared between their governments and the JDC. Some eight sailings from Lisbon to Jamaica took place between January 1942 and December 1943. Most of the Dutch refugees were men of military age who spent brief spells in Gibraltar Camp before being sent to Surinam. Details about their admittance, and the guarantees provided by Jewish refugee organisations will be examined in a chapter three.

¹⁷⁰ A.W.G.Randall, Foreign Office to P Rogers, Colonial Office, 4 December 1942, PRO CO 323/1846/7.

Complaints by refugees over the enforced nature of their life in Gibraltar Camp, and the effect that these had on the Governor of Jamaica had made the Colonial Office keen to prevent further refugees from entering the camp. For example, in October 1942 the Jamaican Governor replied to a request for information on conditions in the camp by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Cranbourne. He commented that:

Among various other misrepresentations of Jamaica now being given currency in the United States are references to Gibraltar Camp as a sort of 'Concentration Camp', not widely different from similar institutions in Germany. There is no doubt that this campaign has been instigated by Polish Jews who have left the Camp for the United States, and who hope by telling harrowing and untruthful stories to persuade the U.S Authorities to grant entry permits to a large number of Polish Jews now in Gibraltar Camp.¹⁷¹

Commenting on this response in a memorandum, J. Emmens, a Colonial Office official noted that "I am getting tired of these Jewish refugees. In Jamaica we have a letter from some of them expressing gratitude for good treatment in Jamaica: now we have complaints such as those described [in the above correspondence]. If these people really think that conditions in Jamaica are no better than in concentration camps in Germany, it is a pity they didn't remain there".¹⁷² Furthermore, during December 1942 the Colonial Office approved the removal of twelve units of the camp to be handed over to the military authorities for accommodation for local forces. Replying to the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office stated that some six units remained available, able to house up to five hundred refugees. The letter related the Governor's reluctance to admit further refugees, and stated that only if a case were made where the removal of refugees to Jamaica was in the national interest would a further proposal be put to him.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ See Governor of Jamaica to The Right Honorable Lord Cranborne, 13 October 1942, PRO CO 323/1846/6.

¹⁷² J.Emmens, memorandum, 17.12.42, PRO CO 323/1846/7.

¹⁷³ Sidebotham, Colonial Office to A.W.G. Randall, Foreign Office, 19 December 1942, PRO CO 323/1846/7. See also correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor of Jamaica over this request by the High Commissioner. On 15 January 1943 the Secretary of State for the Colonies asked the Governor to confirm that no accommodation was available to house Jewish refugees from European countries, on guarantee of maintenance and removal at the end of the war. On 18 January 1943 the Governor replied that room for 500 existed, but was "being reserved for emergencies such as a sudden influx by refugee ships. It might be inconvenient if it were given up permanently". See the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor of Jamaica, 15 January 1943 & Governor of Jamaica to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 January 1943, PRO CO 323/1846/6.

But as information about the extermination of European Jewry spread amongst British and American refugee organisations and the public in general, a renewed debate began over possible rescue initiatives and finding places of refuge. Campaigns centred on finding possible sanctuaries for Jews able to reach neutral territory, and several proposals included sending refugees to Camp Gibraltar in Jamaica.¹⁷⁴ In December 1942 an Allied Declaration made explicit Nazi plans to exterminate European Jewry, and promised to prosecute Germany for war crimes. Thereafter momentum amongst refugee organisations increased pressure on Governments to initiate rescue plans, and an Anglo-American Conference in Bermuda was eventually held in April 1943 to discuss the Jewish question. The conference was convened in Bermuda precisely because of its remote location, and press and refugee organisations were locked out of the discussions.

The main focus of the conference was concerned with finding ways of evacuating refugees stranded in Spain and Portugal. As we have seen, after 1942, the majority of refugees able to reach the Spanish and Portuguese borders were young allied nationals, potential army recruits and servicemen who had escaped from Nazi territory. As Vichy and German authorities were leaning on Spain to end immigration, Allied powers saw the evacuation of existing refugees from these areas as a high priority, hence the importance attached to this issue at Bermuda. Estimates prepared for the conference divided the refugees stranded there into three categories: some 14,000 French refugees, mainly men of military age hoping to be posted to North Africa, some 800 Allied nationals, mainly Poles accepted into the armed forces of their countries and whom the Allies wished to take to Britain, and some six to eight thousand Jewish refugees, most from Central Europe.¹⁷⁵ Of the Jewish refugees, some two thousand had reached Spain prior to 1942 and had been unable to continue because of lack of visas. The remainder were mainly young men who had crossed the border since the German occupation of France.¹⁷⁶ For the same reasons that it had been expedient to remove the group of Polish Jews to Jamaica in January 1942, the removal of these refugees would persuade

¹⁷⁴ For example, in January 1943 a Parliamentary Motion asked for possibilities in the colonial Empire to be explored. In a booklet published in February 1943, Victor Gollanz called on the government to investigate immediately possibilities in the colonies. Both the Joint Emergency Council in America and the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror in Britain put forward 12 point plans to for consideration at the Bermuda Conference, which included sending refugees to Camp Gibraltar. These proposals are explored in Chapter 3: Jewish Refugee Organisations and the British West Indies, 1939-1945.

¹⁷⁵ See Marrus, *The Unwanted* p.264.

¹⁷⁶ Report to the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom from their Delegates to the Conference on the Refugee Problem held at Bermuda, April 19 - 29, 1943, printed for the War Cabinet, May 1943, PRO CO 733/449.

Spanish Consuls to admit refugees escaping from France into neutral territory, where they could be removed to Britain or America to enlist. Despite Axis pressure on Spanish authorities to prevent refugee entry, British and American pressure on the Spanish government to keep the borders open was successful. During 1943 it has been estimated that more than 20,300 refugees left Spain, “including 16,000 Frenchmen, 800 American airmen and about 3,500 stateless Jews”.¹⁷⁷

On 4 May, the Foreign Office circulated the report of the Bermuda Conference to the War Cabinet. Regarding the refugees in Spain, it had been recommended that the French refugees would be sent to camps in North Africa, that Allied nationals would be accepted into service in the armed forces and that for the remaining 6,000-8,000 Jewish refugees, several destinations had been discussed. Some would be admitted to the United States, certificates for admission to Palestine was discussed for some 2,000, removal to temporary refugee camps in North Africa, and for some 2,000, removal to Camp Gibraltar in Jamaica.

Regarding the position in the colonial Empire, the report stated that possibilities in British Caribbean territories had been rejected because “in general there would be the gravest difficulties in receiving refugees owing to the acute supply position, especially in regard to food, fuel and accommodation.” It continued that Europeans would have to exist without food stuffs “unobtainable” in tropical countries. Regarding British Honduras and British Guiana it stated that the possibilities for settlement had already been investigated, and without construction projects which would not be feasible during wartime, no accommodation would be available.¹⁷⁸

Despite one of the recommendations of the Bermuda Report being the “Admission of a limited group to Jamaica”, only Dutch refugees of military age from Spain were moved temporarily to Jamaica, and from there on to enlist in Surinam. No further groups of Polish

¹⁷⁷Marrus, The Unwanted, p.262. Marrus notes that at the Bermuda Conference the numbers of conscripted Allied military personell who had gained entry into Spain or Portugal was kept secret, see p. 265.

¹⁷⁸Report to the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom from their Delegates to the Conference on the Refugee Problem held at Bermuda, April 19 - 29, 1943, printed for the War Cabinet, May 1943, PRO CO 733/449.

Jews were moved to Gibraltar Camp.¹⁷⁹ Although the removal of refugees from Spain and Portugal was of importance to the British government, it would seem that objections from the Governor, reduced space in the camp, and perhaps the exigencies of war prevented their removal there. On 19 May 1943 the House of Commons again debated the refugee question where a statement was made giving an account of the Bermuda Conference. Although the recommendations of the conference remained secret, Mr Peake, Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office stressed the contribution already made by the colonial Empire in contributing to the refugee problem. He moved on to state that:

We must, I think, recognise that the United Nations can do little or nothing in the immediate present for the vast numbers now under Hitler's control. He is determined not to let those people go. The rate of extermination is such that no measures of rescue or relief on however large a scale could commensurate with the problem. . . Any slackening of our war effort or any delay to shipping in the attempted rescue of refugees could only delay the day of victory and result in the infliction of greater suffering on the subjugated peoples of Europe.¹⁸⁰

In summing up, during the 1930s the Colonial Office successfully managed to steer a course between following government instructions and "enquiring" about refugee possibilities whilst all the time guarding against any possibility that they would become reality. Throughout the wartime period, calls continued to be made for the colonial Empire, and the West Indies to provide sanctuary for refugees. The difference now was that British objectives placed the winning of the war as more important than demonstrating generosity over refugee policies. At times, when British interests dictated a change in policy, refugees were moved to parts of the colonial Empire, where they were housed in refugee camps. Refugees able to reach Palestine were turned back by British authorities and interned in Mauritius and those blocking exits in Lisbon were sent to Jamaica. Moreover, some 40,000 Polish refugees were sent from Russia to Persia.¹⁸¹ In this last instance, a statement by Anthony Eden over British policy towards these refugees is enlightening. Stressing the contribution that Britain had already made towards the refugee problem, in the House of Commons Debate following Bermuda, he stated that:

¹⁷⁹ No refugees from the group referred to at Bermuda were moved to Jamaica, probably because of objections from the Governor that it would be difficult for them to remigrate after the war. During 1943 further groups of Dutch refugees were moved to Jamaica, but these refugees were young men of military age, who were transferred from Gibraltar Camp to Surinam, where they joined the armed forces within months of their arrival in Jamaica.

¹⁸⁰ Report of House of Commons Debate on the Refugee Problem, 19 May 1943, PRO CO 733/449.

¹⁸¹ Although Persia had changed its name to Iran in 1935, during the war it continued to be known as Persia. See I.C.B. Dear, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, p.874, Oxford, New York, 1995.

Every ounce of food they consume has to be imported by us. We have to supply the shipping and supply the food, and it is the focus of our war effort, but it has to be done, as a contribution to our Polish Allies in the war. It is true to say that great as the difficulties are, we would not allow this to stop us or any other cause, but there are many cases where it is the action of the enemy power that stops our effort.¹⁸²

Whilst the “action of enemy power” undoubtedly prevented many thousands of refugees from being sent from Europe to places of refuge, opportunities were lost. For instance, during 1940 and 1941, facilities to house several thousand refugees in Gibraltar Camp were never fully utilised.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the influence that Britain had over its West Indian colonies, and has demonstrated that particular concerns, both during the 1930s and the wartime period prevented the question of mass or individual refuge there from ever being a serious option. Individuals gained access to the Caribbean through their own initiative or with the help of refugee organisations, and once their numbers began to increase, immigration controls were instigated against them, with the sanction of the British government. It has also shown, however, that at particular points of “pressure” during the refugee crisis, the West Indies became an important focus for the Foreign, Home and Colonial Office and that despite the knowledge of local conditions, considerable pressure was exerted on the Colonial Office to explore possibilities, and to discourage the instigation of firmer immigration controls.

It is true that many schemes were cynical exercises in avoiding the question over Palestine. Nevertheless, with the political and financial will, settlements in British Guiana and British Honduras could well have benefitted both West Indians and Jewish refugees. For the British Government, the West Indies was a remote area within the colonial Empire, which may have provided temporary solutions to a refugee crisis. Attention focused on the region at certain times, regarding labour riots during the 1930s and their strategic position during the war. Yet with the exception of an offer of land in British Guiana, and the actual establishment of a refugee camp in Jamaica, the realpolitik of the relationship between Colonial Legislatures and the Colonial Office prevented British refugee policy from superceding West Indian demands to keep their islands free from a refugee influx.

¹⁸²The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, House of Commons debate on the Refugee Problem, 19 May 1943, PRO CO 733/449.

PART 2: JEWISH REFUGEE ORGANISATIONS AND THE WEST INDIES

Chapter 2: Bound for Nowhere: Jewish refugee organisations and the West Indies 1933 - 1939.

Introduction

In the following two chapters, the role of Jewish refugee organisations with regard to the West Indies will be explored. Their involvement with the West Indies, voluntary and involuntary, provides a paradigm of the importance of their work and the growing problems that they faced in achieving their objectives. During the 1930s, the overriding concerns of these organisations was to provide aid to impoverished Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and Nazi Germany, and to coordinate and help in the process of refugee migration and reception. In this chapter, the focus is on their changing attitudes towards refugee migration, and most particularly, towards refugees from Nazi Germany.

The emphasis on refugees from Nazi Germany, rather than on Eastern European refugees, is for the following reason: whilst a potential refugee crisis existed in Eastern Europe, comparatively few Jews from these regions were able to emigrate. Yet the situation in Eastern Europe created dilemmas for Jewish organisations over spending priorities: Jewish organisations were constantly divided over the question of how to divide their dwindling resources between the actual refugee crisis that had occurred in Nazi Germany, and the relief and rehabilitation needed to provide for impoverished Jews in Eastern Europe. A report of June 1938 sums up the view of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the leading American Jewish aid organisation:

Emigration will not solve the problem [of Eastern European Jews]. Mass emigration is impossible in view of the situation in the immigration countries which have little capacity of absorption, unemployment questions of their own... Besides, the situation of the Jews in Germany and Austria is momentarily more urgent... Polish Jewry can only be saved by economic reconstruction with the help of the Government.¹

In 1933 Jewish philanthropic bodies had been operating for some fifty years, dispensing advice and information through emigration and relief organisations linked to local committees throughout Eastern Europe, Western Europe, the Americas and the Far East. Jewish organisations had become expert in providing aid to impoverished communities in

¹June 1938 report on Polish Jewry by the JDC, cited in Zosa Szajkowski, "Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief and Immigration (1914-1938)", *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Vol.LVII, No.2, December 1967, p.242. Four articles by Szajkowski, all with similar titles will be referred to in this chapter. To simplify, after the first reference to each article, they will be referred to as respectively Szajkowski 1-4. Henceforth the above will be cited as Szajkowski 1.

Eastern Europe and in facilitating emigration to the west. But, as the 1920s and 1930s progressed, their ability to direct or control the flow of Jewish emigration was largely curtailed by the joint effects of Nazi policies and immigration restrictions in force.

A substantial problem for refugee organisations was their lack of political power. Refugee organisations were often called upon to finance, investigate or approve plans conceived by intergovernmental committees and organisations. Yet Jewish social workers and policy makers, although consulted, had no official status on these committees and intergovernmental organisations. In response, Jewish organisations were divided over how to address the problem of their lack of power and representation. As the chapter explores, organisations that were influenced by, and perhaps formed by western Jewish communities, chose a non-political line, whilst those whose roots lay in Eastern Europe often chose a more confrontational way to achieve their objectives.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the role of Jewish organisations in the movement of refugees to the West Indies was critical. Nevertheless, it also reveals the general sense of powerlessness felt by all Jewish organisations and refugee bodies. Herbert Strauss has argued that “the emigration of Jews from Germany began as a spontaneous movement in 1933, and ... remained largely unaffected by the social planning or policies of Jewish representatives in Germany or abroad”.² Were Jewish organisations powerless to influence the course of refugee migration? This is a theme that runs throughout this chapter, and can be seen in the following paradox: the majority of refugees to enter West Indian colonies came as a result of some form of assistance from Jewish refugee organisations. Yet the Caribbean was, for refugee organisations, a place which signalled their lack of success in organising emigration to more desirable destinations, such as Britain, the United States and South America. For Jewish organisations, the British West Indies became important only when all other planned attempts for a solution to the refugee crisis had been exhausted. Whilst in the early 1930s many organisations argued against mass emigration, by 1935 they had accepted that organising emigration must be their main policy in reacting to the Nazi treatment of Jews. As political bodies argued that Britain should allow Jewish refugees unrestricted entry to Palestine, aid organisations became involved in costly, and largely fruitless investigations into settlement possibilities in remote areas of the world, including British Guiana. Their

²Herbert Strauss, “Jewish Emigration From Germany : Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (I)”, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, XXV, 1980, p.316.

involvement in these settlement schemes was largely forced upon them by circumstance; whilst lacking the status or political power to influence refugee policies of western governments, they were called upon by the same countries to fund such endeavours.

Similarly with individual emigration, the West Indies was not viewed as a suitable destination until the late 1930s. Enquiries about placing individuals in the West Indies had been largely unsuccessful, and organisations were against advocating destinations where the possibility of employment was slim. Yet as Nazi persecution intensified, organisations felt compelled to aid refugees (both legally and 'illegally') to any country in which immigration requirements would allow them entry, or from which they would not be turned back to Nazi Germany. Therefore, during 1938, as a result of Nazi emigration policies, Jewish organisations began to advocate certain West Indian colonies, such as Trinidad, as a destination to which refugees could be directed.

Once immigration was closed in the West Indies and many South American countries, Jewish organisations were left with the problem of aiding refugees who were already on the high seas. Whilst some had set sail before the bans were enacted, others had been forcibly expelled from Nazi Germany and possessed invalid landing documents. These sailings caught world wide attention as ships crowded with refugees sailed from Europe to western destinations where they were often refused entry. In most cases, it was the intervention of Jewish organisations, applying pressure and providing financial guarantees, that enabled the refugees temporary admission to South American or Caribbean ports. Yet the high financial cost to Jewish organisations meant that policy makers had to assess their role in aiding these refugees. Many became convinced that only by ceasing their assistance would Germany stop its policy of expelling Jews. The chapter examines how refugee organisations attempted to formulate a common policy in dealing with this unregulated migration. The cases of two refugee ships bound for Barbados and Trinidad in early 1939 demonstrated the dilemmas faced by these organisations.

The chapter is divided into three sections, the first two providing the context in which policies and problems of Jewish bodies can be understood. The first charts the beginnings of international Jewish cooperation, tracing the motivations that propelled western Jewish communities into establishing philanthropic and refugee aid bodies. While this chapter focuses on Jewish refugee and aid organisations, it would be difficult to understand their

actions without considering their relationship to larger Jewish bodies, from which many refugee agencies were formed. The links between these agencies and larger organisations are often keys to understanding the policies pursued by them. At the same time, policies pursued by political and representative Jewish organisations held repercussions for the scope in which refugee organisations could act. Understanding the origins and development of Jewish cooperation is essential when considering their reactions to the challenges of the Nazi era. The second section provides a general sketch of how Nazi policies affected German Jewish emigration. The last section begins by summarising the general issues and problems facing Jewish organisations in the 1930s, before moving on to an analysis of their changing attitudes towards mass and individual refuge in the West Indies.

-I-

The development of Jewish refugee organisations

The end of the nineteenth century saw Jewish communities in west and central Europe gain full civil and political rights, whilst the majority of the world's Jewish population remained in economic poverty, and subject to persistent bouts of legal and popular antisemitism.³ The growth of international Jewish cooperation developed from two contradictory impulses: the rise in confidence and stature of western Jewry, and their simultaneous anxiety about the impact of political antisemitism in western Europe. As citizens of France, Britain, the United States and Germany, emancipated Jews had formed organisations to represent their concerns at home and abroad. In France, the Alliance Israelite Universelle (AIU) and in Britain the Joint Foreign Committee of the Anglo Jewish Association (AJA) sought to use their influence in international affairs for the benefit of persecuted Jewry abroad.⁴ In addition to representing French Jewry, the AIU began building schools, hospitals and vocational training centres throughout the Middle East and North Africa. In Germany, the Central-Verein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens (C.V.) was founded in response to rising antisemitism in Germany, and to represent a large stratum of German Jewish opinion.⁵ In the United States, the American Jewish Committee, formed in 1906 by an elite of German Jewish origin, was an attempt to create a permanent and representative body of American Jewry broadly similar in outlook to the AJA and the AIU. In 1917 the American Jewish Congress

³Before World War I the largest Jewish populations lived in the Russian Empire, approximately 5.6 million.

⁴The Anglo Jewish Association was founded in 1871, the Joint Foreign Committee of the AJA in 1878, the Alliance Israelite Universelle in 1860.

⁵ According to Yehuda Bauer, German Jewry never had a centralised representative body such as the AJA or the AIU, See his *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945*, New Haven & London 1994, p.7.

was created as an alternative body to represent the growing numbers of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, who felt unrepresented in the American Jewish Committee.⁶ In contrast to the Committee, the American Jewish Congress was Zionist-orientated and in 1936 sponsored the creation of the World Jewish Congress (WJC). Until the First World War, both organisations left most diplomatic activity on behalf of European Jewry to the AIU and the AJA.

From the late nineteenth century, at every major European meeting concerning Jewish issues, Jewish representatives from Britain, France, Germany and the United States were present to press the case for Jewish rights in Eastern Europe.⁷ From the beginning however, differences existed over the approach towards Jewish issues. For example, at the Versailles Conference many Eastern European Jewish representatives pressed for recognition of Jewish rights as a national cause. The approach of the Western European organisations, such as the AJA and AIU, was to press for equality of rights for Jewish citizens, whilst rejecting calls for a recognition of Jews as a national minority.⁸ This reflected the belief, fundamental to many Jewish leaders from western democracies, that the way to ameliorate conditions for persecuted Jewry lay in the adoption of western patterns of assimilation and emancipation. Monty Penkower has described how:

An important characteristic of these national Jewish relief organisations is that they endeavoured to employ the international power of the countries in which Jews had recently acquired citizenship on behalf of brethren in different parts of the world. An active concern for fellow Jews persisted even though the leadership was often avowedly assimilationist and eager to replace certain traditional loyalties to the Jewish community with full participation in the public life of a new community to which they

⁶ In 1848 the United States had a Jewish population of some 20,000, mainly from Germany. After 1860 the numbers of Eastern Europeans, particularly from the Russian Empire, to emigrate to the United States grew dramatically. In 1870 the Jewish population had grown to 600,000 and by 1914 to over two million. See Troern and Pinkus, eds., "Introduction" to Organizing Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period, London 1992, p.11.

⁷Feingold has described a "shadowy international presence", or an "unofficial" presence to defend Jewish interests at "every major meeting of the European state system between the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the negotiations ending World War I at Versailles (1919). See Henry Feingold, Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust, Syracuse New York 1995, p.34.

⁸Jewish organisations convened in Paris in 1919 to discuss Jewish rights to be encoded in the Versailles Treaty (1920). Jewish delegations came from Poland, the Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Britain, France and the United States to lobby for minority rights to be recognised for Jews living in the new nation states. Whilst the American Jewish Congress did not fully agree with the representatives from Eastern Europe for full recognition of Jews as a national minority, their delegate, Louis Marshall, took a more pragmatic line than the AIU and AJA, who refused to sign the memorandum demanding this status. Marshall insisted that western Jews cannot "permit ourselves to judge what is most desirable for the people who live in Eastern Europe by the standards which prevail on Fifth Avenue". See Ronald Sanders, Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration, New York 1988, p.348.

had transferred allegiance.⁹

The anxieties felt by these organisations were fed by the belief that the varied political, religious and social cultures adhered to by many Eastern European Jews were contributing factors to the increase of antisemitism both in their own communities and in western countries to which they emigrated. Therefore, policy was governed by two overriding concerns: preventing a flood of Eastern European immigration into western Europe, and creating a network of educational and social projects abroad through which they could export assimilated western Jewish messages.

During the period of mass migration, most East European emigrants travelled overseas to the American continent but numbers remained throughout west and central Europe.¹⁰ In keeping with the desire to prevent large numbers of immigrants from settling in Germany, France and Britain, countries through which emigrants travelled, organisations were formed to aid their emigration to further destinations and to direct emigration from the point of departure. For this latter purpose, organisations such as the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) established vocational training schemes in agriculture and trades throughout Eastern Europe and attempted to direct young Jews to farming colonies established by themselves.¹¹ Agencies and local committees of organisations were set up throughout East and West European ports and major cities to aid in the flow of migrants leaving Eastern Europe for western destinations, principally the United States.¹² In Germany, the transit country through which the majority of immigrants travelled, the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden was created

⁹ Penkower, Organizing Rescue, p.8

¹⁰ Between 1881 and 1914 more than 2.5 million Jews migrated from Eastern Europe. See A History of the Jewish People, Ed., H.H. Ben-Sassoon, United States, 1976, p.860.

¹¹ The ICA was established in 1891 by Baron Maurice von Hirsch in Paris to encourage Russian Jews to colonize over a million acres acquired by the organisation in Argentina. Although its intention was to settle some 25,000 Russian Jews, the numbers to settle there remained small as the United States remained the main target for immigration. In 1896 the ICA widened its remit to aid emigration to countries other than Argentina and opened branches throughout Eastern Europe. It also innovated a loan system which enabled immigrants to fund their own emigration. For example, in 1901 an ICA emigration agency was established in Rumania and in that year, some 3,187 Jews were helped to emigrate, the majority to Canada. See Theodore Norman, An Outstretched Arm : A History of the Jewish Colonization Association, London 1985, p.101; Ronald Sanders, Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration, pp.150-151; Haim Avni, "Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust", Randolph L. Braham, ed., Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era, New York 1985, p.88. Avni claims that before WWI, some 20% of Jewish immigrants to Argentina remigrated whereas only 7.14% of Jewish immigrants to the US did so.

¹² Between 1901 and 1925 it has been estimated that 86% of Jewish migrants entered the United States, 7.1% went to Argentina and Brazil, 0.9% to other American countries and 3.6% to Palestine. See Mark Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, Philadelphia 1949, p.295.

in Berlin in 1901 to give help to Jews of Eastern Europe. Its chief objective was to aid their passage through Germany in collaboration with Jewish and non-Jewish agencies in Russia, Europe, the United States and Palestine. The organisation gave financial and practical help, obtaining visas and tickets, and receiving remittances on behalf of migrants from their families in the United States.¹³

In turn, agencies and organisations concerned with the reception of immigrants were formed in countries of immigration. In Britain, Anglo-Jewish elites were appalled by the highly visible religious customs, dress and mode of behaviour of recently arrived Eastern European Jews. At a time of increasing poverty, unemployment and industrial crisis, Jewish immigrants were often the targets of public antipathy, and the established Jewish bodies, such as the AJA and the Board of Guardians responded by setting a high priority on projects to “anglicise” immigrants as well as encouraging the onward migration of many recently arrived.¹⁴ In the United States, American Jewry responded by forming a number of organisations. The Hebrew and Immigrant Aid Society was established in 1902 in New York in response to the large numbers of Jewish immigrants arriving. In 1909 it amalgamated with the Hebrew Sheltering House Association (founded in New York in 1888) and became known as the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (Hias). Its remit was to provide shelter and help for newly arrived immigrants. By the outbreak of the First World War, Monty Penkower has described how:

A remarkably effective international network of organisations had been established. Whole new community networks were established that included schools and hospitals, vocational training agencies, religious institutions and organizations to protect the civil rights of fellow-Jews. Some organizations were created to assist Jews to emigrate to safer lands. Other societies were organized to protect Jews wherever they lived.¹⁵

The end of the First World War saw American Jewish organisations become more actively involved in European affairs. War-torn and uprooted Jewish communities in Eastern Europe now formed part of a huge refugee crisis as large numbers fled the effects of civil war and

¹³Mark Wischnitzer has estimated that between 1905-1914, the peak period of Jewish migration, 700,000 Eastern European Jews travelled to German ports to embark for western destinations. The Hilfsverein helped 210,771 of this number to emigrate. See To Dwell in Safety, p.115.

¹⁴For example, in 1891 the Board of Guardians set up the Russian-Jewish Committee. Its objectives were to repatriate to Russia immigrants who were not “authentic” refugees but had come on economic grounds. It has been estimated that some 50,000 were repatriated to Russia. See David Feldman, Englishmen and Jews, USA 1994, passim.

¹⁵Penkower, Organizing Rescue, “Introduction”, p.10.

pogroms in Soviet territories into Poland, the Ukraine, Rumania and the Baltic States.¹⁶ The refugee situation was further exacerbated as new nation states expelled displaced Jews and other minorities from their borders, at the same time as countries of immigration erected barriers against their admittance. In response, Hias expanded its links with emigration agencies and established its own offices in Eastern Europe, now actively involved in aiding immigration to the United States. In 1914 the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), was formed to dispense funds collected by American Jewry for refugee agencies in Europe.¹⁷

During the 1920s, ^{the provision of aid for} migration became subject to increasing political and economic constraints. Although international cooperation was achieved in many cases, the national interests and ideologies of large representative organisations affected the policies of aid and refugee bodies. Directing migration became increasingly hard as immigration restrictions began to affect refugee movement. In 1921 the United States limited annual immigration to three per cent of the number of co-nationals resident and in 1924 reduced this number to two per cent. This system severely limited the numbers of Eastern European Jews able to enter.¹⁸ Excluding France, which mainly welcomed immigrants because of the huge death toll during the war, most European, South American and Commonwealth countries followed the lead of the United States and initiated restrictions and quota laws designed to prevent large scale

¹⁶For example, in October 1921 Frederick Nansen, Appointed High Commissioner, League of Nations in August 1921 estimated that there were approximately 200,000 Jewish refugees. See Michael Marrus, The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century, New York 1985, p.64.

¹⁷ The JDC initially worked alongside Hoover's American Relief Administration during the war, and afterwards began to fund and initiate longer term rehabilitation projects, such as vocational schools and training institutes. In 1922 the JDC attempted to change the nature of its overseas help from relief work to rehabilitation, but as economic and political circumstances remained harsh, spent most of its income on immediate projects, sending relief to prevent starvation. See Zosa Szajkowski, "Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief (1914-1938)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol.LVII, No.1, September 1967, p.63 (hereafter Szajkowski 2). In 1920, the JDC was incorporated in New York State as the Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. and again in 1931 as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

¹⁸ For example, between 1900 and 1920, Jewish immigration from Eastern and Central Europe averaged an estimated ten per cent of the total flow of emigrants to the United States. Between 1924 and 1925 10,000 Jews entered, compared to over 100,000 annually during the period of unrestricted immigration. The 1924 Act cut the annual quota from Eastern and Southern Europe by 87 per cent. Between 1899 and 1903 some 29,513 Jews left Rumania for the United States. After the Immigration Statute of 1924, the Polish quota dropped from admitting 30,977 to 5,982, the Russian quota from 24,405 to 2,148 and the Rumanian from 7,419 to only 603 immigrants admitted per year. See Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, pp.151 & 154, & *ibid*, Visas to Freedom: The History of Hias, Cleveland & New York, 1956, p.25 & p.111. After the new law was passed in 1924, some 8,000 Jews with US immigration visas were stranded in European ports. See Zosa Szajkowski, "Private American Jewish Overseas Relief: 1919-1938: Problems and Attempted Solutions", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol LVII, No.3, March 1968, p.337 (henceforth Szajkowski 3).

immigration from Eastern Europe.¹⁹

For individual migrants, agencies obtained exit permits, transit and immigration visas, acted as repositories for funds sent from families in the United States, and obtained reductions from shipping companies. For those without money or relatives in western countries, organisations continued to concentrate on agricultural settlement schemes and retraining. As emigration on a massive scale was no longer possible, Jewish organisations focused on Eastern Europe, intensifying reconstructions and beginning settlement projects there. Migrants were also directed to agricultural settlements in South American states.²⁰ But agricultural colonies had their limits, depending on the young and the fit to take part, and were not a solution for resettling refugees. This was also true of Palestine. The Jewish Agency, established in 1920, established training for potential emigrants in agriculture, handicrafts, Hebrew and Jewish history in cities throughout Eastern Europe. Yet conditions in Palestine in the 1920s were harsh, and Zionist groups were themselves ambivalent about encouraging refugee, rather than immigrant migration to Palestine. Whilst economic and political conditions stimulated emigration to one of the few places which encouraged settlement at the time, remigration from Palestine proved that the Yishuv was a project which favoured the young and fit.²¹

Politically, Jewish organisations were divided over what policies to follow regarding aid and migration in the increasingly restrictionist climate. Western Jewish leaders were reluctant to engage in activity likely to stimulate emigration from Eastern Europe, and felt a responsibility to ensure that immigration restrictions were not ignored. Indeed, many Jewish policy makers

¹⁹In France, 1.5 million Frenchmen were killed during the war. By 1928, the same number of foreign workers emigrated to Paris. Of this number were some 150,000 Jews. See Marrus, *The Unwanted*, p.113. France was the exception in Europe, Britain and Germany remaining countries of transit rather than settlement. Countries which followed the example of the United States included Australia, which enacted an Immigration Act in 1925 and Canada, which prohibited in 1923 all immigration from Eastern Europe excepting agriculturalists, farm labourers and female domestic servants.

²⁰ The Bund, a Jewish labour organisation in Poland set up a labour emigration bureau, sending emigrants mainly to France and Argentina, and published a weekly column on emigration possibilities. In 1924 the JDC established the AgroJoint, which founded 112 colonies in the Ukraine and 105 in the Crimea. In 1924 the American Joint Reconstruction Foundation was organized by the JDC and the ICA to carry out economic reconstruction in East and Central Europe. By 1928 the AgroJoint had settled some 60,000 Jews in its settlements, Marrus stating that the overall number may have been 100,000. See Marrus, *The Unwanted*, p.118. In the 1920s the ICA started directing refugees to agricultural settlement projects in South America, and set up reception committees in Argentina, Canada, Chile, Bolivia and Mexico. The subcommittees set up in countries of reception not only provided for newly arrived refugees but also provided intelligence on prospects for further immigration

²¹Between 1919 and 1923 some 37,000 Jews emigrated to Palestine but by 1923 remigration reached 43%. Between 1924 and 1926 Polish persecution led to some 32,500 Jews emigrating to Palestine, many of these seeking an escape from economic persecution. See Marrus, *The Unwanted*, pp.115-117.

felt that aid directed to Eastern European bodies would be used to fund emigration to western countries.²² Instead, they focused on donating aid into established projects, such as the training schools and emergency relief projects set up by their own bodies operating in Eastern Europe, such as the Alliance and the ICA. At the same time, Jews of Eastern European origin had gained a stronger voice in American Jewish politics, as evidenced by the leadership of Hias:

This change had a great influence on the attitude of the Hias towards Jewish problems of an international character, including emigration. The Hias favoured giving Eastern European Jewish Organisations a stronger voice in the direction of migration and relief work. At the same time Dr Bernhard Kahn of the Hilfsverein, a trusted official of the JDC, tried for a collaboration between the JDC, AIU and the JCA[ICA].²³

In contrast, the leadership of the JDC, formed by a German Jewish elite, shared many of the same ideals as the American Jewish Committee, itself modelled on western representative bodies, such as the Alliance in France.²⁴ Whilst members of Hias felt they were helping immigrants not unlike themselves, the JDC leadership was more remote:

Those they helped were foreigners; if American aid could help them to rebuild their lives so that they could achieve in their own countries what German Jews had achieved in America - equality and a sense of identification with their land of residence - so much the better. There would be fewer poverty stricken Jews to take care of in New York and other places in the United States.²⁵

The different approaches towards issues of migration were drawn out at two conferences held by Jewish organisations in 1921. Both were attempts to coordinate activities by founding a single emigration body, and both failed because of differences over policy and objectives concerning the politics of aid, distribution of funds, and migration. In June 1921 the ICA convened at Brussels to suggest that all future emigration activities came under their control, but dissent prevented the conference from adopting the idea. Objections centred around two issues, the distribution of aid and attitudes towards emigration from Eastern Europe. Whereas Western organisations wanted to concentrate on providing aid within Eastern Europe, Eastern European organisations were more interested in getting help for their own

²²See Skajkowski 1, p..235.

²³ Skajkowski 1,p.233-234. This thesis uses the acronym ICA for the Jewish Colonisation Association.

²⁴ Yehuda Bauer comments of the JDC and American Jewish Committee that “ in many ways the two groups were merely different organizational expressions of the same elite”. See American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945, Michigan 1981, p.22.

²⁵Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.22.

projects, and in finding avenues for emigration.²⁶ Western organisations called for selective emigration, arguing that despite “desperate appeals” from Jews to leave Europe, only those “fit for overseas migration should be aided”.²⁷ Complicating the issue was the fact that Hias, was far more sympathetic to Eastern European delegates present at the conference than the other established western bodies such as the ICA and the AJA. Indeed, Hias fell under suspicion of stimulating migration to the United States, and being involved in the traffic of illegal visas.²⁸

In October 1921 Hias called a second migration conference in Prague. The result was to establish the United Committee for Jewish Migration, EmigDirect, whose remit was to organise committees throughout Eastern Europe. From its inception, it was more centred on Eastern European priorities. Its policy^{was} to work with locally established committees as well as establishing a complex system of loans, (kassas) in Eastern Europe to enable emigrants to fund their own emigration.²⁹ Although EmigDirect was named an umbrella organisation, it remained unaffiliated to the JDC, Hilfsverein, Alliance and ICA. Their refusal to become involved stemmed from the perception that association with Hias and EmigDirect cast doubt over their own activities. For example, in the United States, Hias was viewed by State Department officials as an organisation which stimulated migration at a time when quotas were being introduced. Hias was charged with sending emigrants to South American States with the express purpose of enabling them to reapply for entry to the United States.³⁰ Nevertheless, Hias had the support of Eastern European bodies because the United States remained the goal of many emigrants:

²⁶ For example, a report of the conference from an Eastern European delegate reporting to Hias stated that the conference was a “grand tragic comedy”, and that arguments against “undermining the self reliance of newly organized Polish and Rumanian Immigrant committees fell on deaf ears”. Instead, the delegate felt, the conference was “nothing but a gathering of representatives who either came to collect for past contributions or plead for future donations”. See Skajkowski 1, p.234.

²⁷ See Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, p.148.

²⁸ See Skajkowski 1, p.233. The accusation that Hias was involved in issuing false visas was made by Lucien Wolf, British delegate for the ICA. See Sanders, Shores of Refuge, pp.390-391.

²⁹ EmigDirect represented 27 committees in 16 countries, including the Jewish National Councils of Poland, Lithuania and Zionist Organisations. Its headquarters were in Berlin. Zosa Skajkowski has noted that whilst it represented many committees, it’s letterhead made it clear that it was directed by Hias, as its letterhead stated the organisation was the “European Representative of the Society ‘Hias of America’”. See Skajkowski 1, p.214.

³⁰ For example, writing to Stephen Wise in January 1924 an official from the US Labour Department wrote that “The Department of Labor looks with disfavor upon any expenditure incurred by the HIAS, on immigration to countries contiguous to the United States. The Department of Labor designates this as “assisted immigration” with a view of eventually handing those immigrants in the United States, who would otherwise come under the purview of the rule of inadmissibility”. See Skajkowski 1, p.231.

Only HIAS could offer the prospect of an emigration route that might at least lead there eventually, in spite of the drastic new restrictions. Moreover, the JCA,[ICA] an organization of elite West European Jews, simply did not have the roots in Eastern Europe that HIAS had, with its many members who had been born there and spoke good Yiddish.³¹

In 1927, ideological differences were, to some extent, put aside when ICA, Hias and EmigDirect formed a permanent migration and aid organisation, Hicem. It is not clear how or why the ICA and Hias managed to overcome their different attitudes to migration, but it is possibly as a result of successful collaboration in the United Evacuation Committee, formed in 1925 to help evacuate Jews stranded in European ports.³² This body would specialise in organising emigration from the point of departure in local committees, and processing immigration into the United States. All local migration branches of the three organisations and the European transit committees became branches of Hicem, with the ICA supplying 40 per cent and the Hias supplying 60 per cent of the expenses. It established offices and bureaus of information in 32 countries and helped to organise local committees to aid emigration.

During the 1920s the success or failure of representative bodies to influence immigration policies bore an obvious impact on the scope^{of activities} that aid organisations could tackle. Although aid organisations such as the JDC operated independently of larger Jewish organisations, policy in these organisations was decided by individuals with direct links and affiliations to the larger organisations. Politically, the JDC followed the example of the American Jewish Congress in its attitude towards immigration restrictions in the United States. Whilst Hias, the Liberal Immigration League and similar organisations held mass meetings and petitions, the AJC and the JDC “preferred lobbying” in Washington and exerting other pressures.³³ Throughout this period, and with a continued resonance during the 1930s and 1940s, these organisations took very different approaches towards issues such as emigration, aid and relief. Attitudes formed in the 1920s would continue to influence policy making and decisions, yet with the onset of Nazism, they faced an entirely new situation. To understand the responses

³¹ Shores of Refuge, p.392.

³² There is no clear explanation as to why organisations came together. Wischnitzer suggests that as a year previously, EmigDirect, Hias and the ICA cooperated with each other in the United Evacuation Committee, the ground was paved for further cooperation. See Wischnitzer, Visas To Freedom, pp.122-123, and for a background to the United Evacuation Committee, To Dwell in Safety, pp.155-156. Certainly, it had been an aim of all three organisations to coordinate migration work.

³³ Skajkowski 1, p.217.

of Jewish organisations, it is crucial to place them in the context of Nazi measures towards the Jews under their control. The following provides a sketch of Nazi policies and the pattern of German Jewish emigration from 1933 to 1939.

-II-

The effect of Nazi policy on German Jewish emigration 1933-1939

In 1933 the German Jewish community numbered an estimated 525,000.³⁴ It was an ageing population in “sharp demographic decline”, with the number of deaths far outweighing the number of births.³⁵ The majority of Jews were concentrated into urban centres, just under half the entire Jewish population living in six major German cities.³⁶ Whilst Jews were well represented amongst the upper social classes, the majority belonged to the lower middle and working class. Occupationally, over half were self employed, and there was a strong concentration in trade and commerce. Only a small percentage of Jews were employed as workers in industry.³⁷

Nazi emigration policies towards Jewish refugees have been characterised as haphazard and chaotic.³⁸ Up to early 1938 the pattern of German Jewish emigration from Germany rose and fell. Nazi leaders followed policies which at times encouraged mobs to terrorise and assault Jewish citizens without fear of prosecution and at other times relocated violence and terror away from the public gaze.³⁹ At the same time a programme of persecution through

³⁴See Herbert Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany”, (I), pp.316-318. This figure is the estimated number of Jews affiliated by religion. Strauss notes that if non affiliated Jews, those living in mixed marriages, and those identified only by descent were added, the figure would approach a total of 867,000 persons affected by Nazi laws.

³⁵Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany” (I), pp.319-320.

³⁶Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany”(I), p.323.

³⁷Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany”(I), pp.324 -325. See also Leni Yahil, The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, New York, Oxford 1987, p.22.

³⁸ The following account draws heavily from Strauss: “Jewish Emigration from Germany (I)”, pp. 313-361 & “Jewish Emigration from Germany: Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (II)”, Leo Baeck Year Book XXVI, 1981, pp.343-409. For other works on German Jewish emigration,(which Strauss has used for his sources), see Arthur Prinz, "The Role of the Gestapo in Obstructing and Promoting Jewish Emigration", Yad Vashem Studies, 2, 1958, pp.205-218; Werner Rosenstock, "Exodus 1933-1939: A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany", Leo Baeck Year Book,1956, pp.373-390; Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety.

³⁹For example, following the Jewish boycott announced in April 1933 widespread violent attacks against Jews were quickly discouraged by Nazi authorities and replaced by legislative persecution. While large numbers of Jews fled the regime during 1933, some returned in 1934 partly because they were unable to secure a living in neighbouring countries, and partly because of the cessation of violence in Germany. Yet it is also clear that the level of violence and brutality varied greatly throughout Germany. Strauss has noted that violence was always organised, and that pogrom style brutality and attacks of a spontaneous nature never occurred in Germany. In fact, “the passivity of broad strata of the population in Germany remained a constant throughout the period of persecution”. See Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany”(I), p.331.

legislative means, of “creeping persecution”, achieved the steady eradication of Jewish rights in Germany.⁴⁰ In 1933 Jews were excluded from the civil service and government, and those Jews naturalised during the Weimar period had their citizenship revoked. In 1935 the Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their citizenship, and articulated the physical separation of Germans from Jews, through a series of racial interdicts.

Correspondingly, German Jews were divided and confused by Nazi policy. In 1933 large numbers emigrated from Germany in reaction to the initial brutality, loss of employment, and for political asylum. But from 1934 to July 1938, emigration was at a steadier and lower rate, as various factors prevented a mass exodus from Germany.⁴¹ These factors were both internal and external. Internal factors included the belief that the regime would improve, political opposition to leaving Germany, an unwillingness to become uprooted and family concerns, such as having children at school.⁴² External factors revolved around the difficulties involved in finding places to emigrate to, and the problems of leaving Germany. An ageing population, with a concentration in trade and commerce, the demographic profile of German Jews worked against their admittance to neighbouring European or overseas countries. Whilst Palestine remained open to Jewish immigration, apart from capitalists, it relied on the young and fit. Otherwise, immigration regulations stipulated the need for financial self sufficiency, family connections and or definite offers of employment. As we have seen in the previous chapter, world depression and economic insecurity led to harsh restrictions being imposed on entry to most countries in the western hemisphere for those not meeting this criteria. In addition, if Jews did have capital and property in Germany, the conditions imposed on Jews leaving the Reich also acted as an impediment to emigration. Apart from the Haavara scheme, which allowed the transfer of capital to Palestine, the flight tax ensured that individuals leaving Germany could only take a small percentage of foreign currency from the country.⁴³

⁴⁰See Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany” (I), p.331.

⁴¹Strauss estimates the following pattern of emigration between 1933 and 1938: “Jewish emigration from Germany fell from a peak of 37,000 in 1933, to 21,000 in 1935, rose to 25,000 in 1936, fell once again in 1937 and reached its final crescendo in 1938 before and after ...Kristallnacht, to continue through 1940”. See Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany” (I), p.330.

⁴²Ibid, p.328. Strauss notes that families with infants tended to postpone emigration.

⁴³The flight tax, initiated prior to the Nazi regime, was increased under the Nazis. See Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, p.190.

Estimates of the numbers of Jews to leave Germany during the first five years of the regime and for the period before the outbreak of war need to be treated with caution. Nevertheless, they illustrate the changing conditions in Nazi Germany.⁴⁴ Between January 1933 and July 1938 some 150,000 Jews emigrated, approximately 26% of the German Jewish population. These Jews were able to enter countries by satisfying immigration conditions. As the 1930s progressed, overseas destinations overtook European countries and Palestine. By the end of 1937 more than 60 per cent of emigres went overseas, 15 per cent to Palestine, and 25 per cent to Europe. Of the overseas countries, the the United States was the foremost destination, with Argentina and Brazil coming second in importance.⁴⁵

From 1937, Jewish emigration became a primary Nazi objective. Henceforth the more pragmatic forces in the Nazi hierarchy, who had emphasised the need for orderly emigration, and for the continuation of Jewish involvement with the German economy, lost influence in the Party structure. From now onwards, policy was designed to speed their emigration whilst retaining Jewish assets. This policy meant that in order to leave, Jews became penniless refugees.⁴⁶ Whilst changes in Nazi policy had been gradual in Germany, in Austria after its annexation in March 1938 the pace of persecution was swift and brutal. Through the Anschluss, some 200,000 Jews were now included in the Greater German Reich. In April a Central Office for Jewish Emigration was established under Eichmann in Vienna, and in January 1939 the Reich Central Office for emigration was established. Under the Gestapo, forced emigration took over from a more bureaucratic and ordered attitude to emigration, favoured by the Reich's Office of Migration.

A further turning point centred around the organised pogrom carried out over the night of 9 November⁴⁶ by Nazi authorities. In a planned attack which decimated Jewish Synagogues and property, Jews were assaulted and over 30,000 arrested by Nazi authorities and imprisoned in

⁴⁴See Rosenstock, "A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany", pp.373-37. Rosenstock arrives at the figures of 150,000 before 1938 and 150,000 mainly after Kristallnacht from statistics of countries of immigration, annual reports of the Reichsvertretung and records of Jewish communities. However, Rosenstock warns that the figures are unreliable due to the following factors: Jewish organisations had reasons to both deflate and increase figures. Many Jews are excluded from his estimates because of no affiliation to organisations. Organisations only have records of those they helped, many Jews emigrated without their assistance.

⁴⁵Jewish emigration from Germany was an estimated 20,000 in 1935, increased to 24,000 in 1936 and went down to 23,000 in 1937. In Germany, the Haavara transfer arrangement was still working and 1937 has been estimated as the "peak year" of its operation, when the capital withdrawn amounted to thirty-one million marks, see Marrus, *The Unwanted*, p.213; A. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich*, London 1973, p.59- 60; Rosenstock, "A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany", p.382.

⁴⁶ See Yahil, *The Holocaust*, p.105. Yahil suggests this phase began as early as January 1937.

the newly expanded concentration camps, Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen.⁴⁷ Their release mainly depended on the condition that they emigrate immediately. In March 1939 the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in Czechoslovakia created a further refugee problem as some 56,000 Jews fled to Poland, Hungary and France. International efforts to persuade Nazi authorities to allow Jews to transfer assets abroad went unheeded. Jewish refugees were dumped across borders or loaded onto steamships without valid visas or landing permits, causing a massive refugee crisis. The refusal of many countries to receive these refugees further strengthened Nazi propaganda, which saw the rejection of refugees as confirmation that other countries wanted nothing to do with the “Jewish question”.⁴⁸

Between July 1938 and September 1939 approximately the same number emigrated as had left during the previous five year period (some 150,000 from Germany).⁴⁹ Whilst Britain and the United States increased its intake of refugees after November 1938, smaller outlets all over the world began to assume importance as havens for refugees.⁵⁰ By the end of 1938 some five hundred refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia had emigrated to Trinidad, some 14,000 to Shanghai. In a conference in August 1939 Hicem and the JDC estimated that some 380,000 Jews had left Germany, Austria and the Czech Protectorate in past six years, leaving about 500,000 Jews in occupied territory.⁵¹

For those refugees who found havens such as the West Indies, refugee organisations represented a bulwark in their struggle between Nazi policies and immigration restrictions.

In November 1936, summing
up the situation for the Palestine Royal Commission, Chaim Weizmann stated that:

For six million Jews in Eastern and Central Europe the world is divided between states in which it is not possible for Jews to live, and others which prevent them from

⁴⁷Yahil, *The Holocaust*, pp.110-112.

⁴⁸Germany, it was said, expected foreign public opinion to understand and sympathise with Nazi antisemitism better the more ‘the world gained first hand experience with the Jewish question’ created by unregulated Jewish immigration. See Strauss, “Jewish Emigration From Germany” (I), p.347.

⁴⁹Rosenstock, “Jewish Emigration from Germany”, p.387. Between March 1933 and August 1939 reports from the Hicem conference in August 1939 provided the following figures: 270,000 Jews emigrated from Germany, 100,000 from Austria and 10,000 from the Czech Protectorate. See Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom*, p.159.

⁵⁰During 1939 the United States allowed the full German quota.

⁵¹ Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom*, p.159. Of this figure, 230,000 were from Germany, 80,000 from Austria and 190,000 from the Czech Protectorate.

entering their boundaries.⁵²

- III -

Jewish organisations in the 1930s

With Hitler's rise to power in January 1933 an entirely new refugee crisis confronted Jewish organisations. In Germany, the Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden was created as a coordinating agency for the various German Jewish bodies involved in emigration, social work and vocational training. Thus, two organisations were responsible for migration under the umbrella of the Reichsvertretung: the Hilfsverein and the Palästina Amt, the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Germany. In addition, the Reichsvertretung represented German Jewry in negotiations with Nazi authorities and acted as an intermediary for funds sent from overseas Jewish organisations.⁵³

Existing refugee bodies, such as the Hilfsverein, now began to focus their attention away from Eastern Europe and new organisations were set up with the specific brief of dealing with the inflow of refugees from Nazi Germany. For example, in the United States the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees and Emigrants Coming from Germany (National Coordinating Committee) was set up in 1934.⁵⁴ In Britain the Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC) was formed in March 1933 and the Council for German Jewry (CGJ), founded in 1936 to organise a programme of permanent emigration overseas, had representatives on its board from Jewish organisations in Britain, the United States and Germany.⁵⁵ The British section remained dominant in policy making and was the funding body of the JRC. In 1939 it was renamed as the Central Council for Jewish Refugees (CBF).

⁵²"Statement made before the Palestine Royal Commission in Jerusalem, November 25 1936", in MW Weisgal, ed., Chaim Weizmann, Statesman, Scientist, Builder of the Jewish Commonwealth, New York 1944, pp.304, cited in Abraham Margalio, "The Problem of the Rescue of German Jewry During the Years 1933-1939; The Reasons for the Delay in Their Emigration from the Third Reich", Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Second International Historical Conference-April 1974, Jerusalem 1977, p.571 .

⁵³See Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany" (II), p.394. A further organisation under the Reichsvertretung was responsible for internal migration and repatriation to Eastern Europe.

⁵⁴It was affiliated to the JDC, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and Hias. Cecilia Razovsky served as its executive director. In 1939 it was renamed the National Refugee Service, Inc.

⁵⁵ The JRC became known as the German Jewish Aid Committee (GJAC) in January 1938, and reverted to its original name in 1940. Its American members included Felix Warburg and Paul Baerwald of the JDC, Charles Liebman of the Refugee Economic Corporation, and Stephen Wise. Its British members included Sir Herbert Samuel, Lord Bearsted, Simon Marks, Chaim Weizmann (Jewish Agency), Sir Osmond Goldschmidt (ICA & Central British Fund).

In Britain, Anglo-Jewish refugee groups were far more involved with the process of admitting refugees than American Jewry. Louise London has described how a degree of trust developed between the Home Office and Jewish bodies in admitting refugees to Britain.⁵⁶ In part this trust developed because both sides [Home Office and refugee organisations] agreed about Britain's role in receiving refugees. Both saw Britain as a place of temporary refuge or transit from Germany, saw the need to be selective over which refugees were "desirable immigrants", and in 1933 at least, felt that only a small proportion of refugees from Nazi Germany would want to settle in Britain. This last reason is demonstrated by the guarantee given in April 1933 that refugee costs would be absorbed by the Anglo Jewish community. By 1938, as larger numbers of refugees began to enter Britain, this guarantee was no longer tenable and government funds began to be used to help support refugees.⁵⁷

With greater funds available, American Jewry became the main financiers of aid and migration activities in Europe. The JDC was the largest Jewish relief organisation, contributing to the budgets of other American aid organisations, such as the Hias, as well as giving directly to overseas organisations, such as the Hilfsverein.⁵⁸ In turn, with money donated by the JDC, Hias sponsored part of Hicem's budget alongside direct contributions from the JDC, the ICA and the British Section of the Council for German Jewry.⁵⁹ The JDC received funds from its own appeal drives, as well as receiving money collected by the United Jewish Appeal, which divided money for overseas collections between the JDC and the American Palestine Campaign.⁶⁰ From 1935 the JDC avoided transmitting dollars into Nazi Germany. Instead, money was donated to the budgets of other organisations, and a

⁵⁶For example, London describes how "the Aliens Department [of the Home Office] came to rely on voluntary bodies to do much of the work of sifting refugees to assess which were desirable immigrants". See Louise London, "British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees, 1933-1942", unpublished PhD thesis for the University of London, 1992, p.499, (hereafter cited as London, PhD).

⁵⁷See London, PhD, pp. 497-499 and Richard Bolchover, British Jewry and the Holocaust, Cambridge 1993.

⁵⁸For example, in 1938 the Hilfsverein spent a total of RM.738,693.41. Half of this amount was covered by the Reichsvertretung, who in turn were funded by the JDC. The balance was paid for by Jewish communities in Germany and by the emigrants themselves. See JDC Monthly Digest No.17, 15 June 1938, #150, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives, New York (henceforth JDC).

⁵⁹ See Aid to Jews Overseas: Report of the AJJDC for the Year 1937 NY, 1938, p.20, #156, JDC.

⁶⁰ For example, in 1934, the JDC obtained 55 per cent of the total contributions from the united campaign. See Zosa Szajkowski, "Budgeting American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919- 1939)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol.LIX, No. 57, June 1970, p.88 (henceforth Szajkowski 4).

transfer system was devised whereby both emigrants and local committees were helped.⁶¹ By the outbreak of war, reliance on American aid became absolute as the funds of Jewish bodies in Europe were either exhausted or being used to support refugees in their midst.⁶²

Broadly speaking, three problems occupied Jewish organisations during the 1930s; lack of funds, lack of influence, and a lack of unity. Because of the economic effects of the worldwide depression, throughout the 1930s Jewish organisations found it difficult to persuade donors to give foreign aid a priority over domestic issues, leading to a deficit in funds for relief work. This was especially true for the United States, where many felt that contributions to charity should be spent on providing relief to their own poor Jewish communities.⁶³ This made fundraising for overseas work difficult and created problems over the distribution of the amounts collected. The dilemma was how much should be spent on emergency relief in Nazi Germany, when this took away from the continued and increasing need to provide aid to impoverished communities in Eastern Europe.⁶⁴ Whilst the JDC raised a total of \$24.4 million between 1929 and 1939, the amounts it had available to spend abroad were much lower, and by 1939 it was running at a \$1.8 million loss.⁶⁵

Another factor impeding Jewish influence lay in the problematic relationship between State refugee bodies and Jewish refugee organisations. State refugee bodies relied heavily on funding from Jewish refugee agencies, who in turn relied mainly on public fundraising.⁶⁶

⁶¹ The emigrant would pay for his or her journey in local currency to a local migration agency, such as the Hilfsverein or a Hicem branch. Once he or she was overseas, the JDC would repay the emigrant in dollars. See Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.27.

⁶² See Marrus, The Unwanted, p.183. In 1938 the CBF had to withdraw from their share of funding Hicem and the JDC and ICA took over the full amount.

⁶³ See Szajkowski 4 ,pp.83-85; Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.25.

⁶⁴ For example, Zosa Skajkowski states that from 1933 the JDC received complaints that aid sent to Nazi Germany was at the expense of aid in Eastern Europe. See "Budgeting American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919-1939)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, 57, pp.98-101. See also Skajowski's "Private and Organised Overseas Relief and Immigration (1914-1938)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, 57, pp.242-243, which describes how at various migration conferences throughout the 1930s it was repeatedly felt that Jews in Poland and Rumania were being neglected at the expense of German Jewry.

⁶⁵ See Marrus, The Unwanted, p.183 and Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.24.

⁶⁶ See Haim Avni, "Latin America and the Jewish Refugees: Two Encounters, 1935 and 1938", Judith Laikin Elkin & Gilbert W. Merkx, eds., Boston 1987, pp.58-59. In 1934 - 1935 the High Commissioners budget amounted to \$138,000, most of which was provided by the JDC, the ICA and other Jewish organisations. Governments including the US also funded the organisation, but Haim Avni has noted that their payments were token.

In addition to these organisations, Jewish bodies made substantial contributions to the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees (PACPR) and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR).

Jewish organisations were represented on advisory committees of refugee bodies, but were excluded from representation in decision making forums. Even if Jewish bodies were given fuller representation, the scope of these refugee bodies was severely limited by political considerations. The High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany was created by the United Nations on 26 October 1933. Its Advisory Committee included representatives from the JDC and ICA. From its inception, it was ineffectual in dealing with Nazi Germany. Separated from the League's headquarters, it had no power to intervene in Germany, limiting its concern to refugees only once they had left. In 1935, James McDonald (the High Commissioner) resigned, stating publicly that the organisation lacked political or economic teeth in dealing with Germany, and that the unwillingness of western countries to alter immigration restrictions sidelined the organisation from achieving any of its goals. McDonald's successor, Sir Neill Malcolm also failed to achieve any success.

In 1938, the post was scheduled for liquidation, precisely at the moment when the refugee crisis in Germany was reaching its height. Instead, another temporary body was formed. Sir Herbert Emerson was appointed as the High Commissioner for Refugees under the protection of the League of Nations, but again the post was prevented from intervening with Germany, providing aid only once refugees had left.⁶⁷ The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) created after the Evian Conference, attempted to improve on the shortcomings of the League, and was empowered to enter negotiations with Germany. Again, much of the funding for this body was provided by Jewish charities. Apart from its involvement in investigating plans for mass refuge, amidst controversy the IGCR entered negotiations with Nazi authorities in late December 1938 over a plan to finance Jewish emigration from Germany. Although negotiations continued up to September 1939, the plan was never likely to have succeeded, given contradictory Nazi policies, widespread Jewish and non Jewish opposition to what was seen as a ransom demand, and the unwillingness of any country to change immigration regulations.⁶⁸

⁶⁷See Sanders, Shores of Refuge, pp.430-432 & Marrus, The Unwanted, pp.163-164.

⁶⁸George Rublee, Director of the IGCR at first entered negotiations with Hjalmar Schacht, head of the German Reichsbank and German Foreign Minister. Schacht came from the pragmatic, conservative wing of the Nazi hierarchy which saw a link between increasing German wealth and expediting Jewish emigration. With Schacht's dismissal, the more radical elements of the hierarchy disapproved of these negotiations. For an analysis of the IGCR see Tommie Sjöberg, The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Sweden 1991. On the Schacht Rublee plan, see pp.47-57. For a description of the WJC attitude towards the Schacht Plan, see Avi Becker, "Diplomacy Without Sovereignty: The World Jewish Congress Rescue Activities", Troern and Pinkus, eds., Organizing Rescue, pp.349-350.

The new refugee crisis set again into sharp relief political differences between organisations. Recalling arguments during the 1920s, the rifts ran between those who felt their organisations should remain outside the political arena, and those who felt that only through united Jewish appeals could effective results be achieved. Therefore, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith opposed the American Jewish Congress's planned boycott of German goods, arguing that overt action was too provocative to the safety of German Jewry, preferring to apply pressure on their own Governments to exert influence on the German regime.⁶⁹ In turn, those supporting the boycott felt that the Haavara (transfer) scheme ran counter to the boycott and undermined its effectiveness.⁷⁰

Many Anglo-Jewish groups favoured a form of "back door diplomacy", the influencing of policy through unofficial high level meetings whilst maintaining a public non partisan approach. This clashed with the call from the American Jewish Congress for a more overt stance, holding mass meetings and demonstrations against Nazi policies. The Anglo-Jewish view is articulated in the following response from Leonard Montefiore to the Chief Rabbi, commenting on a proposed series of protest meetings:

... All German Jews I have been in contact with say protest meetings at this juncture can do no good but only harm. In view of that I feel I must resist all attempts to stampede us in to meetings, wild speeches, etc. Wise and Co are too obsessed with applauding crowds to judge of their actions. ...It seems to me that we play in to their extremist hands by holding or organizing protest meetings à la Stephen Wise.⁷¹

Reluctance to participate in mass rallies also stemmed from a fear that provocative actions would have consequences for Jews in Germany. Montefiore's letter ended with the following footnote: "p.s, Bernhard Kahn [of the JDC] said to me 'Wir sind Geisseln in Deutschland' [we are hostages in Germany], hostages, for every insult and attack on Hitler, we shall surely suffer'. I believe it to be true".⁷²

⁶⁹In his autobiography, Nahum Goldmann claims that American Jewish objections included the view that it was "unpatriotic to organise an economic boycott of a country with which one's own country maintained normal commercial relations". See The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann, United States 1969, p.153.

⁷⁰The Haavara scheme was initiated in April 1933 to facilitate the export of Jewish capital to Palestine in return for Palestine importing German goods. For a description of objections to Haavara, see Bauer, Jews For Sale? Nazi - Jewish Negotiations, pp.16-18.

⁷¹Leonard Montefiore to Chief Rabbi Hertz, 23 March 1933, MS177, 114/3, University of Southampton Archive (henceforth SA). Montefiore was a leading member of Anglo Jewry.

⁷²Ibid.

In the same vein, efforts by the American Jewish Congress in the beginning of the 1930s for concerted Jewish action failed as organisations in America, Germany, Britain and France feared that supporting calls for representation of "United Jewry" would fan antisemitic feelings at home. Monty Penkower has described how, "Jewish unity could not be had when the American Jewish Committee, B'nai Brith, the Board of Deputies, the Alliance, the Bund and Agudas Israel opposed the Congress's international campaign against persecution".⁷³ Yet the American Jewish Congress argued that change could only be effected by official representation as a political body for Jewry at a supranational level, and in 1936 approved the convention of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in Geneva. There, among 291 delegates, resolutions endorsed the development of Palestine as a national home for Jews, the facilitation of Jewish emigration overseas and the equality of Jewish rights. Whilst these goals were not in themselves contentious, opposition to the aims of the WJC centered over how to implement these ideals. For the WJC, their organisation was to be based on the concept of Jewish national identity, and, according to Nahum Goldmann its first Chairman, offered a rebuke to "the perspective of the AJC [American Jewish Committee] and its elitist counterparts in England, France and Germany, which feared that any international organisation would engender more antisemitism".⁷⁴ Indeed, bodies such as the JDC, AJC and AJA did feel that claims to represent Jews at an international level compromised their standing as national organisations, damaged their own attempts at diplomacy and stimulated antisemitic images of the cosmopolitan Jew, leaving Jewish communities vulnerable to charges of dual loyalty.⁷⁵

In July 1938 these schisms were further evidenced at the Evian Conference. The WJC appeal for a single delegation and joint memorandum was opposed by many organisations including the British Council for German Jews who claimed that any appearance of "international Jewry" would strengthen antisemitic propaganda.⁷⁶ Several commentators have suggested that the multiple representations at the Evian Conference created a "ridiculous spectacle" and

⁷³ See Penkower "Dr Nahum Goldmann and the Policy of International Jewish Organizations", Organizing Rescue, p.148.

⁷⁴ Goldmann, The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann, p.144.

⁷⁵ See Geoffrey Alderman, Defence of an Image: Modern British Jewry, Oxford 1992, p.281.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.148. See also Adler-Rudel, "The Evian Conference on the Refugee Question", Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XIII, 1968, pp. 235-273.

may have contributed to the lack of a positive outcome.⁷⁷ Yet it was not the lack of unity amongst organisations which contributed to the “humiliating” and “ridiculous” spectacle (the two adjectives most witnesses and historians use to describe the event). It was the way in which Jewish organisations were sidelined and heard at the conference. Evian is a perfect example of how private bodies lacked the necessary power to influence refugee policies. Not only was the initiative for the conference a surprise to private bodies, but Jewish organisations were not given delegate status, although the United States had made clear from the beginning that any emigration schemes which may develop from the conference would be financed by private bodies.⁷⁸ Instead, organisations were invited to give evidence to a subcommittee. The subcommittee heard from 24 representatives, mainly of Jewish organisations. As Adler-Rudel suggests:

The hearing was a humiliating procedure. Nobody was prepared for it, neither the members of the Committee, nor the representatives of the various organisations who had to queue up at the door of the meeting room to be called in, one after the other, and to face the eleven members of the Sub-Committee whom they were supposed to tell their tale within ten minutes at the most.⁷⁹

The dilemmas facing Jewish organisations at Evian will be considered in more detail when examining their changing responses to emigration. Given the realities of Nazi policies and immigration restrictions in effect, and the different attitudes of organisations towards emigration, it is not really surprising that Jewish organisations were unable to present those at Evian with a single memorandum. As this chapter will make clear, despite the fact that refugee organisations were unable to influence or control the emigration process, they played a crucial role within that process, intervening for refugees and processing and administering emigration.

Jewish refugee organisations and the West Indies

In 1933 most Jewish organisations felt that emigration was not a solution for the majority of the German Jewish population.⁸⁰ The exodus of Jews, liberals and political refugees during

⁷⁷ For this attitude, see Avi Becker, “Diplomacy without Sovereignty: The World Jewish Congress Rescue Activities”, *Organizing Rescue*, p.351; Monty Penkower, “Dr. Nahum Goldmann and the Policy of International Jewish Organizations”, *Organizing Rescue*, pp.148-149.

⁷⁸ Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference”, p.241.

⁷⁹ S.Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference”, p.255.

⁸⁰ There are exceptions: In September 1933 the Zionist Federation of Germany proposed the planned emigration of half the population to Palestine over a period of ten years, and in the summer of 1933 Ruppin, head of the Jewish Agency proposed the emigration of 200,000 Jews from Germany over the same period. See Margaliot, “The Problem of the Rescue of German Jewry”, p.565.

1933 was frowned upon by German Jewish organisations who felt that mass flight was unwarranted and would result in economic hardship.⁸¹ Indeed, many returned during 1934, unable to find jobs in the neighbouring European countries to which most had emigrated to. Instead, organisations stressed the need to sit out the immediate results of the new regime, hoping that economic and political sanctions against Jews would be eased. Believing that political pressure could change Nazi policies towards Jews, they had tried to concentrate on alleviating the need for Jewish emigration by appealing for a cease to Jewish persecution, and advocating emigration only as an option for those with good prospects in the countries of reception. For example, in 1933 at an International Jewish Conference for the Assistance of German Jewry in London in October 1933 the Hilfsverein stated that emigration should be assisted only when the chance of absorption was realistic.⁸²

From the beginning however, for the young and fit, or for those with capital, organisations encouraged emigration, and this was true of Eastern Europe as well. Groups within Germany focused on retraining and education for the young, encouraging their emigration to Palestine, or to South and Central America. These states had experienced a steady stream of Jewish immigration since the late nineteenth century, and immigrants had established a network of aid and reception committees linked to the JDC and Hicem, which by the 1930s also functioned as refugee reception centres. In addition, refugees continued to be directed to agricultural settlements established by the ICA in the nineteenth century.⁸³

In contrast, the West Indies was not seen as having potential for either individual migration or as a site for mass settlement. The Caribbean had no history of continuous Jewish migration since the mid-nineteenth century, and Jewish communities in British Guiana, Curacao and Jamaica were small in number, and well integrated into West Indian society.⁸⁴

⁸¹For example, the Central Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation (Zentralausschuss für Hilfe und Aufbau) made a public statement in April 1933 condemning mass flight. See Margalio, "Emigration of German Jewry", p.555.

⁸²American Jewish Year Book, 5696, 1935- 936, vol.38, p.327. However, this view was somewhat contradicted by a report published in the Jewish Daily Bulletin, 15 September 1933. Reporting on a recent visit to Germany by the Hias Commissioner, it reported that his view was that "Emigration sole recourse for German Jews".

⁸³For example, newly formed Jewish communities established aid organisations in the 1920s which developed into refugee aid organisations in the 1930s, working with the JDC and others. In 1923 Soprotimis, an immigrants aid society was created by Jewish settlers in Argentina and in 1927 Hicem formed a committee in Rio de Janeiro, which offered help to immigrants and developed into a refugee aid organisation in later years. See Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, p.166.

⁸⁴The American Jewish Year Book for 1938-1939 estimates Jewish populations of 566 for Curacao, 2,000 for Jamaica, and 1,786 for British Guiana. These communities had been established since the seventeenth century.

The majority were descendants of seventeenth century Sephardic Jews and therefore had very little in common with refugees from Eastern or Central Europe. Nevertheless, in 1933 and 1934 Anglo Jewish groups did show interest in possibilities of refuge in the British Colonial Empire, and the West Indies. In 1933 at a conference on German Jewry, Anglo Hicem was established by the German Jewish Aid Committee and Hicem to investigate refugee opportunities in the Colonial Empire and Dominions. Whilst lists of qualified refugees were sent to the Colonial Office nothing concrete developed from the Committee's work.⁸⁵

Whilst 1935 marked a decisive change in attitudes towards emigration, the West Indies was still seen as peripheral to any solutions. From the instigation of the Nuremberg Laws, Jewish Organisations, both in and outside Germany, began to formulate plans for the emigration of the majority of the population. In 1935 the Hilfsverein accepted that the emigration of German Jews as well as transmigrant refugees must be the central concern of their organisation and announced all future activities would be concentrated on aiding their emigration to overseas countries.⁸⁶ To this end, a major goal of both official and non-official refugee bodies was to persuade Nazi powers to allow refugees to take or transfer assets out of Germany.

Whilst the Nuremberg Laws signalled a change in attitude, organisations still emphasised the need for selective and gradual emigration of the population. This is demonstrated by the plans submitted by organisations to the Evian Conference in July 1938. Most memorandums submitted to the conference fell into four categories: calls to reverse Britain's policy on Palestine and allow unrestricted Jewish emigration there; to persuade western countries to relax immigration restrictions, stressing the benefit that refugees would bring to western economies; territorial plans outside Palestine, and lastly arguing that more political pressure should be brought to bear on Germany to alleviate persecution rather than facilitate

⁸⁵ In 1934 Leonard Montefiore, on behalf of the German Jewish Aid Committee and Anglo Hicem had submitted to the Colonial Office a list of qualified doctors, nurses and bio chemists for possible employment in the colonies (see chapter 1). Again in 1938 the German Jewish Aid Committee entered into a lengthy correspondence with the Colonial Office about sending two German Jewish tailors and their families to British Guiana. Whilst initially the Committee were told that the chances of placing these two families were good, by February 1939 the Colonial Office had stalled the project, stating that whilst investigations into mass refuge in British Guiana were continuing, individual refugee migration must be discouraged. See Public Record Office, London (henceforth PRO) CO 323 /1271/1& PRO CO 318/440/6.

⁸⁶ American Jewish Year Book, 5696, 1935-1936, vol.38, p.327.

emigration.⁸⁷

A joint memorandum submitted by the CJG, ICA, Hicem, JDC and the Jewish Agency, stressed that measures needed to be taken to alleviate the suffering of Jews in Eastern Europe as well as Nazi Germany, and that without pressure applied on Germany to allow the transfer of Jewish assets abroad, no realistic emigration could be organised on a large scale. In addition, it was pointed out that private resources were already strained to the limit, and governments must be prepared to give financial support to emigration plans.⁸⁸

The memorandum submitted by the Reichsvertretung was inhibited by fears of German retaliation, and as Adler-Rudel notes, should be read with this in mind. As with the joint memorandum, it also envisaged that mass evacuation was an impossibility. It argued that:

Obviously, a certain proportion of the Jewish population of Germany will have to stay in Germany, as, for lack of suitable employment abroad, reasons of age, health, or a financial or personal nature, they are not yet ready or can never expect to be able to emigrate from Germany.⁸⁹

Cautious in tone, it emphasised that whereas before “emigration was primarily a problem to be answered according to the qualities of the individual involved, conditions have lately undergone a steady change so that it is now almost exclusively a question of using all possibilities to immigrate”. However, the document stressed that emigration would have to be gradual and planned in order, over a period of years for refugees to be absorbed

⁸⁷ See Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference”, pp.256-257. For the last point, the JDC argued in a separate memorandum that although some 75,000 Jews had emigrated without assistance, with intensified persecution the numbers of refugees reliant on JDC help will increase. They argued for pressure to be applied on Germany to allow refugees to take assets out. They stated that the costs of training, education and relief were being met by the JDC and German Jews in equal measures, but that the JDC were now supporting all European aid organisations with the exception of Anglo Jewish organisations. See JDC Statement at Evian, # 156, JDC.

⁸⁸ For example, regarding Eastern Europe the joint memorandum signed by the Council for German Jewry, the ICA, Hicem, the German Jewish Aid Committee, the Jewish Agency and the JDC stressed the “impossibility of mass evacuation”, stating that “emigration can only be a secondary solution”, and that a primary remedy must be to retrain Jews to adjust to different economic activities, particularly applying to Jews in Eastern Europe. Regarding Germany, the memorandum acknowledged that after Nuremberg, planned and ordered emigration of Jews from Greater Germany was the goal of their organisations. It called attention to a plan devised in 1935 for the planned emigration of 25,000 per year, mainly to Palestine, of young men and women under 35 years but that if governments present at Evian were unable to draw concessions from Germany then “it does not appear to be possible that orderly and planned emigration can be carried out”. See Council for German Jewry, Council for German Jewry, Evian Conference - Concerning Political Refugees : Memorandum of Certain Jewish Organisations Concerned with the Refugees from Germany and Austria, London 1938, pp.5-8.

⁸⁹ Memorandum submitted to the Evian Conference by the Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland, Appendix 1 of Adler-Rudel’s “The Evian Conference”, p.264. In 1935 the Reichsvertretung were obliged to change their title from Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden (Organisation of German Jews) to Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland (Organisation of Jews in Germany).

successfully in countries of immigration.⁹⁰ What of the accusations that an opportunity had been wasted at Evian? In a measured response, Adler-Rudel has stated that Jewish organisations were not “free from blame”. He argued that if a joint plan had been submitted, the effect before the conference would have been more effective.⁹¹ Yet others have argued that organisations failed because they lacked the political foresight in not calling for the mass evacuation, or mass “rescue” of entire Jewish populations in East and Central Europe.⁹² Firstly, as shown in chapter ONE, two major currents ran through Evian influencing its outcome: no reversal on policy in Palestine, and the fear that a relaxation of immigration regulations would encourage Eastern Europe to expel its Jewish populations. Secondly, it would be naive to expect a unified approach amongst organisations with fundamental differences over what emigration policies should be followed. Whilst the Freeland League argued for territories to be given to Jews in the British Dominions or colonies, Zionist groups were totally against any deflection from continued Jewish emigration to Palestine.⁹³ Similarly, representatives from American and Anglo Jewish organisations were realistic: calls for mass evacuation on an immediate scale, given the attitudes of the United States and Britain would not be listened to. The approach taken, asking for pressure to be applied on Germany to enable Jews to leave as emigrants rather than as penniless refugees made sense at the time. So did the feeling that it would be impossible for the entire German Jewish population to leave Germany. Even in July 1938, the Hilfsverein envisaged that the aged, the sick and those unable to leave would be tolerated to remain in Germany.

The fallout from Evian was an increasing pressure from the United States and Britain for Anglo and American organisations to fund investigations into alternatives to Palestine. Given the continued refusal of Germany to allow Jews to transfer assets and no change in immigration regulations, plans for ordered emigration remained unworkable. Jewish organisations had been unwillingly coopted into investigations of a similar nature in 1937 in Madagascar. In May of that year the Hicem Director in Warsaw, Leon Alter was among a

⁹⁰Appendix to Rudel, p.264.

⁹¹Adler-Rudel, “The Evian Conference”, p.255.

⁹²For this view, see Abraham Margalio, “The Problem of the Rescue of German Jewry”, p.567. For a refutation of this view, see Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany” (II), p.390.

⁹³See for example memorandum submitted to Evian by the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation, London, July 1938. The Freeland League was a successor to the Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO), and was founded in Poland in 1935 as agricultural training organisation for Eastern European refugees in the interwar period. It initiated training programmes for prospective farmers in Poland in the 1930s and developed branches in London, Paris and New York. See Wischnitzer, To Dwell In Safety, p.219.

three man team who went to investigate conditions there, with the permission of the French government and the encouragement of the Polish Government. The Hilfsverein warned that "it would be false to expect that this offer would alleviate the Jewish emigration problem" but the Berlin Jewish community urged that the JDC and ICA take the offer seriously, and money was put aside for this venture.⁹⁴ As a result of Evian, the newly created IGCR now worked alongside the President's Advisory Committee for Refugees (PACPR) investigating settlement projects. The PACPR had been created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in April 1938. Its remit to advise the Administration on developing refugee policies and to coordinate the work of private refugee organizations in the United States.⁹⁵ This Presidential Committee had quasi official status; receiving no government funding, the majority of its small budget was provided by the JDC. The PACPR sought to resettle refugees in agricultural colonies in remote areas. Amongst suggestions sent to this body were the following: the Dominican Republic, British Guiana, Cyprus, the Phillipines, the Belgian Congo, Ecuador, Mexico, Haiti and Surinam. Of these, the PACPR, with the backing of the JDC, participated in sending survey commissions to: Mindaneo (Philippine Islands), British Guiana and the Dominican Republic.⁹⁶

Jewish refugee organisations were caught in a double bind: on the one hand they advised against spending time and money investigating schemes they felt had no practical or viable possibilities, on the other hand, given restrictive immigration to countries which were suitable and the desperate need of refugees to flee, they often had little choice but to become involved. As discussed in the previous chapter, British Guiana was investigated and promoted as an option until the outbreak of war. Whilst the JDC had been involved in the Commission sent to study conditions in British Guiana in February 1939, it had serious reservations about the specific place, and the role that "exotic" places could play in solving the refugee crisis.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ See American Jewish Year Book, 5697, 1937-1938, vol.139, p.315 & Leni Yahil, "Madagascar-Phantom of a Solution For the Jewish Question", B.Vago and G. Mosse, eds., Jews and Non Jews in Eastern Europe 1918-1945, New York 1974, p.317. The JDC put aside \$12,000 but nothing came of it.

⁹⁵The committee comprised eleven members appointed by Roosevelt. James G. McDonald, (formerly the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), served as chairman and George L. Warren as executive secretary.

⁹⁶See Marrus, The Unwanted, p.187 and Feingold, Bearing Witness, pp.94-141.

⁹⁷For a description of their objections, and the opposition from other organisations to plans involving mass refuge outside Palestine, see Feingold, Bearing Witness, pp.124-127. Various other plans for mass settlement were investigated. A WJC survey carried out in 1939 contained information on mass refuge possibilities in Ceylon, Kenya, Tanganika, Nyassaland, North Rhodesia, Madagascar, British Colombia, California Basin, Alaska, French Guyana, British Guiana, Dutch Guyana, New Caledonia. See Contributions A L'Etude Des Possibilites De Colonisation Juive: Materiaux statistiques groupes par les services techniques du Congres Juif Mondial, WJC, Janvier

These objections applied equally to British Guiana, Ecuador, or any other scheme which ignored certain realities. These objections centred over the extreme and non-viable costs that would ensue, that the demographic profile of Jews in Germany, and in Eastern Europe, was unsuitable for large scale agricultural settlements in tropical regions and that the only real solution lay in either a cessation of persecution, or a willingness to admit penniless refugees to western countries. While organisations felt compelled to take part in investigations encouraged by the British Government (as in British Guiana), they were also flooded with suggestions from an interested and sympathetic public. For example, in April 1939 the JDC discussed how a plan to settle Jews in French Guiana had failed. Dr Joseph Rosen, a member of the Anglo-American committee to investigate British Guiana, described how “Somebody from France got people to French Guiana and inside of two weeks the people either ran away, got into trouble or got others into trouble”. Whilst this scheme had been initiated by Baron Robert Rothschild, Cecilia Razovsky, Director of the Coordinating Committee stated that:

There isn't a day that we don't get letters from committees in all parts of the country insisting that we put Jews on the land and they are very indignant because we seem to pass over these suggestions, as though we never heard of them and write a cold reply to their enthusiasm. ..It seems to me that a statement worked out by the JDC, emphasizing exactly what Dr. Rosen has said today, would be very helpful in educating the Jewish population in the United States. They say they don't want them in the cities. Put them on the land.⁹⁸

Another consideration which informed attitudes to settlement outside Palestine was the belief that it was undesirable for European refugees to settle in a predominantly black population. These views were widely held amongst Government Officials in the Colonial Office, interested members of the public and organisations researching possibilities in the colonial Empire. For example, in April 1938 the Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore was in favour of Jewish settlement in Madagascar as an alternative to investigations in British colonies in Africa and the West Indies. He felt that whilst Madagascar was “...large, healthy, underdeveloped and sparsely populated” the British colonies were unfit for white settlement.⁹⁹ When the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization investigated conditions in various countries, including British colonies such as British Guiana and Tanganyika in Africa

1939. Some of these schemes were actively supported by sections of the British and American governments (such as plans involving British Guiana and the Virgin Islands) but all were founded on the insistence that no government funds would be available for settlements.

⁹⁸Typescript of meeting of the Subcommittee for Central and South America, 13 April 1939, #112, JDC.

⁹⁹ Ormsby Gore to Halifax, Foreign Secretary, 26 April 1938, cited in Yahil, “Madagascar-A Solution for the Jewish Question”, p.321.

during 1938, it also came to the conclusion that mass refugee settlement in Kimberley Western Australia would be far more suitable for white settlers.¹⁰⁰ In a letter to The Times, the League stated that proposals for settlement in Africa:

Overlooks the fact that Africa differs widely, in almost every condition pertaining to mass-settlements, from those countries into which European civilisation has been successfully introduced in modern times, such as North America, Australia and New Zealand. These were transformed into white men's lands mainly because the immigrants encountered only sparse native populations which could either be absorbed by the newcomers or disappeared in contact with European customs and institutions.¹⁰¹

Whilst this should close the section on mass settlement, one further plan was given brief consideration, this time for cultivating swamp land in Trinidad. The scheme was initiated by Edgar Pereira of the Refugee Aid Committee, Trinidad with the backing of Norman Bentwich of the Council for German Jewry. The JDC, the Chief Rabbis Religious Emergency Council, (CRREC) and the CGJ approved the plan, which had the support of the Colonial Secretary, but was abandoned with the outbreak of war.¹⁰² After Kristallnacht in November 1938, a comment from Chaim Weizmann to the Liberal Party summed up the position: "All the fancy territorialist projects are useless. Its merely dangling false hopes before the eyes of a tortured people".¹⁰³

Meanwhile, the attitudes of refugee organisations towards aiding emigration changed substantially. From arguing against emigration, they had argued for selective emigration. From arguing for emigration to be limited to the young and fit, they had argued for the gradual emigration of most of the population. Now a fundamental shift occurred. Organisations began to take an active role in assisting emigration to anywhere where immigrants would be admitted. Yet between 1938 and the outbreak of war various factors made their intervention of limited benefit to Jews still in Greater Germany and refugees waiting to be resettled. Since 1937 Palestine had been virtually closed to immigrants without capital. Since refugees began to be forcibly expelled from Germany, further restrictions were

¹⁰⁰ "Report on the Activities of the Freeland League" (undated), MS 116/159 Part 2, AJA, SA.

¹⁰¹ Kessler, Chairman of British Section of League to The Times, 2 January 1939. M S116/159, Part 2 (AJ398/2)AJA, SA.

¹⁰² Edgar Pereira to Cecilia Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee for German Refugees 16 January 1939, JDC, #1047.

¹⁰³ Martin Gilbert, "British Government Policy Towards Jewish Refugees (November 1937 - September 1939)", Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. XIII, 1979, pp.131-132.

introduced in most countries of immigration. These restrictions had a “serious effect: everyone realised that without stringent immigration controls that were everywhere being imposed, the refugee totals would have been much higher than they were”.¹⁰⁴

Whilst the Hilfsverein had worked alongside the Reich Office for Migration, both sides interested in effecting “orderly” emigration from Germany, the takeover from the Gestapo forced the organisation, and others, into actively helping and promoting “illegal” emigration, to any place on the map which allowed refugees entry. Arthur Prinz, a member of the Hilfsverein, and later historian on German Jewish emigration, has described how after Kristallnacht, many officials of the Hilfsverein were arrested by the Gestapo. Regional offices had “their typewriters ...thrown out of the windows, files torn up and furniture was smashed; a very effective form of promoting emigration”. The “consequences” of this meant that “no holds were barred in an emergency”. Thus, thousands travelled to South America on tourist visas, many emigrants procured false papers and bought foreign passports, thus emigrating illegally. Prinz describes how after 1938 “the most diverse passports were being traded on the black market”.¹⁰⁵ Whilst Prinz emphasises that emigrants themselves were responsible for the purchase of “illegal” or non-valid travel documents, Strauss stresses the involvement of refugee organisations in this process.¹⁰⁶ For example, he states that after Kristallnacht the Gestapo exerted pressure on Jewish emigration agencies to become involved in the illegal procuring of tickets and visas:

Organisations in aid of emigration, frequently under Gestapo pressure, chartered ships and sent groups of persecuted refugees abroad with visas that were acquired through questionable channels, or with no immigrant visas at all, hoping that overseas governments would waive regulations, or aid organisations, relatives or friends would be on hand to set things straight.¹⁰⁷

At the same time, organisations also sent emigrants to places which allowed refugee entry. Thus, from rejecting places such as the West Indies as unsuitable for refugee settlement, refugee organisations now placed their hopes into any areas where emigration was possible.

¹⁰⁴Marrus, *The Unwanted*, p.178.

¹⁰⁵ Prinz, “The Role of the Gestapo in Obstructing and Promoting Jewish Emigration”, pp.214-218.

¹⁰⁶So does Marrus, who describes how “Jewish officials throughout Europe began in desperation to cut corners, often under direct pressure of the Gestapo. They sent refugees abroad with incomplete documentation, obtained other papers through dubious channels, and connived to dispatch emigrants illegally into Palestine”. See *The Unwanted*, p.177.

¹⁰⁷Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany” (II), p.367.

As Prinz stated, "The end of the Jewish emigration policy was Shanghai - because it was the only place that required no papers or visas at all. The closing up of all immigration possibilities by pressure and counter-pressure on the part of the Gestapo was a prelude and a prerequisite for the annihilation of all the remaining Jews in Germany."¹⁰⁸

Therefore whilst West Indian destinations were discounted in the early 1930s, by December 1938 the JDC offices in New York noted that the Hilfsverein and Hicem were sending refugees in large numbers to Trinidad.¹⁰⁹ Refugee organisations had kept each other up to date on immigration requirements in the West Indies, as well as other places that did not require visas. The National Coordinating Committee in New York, the JDC and other organisations sent regular information on immigration requirements to their European counterparts who processed refugee migration through their offices. Information regarding Trinidad's immigration requirements had been sent to the National Coordinating Committee in New York by a resident Trinidadian Jew, Edgar Pereira.¹¹⁰

Trinidad's importance as a destination was three fold: firstly as a transit station for refugees to reapply for visas to the United States and other destinations, secondly for "change of status" cases, and thirdly, as a place which allowed people entry.¹¹¹ Information on the procedure to send refugees to Trinidad were sent to most refugee agencies in Europe who could then process refugee passage.¹¹² For example, the Coordinating Committee informed agencies in Europe that:

Firstly, cooperating agencies had to notify the National Coordinating Committee of details of the refugees. The National Coordinating Committee would then notify the Harbour Master in Trinidad and obtain landing certificates. These certificates would

¹⁰⁸Prinz, "The Role of the Gestapo in Obstructing and Promoting Jewish Emigration", p.218.

¹⁰⁹JDC New York Office memorandum, 29 December 1938, #1047, JDC.

¹¹⁰Pereira informed the Coordinating Committee that..."Landing permits of \$250 are issued in Trinidad bearing the name of the intended passenger. The permits must be paid to the steamship company at the port of embarkation. Edgar Pereira to Cecilia Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, 19 December 1938, #1047, JDC.

¹¹¹Refugees classified as "change of status" had emigrated overseas on in transit visas or as illegal immigrants. In order to regularise their status, they had to leave and reapply for entry. In a memorandum of 29 December 1938 Cecilia Razovsky noted that the National Coordinating Committee was "using Trinidad as a place to which to send immigrants on change of status cases". See #1047, JDC. In the Hias Annual Report for 1940-1941 it was noted that the process of regularising change of status cases had changed in the United States in January 1941. See Hias Survey, 1940-1941, New York 1942, p.29.

¹¹²National Coordinating Committee Memorandum To All Cooperating Agencies from Cecilia Razovsky, 29 December 1938, #1047, JDC.



be forwarded to the passenger, who would present it to the steamship company at the port of embarkation. The cash deposit of \$265 should be paid at the port of embarkation but in cases where American relatives were supplying the money, other arrangements could be made.¹¹³

The memorandum also noted that "While there are few restrictions now for admission to Trinidad, it is feared that there may be radical changes within the next two months and therefore we urge that persons wishing to immigrate do so immediately".¹¹⁴ The administrative and financial help of organisations was instrumental in enabling many refugees to gain admittance to Trinidad, for example by publicising its immigration regulations, chartering ships and by supplying landing money to refugees before they embarked on their journey.¹¹⁵ However, once there, the problem of their support became an urgent issue. In a report on the refugees in Trinidad, the JDC New York Office noted that legislation would be produced to prohibit further immigration unless provision was made to support the refugees already there. Efforts were made between the National Coordinating Committee, the JDC, Hicem and the Council for German Jewry to raise funds.¹¹⁶ Rather than send money to individuals, the JDC's policy was to send direct grants to committees formed in South American and Caribbean countries.¹¹⁷ In 1937 a Hebrew Aid Society had been formed in Trinidad by the Polish and Rumanian refugees. Its brief had been to carry out philanthropic works and to act as an umbrella organisation for Jewish activities. In March 1938 it was renamed the Jewish Association of Trinidad (JAT) and elected Edgar Pereira as its President, authorising him to correspond with foreign communities on its behalf. Initially, it was to this organisation that the JDC began transmitting regular funds.¹¹⁸

The JAT was in a difficult position. Most of the refugees arriving in Trinidad after December

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, Razovsky states that whilst the Coordinating Committee in New York transmitted money from relatives to refugees, "the people coming in from Germany are given the landing money, but aside from that have absolutely no funds upon entering Trinidad".

¹¹⁶ JDC New York Office, memorandum, 29 December 1938, #1047, JDC.

¹¹⁷ Aid to Jews Overseas: Report on the Activities of the AJJDC for the Year 1938, New York 1939, p.26, #156, JDC.

¹¹⁸ Edgar Pereira to Charles Liebman, Refugee Economic Corporation, New York 12 December 1938, #1047, JDC. In April 1939 a further organisation was established in Trinidad, the Jewish Refugee Society by the German and Austrian refugees who felt that the JAT did not fully represent their interests. After its establishment money was sent by the JDC to both organisations. This is explored in Chapter 4: Refugees and the West Indies.

1938 were penniless, some having been released from concentration camps on the understanding that they would leave Nazi occupied Europe immediately. Unlike earlier arrivals, many were professionals who were unable to find work in Trinidad. The JAT had to find clothing, housing and counsel these refugees. The more refugees present in Trinidad and unable to support themselves, the more pressure the JAT felt from Colonial authorities that further immigration would be barred. At the same time, they were receiving daily lists from Jewish communities in Paris, Berlin and from the Hicem of further passengers set for Trinidad. In a letter to Charles Liebman, of the Refugee Economic Corporation of New York, Pereira informed him that "each European steamer brings in between twenty and thirty, nearly all of whom bring only sufficient funds to last them only a few weeks".¹¹⁹

In January 1939 the JAT outlined their difficulties to the National Coordinating Committee:

The situation is very serious for the Jews here. The 1st of January arrived 85 Jews with the S.S Cordillera and with the S.S Columbia we have expected more but only 80 arrived. We have settled them temporarily in a Sailors Club for our Home from 19 Marli Street (the JAT's Jewish Centre) is crowded. If the number of the Jews still increase with the arrival of every ship the situation will be impossible.¹²⁰

During the last months of 1938 the JAT became aware that the Colonial authorities in Trinidad were preparing to close immigration and communicated this to the National Coordinating Committee. On 15 January 1939 the inevitable happened, and the ban was imposed, aimed specifically at preventing further immigration from European countries. Pereira informed the JDC that the Colonial Authorities stated that it was on "economic grounds" and would be reconsidered when the existing refugees had settled into occupations.¹²¹ Pereira also informed Razovsky that similar bans had been enacted in other West Indian colonies.¹²² Despite assurances that the ban in Trinidad would be temporary, in

¹¹⁹Edgar Pereira to Charles Liebman, Refugee Economic Corporation, New York, 12 December 1938, #1047, JDC.

¹²⁰ Dr Pulver, Secretary of the JAT to Cecilia Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, 7 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²¹Pereira informed Razovsky that they had received news that immigration would close in two days and all permits cancelled. On the same day Dr Pulver of JAT informed the National Coordinating Committee that the Government of Trinidad had stopped issuing immigration permits. In a further letter of 12 January 1939, Pereira informed Razovsky of the National Coordinating Council that immigration would be closed from the 15 January. See Pereira to Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, 7 January 1939; Dr Pulver, JAT to National Coordinating Committee, 7 January 1939; Pereira to Razovsky 12 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²²Pereira informed Razovsky that the Hamburg-Amerika Line had sent the JAT a communique that British Guiana had altered their immigration regulations and individual immigration was no longer being encouraged. Edgar Pereira to Cecilia Razovsky, 16 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

March 1939 the Colonial Office again informed Pereira that all emigration from Central European countries would be prohibited on economic grounds.¹²³

The National Coordination Committee and the JDC immediately sent this information to refugee agencies in European ports, informing them that no further refugees should be sent to Caribbean destinations. Some were already on their way. The JAT began negotiations with the Colonial Governor of Trinidad, asking him to honour existing landing permits of those already on the high seas and through a complex series of negotiations, managed to enable refugees whose landing permits had been issued prior to the ban on immigration to land in Trinidad.¹²⁴ Despite Colonial Office reluctance to allow further refugees entry to Trinidad, a scheme was developed to enable relatives of the refugees entry. In March 1939 Pereira informed the National Coordinating Committee that the Colonial Secretary was prepared to grant landing permits to wives and children of the refugees in Trinidad.¹²⁵ In April 1939 further concessions were made and the JAT informed the National Coordinating Committee that:

we are now permitted to bring over from Europe those relatives who are parents or children under 16 years of age; also those who are engaged to be married to those already in Trinidad and who are willing to be married within one year of arrival here.¹²⁶

As many relatives could not afford the landing permits, arrangements were made to forward the money to their counterparts in Europe who would then forward the landing permits to the

¹²³ The letters stated that "in view of the influx of refugees from Central European countries, it has become necessary on economic grounds to prohibit further immigration to the colony from these countries". Acting Colonial Governor to the JAT, 3 March 1939 #1047, JDC.

¹²⁴ On 17 January 1939 the JDC Paris bureau cabled the JDC office in New York with the news that the Colonial Office would "look favourably" for landing of those presently en route; On 16 January 1939 Pereira informed Cecilia Razovsky of the National Coordinating Committee that the Colonial Governor was likely to allow refugees due to arrive on the 18 January on board the S.S Cottica permission to land and was sending a translator to assist the refugees in filling in landing applications. Pereira warned Razovsky that the steamships Pericles, De La Salle, Amazon and Horn were all making their way to Trinidad, with further refugees on board; On 20 January 1939 Razovsky received a cable from Pereira informing her that the passengers on board the S.S Cottica had been granted residence permits, see Western Union Cablegram, JAT to National Coordinating Committee, 20 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²⁵ The permits had been forwarded to Consulates in the relatives cities of residence. See Pereira to Razovsky 3 March 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²⁶ Dr Shaecter, JAT to Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, 13 April 1939, #1047, JDC.

relevant British Consulates.¹²⁷ By June 1939 reports that parents and children were still arriving reached the JDC office in New York.¹²⁸ These permits were issued as humanitarian gestures towards the refugees in Trinidad, and were exceptions to Trinidad's new immigration laws. With the outbreak of war, all permits previously issued were rescinded, although in 1940 and in 1941 some permits were revalidated.¹²⁹

Once immigration to Trinidad had been cancelled, Hicem, Hias and the JDC contacted the Hilfsverein and Hicem offices in Berlin and Vienna, and requested that they notify steamship companies not to send further refugees to destinations in the British West Indies.¹³⁰ Whilst places such as Trinidad and Shanghai continued to allow immigration, refugee organisations could to some extent direct the migration of refugees they were assisting, but with the acceleration of forced emigration, their role became limited to negotiations for refugees already on the high seas. As Jews were forced to embark without papers, visas or landing permits onto boats destined for ports in the Western Hemisphere, German steamship companies were complicit in this action, by furnishing refugees with invalid or illegal visas from various consular officials.¹³¹ With the additional problem of tightened immigration restrictions in most Western countries, refugees on board these ships were unable to land without the intervention of Jewish refugee organisations. After 1938, organisations were forced to spend most of their allocations on funding landing monies for refugees "dumped illegally".¹³² In a report produced in February 1939 by the National Coordinating Committee, the term "panic migration" was used to describe the results of Nazi emigration policy. "Bound for Nowhere: Disorganized Panic Migration" described the problems faced by refugee organisations since the mass expulsions of refugees from Europe. The report described how after the summer of 1938 practically all South American and Caribbean

¹²⁷ Pereira to Razovsky, 10 May 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²⁸ Pereira to JDC office, New York 21 June 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²⁹ The background to Trinidad's decision to allow relatives entry to Trinidad is explored in chapter 5, *The West Indies and Refugees*.

¹³⁰ "Note of the Hias-Ica Emigration Association on S.S Koenigstein and Caribia's transports", 3 March 1939, #1059, JDC.

¹³¹ See Wischnitzer, *To Dwell in Safety*, p.197.

¹³² Committee on Refugee Aid in South America, 1939, p.4, #112, JDC.

countries had been closed to immigration.¹³³

In early 1939, two ships bound for the West Indies became the final signal which forced refugee bodies to reassess their position and policies regarding this forced emigration. The steamships Caribia and Koenigstein both left German ports in January 1939 bound for West Indian and South American destinations. Refugee organisations in America had alerted their sister organisations in Europe not to assist passengers with landing permits and to advise them against boarding the vessels. Despite this warning, the JDC in New York were informed by the JDC Paris Office that both the Caribia and the Koenigstein had “assisted cases” on board, as the decisions to aid their passage had been taken prior to any knowledge that they would not be admitted. The Paris office also informed New York that the other refugees on board, approximately 200, had been forcibly transported, many recently released from concentration camps.¹³⁴

Both steamships were refused admittance to Barbados, British Guiana, Trinidad and other destinations in South America.¹³⁵ Cables were sent by the Jewish organisations in Britain and the United States to various countries as both ships floundered on the high seas. Through intense negotiations with government representatives, steamship offices in countries of reception and Jewish communities in those countries, temporary refuge was found in February for the passengers of the Caribia in Venezuela and for those on board the Koenigstein in Ecuador. The conditions of admittance rested on financial guarantees provided by Jewish refugee organisations and the undertaking that further destinations would be sought.¹³⁶

In response to the cases of the Caribia and Koenigstein, the JDC office in New York contacted its Paris Office, suggesting that a common policy amongst Jewish organisations

¹³³ Report by Cecilia Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, “Bound for Nowhere: Disorganized Panic Migration”, 9 February 1939, #1059, JDC.

¹³⁴ JDC office New York to JDC office Paris, 20 February 1939, #1057, JDC ; JDC office Paris to JDC office New York 21 February 1939, #1059, JDC. See also Sherman's account of the refusal of Barbados authorities to allow the SS Koenigstein to disembark. Sherman mentions the SS Koenigstein as an example of the reluctance of British authorities to admit refugees to British colonies, see Sherman, Island Refuge, p.251, f.n.58.

¹³⁵ Although Trinidad refused permission for the Caribia to disembark, three relatives of refugees in Trinidad on board were given admittance, under the agreement made between the JAT and the Colonial Secretary, see “Bound for Nowhere: Disorganized Panic Migration”, p.4., #1059, JDC.

¹³⁶ Jointfund Paris to JDC office New York , 31 January 1939; Bound for Nowhere: Disorganized Panic Migration, Report of the National Coordinating Committee, February 1939 p.4, #1059, JDC.

must be formulated. They asked whether the cases of these two ships had been discussed with the Council for German Jewry and ICA, and stated that:

This is not a matter of immediate cash available but question of large important policy which important Jewish organisations must consider together. We [are] in [a] great quandary although [the] judgement [of] many members [of] our committee and officers is that with continuous similar dumping of shiploads we have no alternative but to refuse financial help . Important question in principle [to] be canvassed with other organisations to determine decision re these passengers and [the] future.¹³⁷

The Paris office replied on 3 March 1939 and called for a conference of the steamship companies and agents with the participation of the Council for German Jewry, ICA, JDC and Hicem. They proposed that a statement should be read on the "future attitude of the private organisations towards the people who leave with no visas or with irregular ones".¹³⁸

Although these organisations were fully aware that by refusing financial help passengers would be returned to their country of origin, they were also conscious that it was their continued assistance which allowed corrupt officials to continue issuing false visas and landing permits.¹³⁹ Their dilemma is encapsulated in the following telegram sent between the Joint offices in New York and Paris:

Please consider fully British Council (sic) ICA Hicem [to] reach common approach policy respecting entire problem of dumped panic migration Central South America Far East. Quite clear resources [of] private philanthropic Bodies strained utmost deal even more normal orderly emigration under supervision responsible Bureaus. Dumping refugees resulting panic migration [and] exploitation by unscrupulous steamship agencies, lawyers [and] venal officials raises alarming problems involving long continuing or indefinite maintenance making huge guarantees quite beyond financial possibilities [of] private Bodies. Moreover this dumping carried out [with the] assumption [that] Jewish organizations will pay this form [of] blackmail. How to deal [with the] whole situation is fundamental problem [of] international Intergovernmental scope.¹⁴⁰

Despite considering whether to cease financial assistance, Jewish organisations continued to materially support "dumped" refugees and find them places of refuge as long as they were called upon to do so. The desire of Jewish organisations to formulate a common policy

¹³⁷28 February 1939, # 1059, JDC .

¹³⁸ Morris Troper, JDC European Executive Council to J.C. Hyman, Executive Director, JDC New York, 3 March 1939, #1059, JDC.

¹³⁹ JDC Office New York to JDC Office Paris, 21 February 1939 #1059, JDC.

¹⁴⁰ Jointfund Paris to JDC New York, 10 March 1939, #1059, JDC.

towards "panic migration" is itself a reflection of their helpless position. Their objections to financing, and in effect aiding Nazi emigration policies were partly practical, their funds were overstretched in providing for existing refugees and for aiding Jews in Nazi occupied countries. Their belief, however, that they could influence Nazi emigration policies by refusing to aid refugees expelled without proper documents seems highly unlikely. During 1939 it may have seemed a more realistic desire, and in this they shared the same logic as Colonial Office officials, believing that by refusing to cooperate, Nazi policies would change. But it could also have been a psychological need to feel they were able to command some level of control over the chaos of refugee movements and against the blackmailing tactics of the Nazi regime. Whilst the Colonial Office reacted against Nazi policies by closing immigration, Jewish organisations were compelled to continue their assistance. As it was, this assistance given to destitute refugees ensured their liberty and prevented them from being returned to Nazi Germany.

Conclusion

As the 1930s progressed, the role of the West Indies as a refuge gained in importance for Jewish organisations. That it did is a symbol of their increasing desperation, but it also demonstrates the importance of their role in the migration process. Within tight parameters, Jewish refugee organisations were to some extent able to aid refugee emigration, and their role in sending refugees to Trinidad saved many lives. Jewish organisations have been criticised for their insistence, throughout the 1930s, that emigration should remain a selective process. What alternative approaches could they have taken? Could they have achieved more by calling for immediate mass evacuation at the Evian Conference, for example? This ignores several factors. Firstly, Jewish leaders were pragmatic and realistic (on the whole). Faced with the realisation that without Nazi Germany allowing Jews to take assets with them, immigration countries would not allow them entry. Therefore, emigration plans submitted to Evian argued for pressure to be placed on Germany. They argued that Jewish immigrants would become useful citizens of whichever countries allowed them entrance. And, perhaps most importantly, none envisaged that within a few years, Jews remaining in the Reich territories would be deported and murdered in death camps.

In the majority of cases, only those Jews with means, family connections, youth or skills were able to leave for other countries. Whilst three fifths of German Jews were able to emigrate, the majority were young and middle aged, leaving behind a population with a marked

increase in the elderly.¹⁴¹ These figures underlie Herbert Strauss's argument that emigration remained an individual choice, that Jewish organisations "had no influence on decisions to emigrate, in timing of emigration, or in ultimate direction".¹⁴² Yet this statement underestimates other forms of help and assistance. Of the estimated 329,000 Jews to leave the Greater Reich between April 1933 and July 1939, about half had been assisted by private organisations. If one adds the financial and logistical help given to prospective emigrants (travel information, training and education, etc), the number of Jews assisted to emigrate is far higher.¹⁴³ Whilst for many, the decision to emigrate remained an individual decision, for those who came to the West Indies, the inverse is true: the majority of refugees from Nazi Germany reached the Caribbean through some form of assistance from refugee bodies. For assisted refugees, places such as the Caribbean were of far greater importance than for those able to choose their destinations.

Whilst it can be concluded that refugee organisations did play an essential role in aiding migration, their attempts at planned emigration and mass refuge projects failed, because of intransigent immigration laws, Nazi policies, and the insistence of the United States and Britain that refugee bodies fund any planned settlements. These aspects must be remembered when considering current arguments over the effectiveness of Jewish refugee organisations during this period. In this vein, they have been criticised for their inability to overcome differences and work together. These are, however, views which ignore the political, social and economic diversity existing amongst Jewish organisations during the Nazi era. It is difficult to imagine an international Jewry able to respond with one voice to the challenge of Nazi Germany. Despite alliances between national and international organisations, real differences existed, making a sustainable unity impracticable, and unachievable. Political issues which divided organisations in the 1920s found their echo in the 1930s. At the same

¹⁴¹ Between 1933 to 1941 the ratio of German Jews over 60 years climbed from 16.54 per cent to 36.44 per cent whilst the ratio of those between 0 to 30 years fell by 80 to 83 per cent. See Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany" (I), p.327.

¹⁴² Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany (I), p.389.

¹⁴³ The total organised emigration figures came to 164,273, supplied by Hicem Paris, German Jewish Aid Committee London, the Hilfsverein and Palastina Amt in Germany and the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Vienna. See Council for German Jewry, "Statistics of Jewish Emigration from Greater Germany: April 1933 - 1 July 1939", MS183/289, section F, Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council papers, SA. Yehuda Bauer also estimates that between 1933 and 1939 of an estimated 404,809 Jews to leave Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Moravia "roughly half" left through "organised emigration" and half through private initiative. See *American Jewry and the Holocaust*, p.26. Of German Jewry, Rosenstock has estimated that in 1937 assisted emigration from Nazi Germany amounted to 37%. He notes that Wischnitzer came up with a figure of only 25% for the years between 1933 and 1938. For a discussion of the unreliability of these sources see Rosenstock, "Jewish Emigration from Germany", p.375. Both Wischnitzer and Rosenstock were officials of the Hilfsverein in Berlin.

time, alliances were formed, and it was only through real cooperation that Jewish organisations were able to achieve as much as they did, for example in the actual process of refugee emigration.

The next chapter explores how the West Indies became an increasingly important focus for Jewish organisations. The themes which have been examined in this chapter, of cooperation, of division, and of attitudes towards refugee issues, are developed further in regard to the wartime period.

Chapter 3: Jewish refugee organisations and the West Indies 1939 - 1945.

Introduction

During the war, the activities of refugee organisations became increasingly confined by the obvious results of Nazi policy, but also by Allied wartime policies, and the policies of organisations themselves. Whilst assisting emigration continued to be a concern, priorities changed to providing for refugees in safe areas, sending relief to occupied Europe and campaigning for rescue initiatives. As the war progressed, their involvement with the West Indies became more important for both practical and symbolic reasons. By exploring these concerns, the limits and achievements of refugee organisations can be demonstrated. Beginning with an overview of the issues and problems facing refugee bodies during the war years, the circumstances and importance of their involvement with refugees and the West Indies can be understood.

The second section of this chapter analyses the practical concerns of refugee bodies with refugees in British West Indian colonies, examining their involvement with refugee admittance and maintenance. After the outbreak of war, the importance of the West Indies for Jewish organisations developed on several fronts. On a practical level, their involvement with refugees in the British West Indies grew considerably. In addition to those already there, refugees continued to be admitted during the war, because of a new perception of the Caribbean from a “free world” perspective: its geographic proximity to Central, South and North America. Ships bound for these destinations stopped in British and Dutch Caribbean ports and in transit passengers aboard were investigated. Those suspected of Axis sympathies, invalid ticket holders and enemy alien refugees were detained, and often interned. The financial guarantees that Jewish aid organisations gave to colonial administrations and local refugee bodies ensured that refugees detained from these ships were able to remain in the colonies for the duration of the war, or until they succeeded in remigrating. During 1942 and 1943 refugees were transported to Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica, under a scheme arranged by the British Government in collaboration with Governments in Exile. Whilst not initiating this movement, Jewish refugee organisations played a fundamental role in financing and sustaining refugees once there. For refugee organisations, their involvement with refugees in the British West Indies represented a considerable drain on resources. Compared to refugees in other South American countries, refugees in the Caribbean were more reliant on overseas aid, and those in Gibraltar Camp were wholly dependent on support from their governments or refugee bodies. For refugees, the high level

of dependency led to a fractious relationship with the main organisations involved. For the organisations, however, as knowledge of Nazi atrocities increased, their involvement with refugees in the British West Indies took on significance for more than practical reasons.

The third section of this chapter illustrates particular concerns regarding refugees in the Caribbean region, and explores the growing symbolism of the West Indies. As the fate of Europe's Jews became public knowledge, Jewish organisations began to campaign to make rescue an Allied priority. Yet their failure, individually and in combination, to change Allied priorities led to an increased focus on their work for communities of refugees in safe areas, including the Caribbean. Refugee organisations began to publicise their activity on behalf of refugees in the British West Indies in fundraising ventures, and competition developed between rival organisations, each claiming to be responsible for the welfare and safety of these refugees. For policy makers in Jewish organisations, as the situation in occupied Europe became increasingly desperate, the West Indies became more relevant as a subject of positive campaigning.

- I -

Jewish refugee organisations during the war.

With the outbreak of war, Jewish organisations faced a new set of priorities and challenges. The need to find countries of reception, and to aid the largely unregulated and chaotic migration of refugees remained a main focus for aid organisations whilst refugees were still able to leave the German Reich. After 1941, the focus increasingly changed from concerns over the problems of emigration to those of rescue and providing for refugees in safe and neutral territories. Whilst cooperation between organisations was often achieved, the problems and divisions that had separated Jewish organisations during the 1930s did not disappear with the outbreak of war. Instead they were exacerbated by additional tensions, such as whether rescue should be placed above national concerns and how to campaign against British policy in Palestine. The following section gives an overview of how Jewish organisations operated during the war years, examining their reactions to the Nazi genocide of European Jewry and their subsequent attempts to place rescue as an Allied priority. Thus changing attitudes of refugee organisations towards the West Indies can be understood within a broader context.

With the exception of German Jewish organisations, the network of Jewish refugee and aid agencies which had functioned throughout the 1930s continued to cooperate with each other

after the outbreak of war. In June 1939 the Reichsvertretung had lost its remaining independence and had been taken over by the Gestapo and renamed as the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (Reich Association of Jews in Germany).¹ Whereas initially Anglo, European and American Jewish refugee organisations contributed to funds set up for the transportation, relief and remigration of refugees, as the war progressed it was American Jewish organisations, and principally the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) that gave the overwhelming amount of financial support. This was partly as a result of wartime legislation. For example, after the outbreak of war, the CBF (formerly Council for German Jewry), withdrew their support for Hicem because of British legislation stopping the transferral of money abroad. After the fall of France in 1940 the assets of the Jewish Colonisation Association (ICA) were frozen and they also withdrew their financial support. During 1940 HIAS shouldered the financial burden until 1941 when the JDC took over the main charges for transportation, with HIAS contributing to the administrative costs and some transportation expenses. By the first half of 1941, the JDC was supplying 86% of Hicem's budget.² Similarly, the transportation fund for German Jewish refugees that had been established in 1935 by the ICA, JDC and CGJ became the sole responsibility of the JDC in 1941. An Eastern European fund set up by the ICA and HIAS was taken over by HIAS in 1941.

The greater financial strength of American Jewish organisations over British bodies was based on a simple fact: since the main income for Jewish aid organisations was gathered from fundraising appeals, the larger Jewish population in the United States was able to contribute more to American Jewish organisations' budgets than the smaller Jewish community in Britain. Moreover, much of the funds collected by Anglo-Jewish organisations had gone into supporting refugees in Britain. After November 1938, Britain's role as a refuge had grown considerably, and the financial resources of Anglo Jewish groups were stretched to breaking point. By the Spring of 1940, some 60,000 Jewish refugees were in Britain, a large

¹For information on the Reichsvereinigung, see Shaul Esh, "The Establishment of the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland and its Main Activities," *Yad Vashem Studies*, VII, 1968, pp.19-38.

² From its conception, Hicem had been funded by the ICA, EmigDirect, the CBF, HIAS and the JDC. EmigDirect ceased funding HICEM in 1934. From 1933 to 1935, almost a third of the funds disbursed by Hicem for migration purposes were furnished by the JDC. Its share rose to 52 per cent in 1940 and to 86 per cent in the first half of 1941. See Albert J. Phiebig, *HIAS Survey, 1940-1941*, p.15, Leo Baeck Institute, New York (henceforth LBI). It should be noted however that these figures may be open to interpretation. Yehuda Bauer estimates from JDC sources that the JDC provided 38% of Hicem's budget in 1939, increasing to 51 % in 1941. See Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945*, Detroit 1981, p.30, footnote 17.

percentage reliant on some form of aid from the Jewish Refugee Council.³ In February 1940 the House of Commons was informed that refugee organisations had spent a total of £5 million, were about to run out of funds and were currently spending £60,000 per month. In 1938 the Cabinet Committee on Refugees had agreed to match Jewish contributions pound for pound, and from February 1940, their resources were supplemented by government contributions.⁴

Yet despite the greater financial resources of American Jewry, organisations such as the JDC were by no means free of financial constraints. Most of the JDC's income was allotted from its participation in the annual United Jewish Appeal, as well as additional income received from individual donations and legacies. Whilst emigration to Palestine had slowed to a trickle, the United Palestine Appeal continued to receive 40 per cent of the amounts collected by the annual appeal. The reduction in emigration to Palestine had come as a result of British policy, which in May 1939 reduced emigration to a quota system which effectively prevented any further large scale migration of Jewish immigrants. By the end of 1939 the JDC had a deficit of \$1.8 million and during 1940 and 1941 its income decreased further.⁵ The JDC's problems in raising funds may have stemmed from donors continuing to prioritise domestic issues, as they had in the 1930s. It may also have been because of a lack of awareness amongst the American Jewish public of the urgent need to give to European Jewish causes. Yehuda Bauer's history of the JDC during the wartime period is titled American Jewry and the Holocaust because he linked the activities of the JDC with the attitudes of the American Jewish public: he argued that as the JDC's income was derived mainly from public fund raising, it could be measured as an index of American Jewries response to the Holocaust:

American Jewry gave JDC very little money until 1944 (\$37,909,323 in 1939 - 43) and somewhat more in 1944 and 1945 (\$35,551,365). The \$194,332,033 it raised in 1945 - 48 showed how late the reaction to the disaster of the Holocaust was.⁶

³Ronald Stent, "Jewish Refugee Organisations", Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom, Tübingen 1991, pp.583-584.

⁴"From 1 January 1940 the government agreed to match the Jewish contribution pound for pound up to a maximum commitment of £27,000 per month"; by October 1940 the costs of maintenance and general welfare were also taken over by the government. Ronald Stent, "Jewish Refugee Organisations", p.587. Richard Bolchover notes that by 1945, the British Government had paid £140,000, the entire cost of maintenance. See British Jewry and the Holocaust, Cambridge 1993, p.71.

⁵The United Jewish Appeal was founded jointly by the JDC and the United Palestine Appeal in 1939 as an effort to pool resources. In 1939 and 1940 agreements were reached to divide appeal money between the two organisations. See Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.37.

⁶Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.458.

The constant need to raise funds led to fierce competition between refugee bodies, principally the JDC and WJC in their fundraising drives. As will be shown in a later section, the attention paid to refugee communities in South and Central America and the Caribbean by the WJC and JDC reflected the need to raise funds, as well as demonstrating the different concerns of the two organisations over refugee communities. Despite funding problems, Anglo-Jewish groups were also involved in coordinating relief and refugee work in neutral, occupied and safe territories. Throughout 1939 organisations discussed how to divide responsibilities. In April 1939 Paul Baerwald, Chairman of the JDC, contacted Norman Bentwich of the Council for German Jewry (CGJ) to set out how the division of work for refugees in South American and Caribbean countries was to be carried out by refugee bodies, particularly in the face of the panic migration to these destinations. Despite the fact that the CGJ had considerably less funds than the JDC, Baerwald impressed on Bentwich that these refugees should not be the sole responsibility of American Jewish organisations and that these matters were for "joint consideration and joint action".⁷ In September 1939 Jewish refugee organisations again discussed divisions of responsibility in handling refugee migration. It was agreed that the JDC would handle directly all transportation cases from Greater Germany, including Poland, and that the Hebrew and Immigrant Aid Society (Hias), partly through funds transmitted to them by the JDC, would cover all other European countries through its support of Hicem. The Central Council for Jewish Refugees stated that whilst American Jewish organisations would take care of aid to refugees in Germany, Austria and neutral countries, they would become the central body responsible for Jewish refugees in Great Britain and the Dominions and Colonies.⁸

Although financially restrained, organisations without means continued their involvement in refugee initiatives, both on a policy level through participation at conferences organised by refugee organisations and on an administrative level, continuing refugee work through grants made by the larger bodies. In addition, many organisations became involved through contact with the refugees themselves. The JDC may have financed a movement of refugees to a

⁷Baerwald, JDC to Bentwich, CGJ, 6 April 1939, # 1059, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives New York (henceforth JDC).

⁸ See Albert J. Phiebig, *Hias Survey, 1940-41*, New York, 1941, p.14; *Draft Report of Central Council for Jewish Refugees*, 1939, p.32, CBF Reel 2, F.5, AJA, University of Southampton Archive (henceforth SA). The Central Council for German Refugees was renamed the CBF in 1939.

British colony, but the organisation that the refugees would then contact was quite often an Anglo-Jewish body. Despite the CBF announcement that they were the principal body responsible for refugees in the colonies and Dominions, in practice, the CBF did not have the funds needed to offer financial support of refugee communities outside of Britain. Their help was limited to an advisory role, passing on information to other organisations or using their influence in Government circles to press refugee cases.

Both the JDC and Hias, whose headquarters were in New York, maintained offices in Europe which kept in contact both with other organisations, affiliates and branches set up in countries of immigration and reception. In June 1940, the WJC British section in London had become the headquarters of the organisation, under Dr Maurice Perlzweig. It also established a relief committee in Geneva and a relief department in New York, headed by Dr A Tartakower.⁹ In June 1940, after the occupation of France, the JDC and HIAS moved their European headquarters from Paris to Lisbon, Hicem having additional offices in Marseilles and Casablanca. Once the United States had entered the war, JDC and Hicem representatives in occupied countries were withdrawn, giving further importance to staff remaining in offices in Lisbon, Marseilles and Casablanca.¹⁰ As was the case before the outbreak of war, Hicem had the largest number of branch offices, affiliated committees, or correspondents throughout Europe, South and Central America and Africa and Asia.¹¹ Although dependent on funds from the JDC and Hias, in 1940 an administrative committee for Hicem was set up in New York. Whilst the JDC transmitted funds directly for relief work, most JDC funds spent on emigration were processed through Hicem. It was only from July to December 1941, that the JDC maintained a special Transmigration Bureau in Lisbon for refugees from Germany and German-occupied countries, which was cancelled after the United States's entry into the war.

The system by which money was transferred from the United States to Europe was complicated, particularly after September 1939. Up to June 1941, the JDC had devised an

⁹See Elizabeth E. Eppler, "The Rescue Work of the World Jewish Congress During the Nazi Period", Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference-April 1974, Jerusalem, 1977, pp.53-61.

¹⁰In December 1941 the JDC closed its office in Warsaw and its representatives withdrew from Rumania. The JDC representative in Shanghai, Laura Margolies, remained in post.

¹¹ For example, HICEM had branch or affiliated offices in the following European countries: Portugal, France, Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Yugoslavia. In the Americas it had offices in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, and also in the West Indies. In Asia and Africa it had offices in China, Japan, the Philippine Islands and French North Africa.

emigration clearance system which avoided the need to send dollars into Axis lands. Jewish organisations in Axis countries took deposits of local currency from prospective emigrants. This money was used by the local organisations for internal aid programs and the JDC paid in dollars for the transportation of emigrants through non-German shipping lines. In June 1941 an Executive Order by the United States government froze the assets in the United States of all Axis, Axis-occupied and Axis-dominated countries and from that point on the financing of ventures abroad had to be secured by obtaining licences from the United States treasury for each transaction.¹² Most of the JDC's budgets between 1939 and 1945 (approximately \$78 million) were spent on relief and rescue activities within occupied Europe. Support to Poland, about 11 per cent of the overall JDC budget, was channeled through JDC's Warsaw office, directed by Isaac Gitterman. Funds were used to alleviate conditions in ghettos and to help thousands of Polish Jews who fled the German advance. JDC funds sent to France were used by local organizations for relief and rescue activities.

Whilst the JDC had been conceived as an agency to distribute money on behalf of American Jewish groups and individuals, its size, resources and increasing involvement in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s meant that it had grown into a sizeable organisation with its own policy initiatives and decision making bodies. As the chief financier of their own, and other refugee organisation activity, the policies of the JDC are important to consider. Policy in the JDC was decided through a number of committees, the two most important being the Executive Committee and the Administration Committee, formed after the outbreak of war to take swift decisions and develop basic policies in response to events. By setting up committees on the major areas in which the JDC was connected, decision making was devolved to those directly involved. Major policy decisions and requests by committees to fund local initiatives were referred to the main JDC offices in New York and Lisbon. In February 1939, in response to the panic migration to Central and South America and the Caribbean, the JDC set up the Committee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, which took responsibility for aid to local refugee committees and relief to refugees in all Caribbean areas. This committee also provided substantial support to the Hicem and the Refugee Economic Corporation, organisations also active in these areas.

JDC policy was predicated on the belief that primary responsibility for refugees should be

¹² Aiding Jews Overseas: Report of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, for 1941 and the first 5 months of 1942, p.11., #158, JDC.

taken by local refugee committees who should be in control of how to spend JDC funds transmitted to them.¹³ A more central policy insisted that the JDC should remain an apolitical organisation, its principal function to dispense aid and relief. This position would come under increasing criticism as organisations, such as the WJC began to call for JDC involvement in calls for rescue. Yet the JDC was an “‘American organisation’, bound by Roosevelt’s declaration of neutrality”, at least at the beginning of the war.¹⁴ This stance effectively guided JDC policy throughout the war years and was in stark opposition to the WJC . The JDC remained aligned to the policies of the American Jewish Committee, but after November 1939 included members of the American Jewish Congress, and representatives of Zionist and Orthodox organisations in its Executive Committee. Whilst this change had been more or less foisted on the JDC by an increasingly influential American Jewish Congress, the new representatives were not successful in influencing JDC policy.¹⁵

In fact, the JDC, Hicem and other aid organisations kept out of political campaigns, arguing that by aligning themselves to a particular lobby, their position as humanitarian aid organisation’s, trusted by Allied and neutral states to carry out relief, would be jeopardised. It was for this reason that in December 1943 the JDC rebutted proposals by the American Jewish Congress to form a single Jewish agency for rescue activities. The Chairman of the JDC, Paul Baerwald informed the American Jewish Congress that the JDC had "consistently refrained from participation in activities which have a dominant political objective", adding that "no project, plan or measure, however initiated or created, and by whomsoever sponsored " would not be fully considered and if practicable, acted upon by the JDC.¹⁶

As will be demonstrated in the case of refugees aboard the Cabo de Hornos, cooperation existed between political and refugee bodies, but the limits for refugee organisations, and representative bodies such as the American Jewish Committee and the Board of Deputies of

¹³Minutes of Meeting of Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 18 July 1939, #112, JDC.

¹⁴Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.37.

¹⁵Bauer states that the effect of the Committee was “the opposite of that intended by the American Jewish Congress and other groups. The Executive Committee became an unwieldy body unsuited for rapid decision making”. This resulted in decisions being made informally, bypassing the Committee. See Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.37.

¹⁶David Wyman, America and the Holocaust: A Thirteen Volume Set, New York, London 1990, Volume 5, American Jewish Disunity, Document 282, Paul Baerwald, JDC New York to the Rescue Commission of the American Jewish Congress, 7 December 1943.

British Jews, were defined by fears of becoming identified as partisan, thereby jeopardising refugee work or leading to accusations that they would put the rescue of foreign Jews over and above their allegiance to British and United States policy objectives during the war. In reality, however, political campaigns and refugee work existed in tandem, each having repercussions on one another. In order to suggest specific plans, organisations formed to promote rescue initiatives relied on information supplied by the JDC and like organisations, whilst the work of political organisations, such as the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee, led to a public and critical awareness of the plight of European Jewry, making rescue a subject for discussion by Allied powers.

Initially, the impetus to campaign for rescue came from the British section of the WJC, who were instrumental in making known information about the mass murder of European Jewry. This information, firstly conveyed to the British Section by the Polish Bund in June 1942, was added to throughout the year by further reports sent from occupied Europe and the WJC office in Geneva, to American and Anglo Jewish organisations and individuals. In London, the reports were publicised by the British section, the Polish Government in Exile, and other private bodies.¹⁷ The resultant publicity and consistent pressure from the WJC and Polish Government in Exile led to the issuance on 17 December 1942 of a War Crimes Declaration, issued in London by eleven Allied governments, including the United States, Britain and Russia. Henceforth, Anglo and American groups began to campaign for the rescue of Jews as an immediate Allied priority.¹⁸ In Britain rescue proposals were submitted to Parliament, pamphlets were published which sold out almost immediately, and proposals were widely discussed in public forums.¹⁹ In the United States, mass rallies were held and a “temporary committee” of American Jewish organisations was formed, to press for action against

¹⁷ Whilst information had also reached Stephen Wise at the same time, the State Department requested that he ‘sit’ on the information whilst they verified it. This meant that groups in Britain were far more influential in achieving the Declaration than in the US. Subsequently however, campaigns for rescue would gain momentum amongst American Jewish groups. See Tony Kushner, The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History, Oxford UK, Cambridge USA, pp.168-173.

¹⁸ By the time the Declaration had been issued, “most of Polish Jewry had been destroyed, and the mass deportation of West European Jews had been in operation for six months”, Ibid, p.173.

¹⁹ For example, Let My People Go, by Victor Gollanz, was published one week after the Declaration. He urged the Government to remove restrictions from Palestine, and to provide visas for refugees to reach neutral countries. Kushner has described how “within days, the first print run of 100,000 copies had sold out and by the end of January 1943 a further 50,000 had been distributed”. In January a parliamentary motion was introduced in the House of Commons calling for rescue measures to be effected. The motion had the support of some 80 MPs and members of the House of Lords. See Kushner, The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination, pp.177-178.

Germany.²⁰

Most rescue proposals centered around the following proposals: removing restrictions from Palestine, sending food and medical supplies to occupied Europe, encouraging neutral countries to receive refugees, issuing visas to refugees in occupied Europe, and creating temporary havens for refugees able to reach neutral territories. Several schemes put forward to the United States and British governments included the possibility of placing refugees in Gibraltar Camp, and more general calls for the colonial Empire and Dominions to accept refugees.²¹ Even though Gibraltar Camp had been built to house up to 7,000 persons, under half its capacity was used from its conception in 1940. Yet attempts by Jewish organisations to initiate rescue schemes using these facilities failed, although financial support from these organisations and from Allied governments had ensured that refugees in the Camp did not become a financial burden to the British government. For example, whilst movements of Dutch refugees to Gibraltar Camp continued throughout 1942 and 1943, efforts by Hicem and the Polish Government in Exile in 1942 to move other Polish Jews to Gibraltar Camp failed. Similarly, attempts to use other West Indian locations for temporary refuge were considered and rejected. In Britain the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror put forward a twelve point rescue programme which included the suggestion that refugees be housed in Gibraltar Camp.²² In the United States, the Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs also submitted a twelve point plan to be discussed at the Bermuda Conference, suggesting that:

The possibilities in several British territories, both in Africa and in the Caribbean, should be explored without delay. Sanctuary has already been afforded to thousands of refugees in these territories and there is room for many more, if not for permanent settlement, at least for the duration... The evacuation of refugees from Spain and

²⁰On 1 March 1943 over 20,000 attended Madison Square Garden. The Temporary Committee was formed in November 1942, as part of the campaign to press for the Allied Declaration.

²¹For example, following the Allied Declaration, several members of Parliament demanded immediate steps to be taken to evacuate Jews to the British Dominions and Colonies, Sweden or neutral countries, see Eppner, "The Rescue Work of the World Jewish Congress During the Nazi Period", p.58; On 3 February 1943 Oliver Stanley MP asked the House of Commons whether it would continue to pursue investigations to suitable British Colonies. The reply cited grave food shortages. See Hansard; On 23 March 1943 the House of Lords debated whether more refugees could be admitted into the colonies, and on 7 April 1943 the Prime Minister made a statement on the numbers of refugees already admitted, see Hansard, Vol.388, 7 April 1943, col.637 - 638.

²²Eleanor Rathbone, Rescue the Perishing: A summary of the position regarding the Nazi Massacres of Jewish and other victims and of proposals for their rescue. An Appeal, A Programme and a Challenge, published by The National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, founded in March 1943. Pub. May 1943. Revised ed, published June 1943. See also Kushner, The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination, p.179; William D. Rubinstein, The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews From the Nazis, London 1997, pp.132-135 for a reprint of the demands.

Portugal to North Africa and elsewhere would make room in those countries for the admission of others now trapped in France...Camp Gibraltar, Jamaica, is another haven with immediate facilities to accommodate several thousand persons, provided additional food is sent there.²³

Again in 1944, proposals to the War Refugee Board included sending refugees to temporary havens in neutral areas, allied territory and British territories in Africa and the Caribbean.²⁴

Whilst a certain amount of cooperation existed between Jewish organisations in these campaigns, divisions were also apparent. As the Bergson group called for a Government agency to be formed, to intervene directly with Nazi authorities to rescue Jews, the American Jewish Committee distanced itself from any campaigns which it felt fell into conflict with stated United States policy.²⁵ Once the United States and Britain had announced the convening of the Bermuda Conference in April 1943, the energy of campaigning bodies was somewhat dissipated, as Jewish representatives waited for the outcome of the Conference.²⁶

There is no doubt that the aftermath of Bermuda was a turning point for Jewish organisations. Campaigning prior to the conference consistently kept the rescue of Jews, albeit from neutral territories, in the forefront of campaigns, and a certain unity was maintained. After the conference, organisations became demoralized and bitterly divided over future policy making. In a letter to Sumner Welles shortly after the Bermuda Conference, the American Jewish Congress, on behalf of the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs,

²³"Program For The Rescue of Jews from Nazi Occupied Europe", Submitted to the Bermuda Refugee Conference by the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith, the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, the Synagogue Council of America, the Agudath Israel of America and the Union of orthodox Rabbis of America. Microfilm S49 - S146, Wiener Library Book Section, Reel 71 , LBI.

²⁴Suggestion by the Joint Emergency Committee, submitted to the War Refugee Board in March 1944, see "Digest of suggestions submitted to the War Refugee Board by various private organizations in response to a circular letter", c.March 1944, cited in William D.Rubinstein, The Myth of Plans for Rescue, London 1997, p.150.

²⁵Peter Bergson, a Palestinian Jew formed the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe in 1943. The group were young and energetic campaigners, with a flair for creating publicity for their causes, namely: campaigning for a government agency separated from the State Department to carry out rescue initiatives, and for the Zionist aim of achieving a Jewish homeland to be separated from the goal of rescuing Jews from Europe. The methods used by the group, and their refusal to become part of the American Jewish network of organisations, created hostility between established American Jewish organisations, such as the Congress and the Committee, and the Bergsonites. Opinions vary over their effectiveness. Henry Feingold has said that they vastly overestimated the power of American Jews to influence State policy and that their methods were divisive. David Wyman has concentrated on the hostility shown the group by established Zionist bodies and has emphasised their role in the creation of the War Refugee Board. See Feingold, Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust, New York 1995, p.14; David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945, New York 1985, p.328 and generally throughout this work.

²⁶The Temporary Committee reformed in March 1943 as the Joint Emergency Committee on European Jewish Affairs, and submitted plans to the Bermuda Conference. Both the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee participated in this body, although the WJC abstained.

wrote that:

we desire to convey the sense of despair of the American Jewish community over the failure of our Government to take any effective steps to save the Jews in Nazi occupied Europe from the certain death that awaits them.

The letter criticised the conference's failure to consult Jewish bodies as to the agenda of the conference and for their refusal to invite Jewish bodies to appear before the conference.²⁷ Whilst Jewish organisations were locked out of the Bermuda Conference, they did succeed in influencing the agenda, by putting on the table for discussion certain initiatives regarding refugees in neutral territories. For example, the proposal to move 2,000 refugees to Gibraltar Camp was accepted by the Conference, and some refugees from Vigo, Spain were transferred to Gibraltar Camp during 1943.²⁸ Yet for Jewish organisations, the Bermuda conference proved to be an unmitigated disaster, compounding a sense of hopelessness in the knowledge that free world powers were unwilling to make rescue a priority, despite the feasibility of some rescue plans. Bermuda represented for many a final failure in their attempts to persuade governments to act to save what was left of European Jewry. Thereafter, some argued for postwar initiatives to take priority over rescue initiatives. In August 1943 the American Jewish Conference devoted most of its agenda to the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine, paying little attention to rescue plans. Yet others, such as the Bergson group, continued to press for government action, and in July 1943 organised an Emergency Conference in New York. Whilst unsuccessful in influencing government opinion, and facing hostility from established Jewish bodies, the organisation was successful in mobilising public support.

The Allied belief that the rescue of Jews could only be achieved by winning the war limited initiatives such as the Bermuda Conference to possibilities in neutral countries, but with the creation of the War Refugee Board on 22 January 1944, a government body was created with the power to plan rescue operations, evacuate and care for refugees, and negotiate with foreign governments.²⁹ Even then, however, the Board was financed mainly by the JDC.³⁰

²⁷This statement is slightly contradictory, since the conference did accept memorandum and documents from Jewish organisations, and as has been demonstrated, these memorandum formed the basis for some discussions at Bermuda. See David Wyman, *The Bermuda Conference*, volume 3, Document 28, American Jewish Congress to Sumner Welles, 13 May 1943.

²⁸The refugees from Vigo transferred to Gibraltar Camp were young men of military age, Dutch nationals who were transferred to service units in Surinam within a short period of their arrival at the Camp. The Polish refugees referred to at Bermuda were not moved to Jamaica.

²⁹See Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, chapter 6, "The Rules of the Game: Britain, the United States and the Holocaust, 1943 to 1945", pp.173-201, for a discussion of how the creation of this board created a split between Britain and the United States. Kushner argues that while Britain consistently refused to make rescue

Several strands have been identified as influential in its formation. Firstly, in February 1943 the Rumanian Government offered to remove 70,000 Jews from Transnistria and release them to the Allies in return for \$140 per refugee. The Bergson group had campaigned for the State Department to act, and the JDC set aside funds. By the time certain arrangements had been made, it was too late and questionable whether the offer had at any time been serious. Secondly in an election year, Roosevelt felt under pressure from sections of the American Jewish public to act, particularly after the criticism following the Bermuda Conference. Thirdly Henry Morgenthau, ~~Treasury Secretary~~ had prepared a dossier on State Department suppression of news regarding the extermination of European Jewry. Morgenthau's report, entitled "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of Jews" was presented to Roosevelt, who agreed with its main recommendation, to establish a government agency with the power to deal with victims in occupied territories. It centralised rescue work and enabled the JDC to resume transferring funds from New York to Lisbon and to Saly Mayer, the JDC's representative in Switzerland. During 1944 the JDC spent large sums on aid to Hungarian, Slovakian and Romanian Jewry. Although it succeeded in helping to save thousands of lives, the majority of European Jewry had by this time perished.

Reflecting on their role during the Holocaust, Jewish organisations have questioned whether they could have done more to save European Jewry. For example, the WJC formed the opinion that if Jewish organisations had formed a single refugee organisation, their influence would have been far greater. Blame was attached to the JDC for refusing the American Jewish Congress's proposal to form a single refugee organisation under their umbrella in April 1943. It must therefore be considered whether a single organisation could have proved a more effective lobby. Certainly the World Jewish Congress, in a postwar conference address in London, laid vituperative blame at the JDC's feet. Until the formation of the War Refugee Board in 1944, the JDC was the only American Jewish organisation licensed through the US Treasury to carry out rescue initiatives in occupied countries. Although the JDC did work with the WJC in neutral countries, this work was done unofficially.³¹ In his address to the conference, Nahum Goldmann accused the JDC of refusing to cooperate with the WJC. He

a priority over Allied war aims, the creation of the WRB changed United States policy initiatives.

³⁰Of its \$20 million budget, \$16 million was supplied by the JDC and associated Jewish groups in the United States. See Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust*, p.407. Also see Bauer for the background to its formation, pp.401-407.

³¹It was through its Treasury licence that it distributed funds to other organisations such as Hicem. For the background to JDC and WJC rescue activities in Lisbon, see Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust*, pp. 197-216

charged that:

Had the “Joint” been willing to do this work, thousands of Jews in the Nazi-occupied territories could have been saved. For two years, W.J.C., futilely, appealed to Jewish relief organizations to help obtain permission to send relief; but their "ideology" did not permit them to mix relief with politics and the result was that thousands of Jews that could have been saved were exterminated.³²

It must be argued that this accusation distorts the real situation that Jewish refugee organisations faced. In the arena of aid to refugees, it is doubtful whether organisations with such different ideologies as the JDC and the WJC could work as effectively under one management as they did by cooperating with each other. Goldmann's criticism also ignored Allied policies towards rescue, and the reality of Nazi determination to exterminate European Jewry. Yet whilst it was an overblown accusation, it did contain some elements of truth: splits between organisations did prevent a cohesive and united front when tackling governments on refugee and rescue issues. For example, as will be considered, the wrangles between the WJC and the JDC for refugees in Gibraltar Camp may have had an impact on the further admittance of Jews to Jamaica, but this in itself was perhaps only one of many factors. It is also important to recognise what Henry Feingold has pointed out in his study of American Jewish responses to the Holocaust. Just as in the 1930s, American Jewry was not a cohesive, unified community, but divided along political, religious and ethnic affiliations.³³ Whilst certain historians have spent much time investigating the effects of disunity, principally amongst American Jewry, it cannot be stressed too highly that whether unified or not, Jewish organisations faced two intransigent realities.³⁴ Firstly, Nazi determination to carry out mass genocide. Secondly, a sustained and genuine belief amongst Allied leaders that war aims must take priority over relief and rescue of civilian populations.

The aims of this chapter are to demonstrate, through the example of the West Indies, the

³² “Information Bulletin: Activities of the World Jewish Congress Reports on the World Jewish Situation”, New York, October 1 1945, draft. Arch.96-12, Library Archive, Jewish Theological Seminary Archive New York (henceforth JTS).

³³ See for example, Feingold, Bearing Witness, p.15, who argues that it was only in the postwar years that American Jewry could be called a “unified community”.

³⁴ David Wyman has analysed the responses of American Jewry towards the Holocaust, and found them lacking. His principal criticisms centre on the refusal of different organisations to ignore differences and work together. His underlying argument is that if American Jewry had formed a single powerful body, they would have influenced Roosevelt's Government to make rescue an Allied priority. For these views see Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews. Since its publication, a more measured analysis of the capabilities of American Jews has been provided by Henry Feingold, in his Bearing Witness, which specifically takes issue with Wyman's analysis.

changing priorities and concerns of refugee organisations. During the first few years of the war, the refugee crisis continued as many fled occupied Europe. Therefore, funding “panic migration” continued to play a major role in their budgets. The successful admission of refugees to West Indian destinations during 1941 and 1942 was due in large part to the intercession of Jewish organisations. Yet once refugees had reached safe territory, particularly in areas such as the British West Indies, refugees remained reliant on a high degree of administrative and financial support. The following section examines the role of refugee organisations in the admittance and maintenance of refugees in the British West Indies.

- II -

Refugees and the British West Indies.

Refugees in British West Indian colonies who had gained admittance before the outbreak of war in September 1939 were the last to be admitted without conditions attached. Despite refugees from the Koenigstein and Caribia being turned away from West Indian ports, further refugees in transit would often be allowed temporary admittance. Subsequent arrivals rested on two factors: the willingness of Jewish refugee organisations to provide financial guarantees and organise further destinations, and the presence of internment and evacuation camps in the Dutch and British Caribbean.

By the beginning of World War II, some 350,000 refugees had escaped from Nazi Germany, some 110,000 remaining spread throughout Europe.³⁵ Between 1940 and the end of 1941, the refugee situation, characterised in 1938 by the JDC as “panic migration”, became increasingly desperate. As Nazi forces swept across Europe, refugees continued to flood into unoccupied France, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Switzerland attempting to buy tickets out of Europe. After the fall of France, ships continued to leave from ports in Lisbon, Marseilles and Casablanca. During 1941 new restrictionist immigration laws were enacted in the United States and South America and the price of Latin American visas was vastly increased. In order to gain entry into countries from which they could emigrate, in transit visas and final destination visas had to be obtained. Many false visas and documents were sold to refugees by corrupt shipping companies and Consular officials.

Until October 1941, Nazi Jewish policy in the Reich itself, still centered around the forced

³⁵Wasserstein has estimated that of the total number of emigrants from the Reich, between 1933 and the outbreak of war, about 57,000 went to the USA, 53,000 to Palestine, 50,000 to Britain, 40,000 to France, 25,000 to Belgium and 10,000 to Switzerland. Significant numbers were also admitted to Argentina, Brazil, Australia and Canada. See Wasserstein, Britain and the Jews of Europe: 1939 - 1945, Oxford, New York, 1988, p.7.

emigration of Jews from the Reich. Most historians agree that the invasion of Russia (Operation Barbarossa) in June 1941 was the turning point in official Nazi Jewish policy, from forced emigration to extermination. The first mass deportations of Jews from the Reich began in mid October 1941, and on 23 October 1941 Himmler ordered exits from the Reich to be sealed.³⁶ After German exits were closed, the only escape route left was through the Iberian Peninsula. With so many refugees crowding into Portugal and Spain, Portuguese officials were unwilling to admit further refugees into the country, particularly those without valid visas. Wartime restrictions meant that shipping was scarce, leading to overcrowded conditions. Despite grave difficulties, the pressure of Nazi persecution meant that refugees continued to cross the Pyrenees into Spain and Portugal. In Spain many were interned in a concentration camp, the Miranda del Ebro.³⁷

In order to expedite emigration from Lisbon, the JDC began to purchase in advance the entire passenger space available on neutral vessels sailing from Lisbon to Western destinations. The JDC in Lisbon would organise the numbers of refugees with visas and book space on the boat, whilst the JDC in New York would secure the cash through treasury licences. The JDC would then allot blocks of tickets to affiliated organisations and emigration committees such as Hicem, who would choose the individual emigrants for the sailing. Between December 1941 and May 1942 approximately 13 boats left Lisbon for the Western Hemisphere, carrying about 5,000 refugees aided by the JDC and Hicem. These refugees all had bona fide visas for the United States, Central or South American destinations. These sailings caused little administrative headaches for Jewish refugee organisations, as they were in control of most aspects of the refugees voyages.³⁸ Nevertheless, many refugees made their own arrangements, falling into the hands of unscrupulous agents who booked them on to unseaworthy vessels and sold them invalid visas.³⁹ Boats sailing with refugees without destinations became known as floating 'no-man's lands' as permission to disembark was

³⁶See Michael R. Marrus, The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century, Oxford, New York, Toronto 1985, pp.230-233. See also Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, pp.64 - 66, and on the subject generally, David Cesarani, ed., The Final Solution: Origins and Implementations, London, New York 1994.

³⁷Marrus, The Unwanted, pp.258-265. See also chapter one on the refugee situation in Lisbon.

³⁸For example, see the following JDC reports and bulletins: "Present Activities of the JDC, 1939 - 1940", #151 JDC; "Aiding Jews Overseas: Report of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. for 1940 and the first five months of 1941" #157, JDC; "Aiding Jews Overseas: Report of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc., for 1941 and the first 5 months of 1942", #158, JDC.

³⁹For example, the JDC claimed that only one third of refugees from Germany and Austria made their emigration arrangements through established Jewish agencies, Rose Klepfisz, & Emil Lang., "Annotated Catalogue of the Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1933 - 1944", p.122.

refused by each country they approached.⁴⁰ Refugee organisations became involved once the refugees were already on the high seas, attempting to arrange temporary admission, legalising the refugees status, financing their maintenance and negotiating for permanent entry to another country. A number of such sailings during 1941 and 1942 resulted in refugees being temporarily housed in West Indian destinations.

The conditions on these voyages were harsh, and refugees often arrived exhausted after many months at sea. One such voyage has been described by Claude Lévi-Strauss, the French anthropologist. In 1941, unable to obtain a visa for Brazil, but desperate to leave France, he boarded a ship bound for Martinique. Unlike previous voyages he had made, the ship was packed to capacity, mainly with refugees. He has described how:

About 350 people were crammed on to a small steamer which - as I was immediately to discover - boasted only two cabins with, in all, seven bunks. One of the cabins had been allocated to three ladies and the other was to be shared by four men, including myself... The rest of my companions, men, women and children, were herded into the hold, with neither air nor light, and where the ship's carpenters had hastily run up bunk beds with straw mattresses.⁴¹

Another voyage in November 1941 resulted in a group of 86 refugees gaining temporary admittance to Curacao in the Dutch West Indies. Their voyage had begun on 1 January 1941 when the steamship Alsina left Marseilles bound for Rio de Janeiro with several hundred refugees on board, most with visas for Brazil. Once the ship reached Dakar, French West Africa, Vichy authorities refused permission for the ship to continue as the validity of the Brazilian visas were doubted. For four months the refugees were confined to the ship as it lay in the dock, and in May, after the United States had signalled to the Vichy authorities that it would not accept the refugees, they were transported back to Casablanca where they were incarcerated in concentration camps.⁴² In early October 1941, 40 passengers from the Alsina were released, their expired visas renewed by the Brazilian Consul in Casablanca. These refugees were transferred to the Spanish steamship the Cabo de Buena Esperanza bound for Brazil. When they reached Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian authorities refused to accept the

⁴⁰JDC Running Publications, p.4, #151, JDC.

⁴¹Claude Lévi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques, France 1955, trans. London 1973, repr. London 1984, p.25. On arrival, the refugees were interned in a camp in Martinique by Vichy Officials. Their release was effected when local tradesmen complained to the Naval authorities that the internment of refugees in Le Lazaret camp deprived the local economy.

⁴²It was at this point that Hicem established its office in Casablanca, in response to the plight of refugees from the Alsina.

validity of the visas, and the Buena Esperanza sailed on to Buenos Aires. Following emergency efforts by the JDC, Argentina agreed to take the refugees in with a provisional permit of 90 days, and confined the refugees in Buenos Aires, in special quarters. Within days the Argentine government reversed their decision to grant temporary stay and deported the refugees aboard the steam ship Cabo de Hornos, which had arrived in Argentina carrying a further number of ex-Alsina refugees. The Cabo de Hornos was now bound to return to Europe with the refugees. Four days later it returned to Brazil where intercessions on behalf of the refugees were made by Polish, Belgian, United States and British officials and Jewish refugee organisations to various South American countries. On 18 November the Dutch Government in Exile agreed to allow the refugees sanctuary in Curacao for 90 days on the strength of an agreement worked out with the JDC, to shoulder all costs of maintenance and to find final destinations for the refugees. On arrival, the 83 refugees were separated into male and female internment camps. When the ninety day deadline expired approximately 50 refugees remained, unable to go elsewhere. By the end of the war, 19 refugees from the Cabo de Hornos were still in Curacao, maintained by grants from the JDC.⁴³

Throughout their ordeal, appeals were made by Jewish organisations to secure the reception of the refugees. Jewish organisations in the United States and Britain used their connections with South and Central American affiliated organisations to convey information and organise an effective campaign. Attempts to gain the refugees admittance to Paraguay, Trinidad, and other South American destinations all failed.⁴⁴ The decision to allow the refugees temporary shelter in Curacao came about through the direct intervention of, and cooperation between, the WJC, the JDC, Hicem, the CBF and Jewish aid organisations affiliated in Lisbon, Argentina, Brazil, Curacao and Trinidad. During October and November 1941 cables went back and forth between Dr Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress, Chief Rabbi Hertz, the Central Council for Refugees and local refugee committees in Buenos Aires and

⁴³See Klepfisz & Lang, "Annotated Catalogue of the Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1933 - 1944", unpublished, p.124. See also an account by refugee on board, Dr. David Chazan, 10 February 1942, WJC, series H, H213/Curacao, AJAC. See also Jeffrey Lesser's account of the voyage in Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question, London, 1995, pp.139. Lesser gives the context in which Brazil refused to admit the refugees.

⁴⁴An attempt in October to admit the refugees to Trinidad was a failure, despite attempts by the Buenos Aires Campaign Cadoche. The Buenos Aires Campaign Comite Cadoche had cabled Dr Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress informing him that the British Consulate had cabled the Foreign Office enclosing their petition to allow 34 refugees from the SS Buena Esperanza entry to Trinidad. The cable added that the Ambassador Halifax supported the petition to the Foreign Office. See Buenos Aires Campaign Commite Cadoche to Dr Stephen Wise, AJC, cablegram, 24 October 1941, WJC Series H, H213 American Jewish Archives Cincinnati (henceforth AJAC).

Curacao. In London the Central Council for Refugees and Chief Rabbi Hertz negotiated with the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees and the Netherlands Government in Exile. Together they made the agreement which rested on the essential JDC financial guarantee for maintenance and finding permanent places of settlement.⁴⁵

The case of the Alsina, Bueno de Esperanza and Cabo de Hornos demonstrates the cooperation that existed between Jewish aid organisations and larger Jewish bodies, who had no involvement in the mechanics of refugee aid, but were able to intercede on behalf of the refugees through diplomatic and governmental contacts. Historians such as Bernard Wasserstein and Jeffrey Lesser have focused on the case of the Cabo de Hornos as an example of the immigration policies of Allied powers. Whereas Lesser uses the incident to explain Brazilian refugee policy, Wasserstein uses the voyage as an example to demonstrate "the extreme reluctance of the British Government to admit refugee Jews to any of its territories".⁴⁶ Despite Wasserstein's assertion, Trinidad and other West Indian colonies did accept further refugees after refusing the passengers on board the Cabo de Hornos entry. It is difficult to decide why Trinidad and other British West Indian colonies refused the refugees entry in October 1941, since throughout that year and the following year refugees were admitted. It may be for a simple reason of geography, the ship was passing en route through Curacao rather than Trinidad. Placed strategically close to the American continent, the Caribbean acted as a "sieve" for Allied powers to detain captured merchant seamen, enemy aliens or suspected "fifth columnists" in internment camps in Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad. Since May 1940, in order to protect the oil industries in Aruba and Curacao, Allied forces had occupied the Dutch Caribbean colonies. With the agreement of the Netherlands Government in Exile, based in London, Curacao and Aruba also had internment centres from which any suspects or refugees with invalid documents could be taken.⁴⁷

Most steamships en route to the Americas passed through West Indian ports, often carrying

⁴⁵For example, see the following correspondence: WJC Buenos Aires cable to Stephen Wise, 5 November 1941, Sumner Welles cable to American Jewish Congress, 7 November 1941, American Jewish Congress cable to Jewish Community Curacao, 11 November 1941, WJC Series H, H213/Curacao AJAC. See also Central Council for Jewish Refugees to Chief Rabbi Hertz, 14 November 1941, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees to Chief Rabbi Hertz, 17 November 1941, MS175 Hertz 1/3, AJA, SA. See also JDC,#158, for the JDC guarantee to the Netherlands Government in Exile.

⁴⁶ See Wasserstein, Britain and the Jews of Europe, p.142. For Lesser, see above citation.

⁴⁷See Fitz Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939 - 1945, New York, London 1988, p.28.

refugees on board with expired or invalid visas. Others with valid visas were often detained on suspicion of fifth column activity. Those with German, Italian or Austrian passports were interned whilst others were granted temporary landing permits. These refugees had no legal right to remain in the West Indies, as they had not entered as immigrants, but as in transit passengers. Whilst Jewish organisations were not responsible for their entry, refugees became entirely dependent on aid from local refugee committees, and they in turn from remittances sent by the JDC. In some cases, the refugees were released in a matter of days and proceeded to further destinations. For example, on 16 January 1941 twelve Jewish refugees were taken from the steamship Argentina, which was passing through Trinidad en route from Buenos Aires to New York. All the refugees and holders of Italian and German passports were put into the internment camp in Trinidad. A month later, on 14 February all were able to proceed to New York save for one Italian Jewish refugee who remained interned. In this case, the refugee committee in Trinidad was able, with funds sent from the JDC in New York, to care for the refugees whilst the JDC in New York regularised their papers and enabled the refugees to proceed.⁴⁸

Yet others, with expired or invalid visas often remained for long durations. In May 1941 the steamship Winnipeg, which had left Marseilles bound for Vichy controlled Martinique, was intercepted within the American Neutrality Zone. It had been stopped because it was flying the Vichy flag, and the 350 refugees on board were transferred to Trinidad where they were interned. Most of the refugees were in possession of valid visas to the United States and were able to proceed within days. Yet at least seventeen passengers, all with German or Austrian passports, were unable to proceed and remained interned, whilst efforts were made to find other destinations. These refugees were holders of expired or invalid visas: for example, two passengers had received their immigration visas to the United States in January in Marseilles, but could not secure any space until July. Since their visas had expired, they took passage on the Winnipeg expecting to renew their visas in Martinique. Passengers with visas for San Domingo and Cuba did not have in transit visas for the United States, which they needed in order to proceed with their journeys.⁴⁹ Notwithstanding efforts by the JDC in New York, and the Jewish Refugee Society in Trinidad, by October the refugees were still interned,

⁴⁸ W. Grossmann, Secretary Jewish Refugee Society, Aliens Internment Camp, Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, JDC 16 January 1941, #1048, JDC. See also 14 February 1941, #1048, JDC.

⁴⁹ Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad to Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 4 August 1941, #1048, JDC.

permission for their remigration denied.⁵⁰

As with the Alsina, many of these voyages were circuitous and took many months before refugees found a country willing to admit them. Polish Jewish refugees, on board the Lorenzo Marquez, were admitted as in transit passengers to Trinidad in November 1941. They had expired visas for Costa Rica, issued in Lisbon in August 1940. Their route had taken them from France, to Spain, to Portugal, to Lorenzo Marquez, a Portuguese colony in East Africa, to Cape Town, South Africa and finally to Trinidad where they were able to disembark.⁵¹ Again, the majority of the refugees were able to proceed to Cuba and other destinations, but by 1942 eight refugees still remained, dependent on the aid and assistance of the JDC, the local refugee committee, and the Council for Refugee Settlement, an organisation based in Johannesburg, who had funded their journey from Cape Town to Trinidad.⁵² The burden of supporting temporarily stranded refugees fell directly onto the local Jewish refugee committees, formed in Trinidad. Although they received remittances from the JDC in New York, refugees arrived without warning and funds for their support were often slow to arrive.⁵³ In February 1942 the Jewish Refugee Society of Trinidad contacted the JDC, alerting them to the number of in transit cases that were arriving weekly, individuals who depended on their organisation for aid and advice.⁵⁴ In another letter, the Jewish Association of Trinidad (JAT) described the plight of those who had arrived on the Lorenzo Marquez. They had been offered temporary accommodation in the internment camp but refused because they were “very religious people and find it easier to eat kosher [sic]”. Therefore they were housed with local Jewish residents for the first few days, their boarding

⁵⁰ Report to the JDC, NY by M.W. Beckelman, 19 October 1941, #1048, JDC.

⁵¹ Edgar Gruen, Secretary of the Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad to Frederick Borchardt, Secretary of the Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 24 November 1941, #1048, JDC.

⁵² See Dr Pillersdorf, President Jewish Association of Trinidad (JAT) to JDC, New York, 26 November 1941; Otto Malameth, President, Jewish Refugee Society Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, Secretary, Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America 19 December 1941; Council for Refugee Settlement to JDC, New York 24 July 1942; Robert Pilpel, Secretary, Subcommittee on Refugee Aid to Central and South America to the Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad 21 August 1942, #1048, JDC.

⁵³ See "Aiding Jews Overseas: Report of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for 1941 and the first 5 months of 1942", p.22, #158, JDC, and see also JDC, #151. The cost for supporting in transit cases in Trinidad for 1941 and the first five months of 1942 amounted to \$4,400.

⁵⁴ Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 18 February 1942,. See also, Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad to Pilpel, 6 April 1942, #1048, JDC, in which the JRS informed Pilpel of further expenses of in transit passengers arriving in Trinidad. These refugees, aboard the SS Maeskerk and the SS New York City had arrived in Trinidad from London, en route to the U.S., having been granted in transit visas to Trinidad. One refugee had been advised to wait for his Polish quota number in Trinidad.

money supplied by the JAT. Yet the financial burden of aiding an ever increasing number of in transit refugees was straining the JAT's resources. They wrote that:

As they live among us, we cannot see them starving. But on the other hand it is certainly unjust to put such a burden on the shoulders of a young and poor community. We need not tell you that there is hardly a day without new arrivals and passings of refugees through Trinidad. Many of them come to us for help. We are doing our utmost, and in many a time more than we can.⁵⁵

The costs of supporting the refugees was high. For example, in Trinidad the JDC had been remitting regular sums to help support refugees who had arrived before the outbreak of war. In 1938 only \$1000 had been sent by the JDC, reflecting the fact that many refugees who had arrived during that year found employment. In 1939 the amount of aid sent rose to \$3570, reflecting the increased numbers of refugees who had arrived without means. During 1940 many were interned, and the JDC amount was decreased to \$1680. In 1942, the amount rose to \$3290, an indication that more aid was needed to help with the constant arrival of in transit refugees, as well as help for recently released refugees.⁵⁶

For refugees travelling with invalid documents, the West Indies offered only temporary respite: without valid documents, means or further destinations, they would have been returned to Europe after investigation.⁵⁷ That they were allowed to remain, often for long periods, was primarily because of the financial guarantees given by local and international Jewish refugee organisations, and their extensive efforts to relocate refugees to permanent destinations. Therefore, after the outbreak of war, the first involvement with the West Indies for refugee organisations was in essence, accidental: that is as part of the flow of unorganised migration from Europe. Within a chaotic situation, refugee organisations were able to play an essential role in this ongoing traffic, by preventing refugees with invalid documents from being returned to Europe. Their second involvement with the West Indies was as a result of Allied priorities concerning Lisbon. As we have seen in chapter one, Allied powers wanted to clear Lisbon of a surfeit of refugees. Whilst it was a governmental initiative to send

⁵⁵Dr Pillersdorf, President of JAT to JDC NY, 26 November 1941, #1048 JDC.

⁵⁶See JDC Annual Reports for 1938, 1939, 1940, #157; 1941 & 1942, #158, JDC.

⁵⁷This policy was confirmed by a JDC letter written in February 1942 which stated that if there was a question about certain refugees, the British authorities would take them for investigation to Curacao, Trinidad or Bermuda. See JDC NY to Lt. Commander F H Creech, Arlington Medical Center, 10 February 1942, #533, JDC. In this particular case, a refugee had been temporarily interned in Curacao because he possessed an invalid visa for Venezuela. The JDC were attempting to procure an US visa for him, and requested that he be allowed to remain in Curacao under a financial guarantee from the JDC. The letter stated that unless the JDC guarantee was accepted, the refugee would be returned to Europe.

Jewish refugees from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica, the scheme relied on financial guarantees to be given by private organisations. The JDC's role in the movement to, and maintenance of, refugees in Gibraltar Camp, Jamaica had repercussions which were both positive and negative for the organisation.

Gibraltar Camp

The arrangement to send refugees to Gibraltar Camp serves as an example of how refugee organisations were often a vital element in governmental schemes, whilst remaining out of the decision making process. Relied upon for financial and administrative help, they possessed no influence over the planning of such initiatives. The first arrangement to send refugees to Jamaica was initiated by the Polish Government in Exile, who entered discussions with the High Commissioner for Refugees and the British Government in early 1941 on behalf of approximately 200 Polish Jewish refugees stranded in Lisbon. All were without visas for other destinations, and had been in Lisbon since 1940. Possible destinations discussed between the Committee of Polish Jewish refugees, the Polish Government in Exile and the British authorities included temporary settlement for them in British Honduras or Jamaica. It was not until December 1941 that Jan Ciechanowski, the Polish Ambassador in the United States, contacted the JDC in New York, informing them that the British government would allow the refugees admission to Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica for the duration of the war, on condition that the Polish government should guarantee the cost of their maintenance.⁵⁸

Ciechanowski informed the JDC that the Polish government did not have the funds available to give the guarantee, and requested that the JDC or some other American Jewish organisation take financial responsibility ..."in order to save these Jewish refugees of Polish citizenship".⁵⁹ The JDC had already informed Ciechanowski that it was against its policy to issue guarantees to governments, but it would give a limited guarantee for a twelve month period, to cover the 200 refugees. Thereafter, it would "continue to extend all possible help to this group of refugees in the same manner as we extend assistance to refugees in other parts

⁵⁸ Jan Ciechanowski, Polish Ambassador, Washington, to Joseph Hyman, Executive Vice chairman, 3 January 1942, JDC NY, #884, JDC.

⁵⁹ Jan Ciechanowski, Polish Ambassador, Washington, to Joseph Hyman, Executive Vice chairman, 3 January 1942, JDC NY, #884, JDC.

of the world".⁶⁰ This was obviously accepted as good enough, and on 31 December 1941 the JDC released a press release, stating that it had arranged for the emigration of 180 Polish Jews from Lisbon to Jamaica. It emphasised that, "this rescue operation ...[was] an instance of the interest of the Allied democratic powers in the maintenance of programs of overseas aid during the war as a part of the struggle for democracy on the "human front."⁶¹ Whilst this stressed the positive aspects of the arrangement, in private, JDC officials had voiced their hesitancy over the scheme:

The Joint Distribution Committee did not initiate this step ...It was after the arrangements had been consummated among the governmental groups in question that the Polish Government turned to the J.D.C. and stated that it had solved the problem of these unfortunate people for the duration. ... We considered the matter very carefully. This, like many other situations, came to pass without our planning. We were called on, however, to make good arrangements already effected by other groups. We came to the conclusion that at the present time with the possibility of ingress to Latin and South American countries virtually blocked, and with no opportunity at this time of admission to United States, because these people had no affidavits or sponsors for admission there, we had no alternative but to accept a measure of responsibility.⁶²

On 24 January 1942 the first steamship to take refugees to Jamaica sailed from Lisbon. Amongst its passengers bound for Cuba and the U.S, the Serpa Pinto carried 152 Polish Jewish refugees, accompanied by a representative of the JDC, Bernard Jacobson. Once in Jamaica, the refugees were taken to Gibraltar Camp, where they would be housed for the duration or until further destinations could be found. Their entry had rested upon the guarantee given by the JDC, and the condition, insisted upon by the Jamaican Legislature, that they would not seek employment or citizenship.⁶³ In February 1942 the JDC extended its original guarantee to cover an additional 200 refugees of allied nationalities who would be brought from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp. The terms of the guarantee were identical and during 1942 a further 107 refugees of Luxembourg, Czech and other Allied nationalities were brought to Gibraltar Camp from Lisbon by the JDC, under its pledge of maintenance to the

⁶⁰Joseph Schwartz, JDC Lisbon, cable to JDC New York, 31 December 1941, #884, JDC.

⁶¹ JDC Press Release , 9 January 1942, #884, JDC.

⁶²Unsigned, JDC Official, General and Emergency Committee, to Lionel Simmonds, 3 February 1942, #884, JDC.

⁶³ This condition was noted by Charles Jordan, in a report made for the JDC in December 1943. On dealing with complaints from refugees that they wished to be allowed to seek employment, he commented that: "the Jamaican Legislature ... specifically decided to allow these people to come to Jamaica on the condition that they would not engage in any kind of work". See Charles Jordan report on Gibraltar Camp for JDC NY, 17 December 1943, XIII-8 Jamaica, Yivo Archives New York (henceforth Yivo).

British Government.⁶⁴

Although in these two cases the Colonial Office enabled the arrangements, a similar request by the Polish Legation in November 1942, on behalf of 120 Polish Jews in Lisbon, all having arrived in Portugal since the departure of the Serpa Pinto, was rejected. This decision is surprising in the light of further refugee movements to Gibraltar Camp, on the basis of guarantees offered by the JDC and the Netherlands Government in Exile. During 1942 and 1943, Dutch refugees, including Jews, were moved from Spain and Lisbon to the Dutch West Indies and to Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica. In May 1942, 200 Dutch refugees were sent to Dutch Guiana, the Netherlands government in exile paying their transportation costs, the JDC covering their maintenance for a twelve month period.⁶⁵ In December 1942 a further group of 400 Dutch refugees were evacuated from Vigo, Spain to Jamaica. Approximately 250 refugees remained in Gibraltar Camp, the rest travelling on to Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana.⁶⁶ Of those remaining, approximately 175 were Dutch Jews, reliant on JDC aid.⁶⁷ Again in April, October and December 1943 a further three contingents of Dutch refugees arrived.⁶⁸

It is difficult to estimate the overall numbers of refugees dependent on JDC guarantees in

⁶⁴ British Embassy Washington to Joseph Hyman, JDC NY enclosing copies of JDC guarantees, written 5 January and 11 February 1942 to the British Embassy in Lisbon, 23 April 1946, #893, JDC. Regarding the sailings during 1942, see 6 March 1942 the JDC guaranteed maintenance for 58 Luxembourg citizens in Jamaica Camp, see Leavitt to Leon Schaus, Gouvernement du Grand-Duche de Luxembourg, Montreal, Canada, #885, JDC; On the 3 April 1942, 33 Czech and Luxembourg nationals were brought to Jamaica by the JDC, see Loose Leaf Memos, #153, JDC; On the 27 April 1942 Hicem received lists of 16 immigrants sent to Gibraltar Camp from Lisbon on the steamship San Thome, see Ilya Dijour to Asofsky, HicemNY, 27 April 1942, XIII - 3, Jamaica, Yivo.

⁶⁵ JDC Loose Leaf Memos, 15 May 1942, #153; and see "HIAS Annual Report for 1943, Rescue Now!", p.30, I-43, Yivo, "At the end of 1942, a group of about 200 Jewish refugees sailed from Lisbon to Paramaribo, Surinam, where they were to remain for the duration".

⁶⁶ Report to JDC on Gibraltar Camp by Charles M. Jordan, the JDC representative for the Caribbean, 1941 - 1943, 17 December 1942, XIII - 8 Jamaica, Yivo; See also Minutes of meeting, Committee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 1 June 1943, p.4, #114, JDC.

⁶⁷ Ilya Dijour to Bernard Glasscheib, 30 December 1942, XIII-5 Jam, Yivo. See also Glasscheib to Hicem, NY, 14 January 1943, XIII-10, Jam, Yivo. The Hicem reported that 70 of the 250 Dutch refugees had left the camp, and of the remaining 180, 134 were Jewish refugees.

⁶⁸ Bernard Glasscheib to Ilya Dijour, Hicem NY, 13 March 1943, XIII-7 Jam, Yivo. Glasscheib noted that of the 79 refugees to arrive, 66 were Jewish; Bernard Glasscheib to Ilya Dijour, Hicem NY, 3 October 1943, XIII-11 Jam, Yivo. On 3 October 1943 approximately 60 Dutch refugees arrived, 50 men and 10 women. The men would shortly be drafted to military service. In April 1943 305 Dutch refugees were housed in Gibraltar Camp until 31 March 1944. It is not clear if all these refugees were Jewish and maintained by the JDC. See "Dutch Refugees: Ex s/s "Marques De Comillas", list of refugees (undated printed list) given to author by Professor Stolberg, Germany. In December 1943 some 300 Dutch refugees were evacuated to Gibraltar Camp from Vigo, Spain. The Netherlands Government in Exile assumed full responsibility for their maintenance. See Charles Jordan Report, 17 December 1943, XIII-8, Jamaica, Yivo.

Gibraltar Camp, as the figures fluctuated due to births, deaths and remigration. For the month of May 1943 the total number of refugees dependent on JDC guarantees amounted to 325 refugees of Dutch, Polish and Allied nationality.⁶⁹ An average number of Polish and Allied refugees dependent on JDC aid in Gibraltar Camp between March 1942 and December 1943 can be estimated at 163 persons.⁷⁰ By October 1944 the Gibraltans were sent home, and the Dutch refugees had left for other destinations, leaving only refugees from the Polish and Allied groups who were unable to obtain visas for further destinations.

There are several reasons which may explain why Dutch refugees continued to be admitted when the request in November 1942 to allow further Polish refugees entry was denied. Firstly, the contrast between the situation of the Dutch refugees, and the group of Allied and Polish refugees maintained in Gibraltar Camp. Whilst the latter group were without emigration prospects, the majority of Dutch refugees remained in the camp for shorter periods and were able to remigrate to Dutch Guiana or other destinations. In addition, those of military age were drafted and some found employment with the Netherlands government in exile. Furthermore, whilst the Polish government in exile relied upon the JDC to cover expenses of all its citizens in Gibraltar Camp, costs for Dutch refugees were shared between the JDC and the Netherlands government in exile.⁷¹ Therefore, British authorities may have been unwilling to allow Polish Jews entry if the JDC guarantee would only be given for a year, after which they may have become liable for the costs of their maintenance.⁷² This could explain why attempts by refugee organisations to use Gibraltar Camp were also refused. For example, in March 1942 Hicem attempted to send for relatives of refugees in

⁶⁹ 175 Dutch Jewish nationals and 150 Polish and allied Jewish citizens. In addition, the JDC were also maintaining approximately 200 refugees in Dutch Guiana under the same arrangement. See Memorandum to Isaac Levy, J. Human, Moses Leavitt, Evelyn Morrissey from Robert Pilpel, re Remittances to Central and South American committees for the month of June, 1943, 17 May 1943, #114, JDC.

⁷⁰This is an approximate figure estimated from the numbers of refugees present in the camp through a 13 month period. See British Embassy Washington to JDC New York, "Details of numbers in, arrivals, births, and departures from Camp 2, Polish group", 23 April 1946, #893, JDC.

⁷¹Ciechanowski had informed the JDC that they had no funds available to help the refugees, but placed a high priority on sending them from Lisbon. (See notes 24 and 25 of this chapter). There could possibly be other reasons: David Engel has suggested that the Polish Government in Exile still believed in the myth of a powerful world Jewry, and it was partly this belief in Jewish influence that prompted them to push for an Allied Declaration against Nazi war crimes. See David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1939 - 1942*, North Carolina, 1987, pp.113-183, in Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* p.170 - 171. It could therefore be argued that they placed a high priority on aiding Polish Jews in Lisbon, and believed that the JDC, as the largest American Jewish aid organisation, would have the funds available to finance their initiative.

⁷²In the event, the JDC continued to maintain the group of Allied and Polish refugees in Gibraltar Camp until they were able to remigrate.

Gibraltar Camp, and Polish and stateless Jews in Tangiers. The Hicem representative in Gibraltar Camp, Bernard Glasscheib sent lists of relatives in Spain, France and Switzerland to the Hicem office in Lisbon, asking if there was a possibility that they could obtain visas for Jamaica. Hicem replied that to their knowledge only the British Passport Control Officer in Lisbon had the right to grant visas for Jamaica, following instructions from Kingston. Hicem requested Glasscheib to inquire whether the authorities in Kingston had advised the British Consuls in France, Switzerland and Spain. Glasscheib replied that he had been acting on information given him by the Camp commander, Mr. Rae, that the Kingston authorities would give instructions to various consulates to grant the visas on the condition that Hias and the JDC provide all expenses and provide for them in Gibraltar Camp. Although the correspondence regarding these initiatives seemed hopeful of a favourable outcome, eventually nothing came of them.⁷³

The attitudes of the Polish refugees themselves could also have contributed to Jamaican and British reluctance to allow further Polish refugees entry to Gibraltar Camp. The JDC had reservations about the scheme from the beginning, and as will become clear, neither the JDC nor the refugees were entirely happy with the situation in Gibraltar Camp, although for very different reasons. The situation for the refugees housed in Gibraltar Camp differed greatly from refugees who had arrived in Jamaica and other West Indian islands as immigrants. The role of Jewish aid organisations such as the JDC and Hicem for these refugees was limited to an advisory role, helping with remigration and transmitting funds to the refugee committees, enabling the refugees to help themselves. In Gibraltar Camp, however, their role was far more active. Those who had been sent there were admitted on the understanding that they would leave as soon as other destinations could be found. There was no chance for the refugees to seek employment in Jamaica, or to even move freely about the island and it is thus not surprising that they aired complaints. The refugees appear to have blamed the JDC for their incarceration in the camp, and relations became strained. For example, attempts by the Camp Commandant to persuade the refugees to be photographed for JDC publicity purposes were rebuffed by the newly arrived refugees. The Commandant informed the JDC that “the majority expressed dissatisfaction towards the “Joint”, and were hostile to the whole idea of

⁷³See Ilya Dijour, Hicem to Bernard Glasscheib, Gibraltar Camp, XIII-3 Yivo. see Glasscheib to JDC, New York, 3 March 1943, #884, JDC; In October 1942 correspondence between Hicem and the Jewish community in Tangier, and between Hicem and the Polish legation in Lisbon re possibility of sending Polish refugees in Tangiers to Gibraltar Camp also appears to have failed. See Hicem to Polish Legation, Lisbon, 31 October 1942; Hicem to Communaute Israelite de Tanger, 31 October 1942; Hicem to Communaute Israelite de Tanger, 2 November 1942, XIII-5, Yivo.

using them in pictures for propaganda purposes".⁷⁴ Some refugees were also unhappy with the Hicem representative present at the camp, Bernard Glasscheib. He and his wife had arrived with the Serpa Pinto, having served in the Lisbon staff of Hicem. Glasscheib remained as a representative of Hicem in Gibraltar Camp until 1944 when he left for Cuba. Refugees were informed that all grievances should be reported to him, and as he also received a salary as the Commandants representative in the camp was therefore doubly unpopular with the refugees who had sought their own representation, in a shortly lived Committee of the Polish Group.⁷⁵

A major grievance of the Polish refugees lay in the disparity which they felt lay between their situation and that of the Dutch refugees in the camp. They felt that the Polish Government in Exile had abandoned them, and that by allowing the JDC to continue their maintenance, the Polish Government would continue to desist from its responsibility to them as Polish citizens.⁷⁶ The refugees' bitterness was compounded when they received cuttings from American newspapers which publicised the JDC's efforts to bring them to Gibraltar Camp. For example, a press release written by Bernard Jacobson, who had accompanied the refugees to Jamaica was released shortly after their arrival. It was entitled "Saved for the Duration: What is Happening to the 152 Polish Jewish Refugees Who Were Brought to the Island of Jamaica by the JDC". In it he reported that the removal of the refugees to Jamaica had been a "testimony of the desire of the United Nations to aid victims of war and persecution". It described a meeting between Jacobson and the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Arthur Richards, who asked him "how the refugees felt about living in Jamaica". Jacobson reported that, "my

⁷⁴ See Camp Commandant to JDC NY, 17 October 1942, #884, JDC; For further incidents see JDC NY to Committee of Polish Group, 13 May 1942, XIII-7, Jamaica, Yivo & see 25 May 1942, XIII-4 Jamaica, Yivo, for Committee's reply.

⁷⁵ Several Polish Jews had formed a "Committee" in Gibraltar Camp, which was dissolved by the Camp Commandant, Mr Ernest Rae in June 1942. The reasons for dissolving the Committee lay in the attacks its members made on the JDC, the Hicem representative Bernhard Glasscheib, and the Polish Government in Exile. The Commandant stated that the Committee did not have the support of the majority of refugees, and made an official announcement that it had been dissolved. Henceforth, refugees must address Glasscheib for any grievances or complaints. See Report by Ernest Rae, 16 June 1942, XIII-3 Jamaica, Yivo.

⁷⁶ For example, in Charles Jordan's report to the JDC he wrote that: "They feel very strongly that they have been placed in the position in which they are as Polish citizens by thier Government. They do not feel, therefore, that it is the Joint's responsibility to look after them but the responsibility of the Polish Government in Exile and they have, unsuccessfully, tried to contact their Government. They feel that because of the interest of the Joint in their situation, it makes it harder for them to keep up their own relationship with their government". Charles Jordan Report to JDC, 17 December 1943, X-III8, Jamaica, Yivo. Yet the local Jewish community felt that help from them was rejected because "it is the general belief in the camp that by accepting assistance from us on a small scale they are lessening their chances of receiving from you the help to which they believe themselves entitled". See O.K. Henriques to Moses A. Leavitt, JDC NY, 28 May 1942, #884, JDC.

reply to him perhaps sums up the attitudes of the refugees. ‘They never seem to lose an opportunity,’ I said, ‘to express their gratitude to the authorities for their sympathetic attitude and the permission to come and live in Jamaica until the war is over’.⁷⁷

This may explain why in May 1942 the Committee of the Polish Group told the JDC that “it is with much surprise that we noticed in the American newspapers articles on our behalf, the contents of which do not all correspond to reality. These publicity articles are not at all of a nature to satisfy our elementary needs and we shall not declare ourselves satisfied”.⁷⁸ By August of the following year, feelings among the Polish Group had become far more bitter. On 11 August they wrote to the JDC, reminding them that “it is exactly one and a half years since by your action we arrived here. You will not be surprised to hear that our group remembers this jubilee with rather mixed feelings”. The letter complained of the way in which their plight was being ignored by the Polish Government in Exile, and how further articles in newspapers, such as the *Aufbau*, did not help them. In essence, the letter was full of rage and frustration towards their continued stay in Gibraltar Camp, and unhappiness at their portrayal in publicity articles as “rescued” from Europe. It concluded that :

If the Joint took it upon them to “rescue” us they ought to complete their “rescue work” and not leave us halfway to our sad fate. What we desire is to be “rehabilitated” just as so many others have been, and as this is impossible in this country under the hospitality conditions accepted by you for us, we must insist that we should be sent to another country where we will be allowed to be free, law abiding, useful citizens, earning our living and where we will not be obliged to live in barracks and spend our life in idleness.⁷⁹

Whilst the JDC had financed the movement of refugees, Hicem was in control of the day to day problems and needs of the refugees, and took on the bulk of administrative work concerned with their remigration. Hicem’s job was not made any easier because the chances of remigration were complicated further by misunderstandings over the refugees’ status. The WJC, Hicem, HIAS and the JDC became involved in a protracted struggle to obtain visas for the refugees, who were viewed by the State Department in Washington as detainees, and as

⁷⁷Press release by Bernard Jacobson, “Saved for the Duration: What is Happening to the 152 Polish Jewish Refugees Who Were Brought to the Island of Jamaica by the JDC”, 12 March 1942, #884, JDC.

⁷⁸Committee of Polish Group to JDC NY, 11 May 1942, XIII-7, Jamaica, Yivo.

⁷⁹Boruch Eksztajn & Samuel Schipper to JDC NY, 11 August 1943, XIII-7, Jamaica, Yivo.

such, under United States regulations ineligible.⁸⁰ The refugees were housed under the same Evacuees Defense Regulations as the Gibraltans in the camp, and as such were not interned.⁸¹ In April 1942 Hias asked Glasscheib to approach the Jamaican authorities to clear up the muddle.⁸²

The WJC became involved when the Polish committee in the camp had also written to Washington complaining that they were internees of a concentration camp. In May 1942 the Camp Commandant wrote to the JDC in New York and asked them not to represent Gibraltar Camp as a concentration camp to Washington.⁸³ The situation was acerbated when The Day and other American Jewish publications printed a letter from the “interned refugees in Gibraltar Camp”.⁸⁴ This had repercussions both on the relationship between the JDC and the WJC, between Washington and the JDC, and most importantly, on the attitude of the Governor towards admitting further refugees. For example, in February 1943 the Minister Plenipotentiary for the Polish Embassy in Washington contacted the JDC, “in connection with complaints which have been reaching this Embassy regarding the alleged mistreatment of Polish refugees in Jamaica”. He assured the JDC that the Governor had given definite assurances to the Polish Embassy that none of the refugees had been interned, and he warned that “all these unsubstantiated complaints, which found an echo in the United States, do not encourage the Governor to give his consent for the admission of a new contingent of refugees”. Moreover, he advised the JDC to send an “expression of appreciation of the treatment of the refugees directed to the Governor of Jamaica”.⁸⁵

Both the JDC and WJC had approached Washington independently without consultation, resulting in further confusion and JDC accusations that the WJC were interfering in their

⁸⁰Washington believed that the refugees in Gibraltar Camp were internees, and therefore unable to apply for US visas. See Hias NY to Glasscheib, 27 April 1942, XIII-3, Yivo. Yehuda Bauer has described this problem in relation to refugees detained in Spanish camps and prisons, for whom it was impossible to obtain American visas, see Yehuda Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.206.

⁸¹H.M. Brown, Acting Colonial Secretary to O.K. Henriques, Chairman, German Refugee Fund, 6 April 1945, XIII-1, Yivo. This fund had been set up in 1940 by the native Jewish Jamaican population to aid refugees interned in Jamaica.

⁸² Glasscheib to Hicem NY, 15 May 1942, XIII-1 Jamaica, Yivo.

⁸³E.A. Rae, Camp Commandant to JDC NY, 18 May 1942, XIII-4, Jamaica, Yivo.

⁸⁴Ilya Dijour, Hicem to The Day, 24 July 1942, XIII-5, Jamaica, Yivo.

⁸⁵M. Kwapiszewski, Minister Plenipotentiary, Counselor of Embassy, Polish Embassy Washington to Moses A. Leavitt, JDC NY, 9 February 1943, #885, JDC.

work. Annual reports of Hicem and committee meetings of the WJC reflected this muddle, reporting regularly of their work on behalf of these "interned refugees".⁸⁶ In July Hias received proof from the State Department in Washington that Gibraltar Camp was considered as an evacuee and refugee camp.⁸⁷ Yet in spite of repeated assurances that the United States and other governments did not regard the refugees as interned, the rate of remigration reflected the immigration situation for those without relatives or means. By the end of 1944 most had succeeded in emigrating, the majority to Cuba and the remainder to the United States, leaving eighteen refugees in the camp by November 1944.⁸⁸

Given the relatively small number of refugees admitted to the British West Indies, the costs to Jewish organisations was high. Between 1936 and 1943, the JDC's overall expenditure in twenty five Central and South American countries amounted to \$2,794,450. Of this amount a total of \$223,750 was spent in the Dutch and British West Indies, amounting to eight per cent of their total budget. Their total expenditure for this period in the British West Indies amounted to \$153,700, making it five and a half per cent of the total South and Central American budget of the JDC.⁸⁹ The largest amount was spent in countries such as Cuba, Bolivia, Brazil and Chile, reflecting the larger numbers of refugees there.⁹⁰ Yet the amounts spent on the West Indies were disproportionate in relation to the numbers of refugees present. For example, in 1940 Argentina received \$1,350 whilst Trinidad received a grant of \$1,680. In Argentina the JDC estimated that since 1933, 35,000 refugees had been admitted, but only

⁸⁶ For example, in the Hias Annual Report for 1942 to 1943, 1942 Rescue 1943, p.27, it was stated that "numerous refugees were interned in Gibraltar Camp at Jamaica", see I-43, Yivo. Again in a Hias 1944 annual report, it was stated that "there is reasonable hope that the whole problem of the Jewish internees of Gibraltar Camp 2 will be solved during the next few months", see Hias Annual Report, 1944, p.27, I-43, Yivo; See also Minutes of Meeting of the Relief Committee, WJC, 29 July 1943, p.3. The subject of discussion was "refugees detained in Jamaica", DI/6, WJC, AJAC; See also Minutes of the Relief Committee, WJC, 26 August 1943, p.1: "...Dr. Platz wrote an interesting report on the situation of the Jews in the internment camp in Jamaica", D1/8, WJC, AJAC.

⁸⁷ Yivo, XIII-5 Jamaica, 24 July 1942, Asofsky, HIAS New York to Ilya Dijour, Hicem.

⁸⁸ See Yivo, I-43, HIAS annual report, 1944, p.26, Yivo, XIII-16 Jam, 15 August 1944. Ilya Dijour, HICEM to O.K. Henriques, German Refugee Fund, Jamaica; XIII-16 Jam, 10 November 1944, Ilya Dijour, HICEM to Arnaud, HICEM; Yivo, XIII-15 Jam, 29 September 1944, Arnaud to Dijour, HICEM.

⁸⁹ 7 March 1943, Committee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, "J.D.C Work in Central and South America 1936 - 1943." JDC assistance for refugees in Curacao began in 1941, Dutch Guiana in 1943, Jamaica in 1941 and Trinidad in 1938. See # 114, JDC.

⁹⁰ For example, the total assistance given by the JDC to Cuba between 1936 and 1943 amounted to \$773,050, 27.7 per cent of the overall figure. See report on "JDC Work in Central and South America, 1936 - 1943", 7 March 1944, JDC, #114.

50 refugees received direct monthly assistance from the JDC.⁹¹ These figures illustrate that the level of dependency on JDC aid was far higher in the British and Dutch Caribbean than in countries where conditions allowed refugees more freedom of movement. Internment, poor economic conditions, the special conditions attached to entry for in transit refugees and those in Gibraltar Camp meant that reliance on overseas aid was an essential element in refugee life during the wartime period.

So far the practical involvement with refugees in the West Indies has been traced. Whilst of importance, other concerns about the refugees, and the region, were equally significant to refugee organisations. The final section of this chapter will uncover concerns about the region, and how as information about the extermination of European Jewry became known to Jewish organisations, the West Indies was given a disproportionate amount of attention, both in printed publications and in internal discussions. It will be argued that this was the case for two reasons, for the purposes of fundraising, and to fulfil a need to be doing something constructive.

- III -

The importance of the West Indies

Aid organisations were primarily concerned with effecting the remigration ^{of refugees in Gibraltar Camp,} but in the rest of the Caribbean and South American region, other concerns became critical. Important sources for fundraising drives, the actual attention paid to refugee communities in the Caribbean region also reflected the different priorities of organisations concerning the welfare and attitudes of refugees towards their new surroundings. On a practical level, the Caribbean was of importance as a region to American Jewish organisations, and the behaviour of refugee communities was thought to have consequence in the attitudes of the United States, Central and South America towards refugee issues. JDC irritation over the WJC's involvement with the refugees in Gibraltar Camp was heightened with WJC activity in the region as a whole. The ideological differences between these organisations also found their expression in the battles for refugee communities in the South and Central American republics and the Caribbean region.

For the JDC, overt Jewish nationalism or support of a supranational organisation created anxieties over the reaction that host countries would have towards refugee communities and

⁹¹See "Aiding Jewish Overseas: Report of the AJJDC for 1940 and the first 5 months of 1941", pp.33 - 51, #157, JDC.

the impact of this hostility on further refugee admittance. A primary concern of the JDC was to motivate refugee communities to assimilate culturally and socially into their new environment as quickly as possible.⁹² For this purpose, the JDC, Hicem, the Refugee Economic Board and other like organisations carried out regular reports on the area, establishing a Coordinating Committee in October 1940 to act as a clearing house for organisations concerned with these matters.⁹³ The committee was only active for one year, during which time much attention was taken up with countering the WJC's influence in these regions.

For the JDC and like organisations, WJC activity was treated with apprehension. Although itself espousing aid programmes which encouraged self sufficiency, the Coordinating Committee was aware of the attraction that WJC affiliation held for refugee communities. In a report it characterised their appeal to refugees as: "that instead of being recipients of philanthropy from Jewish organisations in the United States, the Congress offers to make them articulate as its representatives in their world wide Jewish program. The Congress, therefore exerts a powerful influence upon South American Jews". The report went on to add that "the State Department is accordingly impressed".⁹⁴ For the Coordinating Committee, it was important to impress upon the State Department "positive" images of refugee communities. As South and Central American countries possessed a good deal of German sympathisers and pro-Nazi support, successful refugee settlement would, they felt, exert "a certain counter influence to German propaganda", and in so doing impress the State Department of the value of refugees to the stability of the region.⁹⁵ During 1940 the JDC was well aware that South and Central American republics were virtually the only places still partially open to refugee admittance. In its mind, such opportunities further added to the importance of enabling refugees to settle successfully, thereby influencing a favourable reaction to further refugee admittance. The JDC also felt that in order to combat antisemitic feelings amongst the general population, quick adjustment to economic life, and an "non-

⁹²The JDC characterised their programme on behalf of the 125,000 refugees in Central and South American Republics and British and Netherlands Colonial Possessions as having a dual purpose:"to aid the refugees to fit themselves speedily into their new life through long range projects and to provide emergency relief when necessary", Today's Facts and Figures on the JDC, October 1942 - 1944, 1944, p.2, #153, JDC..

⁹³ Membership included the JDC, Hicem, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Welfare Board and the Refugee Economic Corporation.

⁹⁴ Minutes of Coordinating Committee, 22 October 1940, #115, JDC.

⁹⁵ Coordinating Committee, "Brief Review of the Situation in Central and South America". 28 October 1940, #115, JDC.

conspicuous" presence would prevent outbreaks of antisemitism and fuel Nazi propaganda.⁹⁶ Yet recruitment amongst refugee communities for the WJC was very successful, by November 1941 claiming support amongst Jewish communities in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvadore, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Trinidad, Uruguay and Venezuela. Whilst the WJC claimed that "the entire Jewish communities" of these countries espoused the causes of the WJC, this was not the case. Communities such as Trinidad affiliated to several organisations, split along religious, ethnic and class lines.⁹⁷ The WJC gained most support from refugee communities who did not feel rooted in their new environments, or who had no established ties to existing Caribbean, Anglo- or American-Jewish communities. In the postwar period, when major fundraising campaigns came to the Caribbean region, WJC attempts to affiliate with refugee committees in Barbados and Trinidad were successful, whereas their attempts to affiliate to the established Jamaican Jewish community failed. This community only included a few refugees, who had arrived before the outbreak of war and the immigration ban. Most of the community were descended from immigrants who had come during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and carried a strong sense of loyalty to Anglo-Jewish institutions.⁹⁸ On attempting to gain support from the Rabbi of Jamaica, the WJC noted that the "leadership of the Jews there is apparently utterly in bondage to the Anglo-Jewish Association, this being the main reason for our futile efforts".⁹⁹

The primary interest of the WJC in gaining refugee support in these regions lay in the fundraising potential of these communities, and this was of importance to the JDC as well. During the 1940s, the need to raise funds became even more essential as news of the Holocaust became known to Jewish organisations. As the war progressed, South America and the Caribbean became a battle field between the JDC and WJC for refugee support.¹⁰⁰ Yet the objections each organisation had about the other's presence in the region was also

⁹⁶ibid.

⁹⁷In Trinidad, refugees came from diverse religious and economic backgrounds. See Chapter Four: Refugees and the West Indies for further details.

⁹⁸The community also numbered Syrian Jewish immigrants, who had arrived in Jamaica at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁹⁹Dr Schwarzbart to Mr Gotlieb, reporting on imminent trip to Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica, Curacao and Latin America, 23 April 1952, Series H, H82/2, WJC, AJAC.

¹⁰⁰In Latin America, Haim Avni has described the battles between the JDC and WJC for refugee support, see "Patterns of Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era", p.113.

used as an excuse to trigger larger debates about the general policy of each organisation. For example, in December 1943 the WJC Relief Committee discussed the situation of the Polish Jews in Gibraltar Camp. Accusing the JDC of neglecting the refugees, a discussion followed which extended to a criticism of JDC rescue policies in general. Indeed, the meeting charged that because of the Joint's attitude "many more thousands could have been saved had enough funds been put at their disposal".¹⁰¹ In turn, the JDC consistently viewed WJC activity as detracting from its own efforts to provide aid to refugees in safe areas, and to its rescue activities in occupied Europe. In the current JDC catalogue describing its archive collection, these opinions are affirmed. Introducing files on the WJC, the catalogue claimed that the WJC "raised vehement objections in public whenever the JDC sought to raise funds in any [of the Latin American countries]". Describing JDC attitudes to the WJC, it stated that "the JDC maintained that the [relief and rescue operations of the WJC] merely duplicated on a small scale some of the activities it itself [the JDC] was conducting on a great scale...the WJC in its publicity repeatedly claimed sole credit for relief and rescue activities that in fact were conducted mainly or entirely by the JDC".¹⁰²

Whilst real concerns existed over refugees in the Latin American and Caribbean regions, the struggle between the WJC and JDC for their support was of importance for other reasons. Indeed, their very existence became an important part of refugee organisation campaigning. In order to lessen the sense of despair felt by all engaged in refugee work, annual reports and publications took a disproportionate interest in refugee groups in the West Indies. This may have been an indication of the helplessness that Jewish organisations felt generally. Yehuda Bauer has described how JDC officials felt the need to temper the bad news from Europe with "hopeful phrases" in order to persuade the American public to continue to give. He describes how:

This solace was reflected in JDC literature and pronouncements. Obviously fearing that too gloomy a picture might cause American Jews to give less, JDC announced in March, 1943, that Europe's Jews 'are not yet dead, not by far. Even in darkest Poland there is organized Jewish life - committees that still function and leadership that guides Jews through these difficult days. It is up to us to preserve as much of this as possible'.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹"Short Report of the WJC Relief Committee Meeting held Dec.9 1943", WJC Series D, Box D1, folder 6, AJAC.

¹⁰²See Rose Klepfisz & Emil Lang, eds., Annotated Catalogue of the Archives of The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1933 - 1944, unpublished, no date, p.109.

¹⁰³Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, pp.192-193.

Therefore for refugee organisations such as the JDC, refugee communities in the Caribbean began to take on greater significance. As pointed out in an earlier section, the involvement of the JDC with the movement of refugees to Gibraltar Camp had positive, and negative results. On the negative side, they earned the hostility of many refugees because of their situation in Jamaica. In addition, whilst running at a deficit, the guarantees issued to the British Government as well as general aid to refugee communities in the West Indies represented a considerable drain on resources. Yet there were also positive aspects to their involvement. For fundraising purposes, focusing on “success stories” was a way of deflecting public attention from what was increasingly viewed as a futile goal. Competition developed between organisations in order to claim success stories for their own fundraising purposes. For example, most aid organisations stressed the importance of their work, omitting any reference to collaboration with other agencies. Thus the Hias Annual Report for 1943 claimed that “While the overwhelming urgency of the task has, of necessity, drawn into the orbit of the rescue program a number of other welfare and relief agencies, Hias is the only Jewish organisation engaged in migration work on a world wide scale”.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the CBF and Chief Rabbi's ^{Religious} Emergency Council (CRREC) carried regular reports of their work for interned refugees in British colonies, emphasising how through their intervention, many were now released.¹⁰⁵ Most organisations also included some information about the refugees in Gibraltar Camp in their annual reports, and nearly all claimed that their organisation had been exclusively responsible. This was the case with the WJC (who had no involvement with the arrangements), claiming in one report that ...“with the aid of our representatives in London, we succeeded in bringing a considerable number of Polish Jewish refugees from Portugal to the British colony, Jamaica”.¹⁰⁶ This was at best an exaggeration, and at worst a complete misrepresentation of the facts. This was also the case, though with more justification, for Hicem, who publicised their involvement in their 1942 Annual Report.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ See Hias Annual Report, “Rescue Now!” 1943, Yivo.

¹⁰⁵ Report of Activities of CRREC, for period ending 31 October 1941, MS183/576/1, part 1, AJA, SA; Report of Central Council for Jewish Refugees, 1940, microfilm collection, reel S110 & Report of the Central Council for Jewish Refugees, 1941, Microfilm collection, reel S111, LBI.

¹⁰⁶ See Special Committee on Relief Questions, Report by Dr. Tartakower 17 April 1942, WJC Series D, D2/6, AJAC.

¹⁰⁷ Hicem Annual Report, 1942, Yivo. It is interesting that in Wischnitzer's history of Hicem, he reproduces this idea and omits reference to the JDC, claiming that it was HIAS-ICA who paid and maintained the refugees sent to Gibraltar Camp. See Wischnitzer, Visas to Freedom, p.184.

In addition to fundraising, success stories boosted the morale of staff workers, donors and the general public alike. The JDC included regular information about their role in publications, internal memorandums, and letters targeted to donors. In the JDC Digest of May 1942, under the heading “Lisbon Diary”, Joseph Schwartz wrote a reportage about the voyage of the Serpa Pinto, and in the JDC Digest, issued in March 1944, an article appeared entitled “Happy Ending: Love Story”. The piece was about a couple who had met and fell in love during the voyage to Jamaica. In Gibraltar Camp, they were married.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the JDC issued a series of “loose leaf memo’s”, basically mailouts which appeared as original documents, to supporters of the JDC. In a series of these, the JDC emphasised its work on behalf of the Polish refugees in Jamaica.¹⁰⁹ During 1943 and 1944, the Jamaican refugees continued to have a high profile in meetings of refugee organisations. For example, the Relief Committee of the WJC reported on their situation at each of their committee meetings for a period of two years.¹¹⁰ The desire to focus on “good news” could also stem from the distance between knowing and accepting. Yehuda Bauer has pointed out of the JDC that:

...reactions varied among incredulity, hope that the reports might turn out to be a nightmare from which the Jewish people might one day mercifully awake, utter despair resulting from accurate appreciation of what was happening, desire for immediate action, feelings of helplessness, and even desire to escape responsibility and hide behind words or meaningless action.¹¹¹

What refugee organisations did for refugees in the West Indies was not meaningless, but their increasing preoccupation with the problems that they presented does reflect the helplessness that organisations such as the JDC felt.

Conclusion

Within the movement of refugees to western destinations, Jewish refugee organisations worked in close cooperation, despite ideological differences, to aid refugee migration. It was through this cooperation that many refugees after 1939 were able to gain admission to West Indian colonies, however circuitous their route to the Caribbean was. However, as this

¹⁰⁸See JDC Digest, March 1944, p.3, #152.

¹⁰⁹See Loose Leaf Memorandums, copy of letter from Joseph Hyman to Board of Directors, JDC, 6 February 1942, JDC.

¹¹⁰See Minutes of the Relief Committee of the WJC, 4 February 1942; 29 July 1943; 26 August 1943; 5 October 1943; 8 December 1943; 11 April 1944; 20 July 1944, Box D1, Folder 6, WJC Series D, Relief and Rescue Department, AJAC.

¹¹¹Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p.192.

chapter has also demonstrated, their ability to aid refugees did not extend to an ability to influence governments. Whereas they were able to step in and finance rescue plans devised by governmental powers, they were wholly unsuccessful in persuading governments to follow schemes initiated by themselves. This is well illustrated in the case of the War Refugee Board. Whilst it cooperated with the JDC, its conception was a complete surprise to the organisation.¹¹²

The overwhelming sense throughout this chapter is that despite having the financial and administrative means, Jewish refugee organisations were in an intolerable situation, at the front end of refugee work and at the back of the queue as far as wartime priorities were concerned. The decision to move refugees to Gibraltar Camp was made without consulting refugee organisations, yet their participation was fundamental to the success of the plan. Furthermore, attempts by Jewish organisations to move more refugees to Jamaica failed, despite the fact that there was space available in the camp. What were the main constraints during the war years for refugee organisations? Just as in the 1930s, problems could be classified in three areas: lack of funds (including now wartime currency restrictions), lack of unity and a lack of influence. Most importantly, two additional factors made their situation intolerable. Firstly, the increasingly detailed knowledge of the extermination of European Jewry, and secondly, the continued emphasis by the United States and Britain that rescue must be placed as a secondary priority to winning the war. Once it became known to Jewish policy makers that European Jewry were being exterminated, aid organisations were faced with a classic dilemma. Political organisations such as the WJC were free to demand action from the United States and British governments, but organisations such as the JDC felt that as an American organisation, its policies must align themselves with governmental action. Yehuda Bauer has written that “JDC’s limitations lay in its very legalistic approach to rescue, its limited funds, and an Allied policy that aimed exclusively at military victory rather than at both victory and the saving of lives”.¹¹³

¹¹² Bauer has described how the establishment of the WRB “caused Leavitt to hurry to Washington in order to find out what JDC’s position would be in the new situation”, see *American Jewry and the Holocaust*, pp.403-404.

¹¹³ Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust*, p.458.

PART 3: THE WEST INDIES

Chapter 4: Nearly the New World: Refugees and the British West Indies, 1933 - 1945.

Introduction

The term “refugee” has been in English usage since the seventeenth century, when it was used to describe the plight of French Huguenots who had sought safety in England. The term implies a recognition of the separation between forced and voluntary emigration, but it was not until 1951 that international law recognised this difference and ascribed certain rights to refugees.¹ In 1936, the Institute of International Law defined a refugee as a person who has left or been forced to leave their country for political reasons, who has been deprived of its diplomatic protection, and who has not acquired the nationality or diplomatic protection of another state. This definition remained, with limited adjustments, until 1951 when the United Nations Convention created a legal definition, amended by the 1967 Protocol, which binds signatory countries to accord certain rights, including the right to refuge, for those persecuted on religious, ethnic or political grounds. Accordingly, signatory countries must make provisions for admitting refugees who satisfy certain criteria despite any immigration legislation in effect.²

Until the nineteenth century, refugee movements were of little importance to the international community. Those who left because of persecution or economic necessity either supported themselves, were absorbed into the poor of the host country, or found some form of charity. In general, refugees were welcomed into new societies, where states felt no obligation to protect them, but saw them as potential generators of wealth.³ Starting in the 1880s, hundreds of thousands of immigrants began to leave Eastern Europe and were able to enter countries of reception because of a general lack of travel restrictions and immigration controls. After the First World War, for the first time large movements of refugees created

¹The term “refugee” has its roots in fourteenth century Old French, via the Latin *refugium*, to flee away. See Oxford English Dictionary.

² For a contemporary definition of the term refugee in the 1930s, see Louise Holborn, “The Legal Status of Political Refugees, 1920-1938”, *The American Journal of International Law*, 1938, p.681. See also Elizabeth Ferris, ed., *Refugees and World Politics*, Praeger Publishers, New York 1985; Göran Melander, “The concept of the term ‘refugee’”, *Refugees in the Age of Total War*, ed., Anna Bramwell, Boston, Sydney, Wellington 1988, pp.7-13. There are many problems with the U.N. definition of what constitutes a refugee, and it is not claimed in this chapter that since legal protection was defined, the problems of refugees have been solved.

³During the nineteenth century, in Europe, refugee movements were small. Prior to the nineteenth century, religious persecution had caused large refugee movements within Europe, such as the 200,000 French Huguenots expelled from Catholic France after the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and the expulsion of some 120,000 - 150,000 unconverted Jews from Spain in 1492. See Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1985, pp.5 - 6; Claudia Skran, *Refugees in Interwar Europe*, Oxford 1995, p.14.

an international problem, as populations displaced by war, famine, and persecution moved between new national borders. The international community responded by pressuring new states to recognise minority rights within their borders, and by establishing a League of Nations Intergovernmental body for European refugees in 1921.⁴ Efforts were made by the League of Nations and private refugee bodies to persuade countries to absorb refugees unable or unwilling to return to their native countries. Whilst willing to solve what was perceived as a temporary problem, the international community also signalled an unwillingness to allow the further mass movements of people, by instigating passport regulations and immigration controls in their countries.

During the 1930s, these controls were tightened. The effects of world depression, alongside the prevailing economic view that immigrants exacerbated unemployment led to a series of anti-immigration laws instigated in Britain, the United States, South and Central America and throughout the Commonwealth. During the interwar and wartime years, these immigration regulations did not distinguish between refugees and immigrants.⁵ Refugees had no legal right to expect refuge, and, with exceptions were accepted into host countries if they could fulfil existing immigration criteria. This is not to suggest that the term refugee was not used to some effect in arguing for special case recognition of the plight of those fleeing persecution, as exemplified by Britain's acceptance of refugees on block visas after Kristallnacht.⁶ But the same argument was also used to strengthen resolve in keeping immigration regulations in place against those "economic migrants" who did not fit the contemporary definition. Whether severe economic hardship can be considered a sufficient argument for legal refugee status only has relevance in debates today, since refugees and migrants were processed under the same immigration conditions in the 1930s. Refugee bodies

⁴For example, at the Treaty of Versailles, Poland and Romania signed treaties to protect minority groups within their borders. In 1921 the League of Nations established the first Intergovernmental body for European refugees, in recognition that refugees were now an important problem for the international community. Britain and the United States felt a specific responsibility towards the 1.5 million Russian refugees who left after the Bolshevik Revolution.

⁵For immigration policy in the United States during this period, see Roger Daniels, "American Refugee Policy in Historical Perspective," *The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation, 1930 - 1945*, ed., Jarrell C. Jackman, & Carla M. Borden, Washington, D.C., 1983. For British immigration policy see Louise London, "Refugee Agencies and their Work, 1933 - 1939", *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, Vol.4, No.1, Summer 1995.

⁶These exceptions included the bending of existing immigration regulations to allow thousands of refugees into Britain during and after November 1938 by an increased use of the transmigrant category. See Louise London, "Jewish Refugees and British Government Policy, 1930-1940", David Cesarani, ed., *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry*, Oxford 1990, pp.180-181. During the war, the War Refugee Board is a further example of a Government Body established with the necessary power to circumvent existing immigration controls. See Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*, Syracuse New York 1995, pp.145 - 146.

could offer advice and limited protection and assistance to refugees, but had no power to force countries to alter immigration requirements.

A principal theme of this chapter will be to examine changing attitudes towards the West Indies. The chapter explores how the different circumstances under which refugees arrived often determined attitudes towards remaining there or attempting to remigrate. Those who came to the West Indies were not a homogeneous group, but came from different countries, traditions, and for very different reasons. The chapter begins by examining what prompted refugees to emigrate to the West Indies. It traces two distinct movements, from Eastern Europe, and from Nazi Germany. Whilst antisemitism was a prevailing factor in refugee emigration to the West Indies, for Jews from Eastern Europe, economic conditions also spurred their emigration. Since economic hardship was often a result of an imposed isolation from other avenues of employment, this chapter takes economic hardship as a reason for including those Eastern European Jews as refugees. Yet it is a problematic term to use, not least because many Eastern European Jews did not see themselves as refugees, deliberately distancing themselves from German and Austrian “refugees” in Trinidad. Official statistics also discounted Eastern Europeans as refugees, which explains in part why restrictions against European immigrants were not initiated until similar numbers of refugees from Germany and Austria began arriving in the West Indies.

By tracing movements of refugees, it becomes apparent that only a minority emigrated to the West Indies out of choice, the majority coming at points when immigration controls made it difficult to enter countries in the geographical proximity of the West Indies. Therefore, for many, the West Indies was not a first choice destination, but a place from which to reapply for entry into South, Central or North American destinations. The West Indies was also a chance destination dictated by circumstances out of individual control, for example for those whose emigration was assisted by Jewish refugee organisations who directed them to the Caribbean, or in transit passengers detained in the Caribbean en route to another destination, or refugees sent from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp. For these refugees, choice of destination was no longer an issue, and the Caribbean represented an immediate haven from which they would either attempt to remigrate or decide to settle.

Whilst initially many saw the West Indies as a point of temporary stay, a transit station between where they had left and where they wished to go, these views often changed as

refugees began to establish new lives in Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica and other islands. Taking Trinidad as an example, the chapter explores how refugees adapted to conditions and what attempts were made to establish themselves. The difficulties faced by refugees in Trinidad were specific to the Island but were also emblematic of any small Jewish community, who had no recourse to wider options. As will be explored, the manner in which refugees arrived in Trinidad had great importance in shaping attitudes towards the growth of a new Jewish community there. Whilst the founding of social, cultural and religious institutions demonstrates the desire to establish a longer term presence, strong differences of opinion between Eastern European and Central European Jewish refugees led to friction over the nature of their community, and how it should conduct itself. The different attitudes of these refugees towards their circumstances meant that the small Jewish community was under constant flux as orthodox versus reform, German versus Yiddish Jewish culture fought to gain expression. Conflicts over internal affairs and external appearances split refugees into various factions which prevented a cohesive community from ever being maintained. After the outbreak of war, the different treatment of Eastern European refugees, the majority of whom were not interned, to German and Austrian refugees, who were all interned without exception, further widened the gulf in experience between the two groups. The inability of many to overcome social and cultural differences became a contributing factor in decisions to remain or remigrate.

Whilst internal divisions played an important part, external circumstances were equally important in shaping attitudes towards the West Indies. The chapter examines the impact of internment on the Jewish community in Trinidad and Jamaica, exploring how this episode made a substantial difference to decisions about remaining or remigrating. For interned refugees, feelings of insecurity, isolation and dependence became common and added to the desire to emigrate. For refugees in Gibraltar Camp, their experience of the West Indies was limited to the confines of the camp. Unable to settle in Jamaica and having great difficulty in remigrating, the chapter examines their experience of life in Gibraltar Camp.

The chapter is divided into three sections, the first tracing two separate movements of refugees to West Indian colonies, from Eastern Europe and from Nazi Germany. The section examines the degree of choice involved in their emigration. The second explores how the diversity of religious, cultural and economic experience amongst refugees affected attempts to build a Jewish community in Trinidad. The third examines the experience of internment in

Jamaica and Trinidad, again examining what factors influenced decisions to remain or remigrate.

-I-

Refugee Arrivals

For Jews fleeing persecution and poverty in Europe, the West Indies were not an obvious destination. By the mid-nineteenth century, as the West Indian sugar economy declined in importance, large numbers of West Indians, including Jews, had emigrated to the United States and other destinations. With the possible exception of Jamaica, by the 1930s the Sephardic Jewish communities in the Caribbean had decreased due to emigration, intermarriage and conversion. Jewish communities numbering around two thousand remained in British and Dutch Guiana, Jamaica and Curacao, but in Barbados, by 1932, of the original congregation, only two brothers remained.⁷

During the 1930s refugee organisations had attempted to place individual refugees in West Indian colonies but without much success. As we have seen, it was not until 1938 that some organisations began advocating West Indian colonies to refugees because of the lack of visa restrictions. Refugee organisations such as the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) and the Agro - Joint had, during the 1890s, been successful in establishing farming colonies for refugees in Russia, Argentina and Brazil, but attempts to set up similar projects in the Caribbean region failed.⁸ Attempts were again made by refugee organisations in the 1930s to instigate mass refugee settlements in the Colonial Empire, with serious consideration given to a plan to enable refugees to settle in British Guiana. But these efforts also came to nothing.

For refugees travelling on their own initiative, during the early 1930s immigration regulations in the West Indies were relaxed if one had sufficient money for a deposit, but

⁷See American Jewish Year Book, Volume 40 - 5699, 1938 - 1939. The following estimates of Jewish populations were given: Curacao 566, Jamaica 2,000 and British Guiana 1,786. Sephardic Jewish communities were joined by small numbers of Jews emigrating from Syria and the Balkans after World War I, see Chapter 5: The West Indies and Refugees, and Malcolm Stern & Bernard Postal, Jews in the West Indies, American Airlines Guide, USA, no date, p.11.

⁸Early in 1882, the Dominican Republic offered to admit Russian Jews for settlement, but the project didn't materialise. In the same year, the Amsterdam Relief Committee approached the Jewish community of Paramaribo, capital of Dutch Guiana with a request to place 20,000 Russian Jewish refugees on the sugar cane, cocoa and banana plantations and in the gold mines of Dutch Guiana. This scheme was also abandoned. See Mark Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800, p. 654, Philadelphia, 1948. Regarding agricultural settlements established by the ICA and Agro-Joint, see Theodore Norman, An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association. London, Boston, Melbourne 1985.

conditions were not favourable to new immigrants. The influence of world depression had created high unemployment and overpopulation, partly caused by the cessation of seasonal employment and migration to South America. These factors, alongside poverty amongst the general population, created an atmosphere that militated against the admittance of new groups of immigrants. There were few opportunities for new industry and commerce, and employment in the vocational and civil sectors were limited to British and British West Indian citizens.

The first wave of refugees, mainly from Eastern Europe, came to the West Indies as a result of the tightening of immigration controls in western countries.⁹ During the 1920s, countries of traditional refuge, such as the United States, began to enact immigration regulations aimed at preventing the further mass movements of peoples. At the same time, postwar conditions in Eastern European countries created large numbers of potential refugees attempting to leave Europe for the West. The birth of new nation states in Europe had given rise to political movements whose mass popular appeal was based on xenophobia, jingoism and antisemitism. Agreements signed at the Versailles Treaty required new nation states to safeguard the rights of minorities living within their borders, but in most cases these guarantees, resented by new governments, were ignored. In 1929 an estimated 5.75 million Jews lived in countries where minority treaties applied: Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Lithuania, Turkey, Greece, Latvia, Yugoslavia and Estonia.¹⁰ Despite the theoretical equality granted in the constitutions of various states, government policy in most Central and East European countries discriminated against Jews in the key areas of citizenship, governmental service, equality of language and in the institutions of higher learning.¹¹ In the United States, slowly, a body of immigration restrictions was built up, leading to separate Immigration Statutes in 1921 and the Johnson Act of 1924 that limited annual immigration of each nationality to a percentage based on the number of co-nationals resident in the United States. The quota system militated against refugees from Eastern and Central Europe and cut their immigration from these countries to the United States

⁹During this period, small numbers of Jews from Palestine, Turkey and Syria also emigrated to some West Indian colonies, notably British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad.

¹⁰See Mark Wischnitzer, Visas to Freedom: The History of Hias, Cleveland, New York 1956, p.951.

¹¹H.H.Ben-Sassoon, (Ed.), A History of the Jewish People, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976.

drastically.¹²

The new restrictions on immigration to the United States and other countries in the West, and the general poverty among potential emigrants meant that the rate of emigration became far lower than during the previous decades.¹³ During the 1920s, until the passage of the 1924 Act, Michael Marrus has noted that emigration from Europe had been “extremely high...as many as a million Europeans migrated abroad annually.” Marrus identifies the year 1928 as a turning point “after which net emigration practically vanished.” Refugees continued to leave East and Central Europe, but many remained within Western Europe, France and Germany receiving the majority.¹⁴ Despite the decrease in mass emigration, refugees continued to leave for western destinations. Compared to earlier migrations, the number of refugees leaving Europe was much smaller, but it was from this movement that the West Indies began to receive numbers of refugees.¹⁵

As persecution and economic deprivation increased during the 1930s, emigration remained a difficult, if desirable option. Hostility against the Jews during the 1920s worsened in the 1930s when, encouraged by the rise of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy, antisemitic elements gained strength. In Romania, organisations such as the Iron Guard and the National Christian Party used antisemitism as the main ideological plank of their manifestos. In 1937 the National Christian Party had become the new Government and instigated a series of racist laws resembling Nazi legislation.¹⁶ Pogroms against Jews broke out in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Rumania, the most savage being in the Ukraine. In addition, a

¹²For example, “half of the people who have ever immigrated to the United States came in the years between 1880 and 1924”, see Roger Daniels, p.63 and the article generally for a summary of immigration controls in the United States. See also Wischnitzer, Visas to Freedom, p.97. See Chapter 2: Jewish Refugee Organisations and the West Indies, 1933-1939 for a description of how immigration quotas effected Eastern European immigration.

¹³See Marrus, Michael, The Unwanted, p.142. In addition to the United States, Australia, Canada and South Africa enacted immigration restrictions based on a quota system.

¹⁴Marrus, The Unwanted, p.113. Similarly, Haim Avni has demonstrated that during the late 1920s and early 1930s Jewish immigration to South American countries decreased. See Haim Avni, “Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust”, Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era, NY 1985, p.89.

¹⁵Wischnitzer estimates that between 1927 and 1932 some 30,000 Jews emigrated annually from Europe, compared to 100,000 annually before World War I. Of this number, he has estimated that between 1927 and 1932 55,574 emigrated to the United States, 28,712 to Palestine, and 97,701 emigrated to various South American countries. It can be assumed that many of the refugees arriving in the West Indies, were probably en route or returning from, South America. See Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, pp.159 & 334.

¹⁶For information about antisemitic regimes in Eastern Europe see I.C. Butnaru, The Silent Holocaust: Romania and its Jews, NY, London 1992 ; R.J. Crampton, Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century, London, NY 1994; Keith Hitchins, Rumania, 1866 - 1947, Oxford 1994.

systematic and intensifying boycott of Jewish economic establishments led to an impoverishment of Jewish populations. In Poland, Jewish citizens were taxed at such a rate that by September 1939, one in three Jewish families had been “beggared by the combination of popular prejudice and governmental cynicism.”¹⁷ Jewish populations became impoverished and dependent on overseas aid, primarily from organisations such as Hias and EmigDirect in the United States, the Hilfsverein in Germany, the Alliance Israelite Universelle in France, and the Joint Foreign Committee of the Anglo Jewish Association in the United Kingdom. These organisations set up food and clothing programs, training schemes for employment and emigration, schools and hospital funds.

With the drastic reduction in quotas to the United States, Eastern European emigrants able to leave travelled to Palestine and South and Central America. For many refugees, emigration to Mexico, Cuba, and other South American destinations represented a halfway point from which they could reapply for entry to the United States.¹⁸ Because of the geographical proximity to South and Central America, many ships en route to or from these destinations made stops in West Indian ports. Refugees on board who wished to remain had little difficulty in satisfying existing immigration controls in West Indian colonies that required no visas. Therefore, during the 1930s, communities of Eastern European refugees began to settle in British Honduras, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, Curacao, and the Windward and Leeward Islands, and most notably in Barbados and Trinidad.¹⁹ Since most arrived after immigration controls were tightened in the United States and South America, the West Indies also represented a place from which they could reapply, this time to enter South American destinations. But whilst some refugees ended their journey in the West Indies, others returned there after unsuccessful attempts to start new lives in the American continent.

Those who came established trading networks and peddled wares, often moving from one colony to another. The entry deposit, refundable after one year, was used as initial collateral

¹⁷Crampton, Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century, p.176.

¹⁸Avni, “Patterns of Jewish Leadership”, p.89.

¹⁹ Wischnitzer claims that between 1933 and 1939 only a “small trickle of Jewish emigration from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Rumania” occurred. During this period, Hicem committees financed 2,500 overseas migrants from Eastern Europe. This figure does not include those emigrants able to finance themselves. See Wischnitzer, To Dwell in Safety, pp .207 - 208. Between 1933 and 1935 some 134,000 Jews emigrated to Palestine, the majority from Poland. See Marrus, The Unwanted, p.152.

to purchase goods on credit from wholesale merchants.²⁰ The more successful were able to open stores in towns and villages, and began to send for relatives from Europe. In Barbados, for example, Henry Altman arrived with his family from Lublin, Poland in 1932. They were sailing to Venezuela, but when the boat docked en route, they decided to remain. By 1934, according to Altman, a further thirty Jewish families had joined them. He has described the growth of a Jewish community in Barbados:

We had family come over, we had friends, and also people from other Islands came to Barbados, from Curacao, some people from Guatemala, and in no time we had our nice community...Most came from Poland, a few from Rumania, who actually went to Trinidad. Trinidad had a larger community than ours of new immigrants, but somehow they never made their homes there or established themselves, they had no roots. But we found roots here.²¹

In Trinidad, the pattern of settlement was similar to Barbados. A JDC report of 1939 described how in 1932, there were only ten Jews in Trinidad, all established in business. In that year, “about 40 Jews arrived from Roumania, all of whom immediately became peddlers and were all able to support themselves and families. Some of them soon established small businesses and created no trouble of any kind”.²² In 1933, for example, the Averbouck family came from Poland and settled in Trinidad where they started a synagogue in a room in their home.²³ In 1936, Lorna Yufe came to Trinidad with her family, and soon established a store in Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad. They had emigrated from Poland to Honduras, found conditions difficult and returned to Trinidad. When she arrived, she remembered about ten Jewish families were present.²⁴

Unlike Barbados, however, the refugee community in Trinidad grew rapidly, because of its lack of visa requirements, and use by aid organisations as a place to send refugees to. By 1938, the community had grown to over 200 families. In November 1938, Edgar Pereira, a Trinidadian Jew, contacted a Jewish refugee organisation in New York, asking for help with

²⁰Donna Farah, “The Jewish Community in Trinidad, 1930s - 70s”, unpublished PhD, University of the West Indies, 1991, p.8.

²¹Interview with Henry Altman by author, 28 August 1990, Bridgetown, Barbados. Transcript in author’s possession.

²²Report of Messrs. Borchartd and Glick for the JDC, 22 March 1939, #1047, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives, NY (hereafter JDC).

²³Feature on Jewish settlement in Trinidad during the 1930s and interview with Mrs Averbouck, 10 December 1989, Sunday Guardian Trinidad.

²⁴See unpublished manuscript by Lorna Yufe, in author’s possession, and Tony Martin, “Jews to Trinidad”, Paper read at the annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Santo Domingo, March 1991.

new arrivals to the colony. He informed them that:

I believe I am the only Trinidad born Jew in this colony, and up to last year I was not aware that there were more than fifteen or twenty Jews in this Island, but now we have considerably over 200 families. A good portion of these are Roumanians who make their living by peddling whilst others have established dress stores, clothing factories, etc., and their economic position is improving rapidly.²⁵

As we have seen, in 1931, the Colonial Office first reviewed the immigration situation in the West Indies, alerting officials to the danger of large scale immigration from Eastern Europe.²⁶

Yet until 1938, subsequent reviews ignored the increasing number of Eastern European immigrants to settle there, and it was only when similar numbers of refugees from Nazi Germany began to arrive that the Colonial Office saw a potential refugee crisis in the West Indian colonies. During 1938 and 1939, a burst of immigration, particularly to Trinidad, increased the refugee population, as refugees from Nazi Germany began arriving in larger numbers. A JDC report stated that in Trinidad, between June 1938 and January 1939 a total of 450 new arrivals had come from Germany, Austria, Poland and Roumania, making the population of Jews in Trinidad grow ten fold in six months.²⁷

During the first years of the Reich, while refugees still had some degree of control over their destination, more refugees from Eastern Europe than from Nazi Germany emigrated to the West Indies. Although the Colonial Office was inundated with enquiries from refugees in Nazi Germany about conditions in British colonial dependencies, the numbers of enquiries received far outweighed the numbers of refugees to emigrate there. Why was this the case? The following traces the arrival of refugees from Nazi Germany to the West Indies, analysing what factors may have influenced decisions regarding their emigration

The first issue was the demographic profile of German Jewry, and the corresponding lack of employment possibilities in the West Indies.²⁸ Mark Wischnitzer has pointed out that the

²⁵Edgar Pereira to Charles Leibman, Refugee Economic Corporation, NY, 12 December 1938, #1047, JDC. Pereira was born of Dutch parents who settled in Trinidad in 1873.

²⁶See Chapter 1: The British Government, Refugees and the British West Indies.

²⁷Report of Borchardt and Glick for the JDC NY, 22 March 1939. The report stated that of the 450 new arrivals, 150 were Germans and Austrians, about 60 were Polish and the balance were Rumanians. #1047, JDC.

²⁸The demographic profile of German Jewry was of an aged population, mainly concentrated in urban areas, with a high percentage engaged in professional occupations. See Herbert Strauss, "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (1)", *Leo Baeck Year Book* XXV, London 1980, pp.313 - 397 & - , "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (2)", *Leo Baeck Year Book*, XXVI, London 1981, pp.343 - 409.

professions of German Jews were a “serious handicap” to their emigration overseas. Whilst a large proportion of Eastern European immigrants were employed as skilled workers, a 1933 census records 61% of German Jews employed in commerce and transportation with a high percent of the balance employed in the liberal professions.²⁹ Few opportunities existed in the West Indies for an ageing population whose main occupations were peripheral to West Indian trade and commerce.

Secondly, what attraction would the West Indies have held for refugees? What images did Europeans have of the Caribbean? In the 1930s, tourism was an elite activity, cruise ships to the Caribbean reserved for very rich passengers. For the majority in Europe, the Caribbean was a remote colonial backwater, perhaps also known as British, French and European possessions. Few Europeans would have met British West Indians, and few West Indians had as yet emigrated to Europe, with the exception of those who fought in the First World War. Its most interesting feature, for those leaving Europe, would have been its proximity to the American continent. Yet the majority of refugees leaving Nazi Germany (some 52,000, just over one fourth of the population) were admitted under existing immigration controls to Britain, Palestine, the United States and South American countries. As with refugees from Eastern Europe, for many, South America represented a transit country from which to re-apply for entry to the United States.³⁰ Smaller numbers of refugees also went to “white” Commonwealth countries such as Canada, South Africa and Australia.

The attitude of German Jewish organisations towards emigration was also a decisive factor influencing refugee migration. Their opinion, reflected in German Jewish publications, was to advise against emigration to countries without large industrial centres or with small European populations. Newspapers, journals and periodicals which catered for a diverse range of Jewish cultural, political and social interests had flourished in Germany since the first World War.³¹ As Herbert Strauss has pointed out in his study of attitudes in the German Jewish press, during the first few years of Nazi power, whilst Nazi policies towards Jews were confused, the Jewish press “hoped that Jewish propaganda tactics might influence Nazi

²⁹ Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom*, pp.139-140.

³⁰ See Avni, “Patterns of Jewish Leadership”, p.89.

³¹ Between 1930 and 1933 German Jewry had up to 130 Jewish periodicals as well as newspapers and weeklies. Between 1933 and 1938 the major periodicals which wielded the most influence and readership consisted of the *C.V.Zeitung*, the *Jüdische Rundschau*, the *Israelitische Familienblatt*, and the *Gemeindeblatt Berlin*. After January 1933 the Jewish press operated under censorship, but continued to publish until November 1938.

policies”.³² At least during the early years of the Nazi regime, these papers did not see emigration as a primary concern. For example, the weekly C.V. Zeitung openly opposed Nazi official policy of emigration, believing that Jewish persecution was bound to become less severe once the new regime had settled down.

Therefore emigration was not advocated as a response until after the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, when institutionalized oppression increased. A number of new periodicals were then founded with the focus on emigration and the major Jewish papers also began to devote more space on their front pages to practical issues regarding emigration, foreign currency information and reports of life in foreign countries. As Strauss notes, ... “Of great value were, however, the reports by emigres on conditions in immigration countries and actual information on changing admission policies.”³³ What information about the islands was available to prospective immigrants? Generally, little material existed which specifically mentioned conditions in the West Indies. Instead, general conditions of entry to the colonial Empire was printed in various newspapers and refugee organisation reports. For example, the last issue of the Jüdische Rundschau, of 8 November 1938, a day before Kristallnacht, carried reports of emigration to Columbia, Brazil, Cuba and the British Commonwealth. Entry requirements to British colonial dependencies were given, but no specific information about the West Indies was included.³⁴ A further source of published information were the annual editions of the Jewish Year Books, which listed population and refugee statistics in many countries. Jewish communities in British Guiana, Curacao, Jamaica and the Virgin Islands were listed, the population figures based on census material ranging from 1925 to 1936.³⁵

For the most current information and advice, refugees consulted the offices and publications of Jewish organisations specialising in emigration. Either through direct contact in offices

³²“Jewish Attitudes in the Jewish Press”, Jewish Immigrants of the Nazi Period in the USA, Volume 6, Ed., H. A. Strauss, NY, Munich, London, 1987, p.110.

³³See *ibid*, p.113.

³⁴Strauss, “Jewish Attitudes in the Jewish Press”, p.114. In 1938 the Gestapo destroyed the Jewish press in Germany. Many editors succeeded in emigrating abroad, including George Salmony, who left Germany in 1933 for Britain, and subsequently emigrated in 1938 to Jamaica, where he became Editor of the Daily Gleaner, until he emigrated to the United States in 1941. See Herbert A. Strauss, Biographische Handbuch der Deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933, Munich 1981, p.631.

³⁵ See Annual Jewish Year Books, Volumes 37, 1935 - 1936; 38, 1936 - 1937; 39, 1938 - 1939; 40, 1939 - 1940. In Curacao, a 1929 census recorded 566 Jews. In Jamaica, a 1935 census recorded 2,000. In the Virgin Islands, a 1923 census recorded 70, and in British Guiana, a 1925 census recorded 1,786. Between 1933 and 1936, the statistics for the Jamaican Jewish population relied on earlier census material, which also gave the figure of 2,000.

and agencies, or in the pages of annual reports and publications, detailed information on conditions throughout the world was made available. Since organisations did not advocate the West Indies as a destination until 1938, specific information about conditions in the West Indies were sketchy, although most organisations were aware of the minimum entry requirements needed for all British colonial dependencies. For example, in 1935, the Jewish Refugee Committee printed an encouraging report on conditions in British Guiana, collected by Anglo-Hicem. It stated that anyone with a deposit of £50 would gain entry and gave the address of the representative of "British Jewry" in the colony. Moreover, economic conditions were promising, British Guiana was becoming prosperous and possibilities in trade and commerce appeared favourable. It stated that some sugar factories were obtainable at reasonable terms, "in which a number of German refugees might be absorbed".³⁶

Information about entry to British Colonies was also known, and used, by Nazi authorities. Whilst pursuing a policy of encouraging Jewish emigration, detailed information on immigration conditions were compiled. It is unknown whether the following was made available to refugee organisations, but a report in September 1936 listed conditions of entry to various countries. It included a paragraph on entry to British colonies, stating that a deposit of £50 was necessary.³⁷ Yet the most active agency concerned with emigration in Germany, the Hilfsverein, part of the Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden, in its publications barely mentioned conditions in the West Indies. The organisation published regular reports and correspondence from German-Jewish immigrants on conditions in countries of immigration. These reports listed emigration conditions in most South American destinations but did not include any reports on conditions in the British West Indies in a publication of 1936 that was reprinted in 1939. It did, however, mention the immigration requirements to British Colonies.³⁸ Whilst its printed literature did not advocate the West Indies, since 1938 the Hilfsverein had been active in sending refugees to West Indian destinations. In the 1937-1938 annual report of the Reichsvertretung, this activity became apparent in a chart

³⁶See Jewish Refugees Committee, report of work from March 1933 - Jan 1935, p.11& p.31, "Summary of Information on emigration possibilities collected by the Anglo-Hicem, (German Jewish Emigration Council, London,), 31 December 1934, Wiener Library Book Section, Microfilm collection S49 - S146, reel S123, Leo Baeck Institute Archive, NY (hereafter LBI).

³⁷John Mendelsohn & Donald S. Detwiler, eds., *The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes*, New York, London 1982, Vol.5, Document 4, p.51, Report by SS Obershaarfürer Hagen, 13 September 1936.

³⁸ See *Jüdische Auswanderung: Korrespondenzblatt über Auswanderungs und Siedlungswesen*, Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland, Berlin, September 1936, reprinted without amendments, 1939.

illustrating countries to which they were directing refugees, and included 21 refugees, sponsored by the Hilfsverein, who had been sent to the British West Indies, the specific colony not mentioned.³⁹

The only report found which specifically highlighted the British West Indies as a destination was not published until July 1939, five months after immigration had been banned in Trinidad. The Coordinating Committee for Refugees produced a list of the entry requirements to Barbados, Bermuda, Bahamas, British Guiana, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands. Its message was cautious, printing the addresses of Colonial Governors with a warning from the Colonial Office that “No intending immigrant should proceed to any Colonial Dependency until he has received confirmation from the Colonial Government concerned that he will in fact be permitted to enter the territory.”⁴⁰

Because of the lack of specific information available in other forms, after 1933 direct enquiries to the Colonial Office, or to immigration officials abroad, sharply increased. These were not limited to enquiries about conditions in the West Indies, but included applications for other Colonial Dependencies, such as Cyprus, Tanganyika, Kenya and Northern Rhodesia. To all these enquiries, refugees were sent a standard reply, listing the entry requirements for each colony with the advice that it would be extremely unlikely, even if an immigrant possessed a certain amount of capital, to earn a living. Potential emigrants were further advised not to proceed without first contacting the Colonial Governor of the colony concerned.⁴¹

Whilst the majority of refugees to arrive from Nazi Germany came during and after 1938, some individuals did emigrate to the West Indies in the early 1930s. In many cases, refugees ended up working in British Colonies as a result of not being able to remain in the first country that they had emigrated to. Edward Schonbeck, a qualified chemist from Berlin, had

³⁹See Arbeitsbericht der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland, 1937-1938, Berlin 1939, p.53. (Report of the Reichsvertretung). This is a good example of the difficulty of collating the numbers of refugees helped by organisations. Whilst 21 refugees were sponsored by the Hilfsverein, these were only some of the refugees directed to the West Indies by the organisation.

⁴⁰ See Bulletins of the Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees, Bulletin for July 1939, Refugee Joint Consultative Committee, Wiener Library collection, microfilm reel S106, LBI.

⁴¹See Public Record Office, London (henceforth PRO) CO 323/1271/2 (30812/1A). This file contains numerous letters from potential refugees in Germany enquiring about conditions in British colonial dependencies. The response from the Colonial Office was the same whether the enquirer wanted to know about conditions in Cyprus, Kenya, Rhodesia or the British West Indies.

emigrated from Germany in 1933, arriving in London. Having no work permit he remigrated to Holland, where his family had settled from Berlin. He subsequently received a job with the British Sugar corporation in Columbia, working there for two years. In 1935 he was admitted to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. In 1937 he moved to Jamaica where he obtained a job with the West India Sugar Corporation (WISCO). Another refugee, Mr Lackenbach, a chemical engineer emigrated with his wife from Vienna to Jamaica where he was employed by a chemical works factory. Despite opposition from the Jamaican Legislature against competition in the medical profession, several refugee doctors and dentists were able to find employment in Jamaica before the outbreak of war. For example, Dr Hans Stamm was amongst the first wave of German Jewish refugees to emigrate from Germany in 1933. He had trained in Giessen as a doctor, and came to London where he was joined by his wife. Perhaps not finding work in London, he was recruited by an American Quaker to work as an assistant doctor in a Friend's project in Jamaica.⁴²

With the intensification of Nazi persecution, refugees from Nazi Germany began to enter the West Indies in greater numbers, Trinidad receiving the majority. The same factors which dissuaded refugees from proceeding during the early 1930s may have become less important as persecution in Germany intensified. As it became more difficult to enter countries of choice, emigration to any country with open immigration became worth risking, even if employment and remigration prospects were slim. This would account for the increased number of enquiries about the West Indies that immigration officials received, particularly after November 1938. During January 1939, for example, the Colonial Office received over two thousand applications from German Jews for passage to Trinidad.⁴³ It would be an interesting but impossible exercise to find out how many refugees who had met with discouragement after making official enquiries decided to proceed anyway, or were persuaded not to pursue the option. Although facing desperate situations, the knowledge that they would be unlikely to make a living was probably enough to persuade many that it was not worth risking the unknown.

⁴²See "Obituary of Dr Hans Stamm", written by his daughter in law, Gertrude Aub Buscher. In author's possession. A Dr Aub also managed to find work in Jamaica, as did a dentist, Dr Lobbenbach. See Conrad Hoffmann Jnr. to Cecilia Razovsky, National Refugee Service, 10 July 1941, #722, JDC.

⁴³JG Hibbert to H.E. Brooks, 20 January 1939, PRO CO 295/612/70036 cited in Tony Martin, "Jews to Trinidad", paper read at the annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Santo Domingo, March 1991, p.18.

But as refugee organisations became more influential in directing and aiding emigration, the West Indies became more important as a refugee destination for those fleeing Nazi Germany. It is clear that for the refugees arriving in Trinidad during and after 1938, the West Indies were not chosen as a specific destination, but represented a place to which they could gain entry. The following account of how a refugee journalist and his wife arrived in Trinidad illustrates well the general lack of information available to refugees. In an interview in the Trinidad Guardian, Ernst Fischer, a refugee journalist from Vienna, described how little he was able to find out about his destination before arriving in Trinidad with his wife in 1938:

It is extraordinary how little is known of the West Indies in Central Europe. And when I left my native land for Trinidad I did not know what I would find and it is most peculiar that my staying in London, which lasted three months, before coming on to Trinidad, I got less information there than I secured in Vienna, and that was very little...although I visited many places for information, such as the Colonial Office and the West Indian Committee, there was little about this island to be got...I can say I received much more help from the shipping office ...The more I see of this beautiful Island, the more I am enchanted. Before arrival here I was very much afraid I would not be able to settle down in Trinidad ...we feel that we have come to a home which will be to us a haven of rest and peace, not only for our travel worn bodies but also for our wounded souls.⁴⁴

Many refugees to arrive at this time were released from concentration camps in Germany on the condition that they leave immediately, and were able, via family, friends or refugee organisations, to purchase tickets to a West Indian colony.⁴⁵ For example, for the Markreich family, the West Indies was a safe haven. Max Markreich had been the lay leader of the Jewish community in Bremen since 1927, and had unsuccessfully appealed to the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council (CRREC) to help him and his family emigrate to Britain. As he was not a qualified rabbi they referred him to Woburn House, which it seems was unable to help him. In November 1938 he was imprisoned in Sachsenhausen concentration camp and gained release when able to purchase a ticket for Trinidad. In December 1938 he arrived with his youngest daughter, and was joined by his wife and oldest

⁴⁴ Ernst D. Fischer, "An Austrian Jew in Trinidad Writes About: Changing Europe", 11 December 1938, Trinidad Guardian.

⁴⁵ For example, the report prepared by the National Coordinating Committee entitled "Disorganized Panic Migration" described how organizations used Trinidad to send people to who had recently been released from concentration camps. It described how "Jewish organizations in Germany and France learned about the opportunities in Trinidad and began to send to Trinidad, people who had just been released from concentration camps and who had to leave Germany without delay". See National Coordinating Committee Report, September 1939, #1059, JDC.

daughter some months later.⁴⁶

Estimates of the amount of refugees to enter the West Indies during this period are unreliable, but do provide an idea of the percentage of refugees taken in by the West Indies compared to the colonial Empire as a whole. In July 1938, colonial dependencies were asked to provide information on the numbers of persons of German and Austrian nationality who had settled in their territories during the five year period ending 31 March 1938, and during a six month period also ending 31 March 1938. It also asked how many of those admitted could be classified as “refugees unable to return to their countries of origin”.⁴⁷ The responses from colonial Governors indicated that only 350 Germans and Austrians had been admitted to the colonial Empire. Of this number, just over one third had entered West Indian islands, the bulk in Trinidad.⁴⁸ Of this third, 127 were classified as refugees unable to return. However, there are several problems with these estimates. Firstly, the figures supplied were unreliable because only partial information existed to supply the criteria asked for. For example, in Trinidad, all Europeans were classified together so the figures of refugees present in the colony were only estimates. During a 12 month period ending 31 March 1938 of 116 Europeans to enter the Colony, he thought that 23 were refugees. During the six months from 1 April to 30 September 1938, of 136 Europeans to arrive, he classified 97 as refugees unable to return. Similarly the Jamaican Governor informed the Colonial Office that because of an absence of alien registration in the colony, the figures that he supplied were underestimates and guess work. In addition, these figures did not include refugees who had emigrated to a Colonial Dependency because of an offer of employment, who were admitted as economic immigrants who satisfied existing immigration criteria, and were therefore excluded from refugee statistics. This would include refugees such as Schonbeck, who emigrated to Jamaica to work for WISCO.

Secondly, as a Colonial Office official noted in an internal memorandum, the figures,

⁴⁶H. Pels, Secretary, CRREC to Taylor, 25 December 1938, MS175 139/1F.2, AJA, University of Southampton Archive (hereafter SA). For details on Markreich, see also Strauss, *Biographische Handbuch*, p.477. See also introduction to the Markreich Archival collection in the Leo Baeck Institute, New York. None of the above state whether it was the Markreich family, friends or a refugee organisation who purchased the ticket to Trinidad.

⁴⁷ See Colonial Office Circular, Malcolm MacDonald, 7 October 1938, PRO CO 323/1602/17.

⁴⁸ I have estimated that 163 refugees, approximately one third of the total number entered West Indian colonies, the majority to Trinidad. These figures were estimated from the responses of the Colonial Governors of the Bahamas, Windward Isles, British Honduras, Leeward Isles, British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados, St.Kitts and Dominica to the Circular. See PRO CO 323/1602/17.

produced before Kristallnacht, were “valueless”, because of the increased numbers of refugees forced to leave Germany after Kristallnacht.⁴⁹ In 1939 the Colonial Office confirmed that the 1938 figures were an underestimate, and that far more refugees had entered between November 1938 and September 1939. In Refugees, A Review of the Situation Since September 1939, Sir John Hope Simpson published a revised Colonial Office estimate of two thousand refugees accepted into British colonial dependencies excluding Palestine, Southern Rhodesia and Newfoundland. Even so, these figures were also an underestimate. Simpson noted that the number was too conservative as “the movement at present is larger than the total figures suggest, as four fifths of the total entered in the six months preceding 31 March 1939”.⁵⁰ In December 1939 the figure was revised again, the Foreign Office informed that the “total number of refugees from the Reich who entered British colonial dependencies other than Palestine from 1933 to the end of September 1939 was ‘in the neighbourhood of 3,000’”.⁵¹ Reflecting the interest in refugees from the Reich only, these figures under-represent the total numbers of refugees, not including those who emigrated from Eastern Europe.

After September 1939, the only refugees to be admitted came because of special circumstances: the presence of internment camps in West Indian colonies, the willingness of Jewish refugee organisations to provide financially for refugees, and the decision on the part of the British government to evacuate refugees from Lisbon to Jamaica. Between December 1941 and the end of 1943, Jewish refugees were transported from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica, where they were housed for the duration of the war, or until they could remigrate to a further destination. As we have seen, throughout the war, refugees arrived in the Caribbean in transit to further destinations. Their length of stay in the West Indies depended on their status; those with valid documentation usually left after brief periods for further destinations.⁵² Others were detained by the government authorities for longer periods,

⁴⁹See Chapter 1, where full quote appears. JG Hibbert to Sir John Shuckburgh, Colonial Office memorandum, 6 February 1939, PRO CO 323/1799/2.

⁵⁰ Sir John Hope Simpson, Refugees - A Review of the Situation Since 1938, London, 1939, p.109.

⁵¹Hibbert to Carvell, December 22, 1939, FO 371/24097, W 19149/1369/48, cited in A.R. Sherman, Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933 - 1939, p.255.

⁵²The Jewish Refugee Society and Jewish Association in Trinidad were involved on a regular basis in helping in transit passengers with financial assistance and temporary accommodation whilst those with visas for the United States waited in Trinidad. For example, on 18 March 1942 a group of 16 people arrived from the steamship Maaskerk from England en route to the United States. All had valid immigration visas. By 24 March all had departed. During their brief stay, the JRS had alerted HIAS in New York of their arrival, had accommodated them

because their visas had expired, they had invalid or false documentation, or were suspected of being “fifth columnists”. In these cases, the colonial government agreed to house them temporarily in internment camps whilst their status was investigated. Refugees without valid papers or expired visas remained interned for long periods and in many cases, their release depended on financial guarantees by Jewish organisations or remigration.

After September 1939, estimates of refugees present in Jamaica and Trinidad are more complete, owing to information supplied by Jewish refugee organisations, and internment camp rolls. In Trinidad, some 600 refugees were present in 1940, perhaps just under one half from Germany and Austria.⁵³ In Jamaica, refugee numbers were lower. By the end of 1942, Gibraltar Camp held approximately 400 refugees in addition to 30 refugees held in the internment camp. Accurately estimating figures of refugees in other colonies, such as Barbados, British Guiana and British Honduras is virtually impossible, due to the continual movement of refugees to other places and absence of census material specifying the origin of those who came from Eastern Europe.

To summarise, refugees entering the West Indies during the early to mid 1930s chose to do so whilst those arriving during 1938 and later came because they had no where else to go. For the majority of refugees, the Caribbean was “nearly the New World”, an exotic location accidentally arrived at, and tantalisingly near the United States, a destination many had failed to enter. Correspondingly, for large numbers of refugees, remigrating, particularly after the outbreak of war, was difficult to achieve. Concentrating on Trinidad, the following section explores the ways in which refugees attempted to build new lives there.

-II-

Refugee Communities in the West Indies

Whilst Caribbean Jewish communities were established in St. Thomas, Curacao and British Guiana, Eastern European Jews emigrating to these colonies created their own institutions, reflecting the different cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds from which they came.

and loaned them small sums. See Edgar Gruen, JRS to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 26 March 1942, #1048, JDC.

⁵³ A Security Office Report, “Refugees in Trinidad and Tobago”, registered 585 refugees in Trinidad on 1 March 1940. Of this number, 366 were recorded under the Aliens Registration Order 1939. 304 of the 366 were registered as enemy aliens, 62 as non enemy aliens registered as a result of periods of residence in enemy and enemy occupied territories. The nationalities of these persons were stateless, Poles, Hungarians, Roumanians, Germans and Palestinians. See Security Office Report, “Refugees in Trinidad and Tobago”, by Supt. W. E. Rumbelow, Trinidad, 1 March 1940, PRO CO 323/1799/2.

Those arriving in Curacao found an established Jewish community whose descendants were Sephardim, originally from Spain. Yet within a few years, Rumanian Jews established their own synagogue and religious societies, marking the different traditions that separated Caribbean Jewry from Eastern European Jewish traditions. Once refugees from Germany and Austria arrived there, Sephardic Jews, Eastern European and Central European refugees cooperated with each other but maintained separate organisations.⁵⁴

In Trinidad, where no established Caribbean Jewish community existed, Eastern European Jews formed the Jewish Association of Trinidad (JAT) to represent their interests. As large numbers of destitute refugees arrived in Trinidad, the strain of supporting and aiding these refugees exposed the emerging community to divisions which they were unable to overcome. By the outbreak of war, the JAT ceased to be the only representative body of Trinidad Jewry, the Jewish Refugee Society (JRS) having been formed by Austrian and German Jews, who felt that the JAT was dominated by Eastern European interests. Ostensibly, both organisations were formed with different aims in mind, the JAT as a permanent body to provide for the cultural and social needs of the community, the JRS to represent and administer aid to refugees. Yet these aims changed as the views and attitudes of refugees themselves changed. Both organisations came to mirror the fluctuating and contested nature of a Jewish community in transition, making and remaking itself, but never quite overcoming its internal divisions in spite of internal and external attempts to do so. The following section examines how material differences which existed in the religious traditions, economic situation and cultural outlook prevented a cohesive community from existing, but also examines how fluid this situation was, and how ideas of permanency amongst Trinidad Jews changed frequently during the interwar and war years.

In 1937, the Hebrew Aid Society was founded in Trinidad, and perhaps as a reflection of its intention to become part of Trinidadian society, was renamed the Jewish Association of Trinidad (JAT) in June 1938. Edgar Pereira, a native born Trinidadian Jew explained its remit “for the purpose of looking after every aspect of Jewish life in this colony”.⁵⁵ From

⁵⁴ In Curacao, in 1932 Eastern European immigrants created a “Club Union” and Synagogue. The existing Synagogue institutions were Sephardic in orientation. During the War a committee representing the three communities was established to aid intransit and interned refugees. With a decrease in the numbers of the Jewish community, after the war Sephardic and Eastern European Jews eventually merged their institutions, and today have one synagogue for the Jewish community. See Dr Isaac Emanuel & Suzanne Emmanuel, History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles, Vol.1, NY 1957, pp 491 - 499.

⁵⁵ Edgar Pereira to Charles Liebman, Refugee Economic Corporation, NY, 12 December 1938, #1047, JDC.

mid-1938, one of its chief concerns was to aid the increasing numbers of refugees arriving with each steamer to Trinidad. Pereira, on behalf of the JAT, coordinated information between Jewish refugee organisations in Europe and the United States, informing them of the latest news regarding Trinidad's immigration regulations, and arranging for funds to be transmitted to aid indigent refugees and provide help with housing, food, loans and remigration advice.

At first, the economic situation between refugees from Eastern and Western Europe differed greatly. Whereas most Eastern European refugees, even those arriving late in 1938, continued to be successful in the dry goods trade and peddling, refugees from Germany and Austria found it much harder to adjust to their new surroundings. Although many of the German and Austrian refugees arrived penniless, reliant on aid from local and international aid organisations, some successful attempts were made to establish businesses or adapt their occupations. An admiring report in the Trinidad Guardian commented on the adaptability of these refugees, comparing them to White Russian's who had fled revolutionary Russia:

Even in Trinidad there are a number of Jewish professional men and women, lawyers, doctors, a university teacher, journalists of good standing, artists... who have found a home here, creating a situation similar to that existing in Paris, London and New York where, following the mass emigration of White Russians, Princes, Grand Dukes and countesses could be found washing dishes. One of the physicians, a lady doctor is now a midwife, another turned chemist and a third one is a foreman in a local factory. A famous master-builder of Vienna is now looking for any kind of work. His wife makes a living by tailoring. A lawyer has become a canvasser, another a floor-walker, while a third one is going to open a jewellers store on Frederick Street.⁵⁶

Under the "situations wanted" section, adverts for employment appeared in the Trinidad Guardian illustrating the social class and occupations of many of the newly arrived refugees:

A first Class European Dressmaker, just arrived from Europe, looking for employment.

European lady seeks work as secretary or stenotypist. English, French and German translated.

Young Viennese Gentleman seeks work of any kind.

Piano lessons by expert European musician.⁵⁷

Following a report on the situation by a local businessman, the Refugee Economic Corporation in New York was contacted and agreed to donate loans to individuals to establish

⁵⁶19 February 1939, Trinidad Guardian

⁵⁷Classified Announcements appearing in the Trinidad Guardian on 17 January 1939.

small business.⁵⁸ On the recommendation of the JDC, a Jewish Loan Fund Committee was established from JDC funds for \$2,000.00 to those able to establish themselves in small enterprises. This decision was taken in March 1939 after two JDC members had visited Trinidad and reported that :

The island is sound economically. Business is good, the natives are employed and spend liberally what they make. It is our belief that even though the German and Austrian Jews are not yet absorbed into the economic life, with some help this can be accomplished and the community of Jews will become self-supporting. There appears to be a good possibility for the large majority of those not yet employed to find or to create work for themselves.⁵⁹

Although many of the German and Austrian refugees held professional qualifications, amongst them were also tailors, watch makers, milliners, shoemakers, and hatmakers who were able to establish small businesses from loans sent by the JDC or the NCCGR.⁶⁰ By May 1940, \$1800 had been borrowed from the loan fund to help 14 persons. The money had gone towards projects which included the purchase of machinery for the manufacture of upholstered furniture and of shirts and pajamas, for the payment of merchandise for retail sale, for the establishment of a boarding house and a restaurant, for the manufacture of sausages and for the expansion of a photographic business.⁶¹ Other refugees were able to find employment, either through working for local business, peddling, or establishing their own businesses, such as Siegel and Karlsbad's Ladies Hat Factory in Port of Spain, and the Stecher's Jewellery and watch business also in Port of Spain.

Despite the optimism of the JDC report in March 1939, as penniless refugees began arriving in larger numbers, the labour situation deteriorated, as did relations between refugees from Nazi Germany and those from Eastern Europe. In a letter to Cecilia Razovsky of the National Coordinating Committee for German Refugees (NCCGR) in New York, Dr Pulver, the secretary of the JAT described the situation in Trinidad:

⁵⁸Memorandum of visit by Mr. Louis Girion to JDC, NY, 29 December 1938, #1047, JDC.

⁵⁹Report of Messrs. Borchardt and Glick, Trinidad, 22 March 1939, #1047, JDC. The amount suggested by Borchardt and Glick for the loan fund was an amount of \$10,000.00. Of the 500 Jews on the island, they found that the majority of Rumanian and Polish Jews were fairly well established as small storekeepers and peddlars. They also found that some German and Austrian Jews had found employment as clerks, engineers and one as a journalist.

⁶⁰Pereira to Razovsky, 16 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

⁶¹JDC Report on loan fund, Meeting of subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 17 May 1940, #113, JDC. This report was issued a month before mass internment took place. The loans had been secured by the \$250 landing money deposits, and the meeting noted that if successful, it would be possible to decrease the monthly subsidy sent by the JDC to Trinidad to support indigent refugees.

There are four categories of Jews. The first category comprises the native Jews. But this category is formed only of about 3 or 4 Jews. The second category is formed of these Jews who arrived here in 1937 and 1938. The majority are Rumanians and Poles and are pedlars. Some have little stores. They live only from the business that they do and have financed their assistance of the German refugees. Their number is between 150 - 170. The third category are the first refugees who arrived from Germany about the middle of 1938. There almost a hundred of them who have settled in small business, jobs, etc. The fourth category is almost unfortunate. They are the refugees who arrived here in great numbers in the last few months. Their situation is desperate. They are unemployed and are scarcely possible to get employment here. ⁶²

In another letter to Razovsky in January 1939, Pulver again confirmed the disparity between the economic situation of Jews arriving in 1938 and those who had arrived in the last few months. Those arriving after November 1938 were without means, and became immediately dependent on the Jewish Association for help with housing and food.⁶³ The Association rented two houses, one in 19 Marli Street, and a Sailors Club, both in Port of Spain, Trinidad's Capital, to house newcomers. They also applied to the Economic Development Council in New York and the JDC for funds and loans to help new refugees. In March 1939 the JDC, who had begun to send financial aid through the JAT, sent two representatives, Borchardt and Glick, to Trinidad to assess the situation. Their report (as we have seen) was optimistic of the economic situation, but pessimistic about the friction that existed between the different groups of refugees.

The report described the hostility that had grown between Polish and Rumanian and German and Austrian refugees. Part of the problem centred around the dislike some Eastern European members of the JAT held towards Edgar Pereira's work in the organisation. Borchardt and Glick reported that "He has been extremely helpful in giving advice and council to the newcomers and is held in high esteem by the German and Austrian group. On the other hand, he is in great disfavour with the Polish and Roumanian groups". They also stated that because he was able to communicate well in English, and was the "only Jew with access and is welcomed at the Colonial Office", the JAT were forced to continue their association with him. Despite Pereira's presence, Austrian and German refugees felt unrepresented in the JAT, and felt that the money sent by the JDC for distribution was not being fairly allotted. In consequence, Borchardt and Glick reported that they had "split wide into two very hostile

⁶²Dr. B. Pulver, Secretary JAT to Cecilia Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, NY, 18 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

⁶³Dr. B. Pulver, Secretary of Jewish Association of Trinidad to Cecilia Razovsky, The National Coordinating Committee, NY, 16 January 1939, #1047, JDC.

groups".⁶⁴

Whilst there, the JDC representatives attempted to form a committee of eleven members, incorporating Jews from both Eastern and Central Europe. This committee was to be responsible for transmitting JDC funds. Despite their efforts, only Eastern European Jews were elected to the Committee. They reported that:

...A general assembly was called of all the Jews of the island and about 400 were present. The names of the men on the proposed committee were read and after an hour of decent discussion, the meeting broke into a bedlam and from the floor a committee of eleven was elected composed only of Roumanian and Polish Jews.⁶⁵

Responding to this outcome, on 14 April 1939 the Jewish Refugee Society of Trinidad (JRS) was formed, electing Pereira as President and giving him permission to correspond on their behalf with all foreign organisations. The JRS informed the JDC that they had formed the new organisation as ...“ the German and Austrian refugees resident here, found that it had become absolutely necessary to establish a body, which could look after their interests and be representative of their opinions and their needs”.⁶⁶ At the same time, the JRS stressed that no discrimination would be made when considering applications for loans or assistance and that “adherence is made to the principle laid down at the inaugural meeting that our interpretation of the “world-refugee” is any Jew, irrespective of nationality, who may be in need”.⁶⁷ At first, JDC funds continued to be funnelled solely through the JAT. Edgar Pereira was allowed to attend meetings where decisions about distribution was carried out, but, as he explained to the JDC, there was a “general dissatisfaction amongst the refugees from Germany and Austria, that funds intended for their assistance should be administered by a committee which is absolutely unrepresentative of this section of the Jewish community.”⁶⁸

⁶⁴Report of Messrs. Borchardt and Glick, 22 March 1939, #1047, JDC. Of Pereira they wrote that he was “blind, crippled, and a very difficult man to deal with because of his tragic physical disabilities”. Edgar Pereira suffered from leprosy. His work on behalf of refugees was prolific. He played an important role in informing Jewish refugee organisations of Trinidad’s liberal entry requirements and helping with refugee immigration. Once immigration was closed, he was influential in persuading the Trinidad government to allow the entry of in transit refugees and relatives of those already in Trinidad. He was also appointed to the Advisory Committee which vetted whether internees could be released. Some time during 1940 he drops out of all correspondence, presumably because of his illness.

⁶⁵Report of Borchardt and Glick, 22 March 1939, #1047, JDC.

⁶⁶Herbert Philip, Secretary Jewish Refugee Society to Cecilia Razovsky, National Coordinating Committee, 14 April 1939, #1047, JDC.

⁶⁷Report of JRS’s aims in JDC SubCommittee Meeting on refugee aid in Central and South America, 19 May 1939, #112, JDC.

⁶⁸Pereira to Razovsky, 15 May 1939, #1047, JDC.

After receiving Borchardt and Glick's report, the JDC started to transmit funds to the Jewish Refugee Society.⁶⁹

On the surface, it seemed that the more established Eastern European Jews, with communities in San Fernando and Port of Spain, were more interested in creating a permanent Jewish community in Trinidad than Jews from Germany and Austria, whose principal interest seemed to lie in remigrating. A letter from Pereira to the JDC confirms this view, when he wrote of the differences that he perceived to exist between the two organisations. He felt that whilst the JRS was principally concerned with practical matters revolving around refugee admittance and settlement, the JAT's focus was on establishing Jewish institutions, such as a synagogue, club, library and other cultural matters.⁷⁰ A report from the United States Consul to the Secretary of State in Washington provides further evidence that most Austrian and German Jews, especially those arriving just before the close of immigration, were mainly interested in remigrating from Trinidad. On 15 January 1939, he described how boatloads of refugees continued to arrive, mostly without funds. Of crucial interest to the Secretary of State was the Consul's observation that... "More than half of the refugees entering Trinidad intend to proceed to the United States and immediately upon arrival make application at the Consulate for immigration visas under the German, or occasionally, Polish quotas."⁷¹

Yet a questionnaire produced by the Religious Committee of the JAT shows a more complex picture. Whilst only ten respondents answered, their replies suggest that it was not only Eastern European refugees who saw a future in Trinidad. The Religious Committee had been formed in March 1939 by Max Markreich, a former lay leader of the Bremen Jewish community. Although part of the JAT, the Religious Committee saw itself as semi-independent and concerned itself with providing religious services and education for Trinidad Jewry. The questionnaire was prepared on 1 May 1939 and was sent to all Jewish families in Trinidad. The aim of the questionnaire was to establish statistical information to help answer enquiries from refugee committees abroad and to establish the religious and social needs and

⁶⁹See Meeting of JDC Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 19 May 1939, report on Trinidad. #112, JDC.

⁷⁰Pereira, President Jewish Refugee Society to Razovsky, National Coordination Council, 10 May 1939, #1047, JDC.

⁷¹American Consul C.H. Hall Jnr. to Secretary of State, Washington, 5 January 1939, Despatch No.226, subject: German refugees in Trinidad. This despatch was also copied to the American Consulate General in Berlin. Record Group 59 Decimal File 1930 - 39 Box number: 6222, file no. 844G.5562/1, National Archives, Washington, (hereafter NA).

expectations of Trinidad Jewry.⁷²

The questionnaire evoked a low response, Markreich commenting that “only [a] few forms have been filled out. It is very difficult to find an agreement. Even the parents of the children liable to going to Jewish education, don’t return the forms (with one exception)[sic].⁷³ Of the ten returned forms however, some light is shed on the expectations of German and Austrian refugees in Trinidad.⁷⁴ The respondents were men, seven including their wives’ responses on the forms, making a total of 17 adults in Trinidad to answer detailed questions. In addition, two respondents included details of their children. Nine of the ten respondents had arrived in the few months between November 1938 and January 1939. Eight were from Germany and Austria and two came from Poland. Only one refugee came in the early 1930s, from Poland to Jamaica and in 1935 moving to Trinidad. Questioned whether they wished to remain in Trinidad or remigrate, five stated that they wished to remain, one respondent did not answer, and four stated they wished to remigrate, to the United States, Australia and an unknown destination. Against general expectations, of the five who wished to remain, three were from Germany and Austria, and two from Poland and Rumania. Asked whether they wished to take part in religious services, five responded positively, four left the answer blank, and one crossed out all questions relating to religious experience.⁷⁵ The results of this questionnaire show that once in Trinidad, before the outbreak of war, there was a positive feeling amongst some refugees, from Eastern and Central Europe, that a new Jewish congregation or community could be established.

Further proof that refugees from both groups were interested in forming a permanent community is illustrated in the ongoing efforts to find a Rabbi and establish a synagogue. These attempts also illustrate the profound differences in religious experience which existed amongst Jews in Trinidad. As the questionnaire demonstrated, the ten returned forms contained Eastern European orthodox, German Jewish reform, German Jewish orthodox, non practising and non religious identities. Under the umbrella of the Religious Committee, a number of organisations were formed. One association, formed by Markreich, the author of

⁷²See leaflet advertising questionnaire, addressed to “All Jewish Families”, 1 May 1939, Max Markreich Collection (hereafter MMC), LBI.

⁷³Markreich to Committee on Refugee Jewish Ministers, 19 May 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁷⁴It is not known how many respondents replied, but ten completed forms exist in the MMC, LBI.

⁷⁵This information has been compiled from studying the ten completed forms. See MMC, LBI .

the questionnaire, was representative of Orthodox German Jewish believers. The "Bethausvereins Agudath Achim" listed 73 members. Bethausvereins had been set up in Germany, mainly by orthodox Jews reacting against the reform movement. Bethausvereins were small houses, private places where services would be carried out, the literal translation being "people without houses". The articles of the Agudas Achim stated that it was a "union of Jews for the purpose of creating and preservation of a Synagogue, Jewish cemetery and religious lessons as well as cultivation of all other matters concerning religious rites".⁷⁶ A weekly divine service was organised for Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, and a teacher, Mr Ottenhooser began religious instruction for children.

The Religious Committee began a series of correspondence with Jewish organisations in Britain and the United States. Reflecting the differences that existed in religious experience and traditions amongst refugee members of the committee, organisations contacted by the Religious Committee found it difficult to discern what type of congregation they wished to establish. For example, in April 1939, the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) was asked for assistance in establishing a Jewish congregation, and told of the JAT's plans to build a synagogue and employ a Hebrew teacher for the children. It reinforced the message that many Jews, including those most recently arrived, were considering Trinidad as a permanent home. It informed the WUPJ that although some immigrants intended to go to the United States, and were waiting in Trinidad for their visa numbers, "a great number will stay in Trinidad. Therefore it is in the Jewish interest to erect here a new point of support for Judaism and to make a Jewish covenant for all Jews of the old and new immigration".⁷⁷ In their reply, the WUPJ suggested that since Trinidadian Jews were obviously traditional, applications for help should be addressed to orthodox congregations. The JAT responded that the majority of the congregants were progressive, with scarcely ten per cent orthodox, yet suggested that the reason for this lay in the unavailability of provision rather than personal motivation towards reform and progressive Judaism, informing them that ... "It is not possible at all to live ritual here because there is no 'Schechita'. Everybody is working on Shabbath to make livelihood". The WUPJ then offered to send a rabbi with a German background, who spoke English, to Trinidad, providing that the congregants were willing to establish a progressive congregation, and that the salary of the rabbi would be taken on by the Trinidad

⁷⁶Undated manuscript sheet, MMC, LBI.

⁷⁷Chairman, JAT to WUPJ, London, 19 April 1939, MMC, LBI.

congregation after the first year. This offer was rejected by the JAT as the future of the congregation was too insecure to be able to offer financial guarantees.⁷⁸

The WUPJ must have been confused by the JAT's response. Although they had originally felt that liberal Judaism was not appropriate for the Trinidad community, they had been assured that the congregation was progressive. When books of prayer were sent, the JAT informed them that "we shall make use of the prayer for the Royal Family, but we are sorry to say that the contents of the prayer book does not correspond with the mentality of our friends in any way, who also being liberal would never appreciate such a profound change of our old prayer-orders..." The reply from the WUPJ stated that they were sympathetic to this, but that liberal congregations differed greatly. Even after the outbreak of war, they were still willing to send a German and English speaking rabbi to the Trinidad congregation, on the basis that after the first year, his salary would be met by the congregation.⁷⁹

Meanwhile the Committee on Refugee Jewish Ministers in New York contacted the JAT in April 1939, informing them that they had received "a pathetic and urgent request for a rabbi and schochet for Trinidad. Some of these refugees are observant and religious minded and complain of the woeful lack of rabbinic guidance and leadership, and appeal to me to send them some one to take charge of the religious and spiritual affairs of the community".

Whilst the Committee felt that they would not persuade refugee rabbis already in the US to minister to the congregation in Trinidad, the committee was in touch with a large number of qualified rabbis still in Germany and Czechoslovakia, who would welcome the chance to go to Trinidad. Markreich replied to them in May, informing them that the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council (CRREC) was involved in providing a rabbi for the community.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Eventually the only outcome from the correspondence was the delivery of a prayer book used by the Liberal Synagogues in England and publications of the Jewish Religious Union, plus a copy of the Prayer for the Royal Family as used on Sabbaths and the Day of Atonement. See Chairman, JAT to WUPJ, London, 19 April 1939; L. Montague to Dr Schaechter, JAT, WUPJ, London, 10 May 1939; Religious Committee JAT to WUPJ, 11 June 1939; WUPJ to Markreich, 23 June 1939; JAT to WUPJ, 24 July 1939; WUPJ to JAT, 15 August 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁷⁹Religious Committee of the JAT to WUPJ, 22 September 1939 & Lily Montagu, WUPJ to Markreich, 30 October 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁸⁰Alexander Burnstein, Rabbi, Executive Secretary, Committee on Refugee Jewish Ministers to the President, JAT, 28 April 1939 & Markreich to Committee on Refugee Jewish Ministers, 19 May 1939, MMC, LBI. The CRREC was formed by the Chief Rabbi, its secretary his son in law, Solomon Schonfeld.

In March 1939 the CRREC had suggested that they send a German Jewish rabbi to Trinidad. Trepp had studied at a Berlin seminary and had been the rabbi of the Jewish congregation in Oldenburg.⁸¹ Trepp was one of a group of some 47 refugee rabbis and their families that the CRREC had managed to bring to Britain, either on temporary permits or with visas, on the understanding that their maintenance would be guaranteed by the CRREC.⁸² It would seem that Trepp never came to Trinidad, perhaps because of financial reasons, or as a result of war breaking out. Although the Religious Committee was a part of the JAT, friction existed between the members, principally over priorities. Whereas the committee saw the religious and spiritual needs of the community as foremost, the JAT tended to look at the committee as one of many. Thus when Markreich requested funds to establish religious schooling for some 28 children, from the JAT in March 1939, he was told that funds were not available, and in any case religious provision was not part of the JAT's remit.⁸³ In November 1939 the Religious Committee suggested dissolving the JAT and JRS to form a single Hebrew congregation to represent the entire Jewish community in Trinidad. The suggestion stemmed from the belief that the religious needs of Trinidad's Jews were being neglected.⁸⁴ The JAT replied that the religious committee was only one part of the Jewish Association, and had no more importance than any other subcommittee, such as the Social Committee.⁸⁵

In appearances, the new community appeared to take pride in their presence in Trinidad. In June 1939, the Trinidad Guardian was contacted and asked to rectify the way in which details of Jewish services were being printed in the religious section of the paper. In the first few issues, Jewish services were listed in small print under the heading of Christian Science. The JAT pointed out the following:

We are neither a part of the Christian Science nor of any other Church, but as the oldest and original of all these churches - quite independent. Here in Trinidad we

⁸¹H. Pels, Secretary CRREC to Markreich, 17 March 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁸²The Secretary of State gave permission for the entry of refugee rabbi's and their families on the understanding that they would be maintained by the CRREC and would eventually be placed overseas. Of the 47 rabbis and their families, some 184 persons, all were in England either waiting employment or remigration, with the exception of four still in Germany and two who were over sixty years old. Trepp was one of the rabbi's now in England and looking for employment. See Under Secretary of State to H. Pels, Secretary, CRREC, 19 November 1938, MS175 139/1F.2,AJA, SA.

⁸³Max Markreich to the JAT, 24 March 1939, and Dr Schaechter, Dr Bronner, Dr Pulver, JAT to Max Markreich, 27 March 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁸⁴Exposé des religiösen Komitees an die Verwaltung der Jewish Association of Trinidad. Max Markreich, 28 November 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁸⁵JAT to Religious Committee, 30 November 1939, MMC, LBI.

came as the last, and therefore we would be obliged to you, if you place our HEBREW CONGREGATION [sic] at the end of your list, but to compose the types in the same size as the other headings.⁸⁶

Yet despite this confidence, problematic differences existed between Central and Eastern European Jews over the character of the Jewish community in Trinidad, and how it should conduct itself. With the outbreak of war, these tensions were exacerbated by the atmosphere of panic in the colony over fifth column activity, and a general suspicion of refugees, particularly those who spoke German or had emigrated from Germany. Whilst initially, only 22 refugees were interned in Trinidad, all Jews in Trinidad were subject to the Aliens Restriction Order of September 1939 which required them to report daily to the Police, observe curfew and remain in Port of Spain. The Order included “neutral” and all other aliens, thus effecting Rumanian and Polish Jews as well.

Much effort was made by refugee committees, such as the JAT to rebut charges of pro-Nazi sympathy amongst the refugees, and challenge public opinion which failed to distinguish between “enemy aliens” and fifth column activists and spies. To counterbalance the mood against refugees, the JAT issued two statements, one to the Trinidad Government and one to the public generally. Both were reported in the Trinidad Guardian. To the Government, the JAT stressed refugee loyalty to Britain, stating that:

In this hour of crisis we Jews of Trinidad wish Government to understand and believe that all of us, including those who have emigrated from German soil, are intensely loyal to Great Britain and pledge our complete support.⁸⁷

In the statement issued to the public, the JAT rebutted accusations that Jews in Trinidad were German spies. The statement said that:

The Jews of the world have no greater enemy than present day Germany. To say that a Jew is a spy for Germany is equivalent to saying that an Englishman is a spy for that country. We know that a thinking person will at once see that although a German spy may possibly pose as a Jewish refugee, that would not make him a Jew, nor could a Jew be blamed for such actions of a spy.⁸⁸

The statement continued by stressing the loyalty and gratitude that Jews felt for England, and for its “hospitality”:

⁸⁶Undated, MMC, LBI..

⁸⁷Undated cutting in the Trinidad Guardian, Max Markreich Collection, LBI, NY.

⁸⁸Undated cutting in the Trinidad Guardian, Max Markreich Collection, LBI, NY.

Jews, and this includes refugees, are in every sense for England and against Germany. Germany stands for everything we hate and despise, whereas we feel as one with England, a government of lofty idealism and noble purpose, where all races are given fair play.⁸⁹

The tense atmosphere after the outbreak of war also led to friction between German-speaking and Eastern European Jews over the way that the community should conduct itself. For example, in September 1939 a decision by the Jewish Association of Trinidad to celebrate Chanukah angered members of the Religious Committee and the Jewish Refugee Society because of the tone of the invitation, which promised a night of dancing and celebration. The protest shows both an awareness of the position of Jews remaining in Europe, and a sensitivity towards their own position in West Indian society. Edgar Pereira of the Jewish Refugee Society wrote to the Jewish Association of Trinidad that:

The committee and our members are shocked that whilst messages come in from the relatives of refugee Jews in Poland, Austria and Germany by letters and cables with tales of maltreatment and great sufferings, expecting at any moment to be exiled to the Ghetto State in Poland which must bring to them agony of mind and perhaps even bodily torture, such as was experienced by a recent arrival from Vienna and whilst such sufferings are being endured by the people of our race the Jewish Association in Trinidad revels in dancing and singing, eating and drinking and making merry. ...Have you or your committee considered what Government circles or the people of Trinidad will think of the Jews here ?⁹⁰

This example illustrates the self consciousness of some refugees in regard to how their behaviour appeared to West Indian society at large. Equally self conscious were members of the JAT to the appearance of letters written in German, by the Religious Committee. A letter from a congregant to Markreich of 21 September 1939 expressed the fear that by writing to members in German, the committee brought trouble to them. It asked Markreich to either write in English or resign.⁹¹ Replying to the Religious Committee's suggestion of forming a single Hebrew Congregation, the JAT also asked the Religious Committee (in essence, Markreich), in November 1939 to write no further letters in German. They stated that:

The official languages of the Association are English, preferably, and Jewish [sic]. Although other languages may be employed for purposes of conveying messages to the members in general, all correspondence of the Association that is on an official basis must be in one of the two above mentioned languages. The use of German is to be discouraged, and is not to be employed unless absolutely necessary in

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Edgar Pereira, President, JRS, to President, JAT, 15 November, 1939, MMC, LBI..

⁹¹Isaac M. Mizrahi to Max Markreich, 21 September 1939, MMC, LBI..

correspondence to those who do not know any other language...we wish to say that at this time when matters are so insecure everywhere, you should be more concerned about maintaining peace within our ranks here, and not try your best to create discord and schisms among the Jews in the Colony.⁹²

Given the atmosphere of suspicion in the colony against German speakers, it is not surprising that some refugees amongst the Jewish Association felt uncomfortable with the use of German, particularly as it was not their language. Amongst the Eastern European Jews who had become naturalised British citizens prior to the outbreak of war, it could also have been a sign that they wished to demonstrate their patriotism and distance towards refugees classified as enemy aliens. It further reflects how those who had emigrated to Trinidad earlier did not consider themselves as refugees, but now as members of a Trinidad Jewish community. In Britain, refugee organisations showed a similar aversion to refugees speaking German, believing that the best way for refugees to assimilate and avoid public hostility was to act as inconspicuously as possible.⁹³ However, it also shows the gulf in understanding between the two refugee groups. A debate ensued, developing into a competition about the relative merits of Yiddish or German, and exposed the hostility felt between the groups, about the nature of Jewish identity, and about how to express their Jewishness.

Whilst the Religious Committee opined that Yiddish was a:

medieval German language, mixed with terms of the languages of the countries in which the Jews were flying out of Germany during the middle ages. Therefore Yiddish remains a German language, and it cannot be admissible, to concede this old German idiom a precedence of the high German of to date. By this way the new Jewish refugees from Germany would be treated different, and that would lead to a further deepening of the present cleft.⁹⁴

The JAT responded that:

While it is true that the Jewish language owes its origin mostly to the German language, just as French owes its origin to Latin, it does not mean that the German language is superior, just as the French language is not superior...While the German language is remindful of everything that has hurt the Jews, for Germany is the birthplace of antisemitism, and of Hitlerism, and of much of the hatred of the world to

⁹²JAT to The Religious Committee, 30 November 1939, MMC, LBI..

⁹³For example, see pamphlet produced by the German Jewish Aid Committee entitled "While you are in England: Helpful Information and Guidance For Every Refugee", p.12, (author's possession) which advised refugees to "Refrain from speaking German in the streets and in public conveyances and in public places such as restaurants. Talk halting English rather than fluent German-and *do not talk in a loud voice*. Do not read German newspapers in public".

⁹⁴Religious Committee to JAT, 12 December 1939, MMC, LBI.

date, the Jewish language is the very reverse. It may not meet up with your standards as you see it, but that does not mean that it is not as good as the German language by any means. The Jewish language has meant unity for the Jews, whereas the German language and nation has meant disruption for the Jews.⁹⁵

Furthermore, the JAT attacked Markreich's suggestion of forming a single Hebrew congregation, and his warning that without one, religious identity would suffer was greeted by the JAT as an opportunity to further emphasise their hostility to German Jewish traditions:

We feel that we Jews, from other European countries than Germany, and from England and the United States, all of whom have thus far been so successful in warding off those evils, cannot take lessons from those who hold up the "high German" language, and the German Jewish methods, as examples of what to follow. The German Jews have been woefully unable to cope with those evils, as evidenced by the very great number of them who have converted to Christianity. Do you think the way of the Jewish Jews is best, or the way of the German Jews?⁹⁶

The result of this correspondence was the resignation of members of the Religious Committee, on 12 January 1940.⁹⁷ Since the membership of the JAT and the JRS were more or less evenly divided between Eastern and Central European Jews, the Religious Committee, as part of the JAT, had been a sort of bridge between the organisations, led by a German Jew, with a mixed membership. In larger societies, Jews from different backgrounds go to their own services and functions, which mirror their own religious background and experience. In Trinidad, refugees were under pressure to overcome personal and religious differences for several reasons. Their community was small, and they feared assimilation. Their community was actively involved in aiding Jews who were still arriving throughout 1938 and 1939, many of whom were continuing to further destinations. Their community was acutely conscious of their tenuous position in West Indian society. With hostility towards Germany growing, and a reluctance of the Trinidadian legislature to admit any aliens, particularly from Europe, the behaviour of the community, and how that behaviour appeared to society, was of immense concern.

Pressure to conform to the "British" way of life was felt by the congregation in all sorts of ways and the community itself was anxious to represent itself as a new, but permanent

⁹⁵JAT to Religious Committee, 21 December 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁹⁶Religious Committee, "Exposé des Religiösen Komitees an die Verwaltung der Jewish Association of Trinidad", 28 November 1939; JAT to Religious Committee, 30 November 1939; Religious Committee to JAT, 12 December 1939; JAT to Religious Committee, 21 December 1939, MMC, LBI.

⁹⁷Religious Committee to JAT, 12 January 1940, see MMC, LBI.

element of Trinidadian society. For example, the JAT made applications to the Trinidad Council to establish a Jewish burial ground, and a licence to slaughter cattle. Whilst only partially successful in these attempts, they illustrate the desire on the part of some refugees to put down roots in Trinidad. With the advent of war, insecurity amongst refugee communities grew, as all refugees were affected by the internment and wartime policies enacted in British Colonies. For refugee communities who had begun to establish themselves, the threat of internment was a psychological blow. As Tony Kushner has pointed out regarding internment in Britain:

With the outbreak of war, the refugees' previous marginality increased as they became the potential 'enemy from within'. . . . the widespread categorization of the refugees as 'aliens', although legally correct (and emphasizing the fact that both Britain and the United States continued immigration policies in the 1930s), damaged both the self image and self worth of the exiles from Nazism.⁹⁸

Misunderstandings between the JAT and the JRS continued during the war, mirroring the different experiences of each refugee group. Whilst initially affected by alien legislation, many Eastern European refugees, who had arrived in Trinidad during the early to middle 1930s, were able to apply and become naturalised British citizens. Refugees who had arrived shortly before or during the war were not able to apply for naturalisation until after the war was over.⁹⁹ This difference could account for the way in which representatives of the Jewish Association chose to represent their association as permanent and the JRS as a temporary body conceived to help Jewish internees, who, it was implied, had no interest in remaining in Trinidad.

For example, in October 1941, a representative of the JDC visited Trinidad and met with Dr Pillersdorf, President of the JAT. The report mentions the "neglect and indifference" that the JAT experienced in their relationship with the JDC, who channelled regular monthly donations to the JRS, now resident in the internment camp.¹⁰⁰ When asked whether the two organisations could be united, Pillersdorf replied that in the authorities eyes, the JAT was

⁹⁸Tony Kushner, The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA 1994, p.150.

⁹⁹JDC memorandum, 5 December 1944, #1048, JDC.

¹⁰⁰The JAT also helped refugees who were temporarily stranded in Trinidad during the war, providing temporary food and shelter, and advice on how to proceed to their destinations. Yet the JDC sent money only through the JRS. In the case of the Winnipeg passengers, the JRS helped those interned, but the JAT, without aid, helped those in Port of Spain. See for example JAT to JDC, 26 November 1941, in which refugees from the Lorenzo Marquez were given boarding and food from members of the JAT, #1048, JDC.

“composed of permanent Jewish residents of Trinidad whereas the Refugee Committee limits its aid to German refugees”.¹⁰¹

Again in the following month, Dr Pillersdorf characterised the JAT as representing permanent residents, and minimized the influence and numbers of German and Austrian refugees within the Trinidad Jewish community. Contacting the Chief Rabbi in November 1941, he wrote that of the 350 or so Jews in Trinidad, the “Vast majority of our community arrived about 3 years ago from Poland and Roumania”. He stated that a few months before the outbreak of war a few hundred German and Austrian Jews arrived, but the majority had emigrated to the United States, Canada and Australia. On the economic situation, he said that although the situation was not good, the majority were able to find employment peddling. The principal problem for the community was “social and spiritual”:

There are among us about 60 bachelors in the age between 20 - 35 years, but on the other hand unmarried Jewish women are practically non existent in the Colony. Being far away from England and America, the situation would deteriorate. There are a few children among us, but those who are, do not receive a Jewish education. We have no synagogue, no Jewish home, no Jewish books. We are too poor to see about it ourselves. In our Colony are stationed at present many Jewish boys from the English and American armed forces. But there is nothing we can offer them in the way of Jewish atmosphere. We turn to you for advice. There are many among us willing to build up a Jewish life in this Colony, but they need inspiration and help.¹⁰²

Attempts by the JDC to reunite both organisations were not fruitful. In January 1942 the Jewish Refugee Society, its principal members now released from internment, proposed to the JDC that they become recognised as a legal entity, and asked for more funds to rent an office. The JDC were against this plan and suggested that the two organisations should put aside differences to work together:

Time has passed and conditions have changed, so that perhaps the old sources of irritation may be forgotten...There is no point in blinking the fact that the points of view of Jews from Eastern and Western Europe have been opposed to a degree. At the same time, this opposition has in many places and in many instances been overcome.¹⁰³

Whilst both organisations had set out with different aims, to represent a permanent

¹⁰¹M.W. Beckelman Report to JDC, 19 October 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹⁰²Dr Oscar Pillarsdorf, Jewish Association of Trinidad to The Very Rev. Dr. J.H. Hertz, Chief Rabbi, 27 November 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹⁰³Robert Pilpel to Jewish Refugee Society, 6 January 1942, #1048, JDC.

community, and to dispense aid to refugees, membership was largely split between Eastern Europeans in the JAT, and Central Europeans in the JRS, so that both organisations ended up as competing bodies, both dispensing aid and attempting to represent permanence and continuity in Jewish life in Trinidad. It was not until 1945 that the two organisations overcame differences sufficiently to work together. In the meantime, the experience of internment seriously disrupted attempts to settle in Trinidad. The following section will examine the impact of the war on refugees in Trinidad and Jamaica, examining how these experiences influenced decisions about remaining in the West Indies, or remigrating.

-III-

Internment and remigration

Sparsely material exists on Jewish communities in West Indian colonies such as British Guiana and Barbados during the war years. This is partly explained by the lack of attention these communities drew to themselves, as the majority had come from Eastern Europe and were not interned.¹⁰⁴ In addition, only certain colonies, such as Curacao, Trinidad and Jamaica continued to play an important role during the war as refugee centres, because of their geographical situation (accepting intransit refugees) and because of their internment facilities (for prisoners of war, evacuees and internees).¹⁰⁵ In Trinidad, whilst refugees classified as enemy aliens were interned, those from Eastern Europe remained free, albeit with restrictions. This section will trace the experience of internment, considering its impact on decisions to remain or remigrate from the West Indies.

Internment in the Colonial Empire generally followed the practices carried out by the British Government in the United Kingdom. In Britain, small numbers were interned at the outbreak of war. By the summer of 1940, at the end of the “phony war”, a policy of mass internment was carried out. By December 1940 public opinion had turned against internment, particularly after the mass deportations of internees to Canada and Australia. With the torpedoing of the *Arandora Star*, public opinion became sharply opposed to mass internment. By the end of August 1941 only two internment camps were left on the Isle of Man,

¹⁰⁴ It would seem that if German and Austrian refugees were present in these colonies, they were sent to Trinidad or Jamaica for internment. For example, in November 1940 three refugees from Barbados were transferred to the internment camp in Trinidad. See Jewish Refugee Society to Robert Pilpel, Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 30 November 1940, #1047, JDC. In February 1940, one German and two German Jewish “enemy aliens” were transferred from British Guiana to Jamaica. See telegram from Governor of Trinidad to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 3 February 1940, PRO CO 323/1799/2.

¹⁰⁵ Dominica was also an important refugee centre, housing thousands of Free French refugees who fled from Vichy controlled West Indian islands during the war. See Lennox Honeychurch, The Dominica Story: A History of the Island, Dominica 1975, pp.134 - 136.

compared to the earlier nine internment camps in the British Isles. By the end of 1944, only a few “hard core” internees were left.¹⁰⁶

Internment camps in the Caribbean had several functions: to intern enemy aliens and suspected enemy sympathisers, to temporarily hold suspects taken from ships, to hold in transit passengers, and to house both allied merchant seamen who had been wounded by German U-Boat actions and enemy merchant seamen, captured by allied attacks. Internees were housed in camps in Curacao, Trinidad, Jamaica, British Honduras and Barbados. Some refugees were moved from other parts of the Colonial Empire, such as Sierra Leone to internment facilities in the Caribbean.¹⁰⁷ Once Holland had been invaded, the Dutch West Indies was administered by the Allied forces, and Curacao also maintained an internment camp for captured enemy seamen, enemy alien refugees and seamen survivors. In Dominica a camp was maintained by the British and the Free French to house some 10,000 refugees who fled from occupied Vichy Martinique, Guadalupe, and French Guiana.¹⁰⁸

In Jamaica three camps existed. At the outbreak of war two internment camps were established, one for women and one for men. All male Jewish refugees present in Jamaica were immediately interned, alongside some 600 Germans and Italians, who were either working in the West Indies or had been captured from enemy U boats.¹⁰⁹ The Jewish refugees who had been interned at the outbreak of war were released some months later, only to be re-interned once the policy of mass internment had been carried out in Britain, alongside their wives and families. Whilst initially Jewish refugees were interned alongside Nazi

¹⁰⁶On the policy of internment in Britain, see for example, Colin Holmes, John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871 - 1971, London 1988, pp.161 - 206; David Cesarani & Tony Kushner, eds., The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain, London 1993; Bernard Wasserstein, Britain and the Jews of Europe: 1939 - 1945, Oxford 1988, pp.81 - 133.

¹⁰⁷For example, in December 1940 Dr Rudolph Aub was transported from an internment camp in Sierra Leone, where he had been the only Jewish internee amongst 800 captured German and Italian merchant seamen, to an internment camp in Jamaica. He remained interned until March 1943 when a former internee and dentist, Dr Lobbenburg, persuaded authorities to release him because of a shortage of doctors in Jamaica. After the war, Dr Aub was one of the few refugees in Jamaica to remain after the war. See Rudolph Aub, “From My Life”, unpublished memoir, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati (hereafter AJAC).

¹⁰⁸For a history of this camp, see Lennox Honeychurch, The Dominica Story: A History of the Island, pp.134 - 136.

¹⁰⁹Conrad Hoffmann to Cecilia Razovsky, 10 July 1941 #722, JDC NY. On 3 September 1939 some 29 refugees were interned as enemy aliens. On appeal to the Advisory Committee 9 refugees, all Jewish were released. See Governor of Jamaica to Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 9 January 1940, PRO CO 323/1797/14.

sympathisers, from 1940 onwards they were separated into a separate compound.¹¹⁰ From October 1940 Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica housed some 1700 evacuees from Gibraltar, and from 1942 onwards groups of Jewish refugees taken from Lisbon. The majority of Jews taken from Lisbon went straight to Gibraltar Camp, but 21 Polish Jews were detained in the internment camp, pending enquiries. The men were housed in a barrack at Gibraltar Camp, separated from the other Polish refugees, whilst the women and children were taken to the Alien Women's Detention Camp in Kingston, on the advice of the Polish Consulate in Lisbon.¹¹¹

In Trinidad, four camps had been established by 1941. A prisoners of war camp was established on Nelsons Island. An internment camp, "Rest" Camp and Detention Centre were set up in St. James, near Port of Spain. All refugees of enemy alien nationality were placed in the internment camp, alongside other internees. Jewish and non-Jewish interned refugees were separated from the beginning. The internment camp consisted of eleven huts and was divided into two sections, one for Jewish internees and one for non-Jewish internees. The Rest Camp was established to hold prohibited and controlled immigrants. The Detention Centre housed seamen survivors of enemy actions, mostly allied merchant seamen. This camp was also used as a clearing centre for passengers taken from intercepted ships who were not prisoners of war or enemy aliens. By 1944 part of the Rest Camp was now used as an Immigration Detention Centre.¹¹² Refugees from the Winnipeg, and from other steamships intercepted and taken to Trinidad, were temporarily housed here. Once the security authorities had checked their papers, they were either allowed to proceed on their journey, or if they did not possess valid papers, were moved to the internment camp or Rest Camp.

Generally, refugees in the West Indies were interned for longer periods than refugees in the

¹¹⁰ Rudolph Aub notes that when he arrived in the Jamaican in December 1940, he was sent to Up Camp internment camp, where he and around 30 other Jewish internees were separated from the 1000 or so non Jews in the camp. See Rudolph Aub, "From My Life", unpublished manuscript, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati. See also Conrad Hoffman to Cecilia Razovsky, National Refugee Service NY, 10 July 1941, #722, JDC.

¹¹¹ A JDC representative, Bertrand Jacobson in Jamaica reported that the detained men asked whether they would be "court martialled and executed" or "set free" as they were under the impression that they were being held as spies. Jacobson attempted to mediate for them and established that hearings were set for 26 February. Bertrand Jacobson to Moses Leavitt, 12 March 1942, #884, JDC. In April 1942 the women had been released, and five of the men were released and sent to Gibraltar Camp Bernhard Glasschieb, Hicem representative at Gibraltar Camp to JDC NY, 2 April 1942, XIII-3 Jamaica, Yivo Archives New York (hereafter Yivo).

¹¹² See Governor of Trinidad to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4 March 1943, PRO CO 980/26; Governor of Trinidad to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 15 April 1943 PRO CO 980/26; Governor of Trinidad to The Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 September 1944, PRO CO 323/1879/12.

United Kingdom. In some cases, release was obtained only if the refugee could remigrate, or if unlimited financial guarantees were provided for the rest of the war period. The specific laws to establish detention and internment powers differed in each colony, but the categories for detention were broadly similar. By 1940 in Trinidad internees were divided into three categories: Category “a”, nationals of scheduled territories; category “b”, former alien residents of scheduled territories and category “c”, any other persons suspected of enemy sympathies or activities. Category “a”s were interned without exception under a general order. Category “b”s were interned in the absence of a specific recommendation against by the Aliens Investigation Committee, and category “c”s were dealt with individually, interned only after examination by the Aliens Investigation Committee. Refugees were included in each category.¹¹³ The structure of command in internment camps was similar to that in Britain. Each camp had a commandant appointed by the Governor, who was a civilian employed by the Government. Whilst the internment camps were entirely controlled by the civil government, who had to finance the costs, Prisoner of War camps were administered on behalf of the military authorities, financed by the Ministry of War. As in Britain, Advisory Committee’s were established to hear appeals against internment.¹¹⁴

Whilst only 22 refugees were interned in Trinidad at the outbreak of war, by June 1940 larger numbers of refugees, naturalised British citizens suspected of enemy sympathies and some “neutral” enemy aliens were interned. By August 1940, some 279 Jewish refugees had been interned in Trinidad, the majority from Germany and Austria. Whilst 34 were released upon appeal to the Advisory Committee, none of those released held Austrian or German passports. Until August 1941 German and Austrians remained interned, unless they were able to leave the colony.¹¹⁵ For refugees in transit, periods of internment were particularly long as they were detained in the camp because they had neither valid visas for further destinations, nor permits to remain in Trinidad. Their release was limited to those able to remigrate. For

¹¹³For details of the internment policy carried out in Trinidad, see telegram no.329 from Governor of Trinidad to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 17 May 1940 and telegram No.22 from Governor of Trinidad to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 8 July 1940, PRO CO323/1799/2.

¹¹⁴In Trinidad, the Advisory Committee included Edgar Pereira, the founder member of the JAT, as well as the Commander in Chief of the local forces, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, the General Manager of the Government railways, and a member of the Executive Council.

¹¹⁵In November 1940 the Jewish Refugee Society reported to Pilpel that on August 1 1940 internment was completed. 279 Jewish refugees were present in camp. Between August and November 45 persons were released and had emigrated to the U.S., and a further 34 were released upon appeal to the Advisory Committee. The 34 released were either stateless or Polish citizens. Although released, restrictions remained. See Jewish Refugee Society to Robert Pilpel, JDC, NY, 2 September 1940 and 30 November 1940, #1047 JDC.

example, whilst the majority of refugees from the steamship Winnipeg were able remigrate within a few months, ten refugees remained in the internment camp until January 1942.¹¹⁶ Because of the continuous arrival of ships carrying refugees in transit, the numbers interned fluctuated, at times increasing to some 1000 refugees. Although the majority were released during 1942, some refugees remained interned until 1945.

At first only men were interned on Nelson Island, whilst facilities were built to house men, women and children in a permanent internment camp in St. James. An account of how internment was carried out in Trinidad is given in the memoirs of Hans Stecher, an Austrian refugee who emigrated to Trinidad from Vienna with his family in October 1938. The small jewellery and watch business that had been built up by his family was shattered. The women were taken to Caledonia Island and the men to Nelson Island:

Within sight and shouting distance of each other; not far away is Carrera, the official prison island, and the waters around the area are said to be shark-infested. ...I was young enough to see mostly the beauty of our surroundings, and played down the unpleasant parts of the situation....They [the elders] could not help but feel bitterness and resentment at being thus mistreated, of being deprived of their newly found freedom and having just sent out new roots, being so abruptly and rudely uprooted once more. The stigma of being branded "enemy alien" was almost intolerable to us.¹¹⁷

The refugees remained in Nelson Island for a few months before being transferred to "Camp Rented", built specially to house them. At this point all other refugees of enemy alien nationality were interned, including wives and children. The camp was "barrack" style, subdivided into a number of rooms so that families could live together. The internal affairs of the camp were run along the same lines as internment camps in Britain, a camp leader being elected from amongst the refugees, and a camp "commander" appointed by the British Government. The camp leader was a refugee from Frankfurt, Paul Richter, whose wife had been a German tennis champion before 1933. In the camp classes were organised in English and Hebrew. Lectures were given in physics, chemistry and other sciences by Dr Laban, a refugee dentist. Children attended school outside the camp.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶See Report for JDC by M W Beckelman, 19 October 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹¹⁷Unpublished draft manuscript by Hans "John" Stecher, in author's possession.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

In August 1941 the Jewish Refugee Society informed the JDC that the Trinidad Government had adopted a new policy concerning internment and had published new directions for release. By February 1942 the majority of refugees had applied for, and been released. The exception's were the *in transit passengers* whose cases could not be reviewed by the Advisory Board, as they had no legal right to remain in Trinidad, and certain refugees without means, who were reluctant to leave the internment camp.¹¹⁹ Jewish organisations in Britain had combined efforts with the High Commissioner for Refugees to persuade British authorities to secure the same widening of release categories as had been effected in Britain during 1941. For example, the Council for British Jewry's 1941 report stated that British Colonies, particularly Kenya and Trinidad had now adopted the English procedure for releasing interned refugees, and a considerable proportion of internees were released.¹²⁰ Similarly, the CRREC's 1941 report also stated that it was "looking after the interests of internees in the colonies". It added that a representations on their behalf had been made to the Colonial Office.¹²¹ Their release may also have been expedited by a visit from Chaim Weizmann to Trinidad, en route to New York. Weizmann visited the internment camp in March 1941 and discussed conditions of release with the Governor.¹²²

For refugees interned in Jamaica, the conditions of release were far harder to comply with. At the end of April 1941 internees received communication from the Jamaican Government that they would be offered release on condition that they show means of subsistence or employment in Jamaica, or could arrange to emigrate to some neutral country for residence.¹²³ The majority of refugees were in Trinidad and Jamaica because they had been unable to reach the United States or South America, therefore it was unlikely that they could find places to emigrate to. In November 1941 17 refugees were still interned, of whom two were

¹¹⁹Jewish Refugee Society to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 4 August 1941, #1048, JDC. In October 1942 the Governor of Trinidad confirmed that upon the advice of the Advisory Committee 165 refugees had been released from internment, 28 remained interned, and eight were recommended for release if they could obtain entry visas for elsewhere. See Sir B. Clifford to Secretary of State for the Colonies, telegram No.1153 secret, 12 October 1942, PRO CO 980/26.

¹²⁰Report of the Central Council for Jewish Refugees, 1940, Microfilm collection, reel S110 & Report of the Central Council for Jewish Refugees, 1941, Microfilm collection, reel S111; LBI.

¹²¹ See Report of Activities of the CRREC, for period ending 31 October 1941, MS183/576/1, part 1, AJA, SA.

¹²²See Julius Sass, President, JRS Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 28 March 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹²³ See letters detailing these conditions from Max Ebersohn, internee to CRREC, 30 June 1942, CBF Reel 14, 70/7 & Karoline (last name deleted), internee to Chief Rabbi, 29 September 1941, CBF Reel 14, 70/19, SA.

children.¹²⁴ Several contacted the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council, informing them that an offer by local organisations to give financial guarantees for a period of four months was rejected by the Jamaican authorities as insufficient. Unless they could satisfy the government that support would be forthcoming for the period of residence in Jamaica, or until employment was found, they would not be released.¹²⁵ One refugee informed the Chief Rabbi that she had arrived in Jamaica in December 1938 with her husband and eleven year old child from Vienna. At the outbreak of war her husband was interned, but released on appeal to the Advisory Committee. In May the whole family was interned, and had remained in separate internment camps for the last fifteen months.¹²⁶

Since the CRREC, and Central Council for Jewish Refugees were unable to provide unlimited financial guarantees, the High Commissioner for Refugees, and the JDC were contacted in December and asked whether they could provide support for several interned families.¹²⁷ However, by November 1942 the CRREC was informed that all refugees had now been released without any financial guarantee.¹²⁸ Despite this information, refugees who had been transferred from other parts of the colonial empire remained interned for longer periods. Rudolph Aub, a doctor from Germany had been transferred to Kingston internment camp from Sierra Leone in December 1940. He remained interned until March 1943 when he was released because of a shortage of medical staff in Jamaica. Although unable to practice

¹²⁴Moses Leavitt, JDC to Central Council for Jewish Refugees, Woburn House, London 2 January 1942, #722, JDC.

¹²⁵A number of organisations in Jamaica were willing to provide financial guarantees for several months, but were unable to provide aid for an unlimited period. The Government of Jamaica had told the Jamaica Young Women's Association that if they could give a guarantee of employment or financial support the refugees may be released. The Quaker organisation who had employed the Stamm's were willing to provide a guarantee for a period of four months, as did the German Refugee Fund, established by the Jamaican Jewish community. The German Refugee Fund could guarantee them for a period of four months, which would not satisfy government authorities. The Christian Association also become involved in the refugee's plight when the German Refugee Fund stopped replying to enquiries from the JDC. See *ibid* & Conrad Hoffmann to Cecilia Razovsky, 10 July 1941 & Marjorie Stewart, Jamaica Young Woman's Christian Association to Miss Mills, JDC, 2 June 1941, #722, JDC.

¹²⁶Karoline (last name deleted) to Chief Rabbi, 29 September 1941, CBF Reel 14, 70/19, SA.

¹²⁷See Secretary CRREC to Central Council for Refugees, 19 August 1941, thanking the Secretary, M. Stephany for passing the information on to Sir Herbert Emerson, MS 183/384, f.2, AJA, SA.

¹²⁸See the following correspondence: CGJ to CRREC, 18 July 1941, CBF Reel 14, 70/5; Rabbi Schonfeld, CRREC to M. Stephany, Central Council for Refugees, 24 November 1941, CBF Reel 14, 70/20; Schonfeld to Stephany, 12 October 1942, CBF Reel 14, 70/25. See also Schonfeld to Stephany, 2 November 1942, CBF Reel 14, 70/16, SA.

as a doctor, he became employed as an assistant medical officer.¹²⁹ During 1943 the World Jewish Congress took up the cases of three Jewish women refugees, a seventy year old woman, her daughter and daughter-in-law who had been transferred from an internment camp in the Gold Coast to Jamaica in early 1941. In their letters to the World Jewish Congress, they described being interned in the Women's Alien Detention Camp in Kingston alongside Nazi sympathisers.¹³⁰

For the majority of refugees, internment lasted between May 1940 and the end of 1941. But for the small numbers who remained in internment camps in Trinidad and Jamaica, and for refugees restricted to Gibraltar Camp, the forced idleness and restriction of movement became hard to bear. Whilst not an internment camp, refugees in Gibraltar Camp were restricted under the same Defence Evacuation Regulations which applied to the Gibraltar evacuees, and were unable to seek work in Jamaica. In a report to the JDC, Charles Jordan, a JDC representative, described life in Gibraltar Camp. Refugees could leave the camp daily, but had to return each evening. Once a month, they were granted 72 hours leave. In the camp, various clubs and societies functioned to give entertainment to the refugees and evacuees, films were shown three times a week, and a library was at their disposal. Magazines and books in Yiddish or German were regularly sent to the camp from Jewish organisations. The Polish group established a synagogue, and were joined by some 38 orthodox Jews from the Gibraltar evacuees for services. The Camp had a separate kosher kitchen, but the Camp Commandant, Mr Rae, had been unable to arrange for kosher meat to be delivered.¹³¹ Although generally favourable in his report, Jordan described several

¹²⁹See Rudolph Aub, "From My Life", unpublished memoir, AJAC. Aub was not allowed to practice as a doctor because he did not possess a British licence to practice medicine. After the war Aub remained in Jamaica, took a medical examination and practiced as a doctor.

¹³⁰See Kurt Grunebaum to Ellen Hilb, American Jewish Congress, 14 April 1943, Box H215/WJC, AJAC. Grunebaum informed Hilb that the women were interned alongside Nazis and sent her extracts of their letters. See also memo from Hilb to Tartakower, WJC on 29 September 1943 asking whether anything could be done to separate the "ladies" from the Nazi internees. The memo added that Mrs Helene Weinberg, nee Hirschland, is "a member of that well-known industrial banker family in Essen Germany". It is not known when the women were released from internment. See Hilb to Tartakower, 29 September 1943, Box H215/WJC, AJAC.

¹³¹The lack of kosher meat was an issue which the Polish group repeatedly attempted to redress. See for example letter from Polish Group to JDC, 20 April 1942, XIII-3 Jamaica, Yivo. In a report on Gibraltar Camp in November 1942, Sylvain Hayum noted that in the separate kosher kitchen fish or eggs were served daily. A Rabbi amongst the refugees, Uscher, (representative of the Polish group) refused to become a shohet: "Il y a au camp une cuisine kocher, et une autre. La cuisine kocher ne sert jamais de viande, mais un plat de poisson et un plat d'oeufs par jour. On pourrait avoir de la volaille, mais le rabbin Uscher refuse de remplir les fonctions de shoichet, sous pretexte qu'il n'en a plus l'habitude". See report by Sylvain Hayum, 10 November 1942, XIII-5, Jamaica, Yivo.

problems for the inhabitants. The most serious were the restrictions of camp life, and the lack of opportunities to remigrate, creating serious frustration amongst the refugees.¹³² A Gibraltar evacuee wrote the following account to his wife, who had been evacuated to London, of the boredom and futility of camp life:

Here I am getting more and more bored, it is no life at all, the majority of us men are just desperate. One cannot make any request or protest, we have some very severe laws in the camp, here we have to say that black is white, indeed sometimes various women have been put in prison because they made riots in the canteens to protest about the food and in regard to food I could tell you many things, but we have to be silent. So no wonder I am longing for this to be ended, so that I can be with you and see the last of this place called Gibraltar Camp, which has nothing good about it...at last we shall leave it.¹³³

Given that most reports of the camp, which ranged from visiting JDC officials, refugees who had left, a resident HICEM representative to Dutch and Polish consular staff, all praised the running of the camp, it is likely that this report exaggerated the "harshness" of camp discipline.¹³⁴ It is more likely that forced restrictions engendered the bitterness and resentment in this report. For Jewish refugees taken from Lisbon to Gibraltar Camp, the restrictions were hard to bear because of additional factors. Many felt that once in Jamaica, they would be at liberty, and wanted to play an active role by enlisting in Allied forces. For example, in February, the Polish Government in Exile in London was contacted by a Polish refugee in Gibraltar Camp. He wrote that:

I beg you to understand that we are not complaining about the camp organisation or camp life. It is simply marvellous, anything is done to give us the most possible comfort. Nevertheless we were not aware of the conditions under which we were to live here. When we left Lisbon we were told, that we were going to a free country as free men, with the possibility of building up our lives again. We have been told now that this is absolutely out of question. We object to the feeling of having to live for the remaining duration of the war on charge of public charity and therefore beg you to find a way that a visa should be granted us to such country where we could really immigrate and make ourselves useful.¹³⁵

¹³²See Charles Jordan report for JDC of Gibraltar Camp, XIII-8 Jamaica, Yivo.

¹³³ Joseph L. Cruz, Hut 16, Gibraltar Camp to Herminia Cruz, London, 9 July 1941, PRO CO 91/515/12. Since this letter was found in the Colonial Office file at the PRO, it is not known whether it was received by Herminia Cruz in London.

¹³⁴For example, the following reports of Gibraltar Camp gave a favorable impression: JDC report, March 1942, #884, JDC. Luxembourg representative, M. Sylvain Hayum, 10 November 1942, XIII-5, Jamaica, Yivo. JDC representative Charles Jordan, December 1943, XIII-8, Yivo. Report of visit to the camp by Polish Ambassador, February 1944, #885, JDC.

¹³⁵ S. Rosenbaum, Gibraltar Camp 2 to Sekretariat Prezesa Rady Ministrow, London, 28 February 1942, X-III-3-Jamaica, 000013, Yivo.

Another factor was that unlike the Gibraltans, for many refugees, the prospect of returning “home” was not an option. Yet their terms of residence in Jamaica negated the possibility of settling there. Therefore, remigration from the restrictions of camp life became a priority.

Again in February, the same writer contacted the WJC, stating that:

What is weighing most on us is the forced idleness. We therefore must consider our residence here only as a halting place and endeavour to reach countries where we can build up a new existence. I insist on what I said in my previous letter and I know that your position will be difficult in getting a collective visa for all of us, but I hope that you will see your way to do me the favour I asked you to procure the necessary visas to Canada for my friends and myself.¹³⁶

Pinning their hopes on entry to Canada, Polish refugees in Gibraltar Camp wrote to Winston Churchill in August 1942, asking that he intervene with the Canadian authorities to allow them entry, where they could enlist in active service and war work. They wrote that :

While a world war rages and hecatombs of victims fall, we young people, wanting to fight and to work and able to be useful through our technical and branch knowledges are here in complete spirit and health-killing inactivity, in Gibraltar Camp. After three years, fleeing from the terrors of the flaming Europe, trying to save ourselves and ours from Nazis and Fascist concentration camps we are now on the English territory, where we wish to give all our possible efforts of our technical and branch knowledges for our common cause. We would have considered ourselves as parasitical individuals if we were not conscious that we are leading these camp-lives absolutely against our own will. But our conscience do not leave us in peace; others fight and die; others work and help, and we live in uselessness. We feel very very depressed, particularly now as the war seems to reach crisis point and when useful strength is more and more necessary. In our despair and helplessness, we decided to address ourselves to you and through your excellency to the Canadian Government , to deliver us and our families Canadian visas.¹³⁷

This letter was forwarded by the Colonial Office to the Polish Government in London and to the Canadian Prime Minister in Ottawa. They asked the Governor of Jamaica to inform the petitioners that the decision was one for the Polish and Canadian authorities, and not in the hands of the British Government.¹³⁸ For Polish refugees, who formed the majority in

¹³⁶S. Rosenbaum to Dr Igancy Schwarzbart, London, 26 February 1942. Rosenbaum states that HICEM would pay expenses for those able to obtain visas. He also enclosed copies of letters sent on behalf of the Polish group in Gibraltar Camp to Sikorski, the Polish Minister in Exile in London, and to the Polish Foreign Minister in Washington. See X-III-3-Jamaica, 000014, Yivo.

¹³⁷Group of Polish Refugees, Gibraltar Camp to Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 24 August 1942, PRO CO 323/1846/6.

¹³⁸JB Sidebotham, Colonial Office to AWG. Randall, Foreign Office, 29 October 1942, PRO CO 323/846/6, Registered number 29/14381/1/42. See also list prepared by Bernard Glasscheib, the Hicem representative in the camp, of Polish candidates wishing to emigrate to Canada, 22 families with professions ranging from diamond cutters, fur-cutters, dressmakers and tailors to carpenters, merchants and one architect. Glasscheib to A.J.Alexander, Montreal, 23 June 1942, XIII-5 Jam, Yivo.

Gibraltar Camp, remigration was achieved at a far slower pace than for refugees of other nationalities. During 1942, of 184 refugees who had arrived on the *Serpa Pinto* and *San Thome* in December 1941, only 30 were able to leave, 19 emigrating to the United States, nine to Cuba, and two to Venezuela and Curacao.¹³⁹ During the next few years, Cuba accepted 100 refugees, 46 were able to obtain visas to the United States, and a few individuals left for Venezuela, Columbia, and Guyana.¹⁴⁰

As well as feeling isolated and helpless, the group of Polish refugees in Gibraltar Camp felt bitter at the different treatment afforded refugees of other Allied nationalities. Whilst the Dutch and Czech refugees received regular visits from consular staff in Jamaica, as well as subsidies, the Polish refugees were reliant on philanthropic aid from the JDC, administered by Hicem, and had received no financial help from the Polish government in exile.¹⁴¹ The Polish group saw Dutch refugees arrive in Gibraltar Camp, and depart relatively quickly for units in Surinam, whilst they had profound difficulties in emigrating, or in gaining the assistance of their government.¹⁴² By the end of 1944 the majority of refugees, and all Gibraltar evacuees had left the camp, but seventeen Polish and Czech refugees remained in Gibraltar Camp until April 1947. Their difficulties included not having relatives in countries of migration, no money for travelling expenses or to procure visas, and ill health. One woman had been committed to a mental hospital in Kingston in 1946. Her husband left the camp with their son for the United States the same year, and, according to Hicem files, was in the process of demanding a divorce from his mentally ill wife.¹⁴³

For refugees in Trinidad, the impact of internment was important in influencing decisions about remaining or remigrating. The long period of internment led for some to a sense of despair, as the following account by Hans Stecher illustrates:

We spent more than three and a half years in detention and...many ...felt defeated and

¹³⁹Data prepared by Bernhard Glasscheib for Ilya Dijour, Hicem, 17 January 1943, XIII-10, Yivo.

¹⁴⁰See undated and unsigned data, XIII - 19 Jam, Yivo. This list must have been prepared in 1944 as it notes that 18 persons remain in the camp.

¹⁴¹For example, Bernard Glasscheib, Hicem representative in the camp described the disparity between the Polish and Dutch groups in the camp. Writing of the Dutch group, he said they had financial advantages over the Polish refugees, who were mainly indigent: "Ce groupe a quelques avantages, surtout financiers, sur le nôtre, qui font grounder le mécontentement". See Glasscheib to Ilya Dijour, Hias, NY, XIII-7 Jamaica, Yivo

¹⁴²See Chapter 4.

¹⁴³Data on refugees prepared by H. Lopez, Camp Commandant, 30 April 1947, #893, JDC.

hopeless. The close proximity of living also caused people to get onto each other's nerves. ...Dr Karell, a doctor of philosophy, became deranged; started to sit on the floor and to proclaim that he was a reincarnation of Abraham. An old man, Mr Blei, unfortunately hung himself.¹⁴⁴

Internment for others provided a measure of relief from an indigent life in Trinidad and also led to a growing dependence on institutionalised care. After the majority had applied for release from internment, a number of refugees remained unwilling to leave the internment camp, where food and lodging was taken care of. Refugees most at need were the elderly without funds or family to support them.¹⁴⁵ For example, in August 1941 the Jewish Refugee Society contacted the JDC over the following cases: A Mr Beer, 78 years, had been voluntarily interned alongside his son and daughter in law. Upon their release, he was requested to leave the camp, but was unwilling to do so. His relatives were unable to support him as they were looking for work: before the war they had established a photographic studio. Another two couples, in their seventies, had no relatives in Trinidad and no means of support. All wanted to emigrate to the United States.¹⁴⁶ In October 1941 the JDC were contacted about the remaining group of internees, 44 men, 29 women and seven children. Negotiations were continuing with the authorities over 14 refugees from the steamship Winnipeg, who were unable to remigrate and had no leave to remain in Trinidad. In addition, a group of ten elderly refugees had not applied for release because they were unemployable and had no means of support. Ideas to establish an old age home were discussed but it would seem that insufficient funds meant the idea never materialised.¹⁴⁷

In January 1944, 16 refugees remained interned, and during that month a further nine were released. The Trinidad authorities allowed them an extra two weeks before leaving, and it is

¹⁴⁴Unpublished draft manuscript by Hans "John" Stecher.

¹⁴⁵Edgar Gruen, President, JRS to Robert Pilpel, JDC 18 February 1942, #1048, JDC. Some elderly refugees were without funds because relatives in other countries could no longer send remittances. For example, Gruen mentions an Austrian refugee in Trinidad who used to be an editor of a newspaper in Austria. His relatives in Shanghai had sent regular remittances until Japan invaded Shanghai. Now the editor, over 60 years old, and his family had become dependent on aid from the JRS.

¹⁴⁶Jewish Refugee Society to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 30 August 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹⁴⁷Letter to the JDC from MW Beckelman, who visited the internment camp in Trinidad on behalf of the JDC, 19 October 1941, #1048, JDC. Whilst by January 1942 the last refugees from the Winnipeg were released, without having to leave Trinidad, the elderly refugees remained reluctant to leave the camp JRS to JDC, 16 January 1942, #1048, JDC.

not clear whether they applied for release, or were compelled to leave.¹⁴⁸ These nine refugees were all without means, and in January 1944, the JDC increased its monthly grant to the Jewish Refugee Society to help provide for these refugees.¹⁴⁹ By August 1944 four refugees remained interned, all unwilling to apply for release. A visit to the camp by a representative from the Red Cross in August 1944, and a later visit by a JDC representative in December 1944 described how three of the remaining refugees, in their fifties, entertained “unrealistic hopes” and refused to apply for release until they had received written guarantees from the Committee to the effect that they would be provided for as long as they were in need. Their families had all left the internment camp, and were now eking out an existence in Port of Spain. The JDC representative wrote that “The longer they remain in the camp the more peculiar their behaviour becomes”.¹⁵⁰ By July 1945 the remaining refugees in the internment camp had been released, and henceforth, were reliant on aid sent from the JDC to the Jewish Refugee Society for their upkeep.¹⁵¹

Release from internment did not necessarily improve the situation for refugees. When German and Austrian refugees were released, the businesses they had established, or the jobs they had gained had, for the most part, disappeared. There is some evidence that Jews not interned looked after the interests and properties of internees.¹⁵² Whilst before internment money sent by the JDC had gone towards loans for the establishment of small businesses, and immediate aid for those without means, with internment, the amounts sent decreased, as food and housing was taken care of. With release from internment, however, the JDC had to increase payments, to help support refugees who had lost their livelihoods, and had to find accommodation and work.¹⁵³ In a report to the JDC in August 1941, the JRS of Trinidad sent

¹⁴⁸Professor Robert Moll, delegate of the International Red cross Committee, reporting on recent visit to Port of Spain, August 9 1944 to JDC NY and Ferdinand Bronner, JRS, to Moll, 27 October 1944, #1048, JDC.

¹⁴⁹Memorandum, Committee on Refugee Aid in South America (CRASA), JDC Administration, 31 January 1944. The memorandum advised that the monthly grant, which had been reduced to \$75 per month, should be restored to \$150 monthly. See #114 and see also JRS to Pilpel, CRASA, 11 January 1944, #1048, JDC.

¹⁵⁰Internal JDC memo by Harry D. Biele, 5 December 1944, #1048, JDC.

¹⁵¹Edgar Gruen, President Jewish Refugee Society to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 9 November 1945, #1215, JDC.

¹⁵²See Farah, “The Jewish Community of Trinidad”, p.22.

¹⁵³The amounts of monthly sums sent from the JDC altered frequently reflecting the situation for refugees in Trinidad. For example, in December 1939 the JDC had sent \$300 monthly. In September the amount rose to \$500. During 1942 it amounted to \$240 monthly. In January 1943 the amount was lowered to \$150, presumably because many refugees released found employment. In that month's report, the JDC stated that “repayments of loans were unusually high” during that month. #150 was dispensed monthly until December 1943 when the monthly amount was decreased to \$75. In January 1944 the grant rose to \$150 again as elderly and indigent refugees were released

them a list of refugees still interned who needed support from the JDC for their release. The report listed their ages, occupations before Trinidad, occupations in Trinidad, what their prospects were in Trinidad, whether they had relatives in the western hemisphere, and what chances they had of remigrating. Of the eight refugees listed, six had found employment before internment, but only four were now considered to be able to find employment again now. All were 50 years or younger and wished to emigrate.¹⁵⁴

The terms of release also added to problems in finding employment. Once released, refugees were still subject to restrictions in force. Since September 1939 all refugees and aliens were subject to the Aliens Restriction Order, which entailed reporting daily to a police station, remaining in Port of Spain, and being under curfew.¹⁵⁵ This Order had already disrupted the livelihood of many in the Jewish community. Once the Order had come into effect, some 150 Eastern European Jews who had settled in San Fernando were compelled to move back to Port of Spain, thus losing their livelihoods. The JDC, who had been sending monthly sums to the Jewish Refugee Society, was asked for extra support in May 1940, when it was estimated that peddlers who sold goods on credit had some \$15,000 debts outstanding in country districts and owing to the regulation, were now unable to collect. By June the amounts outstanding had risen to \$25,000.00.¹⁵⁶

The Aliens Restriction Order also created difficulties for refugees who had been interned from finding employment. For example, whilst the construction activity connected with the American bases made it possible for many internees to find employment, a report to the JDC in 1941 stated that the “construction jobs all lie outside Port of Spain and the terms of release from camp provide that the alien must live in the city, subject to curfew”. In addition, the report stated that the cost of living had been considerably increased in Port of Spain, reflected

and needed more aid. In August 1944 an amount of \$490 was sent, grants for August and September increasing to \$320 for relief of internees. Throughout the rest of 1944 this amount was sent. See Committee on Refugee Aid in South America, Meetings from 1942 - 1944, JDC Administration, #114, JDC.

¹⁵⁴Edgar Gruen, Secretary Jewish Refugee Society Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, JDC, 30 August 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹⁵⁵Julius Sass, President, Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 1 February 1941 and Jewish Refugee Society, Trinidad to Robert Pilpel, JDC 18 February 1942, #1048. See also Memo, National Refugee Service NY, 22 August 1940, #1047, JDC.

¹⁵⁶DJ Goldenburg, President Jewish Refugee Society to Robert Pilpel, JDC, 30 May 1940, and Richter, Jewish Refugee Society to Pilpel, 22 June 1940, #1047. See also Meeting of the Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central And South America, 9 July 1940, #113, JDC.

in high rents.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, many British and American firms seemed reluctant to hire released internees.¹⁵⁸

Whilst it was more than probable that internment created a desire to emigrate from Trinidad, the reality was that for many refugees, difficulties in getting visas, having no funds and other problems militated against a mass exodus once released. In a JDC memorandum, Harry Biele estimated that between 1939 and 1944, approximately 150 Jews had emigrated to the United States. Of the 400 or so Jewish population in Trinidad, about 30 to 40% would eventually obtain visas to emigrate there also.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the numbers of Central and Eastern European refugees remained, until the immediate postwar period, evenly balanced. For example, in February 1944 statistical data supplied by the Jewish Refugee Society of Trinidad to the JDC counted approximately 400 refugees in the country. Of these, 189 were Polish and Rumanian Jews, and 140 were Germans, Austrians and Czechs. Of this number 334 Jews were registered with the Committee and only eight were reliant on assistance from them.¹⁶⁰ In June 1945, of an estimated 320 refugees now in Trinidad, the majority, some 250, were self sustaining. It counted 187 refugees from Poland and Rumania, and 128 from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.¹⁶¹

Therefore, in the immediate postwar period, both groups of refugees remained in Trinidad, the majority able to make a living. During 1945 and 1946 the JRS continued to receive from the JDC \$300 monthly, to support ten people.¹⁶² In 1945 a form of agreement was reached by the different organisations in Trinidad. A Council of Jewish Organizations was formed, optimistically stating that it would “after years efforts to have general Jewish interests

¹⁵⁷M W Beckelman report to the JDC, 19 October 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹⁵⁸Jewish Refugee Society to Frederick Borchardt, Subcommittee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, JDC 12 November 1941, #1048, JDC. See also letter of 17 November 1942 from Edgar Gruen, JRS to Borchardt, JDC, #1048: “Although all American firms attached in Trinidad, and also some British Companies refused from the beginning to employ Jewish people released from the detention we have still some confidence for the future as to the fact that in contempt of all those obstacles a certain number of us have settled themselves again”.

¹⁵⁹ See Harry D. Biele, 5 December 1944, #1048 JDC.

¹⁶⁰February 1944, Statistical Data, Jewish Refugee Society, #1048, JDC.

¹⁶¹Statistical data provided by the Jewish Refugee Society to the JDC, June 1945, #1215, JDC. The remaining few refugees were 2 Italians and 3 stateless.

¹⁶²See R. Pilpel to Isaac Levy and Louis Sobel, memorandum, 5 January 1946, #1215, JDC.

represented in Trinidad and abroad by only ONE Committee".¹⁶³ Since the Council would represent the following organisations, it is doubtful whether it ever achieved its aim.

Represented on the Council were representatives of the JAT, the JRS, WIZO, the Jewish Dramatic Circle, United Zionists, Committee of the World Jewish Congress and the newly formed Jewish Religious Society.

Conclusion

An overriding theme of this chapter has been the degree to which the West Indies was a chosen destination for refugees. From analysing sources of information available to refugees, it would seem that only those acting on their own initiative chose West Indian destinations, whilst those that sought advice were advised against emigrating there. For refugees, the circumstances under which they arrived influenced the way in which they viewed their new home. For a minority, the West Indies seem to have been a chosen destination, whereas for most, the West Indies was a last resort, a place from which they could reapply to enter South or North American destinations. Initially barred from entering the United States, refugees entered the West Indies, reapplying for admission to South America, and from there often reapplying to enter the United States. Yet rates of remigration were slow, again reflecting the fact that the West Indies received refugees who were unable to migrate to a destination of choice.

For refugees in Gibraltar Camp, the West Indies were a cruel disappointment as well as a refuge. Arriving in Jamaica, many were confused about the arrangements which ensured that their stay would be limited to the confines of the camp. With remigration difficult to achieve, frustration, boredom and anger became common complaints. In fact, the difficulties in remigrating may have been one factor in the changing dynamics regarding decisions to settle or leave. Despite difficulties, many refugees did attempt to settle in Trinidad and other West Indian colonies. Yet the different social class, age, occupation and religious identity of refugees were contributing factors in their ability to integrate into West Indian life successfully. Whilst Eastern European immigrants were successful in peddling, and eventually opening stores and other enterprises, the majority of Jews coming from Germany and Austria were more reliant on finding paid employment or on aid. Surprisingly, many were successful in establishing small businesses and factories. Yet with the outbreak of war, these differences were further magnified by the treatment of both groups of refugees. Eastern Europeans were not treated as enemy aliens but German, Austrian and Czech Jews were

¹⁶³Edgar Gruen, Chairman of Council of Jewish Organizations to JDC, 21 December 1945, #1215, JDC.

interned, often for long periods.

It is also clear that Jews arriving in Trinidad before 1938 drew clear lines between themselves and those arriving as a result of forced emigration. Jews in the leadership of JAT made many statements to the effect that their organisation represented Jews who wished to remain in Trinidad whilst the JRS represented those who had arrived as refugees and were in Trinidad until they could remigrate. This was not the case, not just because remigration was difficult, but also because some refugees from Nazi Germany chose to remain, for example the Stechers, who still have a store in Port of Spain. Whilst the number of different Jewish organisations in existence in Trinidad in 1945 expresses a colourful diversity, it can also be seen as a symbol of the failure of the community to overcome its differences. The debates about the use of language and about the relative importance of religious or secular activities demonstrated the gulf of understanding that existed not just between Central and Eastern European refugees, but also within each group. With the outbreak of war, anxieties on both sides were heightened as the community felt external pressure to conform. These anxieties found expression in the hostile debate about the use of German or yiddish in literature sent not only to Jews, but to the surrounding non-Jewish world in Trinidad.

For some refugees, remigrating was always their intention. Some had arrived in Trinidad already possessing visas for South, Central or North America. For these refugees, their experience in the West Indies was just a preliminary to starting new lives. For others, the experience of internment was a key factor in changing decisions about staying or leaving. Internment, however, was not the only factor. In 1939 Max Markreich had stated that he wished to remain in Trinidad, yet in 1941 he emigrated to the United States with his family. He became active in refugee affairs and founded a congregation in Astoria, Queens NYC. The limited possibility of retaining a religious and cultural life in a small colony, particularly given the hostility between Eastern European and Central European traditions, was also a key factor which influenced refugees. For example, a letter to the World Jewish Congress from Barbados in 1950 characterises the post war feelings of that community:

Our community counts at present more than a hundred souls thanks to the influx of a few Rumanian families who settled here recently. The men are organized in the "Jewish Center" and the women in the WIZO. There is hardly anything more of interest going on in our community. Our children grow up without a Jewish education and there is little we can do about it... In the tropics people do very little reading and most of our members are still devoting all their time and energy to the prosaic task of

making a living.¹⁶⁴

In 1946 there was a further immigration of Jewish refugees who came from Rumania, Poland and DP camps to join relatives already in Barbados or Trinidad.¹⁶⁵ Here small Jewish communities took root, and in Jamaica the remaining refugees became part of the larger Sephardic Jewish community. By 1948, in Barbados the Jewish community had grown to about 35 families, and in Trinidad about 60 families, or 250 people remained. Most made their living by peddling, the more successful by owning dry goods stores.¹⁶⁶ There is a striking circularity to this narrative, which begins and ends by describing how Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe began to settle in the West Indies. The successful integration of these immigrants is explained in a comment by Lorna Yufe, in a memoir written in 1981, in Trinidad. Originally from Poland, she had come to Trinidad from Honduras in 1936. Initially making money as a peddler, today the Yufe's store in Port of Spain is highly successful. Recalling the differences between refugees who had arrived from Nazi Germany, and those coming originally from Eastern Europe, she commented that Eastern Europeans were of a different "social and economic background" and that "there were no professionals among the immigrants."¹⁶⁷ Henry Altman's remarks, made in Barbados in 1990, that unlike the Trinidad community "we found roots here," also suggests that those refugees from Eastern Europe adapted to West Indian life more successfully than refugees from Germany and Austria.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Dr Pillersdorf, Barbados to Dr Schwarzbart, WJC, 29 May 1950, WJC Series H, H64/Barbados 1947-1952, AJAC.

¹⁶⁵ See JDC Bulletin on immigration procedures to Trinidad, May 1947. Applications could be filed by local residents on behalf of relatives either too young, old or sick to support themselves, and had no one else to care for them. These persons would be granted permission to emigrate to Trinidad. #1215, JDC.

¹⁶⁶ JDC report on Trinidad in September 1948 said there are some 60 families in Trinidad consisting of about 250 people, 85 of whom children. Most Jews have stores or peddle. "Although there is no obvious anti-semitism in that the Jews are always included in all official receptions, Mr. Albricht felt that it showed itself in the immigration situation. The Island Government has permitted only wives, under aged children and over aged" report by Mr Albricht on Trinidad, from Reta Stein, Director Personal Service Dept, JDC NY to AJDC Paris Emigration, Sept 20 1948.#1215, JDC.

¹⁶⁷ Farrah, "The Jewish Community in Trinidad", p.8, citing manuscript by Lorna Yufe.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Henry Altman, in author's possession, 28 August 1990.

Chapter 5: A New Jerusalem? British West Indians and Jewish Refugees

Introduction

The colonial world of the British West Indies went under profound change as a result of the First World War. Movements for universal suffrage, trade union organisation, social equality and independence all had their seeds in the experience of West Indians who had fought and returned to the colonies from a world where they had seen the possibilities of social and political equality. During the 1930s there was economic, social and political changes of enduring magnitude which eventually led to the independence of many colonies from Britain. Whilst the 1920s and 1930s witnessed political mobilisation, the war period, in contrast, saw a return to a more autocratic rule. Making use of wide ranging detention and internment powers, Colonial Governors clamped down on political movements. The war also delayed the improvements recommended by the Royal Commission appointed in 1938 as it did to the more radical and wide ranging changes advocated by West Indians themselves. Yet the geo-political position of the Caribbean during the war ensured its protection by the United States, and, as an extension of this, the presence of American air bases in many West Indian islands influenced economic and social change in both positive and negative ways.

The two issues which this chapter will examine, attitudes to Jewish immigration and the reception of Jews in the West Indies, must be seen within the context of these dynamic factors in the West Indies. It will analyse why West Indian colonies were unwilling to allow refugee migration, examining whether concerns against refugee migration were influenced by general economic arguments, or specific arguments concerning Jewish immigrants. It will then consider what impact the entry of refugees had on the economic and social life of West Indian Colonies. Where did Jewish refugees 'fit' in West Indian society? What parallels were drawn between the diasporic nature of West Indian identity, and Jewish identity? Were attitudes towards their admittance, and to their presence determined by considerations of race and class? How sympathetic were West Indians towards the plight of European Jews?

A New Jerusalem?

Tell me what you think of a dictator

Trampling the Jews like Adolph Hitler

Tumbling them out of Germany

Some running for refuge in the West Indies

Some land in Demerara and Grenada

They land in Trinidad very regular
 The way they are coming all of them
 Will make Trinidad new Jerusalem.¹

Standing alone, the message of this calypso is ambiguous and it is only when it is seen in context with other calypsos on this subject, and its own final verse, that its message becomes clearer. A major theme running through this chapter is ambivalence towards Jews. The fears expressed by West Indians over the impact of Jewish refugees illustrates specific prejudices about Jews, but also more general concerns about how minority groups integrate into West Indian culture and society. The anxieties revealed tell much about the nature of West Indian society in the 1930s, and the process by which a minority became absorbed into that society. In order to understand public opinion, the chapter explores the attitudes of two leading daily West Indian newspapers, the Trinidad Guardian and its Sunday Guardian, and the Daily Gleaner in Jamaica. Both newspapers covered local and international events from a liberal perspective, and were the most widely read papers in each colony.² Whilst the views expressed in these papers may not have been representative of all sections of the West Indian population, it is reasonable to assume that they both reflected, and led opinion about the impact of Jewish refugees.³ In addition to local press coverage, other sources are used - from debates in the local legislatures to memoirs and calypsos - to illustrate the concerns of West Indians. The chapter explores how local opinion contained both sympathy for Jewish plight as well as hostility towards them for economic or racial reasons.

- I -

The British West Indies

In the 1930s, as a result of widespread social unrest, a Royal Commission appointed in 1938

¹Extract from "Gorilla" Charlie Grant, Trinidad Calypso 1939, cited in Oliver Marshall, ed., The Caribbean at War: 'British West Indians' in World War II, London 1992, p.20. For last verse see later in this chapter.

² The Trinidad Guardian carried its foreign news from the Associated Press, as well as some syndicated articles. In 1944 an American economic analyst prepared a report on the press in Jamaica. Of the Gleaner he commented that the foreign press came mainly from sources in London and from Canapress (a news agency). Of its attitude towards the United States, it was "benevolently critical". It carried columns from Dorothy Thompson, Sumner Welles and Ely Culbertson. Of the Express, another Jamaican newspaper, he stated that it was more conservative than the Gleaner, and represented the Kingston merchant class in its opinion. See report by Paul Blanschard, Senior Economic Analyst for the American State Department, 14 January 1944, RG59, file no. 844D.114, National Archives Washington (hereafter NA).

³Writing about use of press coverage to understand America's reaction to the Holocaust, Deborah Lipstadt has pointed out that the "the press may not determine what the public thinks, but it does influence what it thinks about". See Deborah Lipstadt, Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933 - 1945, New York 1986, p.5.

carried out a wide ranging investigation into West Indian conditions. Amongst its recommendations, it stated that the social unrest represented:

A positive demand for the creation of new conditions that will render possible a better and less restricted life. It is the co-existence of this demand for better conditions with the unfavourable economic trend that is the crux of the West Indian problem of the present day.⁴

The following section considers the context in which these remarks were made. Beginning with a demographic profile of West Indian society, it continues by considering the social, political and economic changes that took place during the 1930s and the wartime period and describes the kind of society that Jewish refugees became a part of.

As a region, the British West Indies are a group of islands which stretch between British Honduras, situated on the mainland of Central America to British Guiana (now Guyana) on the South American coast. The total distance between the islands is some three thousand miles. The two mainland colonies, British Guiana and British Honduras have the greatest land mass. Of the island colonies, Jamaica is the largest with 4,411 square miles, Trinidad the second largest with 1,856 square miles. On the opposite end of the scale, Barbados and Grenada have less than 200 square miles and islands such as St Kitts and Nevis less than 100.⁵ Given the large distances between colonies and their diverse histories of colonization, it is difficult to talk of a homogeneous West Indian identity.⁶ Successive European powers colonised the Caribbean during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, transplanting political and legal systems, language and cultural practices from their respective European metropolis. Each island had a different history of colonisation: for example, whilst Barbados had a continual British presence from 1627, Trinidad remained under Spanish ownership until its capture by the British in 1797. The effects and policies contingent to European settlement decimated and dispersed indigenous populations, making the history of the Caribbean a history of forced and voluntary immigration.⁷

⁴West India Royal Commission Report, revised edition (no date), p.8, (hereafter Royal Commission).

⁵Morley Ayearst, The British West Indies: The Search for Self Government, London 1960, p.11.

⁶Yet it has also been argued that the degree of insularity which exists, and the lack of a sense of "West Indian nationhood" is a result not of geography, but of British colonial policy which ensured that avenues of communication went between individual islands and London rather than with each other. See Gordon Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, London 1968 p.18.

⁷Philip Sherlock has written that "the destruction of the native people was more complete in the Caribbean than anywhere else in America. The islands were comparatively small. There was nowhere for the Arawaks and Caribs to

With the development of the West Indies from small holdings to sugar plantations during the seventeenth century, thousands of West Africans were brought to Caribbean colonies as slaves. This shift fundamentally changed the demographic and economic makeup of the islands as sugar plantations demanded land and labour intensive methods for its cultivation.⁸ During this period, Sephardic Jews, mainly merchants and traders, also established themselves in British and Dutch West Indian colonies, principally Jamaica, Barbados and Curacao.⁹ After the abolition of slavery in 1833, large numbers of indentured labourers migrated to the West Indies to replace freed slaves in sugar and agricultural plantations. Whilst the majority were from Eastern India, thousands of Chinese and Portuguese (from Madeira) also came to Jamaica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Kitt and St Vincent, with the largest numbers migrating to Trinidad and British Guiana.¹⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century, with the sugar industry in decline, no further large waves of immigration took place, although the West Indies acted as a fishing-net for the various migratory movements from East to West. So whilst the primary destination for many was the United States, Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, Lebanon (classified as Syrians) and Palestine came via the West Indies and for a variety of reasons remained.¹¹

go". See Philip Sherlock, West Indies, London 1966, p.17; See Eric Williams for a description of the Spanish conquest of West Indian islands and subsequent treatment of Indian Caribs and Arawaks. Of the Spanish conquistadors he comments that " it has been said that first they fell on their knees, and then they fell on the aborigines". In 1492 a population of between 200,000 and 300,000 Indians lived in Hispaniola (to become the Dominican Republic). By 1548 their number had decreased to some 500 living in some two villages. Thousands of Caribbean Indians were also exported to Spain, forming the first slave movements from, rather than to, the Caribbean. See Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro, London 1970, pp.30 - 34. In British Guiana the Royal Commission counted some 14,000 Mayas and 5,000 Caribs in 1938. See Royal Commission, p.403.

⁸For example, in Barbados, in 1645 the average holding was less than ten acres, with a total of 100,000 arable acres. Of the estimated 18,000 white men in Barbados, 11,000 were proprietors of small land holdings. The slave population was an estimated 5,680. By 1667 ten acre holdings had disappeared and were replaced by 200 - 1,000 acre plantations, owned by 745 plantation owners. The slave population had also grown to 82,023. Eric Williams, p.104 & p.112 and Stephen Fortune, Merchants and Jews: The struggle for British West Indian Commerce 1650 - 1750, Florida 1984, p.58. From Colonial Office files, Fortune has estimated the 1655 slave population at 20,000 and the 1673 slave population at 33,000, markedly lower than William's estimates.

⁹The laws governing Jewish settlement differed in each colony. Whereas some Jews became established as plantation owners in Jamaica, in Barbados their role was legally limited to certain economic functions. For the Jewish community in Barbados, see Joanna Newman, "Jews in a Colonial Society: the Jewish Community of Barbados, 1654 - 1833", MA thesis, University College London University, 1993. For a general background to Sephardic Jewish settlement in the Caribbean see Stephen Fortune, Merchants and Jews.

¹⁰ Hewan Craig states that the largest numbers migrated to British Guiana and Trinidad because the native populations were small in comparison to the amount of fertile and underdeveloped land. See Hewan Craig, The Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, London 1952, pp.3 - 4. For figures of Indian, Chinese and Madeiran immigration, see chapter two, p.21, footnote, 41.?

¹¹For an insight into the Lebanese and Chinese trade diaspora, see Robin Cohen, Global Diaspora: An Introduction, London 1997, pp.83 - 104 . On Lebanese immigration see Nellie Ammar, "They came from The Middle East", Jamaica Journal, Vol.4, No.1, March 1970, pp.2 - 6; David Nichols, "No Hawkers and Pedlars: Levantines in the Caribbean", Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol.4, 1981, pp.415 - 431. See also K.O. Lawrence, "The

In the 1930s, West Indian society was a divided one in which social mobility was limited by considerations of class, race, ethnicity and economic means. The demographic mix of ethnic populations in the West Indies differed again according to its economic history. Generally, census material classified racial groups into the following categories: White, Black, East Indian, Syrian or other Asiatic, Chinese, Mixed or coloured (including Chinese and Indian-Creole) and Race not stated.¹² In British Guiana and Trinidad, East Indians constituted a large percentage of the population whereas in Jamaica, more typical of other British West Indian colonies, they constituted one of several minorities including Jews, Syrians and Portuguese.¹³ The dominant religions in British West Indian colonies were Christian Church of England, Anglican and Protestant non denominational, in colonies with a French or Spanish influence, Catholic and in colonies with East Indian minorities Hindu and Muslim.¹⁴ Altogether the West Indian population in 1936 numbered just over two million and over 90 per cent constituted a working class engaged as urban and rural labourers, peasant proprietors of small holdings or artisans.¹⁵ Within this class, the majority were black or East Indian and within this group, illiteracy and unemployment were highest.¹⁶ Whilst primary and

Establishment of the Portuguese Community in British Guiana”, Jamaica Historical Review, Vol.5, N.2, 1965, pp.50 - 74. In this article, Lawrence describes a similar pattern of economic activity for Portuguese immigrants who arrived at the end of the nineteenth century.

¹² For a discussion of how problematic these categories were, see Carol S. Holzberg, Minorities and Power in a Black Society: The Jewish Community of Jamaica, Maryland 1987, pp.xvii - xxx.

¹³ For example, Hewan Craig has reproduced census material from 1946 which gives the following figures: Of Trinidad, white inhabitants numbered 2.7%, black's, 46.8%, East Indians, 35%, Syrian and Asiatic, .1%, Chinese, 1%, mixed or coloured (including Chinese and Indian-Creole), 14% . In British Guiana, East Indians constituted 43.5%, outnumbering black West Indians by 5.3%. In Jamaica, black West Indians formed 78.1%, and East Indians only 2.1% with a substantial coloured element of 17.5% and a white minority of 1.1%. See Craig, The Legislative Council, p.4. In Barbados the Sephardic Jewish community had all but died out, but in Curacao, British Guiana and Jamaica, communities remained. In Curacao the Jewish population numbered 566 in 1929, of a general population of 90,870. In British Guiana the population numbered 1,786 in 1925 of a general population of 310,933. See Annual Jewish Year Book , Vol.40, 1938 - 1939. In Jamaica the Jewish population numbered 1277 in 1943, constituting 10 % of the white population, see Holzberg, Minorities and Power, p.21.

¹⁴ In Trinidad in 1931, 24.6% were Church of England, 22.8% Hindu, 5.2% Muslim, 22.5% Protestant non-conformist. See Craig, The Legislative Council, p.111.

¹⁵ Royal Commission, p.9. The figure, 2,514,000, was open to question, as the Report stated that a wide margin of error must be accepted as the figures were calculated from 1921 census figures including estimates for the rise in population since that date.

¹⁶ See Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.56. In colonies where Indians formed a large minority, their status was often lower than black West Indians, the majority working as agricultural labourers in sugar plantations. The level of acculturation to a Creole culture, that is to a culture native to the Caribbean was also lower in this group in Trinidad. Retaining distinct religious and linguistic practices, the majority of East Indians worked in rural plantations. They were also disadvantaged educationally. In a 1946 census taken in Trinidad, the highest proportion of illiteracy occurred among the East Indians, 50.44 per cent compared to 22.5 per cent of the general population. See Craig, The Legislative Council, p.5. The high level of illiteracy came as a result of living in rural areas with poor educational facilities, and the practice of removing children from school early in order to help parents in small

secondary education existed in most colonies, sometimes to a high standard, overall, provision was inadequate and the majority of children attended only to primary level, and, even then, attendance was also poor.¹⁷ For those who did manage to remain in secondary education, no university existed in the West Indies and competition for the one annual scholarship was fierce, creating an atmosphere which allowed “one favoured candidate through the escape-hatch from the colonial prison”.¹⁸

Social mobility was limited by various factors, race playing an important part. Whilst “coloured” West Indians were found in the upper, middle and lower classes, black West Indians remained, on the whole, in the working class. Ayearst defined the word ‘coloured’ in its West Indian context to mean, “a person of mixed European and non white ancestry...The mixture may include Indian or Chinese as well as Negro forbears”.¹⁹ Therefore the upper classes included British officials, white landowners, a few wealthy coloured families and old established colonial families, whereas the upper middle class consisted of those whose education and background enabled them to take professional jobs, and included coloured and white West Indians. The majority of clerical and civil service employees, self employed small businessmen, skilled artisans, some peasant proprietors and elementary school teachers were included in the lower middle classes, which again mainly consisted of white and coloured West Indians, with a small percentage of black West Indians.²⁰

As well as racial considerations, ethnic identity defined to some extent the degree to which its members could climb the social ladder. Generally, minority ethnic groups formed part of an “urban and commercial bourgeoisie”, occupied as peddlers, shopkeepers and owners of small

holdings.

¹⁷ Philip Sherlock has noted that “up to 1940 a very small number of children of school age attended secondary school”. In Jamaica, “as late as the 1930s only one out of every 80 children of school age received secondary schooling”. See Sherlock, West Indies, p.129.

¹⁸ Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.87.

¹⁹ See Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.56. See also Gordon Lewis, who suggests that whilst skin colour did determine social class, it was not an exclusive determinant, “The real divisions of the society are the horizontal ones of social class rather than the vertical ones of colour identification”, see Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.21. See also Hewan Craig, who notes of West Indians of mixed heritage that “this mixed group, in general better favoured economically and educationally than the Negroes, displays some of the features which in societies where class divisions are not associated with differences in colour, are regarded as characteristic of the newly rich”, that often the coloured middle class tended to show greater prejudice towards the black working class than to the white ruling class. See Craig, The Legislative Council, pp.5 - 6.

²⁰ See Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.56.

businesses.²¹ Whilst these groups were to an extent acculturated, it has been suggested that their alien status provided an advantage, enabling them to form a:

Distinct class of professionals and merchant capitalists in West Indian life: the Chinese grocery and merchandise families; the Indian family dynasties of professional practitioners like the Luckhoos in Guyana, ... the Portuguese business families in Guyana...the Jewish-Jamaican business magnates.²²

There are obvious comparisons to be made between the Eastern European Jews and Syrians who came to West Indian colonies between the late nineteenth century and the 1930s. Both groups came en route to or from South or North America, and for the majority in both groups, a living was made by peddling or dry goods. In addition, among the Syrian immigrants were Jews, who in Jamaica, became influential members of both the Jewish community and Jamaican society.²³ In case studies of Syrian immigrants, Robin Cohen has shown a general pattern where the majority established themselves as pedlars and traders. Citing the following as typical, he describes the life of one Lebanese in Jamaica:

To the end of his life old Elias Issa, who had arrived in Jamaica in 1894, could show the mark on his back made by the box he carried as a pedlar. After some years he was able to buy a donkey and then set up shop in Princess Street, later moving to Orange Street.²⁴

As will be explored later in this chapter, the nature of colonial society saw one group compete against another for control of trade, and this was particularly true in Trinidad of Syrian and Jewish merchants. Whilst the cultural differences of minority groups may have provided some advantages, a process of acculturation, or “creolization” into West Indian society did take place. Yet it has been suggested that this was a movement of individuals whose ethnicity became subsumed within Creole culture. Gordon Lewis has described the process

²¹For example, Chinese and Portuguese immigrants to Trinidad had begun as agricultural labourers but by the 1930s became chiefly engaged in trade and small business. See Craig, *The Legislative Council*, p.4.

²²Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, p.38. See also Robin Cohen, who has described how Chinese, Lebanese and Indian immigrants were successful in the West Indies because they fulfilled specific economic functions and as a group, were resistant to assimilation to the native populations because of ethnic and religious reasons. He writes that their success stemmed from “the combination of blocked opportunities, hostility from others and ethnic cohesiveness seem to create an advantageous sociological and commercial ethos in the ethnic group concerned”, see *Global Diasporas*, p.101. This description could be equally applied to the success of Jewish merchants and traders in the West Indies during the slavery period.

²³For example, the Matalon family in Jamaica achieved economic and political power in Jamaica after the Second World War. Joseph Matalon arrived from Syria in the 1920s and entered the drygoods business. See Holzberg, *Minorities and Power*, pp.203-205. In Jamaica, cooperation existed between Chinese, Syrians and Jews involved in trading. Holzberg states that some Jews and Syrians worked together but by the 1920s, Syrians monopolised the retail dry-goods trade whilst Jews concentrated more on wholesaling. See *ibid*, p.127.

²⁴ See Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, pp.96 - 97.

of creolization of marginal groups as follows:

A process of “creolization” takes place in which marginal groups, hitherto kept outside of the ‘national’ community by the colonial economy, gradually incorporate themselves into the emergent Creole culture, although it remains as yet, a process, pretty well confined to the educated, professional persons of those groups who accept the competitive norms of the class stratified society.²⁵

But the level of acculturation for immigrant groups remained an uneven process, both for groups as a whole and for individuals within groups, reflecting active racial and class barriers. Whilst both the Jamaican and Chinese communities in Jamaica remained distinctive groups, Lewis has argued that the Jews were far more socially integrated into Jamaican society than the Chinese.²⁶ Even so, there is evidence to suggest that as a group, the Jamaican Jewish community was tolerated rather than accepted as part of the white upper class society and that the community as a whole was in decline.²⁷ Rather, it was as individuals that Jewish politicians, landowners, newspaper editors and other professionals found acceptance within Jamaican society.²⁸ Similarly he has argued that the successful integration of Jamaican Jews illustrates the point that the West Indies cannot be viewed as a pluralist society, as their success came alongside a “general attenuation of Jewish faith and tradition” and that the extensive involvement of Jews in the economic and social life of Jamaica illustrates “how fully creolised the group had become”.²⁹ Yet these assumptions have been questioned in a study of Jamaican Jewry which illustrates that at least up to the 1970s, Jews in Jamaica remained a distinct group, surviving because of their inclusion of members who were visibly

²⁵ Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.38

²⁶ Gordon Lewis has claimed that whilst the Jamaican Jews remained within the higher echelons of society, the Chinese in Jamaica found it difficult to enter the upper reaches of the professional or business classes. Lewis cites an example of an Anglican Bishop exhorting his congregation to “go into a Chinaman’s shop and make him a Christian”. Whilst this would be socially acceptable behaviour towards the Chinese in Jamaica, it would be “unthinkable” behaviour towards Jamaican Jews. See The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.39.

²⁷ Similarly, Morley Ayearst has emphasised that individual Jews played an important role in the economic life of Jamaica but that as a group, they had become assimilated through intermarriage with the non Jewish population, “both white and coloured for generations”. See The British West Indies, p.65.

²⁸ Evidence of the unpopularity of the community can be found in Colonial Office minutes in several files. For example, on 24 June 1938 a Colonial Office official minuted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that the Jamaican Jewish community was “not too popular as it is”. See Public Record Office, London (henceforth PRO) CO 323/1604/4.

²⁹ See Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.65, and Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.39. Lewis notes that in 1941 only one copy of a Talmud was possessed in Jamaica. Yet Lewis also takes as evidence of a low religious identity the lack of any Zionist organisation on the island, see p.40. I would question the assumption that a lack of Zionist affiliation is proof of lack of Jewish identity.

“Jamaica white”, black and Chinese.³⁰ Therefore it is questionable whether Jews retained their identity through creolization, or whether in order to become creolised, their ties to Judaism were diminished.

Whilst the Jamaican Jewish community were a distinct but well integrated group, those immigrants from ethnic minorities who had arrived in the nineteenth century were often the target of prejudice and stereotyping from Creoles who saw their economic and social activity as a threat to their own standing. Gordon Lewis has described how opinion saw that the :

Asiatic has an innate capacity, the Negro an innate incapacity for business, that the one is the ‘economic man’ with all of the petty-bourgeois acquisitive instincts, the other the spendthrift of the well-known West Indian Creole ‘personality image’. Sometimes too, the stereotypes, inevitably contradicted each other: so, at times, the Oriental is blamed because he is ‘clannish’ and ‘won’t mix’, at other times he is criticised for his ‘aggressive’ intrusion into areas where he ‘doesn’t belong’.³¹

In fact, these stereotypes often developed from legal restrictions imposed on immigrants. Echoing the justifications used to explain prejudice against Jews and their involvement in certain occupations, Lewis points to similar explanations: that Asiatic immigrant groups were barred from:

education, government and ‘respectable’ social life, the only escape from estate labour was the field of business entrepreneurship neglected by the other groups, and it was not surprising that the Asiatic, with the helpful tradition of the organised, patriarchal Oriental family structure behind him, seized the opportunity to full advantage.³²

As will be explored in this chapter, all these factors played an important role in shaping West Indian attitudes towards Jewish refugees.

For British West Indians themselves, the 1930s marked a period of profound change and of profound frustration. The First World War had a fundamental impact on the lives of West Indians. During the war, the West Indian economy enjoyed a brief boom as European beet sugar became unavailable. Sugar production increased and there was a period of prosperity which lasted until demand outstripped supply and by 1929 the industry was again in crisis.

³⁰ See Holzberg, *Minorities and Power*, p.7. See also her refutation of “stratificationist” and “pluralist” views which oversimplify ethnic identifications in West Indian societies, pp.xxii - xxvi.

³¹ Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, p.42.

³² Ibid.

Over 15,000 men and some 400 officers served in the British West Indies Regiment during the war. Whilst many were introduced to the egalitarian and socialist ideals of the British Labour Party, they were also exposed to "the most appalling racism at the hands of those whose war they were fighting, and their bitterness fuelled a period of unrest".³³ Abroad, many were able to see more clearly the need for change in their own society and returned to the West Indies with demands for better social, political and economic conditions. Those returning from work in South and North America also brought back to the West Indies ideas for trade union organisation and the need to safeguard the rights of working men and women. Therefore, during the interwar and war years, the future intellectuals, writers, and leaders of West Indian colonies became involved in movements for constitutional, economic and social reforms.

From the generation who had experienced the war, demands for constitutional change were first articulated in the 1920s by a newly emergent coloured and black professional middle class. For this purpose, representative government associations were formed in several colonies, and members of these associations lobbied Parliament to make West Indian reforms a live issue.³⁴ Pressure for change did result in several Commissions and Reports, the first in 1922 which advocated a gradual increase in the number of elected members, and a decrease in the number of nominated members of Legislative Councils.³⁵ In 1932 a conference in Dominica went much further than the recommendations of the Wood report and advocated West Indian federation and the abolition of nominated officials in the legislature. Whilst these demands were not met, the instigation of Crown Colony government was an attempt by the Colonial Office to introduce gradual reforms. By the 1930s all British West Indian colonies had adopted the Crown Colony system of government (with the exception of Barbados) whereby ultimate authority rested with the Secretary of State for the Colonies.³⁶ Yet by the

³³Ben Bousquet & Colin Douglas, West Indian Women at War: British Racism in World War II, London 1991, p.31; Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.33.

³⁴Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.33.

³⁵ In 1922 the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Mr Woods visited the British Caribbean and published a report, recommending that gradually, elected members should replace nominated members as the majority of the colonial legislatures but that the Secretary of State should maintain ultimate authority through the use of the Governor's veto. These recommendations were accepted and new Acts of Parliament were passed affecting the Leeward islands, Virgin Islands, Dominica, Trinidad, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent. In 1925 Trinidad changed from a wholly nominated legislature to allowing half its members to be directly elected. See Ayearst, The British West Indies, pp.35 - 37.

³⁶For a discussion of the crown colony system, see Chapter 1: The British Government, refugees and the British West Indies.

time that the West India Royal Commission began investigating conditions in the West Indies in 1938, their report stated that these reforms had made little difference to the political climate. This was for a number of reasons. Whilst the Colonial Office had been in favour of gradually extending the numbers of elected representatives to Legislative Councils, during the 1930s their numbers were small. Nominated and unofficial members were still the majority in Legislative Assemblies, and on the whole representative of local business interests, forming an effective block to reforms proposed by elected members.³⁷ Qualifications for election to the Legislature were based on high property and income requirements which precluded the majority of the population, thereby ensuring that those elected came from a small and privileged section of West Indian society. Nor did elected representatives represent the entire population, as franchise was still based on property requirements. Indeed, the majority of West Indians were still politically inactive and excluded from the franchise, which set high qualifications, such as property ownership, tax, salary and income requirements.³⁸ Therefore, during the 1930s and 1940s constitutional reforms were gradual, with the possible exception of Jamaica, who gained a new constitution in November 1944, creating a bicameral legislature with a fully elected lower house. For other colonies, changes to constitutions and franchise requirements were delayed until after the war.

Whilst it was mainly middle class involvement in campaigns for constitutional reforms, the 1920s and 1930s also saw the politicization of the peasant/working class block in the West Indies, organised through emergent trade unions.³⁹ Indeed, the period between 1935 and the outbreak of war has been characterised as "nothing short of a political revolution in the Caribbean" as issues such as slum clearance, extension of the franchise, land settlement and

³⁷Nominated officials tended to support the Governor's vote and ensure his absolute majority, whilst unofficial nominated members were made up of special interests and economic lobbies, chosen by the Governor. During the 1930s elected members formed an ineffective group in Council, sure in the knowledge that any proposal put forward could (and usually was) vetoed by the official majority. In Trinidad, it was not until 1946 when universal suffrage was introduced that elected members gained more seats, and more power, see Ayearst, pp.166 - 174; Lewis has commented on the "servile mentality of the majority of the coloured group of legislative members". See The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.199.

³⁸ In 1938 the Royal Commission Report found that 6.6 per cent of Trinidad's population were eligible to vote, 3.3 per cent in Barbados. In 1938 of a population of 1,100,000, only 66,000 were eligible to vote in Jamaica. The Commission stated that opinion was divided amongst its members on the question of franchise. Some members recommended the introduction of universal adult suffrage whilst others felt that this would be premature, and instead, present qualifications should be reduced enabling a larger percentage to take part. See Royal Commission pp.379 - 380.

³⁹ Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.108.

social services were "forced onto parliamentary timetables".⁴⁰ Demands for change stemmed from a variety of factors, both economic and political. Economic factors stemmed from the effects of the world economy on West Indian trade (unemployment, overpopulation due to lack of seasonal employment and emigration opportunities) but also from local conditions such as poverty, abysmal pay and working conditions, and the lack of organised trade unions.⁴¹ During the 1930s, a wave of strikes and political unrest spread throughout the British West Indies. In July 1934 some 15,000 sugar workers struck in Trinidad, followed later in the year by agricultural workers in British Honduras. In 1935 strikes occurred amongst sugar and oil workers in St Kitts, Jamaica, British Guiana and St Vincent. The unrest was inspired by wage cuts, added taxation and general political unrest over the nature of colonial rule. In 1937 and 1938 workers in the sugar, oil and water industries struck again in Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica.⁴² Political unrest was dealt with by the Colonial Office in two ways. The immediate reaction was to put down strikes and unrest with force and mass arrests, leading to further resentment. The second reaction was to recommend a Royal Commission to investigate conditions in the West Indies and make recommendations for change. It is clear that many in the Colonial Office had sympathy with the causes of the unrest. Yet the dilemma lay in appeasing an intransigent block of colonial capitalists who were implacably opposed to change, pacifying a large and increasingly militant work force, whilst guarding British interests in the continued safety of the oil industry in Trinidad.⁴³

With the strikes came a new political consciousness and organisations sprung up with the aim of representing the West Indian masses and forcing a change in working conditions onto the political agenda. So too came a new generation of political leadership. For example, in Trinidad, Captain AA Cipriani had fought in the British West Indies Regiment during World War I and on his return founded the Trinidad Workingmens Association, later to be renamed the Trinidad Labour Party. In 1936 the total membership of his association numbered 125,000 workers, peasants and small businesses. In 1925 Cipriani was elected to the Legislative

⁴⁰ Bousquet & Douglas, West Indian Women at War, p.43.

⁴¹ See Bousquet & Douglas, West Indian Women at War, pp.35 - 48. For a description of how, after the riots and strikes a new working class and nationalist consciousness took over from the mainly middle class involvement with reforms in the early 1930s, see Williams, From Columbus to Castro, p.475.

⁴² Bousquet & Douglas, West Indian Women at War, pp.34 - 36.

⁴³ See for example the support given by the Trinidad Governor, Sir Murchison Fletcher in favour of the demands of the striking oil workers in Craig, The Legislative Council, pp.127 - 135. See also Howard Johnson, "Oil, Imperial Policy and the Trinidad Disturbances, 1937", The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, IV, I, 1975, pp.32-35.

Council in Trinidad. Whilst a popular and respected leader, Cipriani was sidelined in the Executive Council, where as an elected member, he was only able to "complain" rather than influence policy. CLR James has commented that:

Had Cipriani been the man he was ten years earlier, self-government, federation and economic regeneration ...could have been initiated then.[At the time of the 1937 Trinidad Oil workers strikes]. But the old warrior was nearly seventy. He flinched at the mass upheavals which he more than anyone else had prepared, and the opportunity was lost. But he had destroyed a legend and established once and for all that the West Indian people were ready to follow the most advanced theories of an uncompromising leadership.⁴⁴

Tubal Uriah Butler was also among the new breed of labour leader in Trinidad, representing sections of the oil workers and far more militant than Cipriani. In 1936 he founded the British Empire Workers and Citizens Home Rule Party. By the 1930s the Legislative Assembly in Trinidad reflected the rise of political leaders as a loose alliance was formed between elected members such as Cipriani, Mr Sarran Teelucksingh, Mr Roodal, and Mr A C Rienzi. Roodal brought with him popular support from the Indian working class, and whilst a propertied oil magnate, was a leading member of the Working Man's Association. All opposed the nominated system in Trinidad.⁴⁵ In Barbados the Barbados Progressive League was formed in 1938 by Grantley Adams and was known as the "First Party of the Barefoot Man", aiming to organise trade union activity and run candidates for local election. In Jamaica, Norman Washington Manley founded the Peoples National Party in 1938, and in 1942 faced competition from Alexander Bustamante, who on release from internment founded the Jamaica Labour Party.⁴⁶

Political and social unrest was expressed in the emergent nationalist and labour movements, but also saw expression in popular songs, dance, literature and calypsos on social and political themes. After emancipation and certainly in the 1930s and 1940s, many black West Indians began to look for forms of West Indian identity in which pride could be taken, away from European influences and back to African traditions.⁴⁷ CLR James has commented that "in dance, in the innovation of musical instruments, in popular ballad singing unrivalled

⁴⁴ See CLR James, The Black Jacobins, London 1989, p.404. Cipriani died in 1945.

⁴⁵ See Craig, The Legislative Council, pp.86 - 89.

⁴⁶ See Ayearst, The British West Indies, pp.39 - 41, 88, 203; Bousquet & Douglas, West Indian Women at War, p.41; Lewis, The Rise of the Modern West Indies, pp.203 - 205.

⁴⁷ Ayearst, The British West Indies, pp.14 - 15.

anywhere in the world, the mass of the people are not seeking an identity, they are expressing one".⁴⁸ The calypso, with its roots in African music and culture functioned in West Indian colonies as " a kind of auditory newspaper, spreading information about current issues". Originating as slave music, calypsos passed comment on political and social issues.⁴⁹ By the 1930s Calypsonians played to local audiences in villages, rum shops and cinemas and the bamboo "tents" in which they had performed in the 1920s became more permanent and commercial enterprises. As their popularity increased, in Trinidad calypso artists became commercially successful as Decca and other record companies began recording and selling calypso records in the United States and the Caribbean.⁵⁰ Yet the messages conveyed by calypsos remained biting social satire, often invoking bans from Colonial authorities who deemed their messages too inflammatory to be broadcast or reproduced.⁵¹

While political leaders were active within the West Indies, West Indians abroad also became involved in movements to change conditions for West Indian peoples. Future leaders and intellectuals gathered in New York and London and became involved in movements for West Indian independence and in wider campaigns influenced by marxist and socialist ideas. In Britain, George Padmore and C.L.R. James were founder members of the International African Service Bureau which called for a declaration of rights for West Indian peoples and for universal suffrage. Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the United States. Whilst his movement was concerned with the return of Africa to black Africans, his political consciousness was rooted in the problems of West Indian identity. CLR James has written of him that :

Garvey never set foot in Africa. He spoke no African language. His conceptions of Africa seemed to be a West Indian island and West Indian people multiplied a thousand times over. But Garvey managed to convey to Negroes everywhere (and to the rest of the world) his passionate belief that Africa was the home of a civilisation which had once been great and would be great again.⁵²

⁴⁸James, The Black Jacobins, p.417.

⁴⁹ Trevor G. Marshall, "Bajans Come Back to Calypso", Rachel Wilder, ed., Insight Guide: Barbados, Singapore 1990, p.235.

⁵⁰Between 1912 and 1934 "American recording companies fostered the emergence of Trinidad's music primarily as an aspect of Latin American music", see Gordon Rohlehr, Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad, Trinidad, 1990, p.147.

⁵¹Rohlehr, Calypso and Society, pp.202 - 205.

⁵²James adds that "when you bear in mind the slenderness of his resources, the vast material forces and the pervading social conceptions which automatically sought to destroy him, his achievement remains one of the propagandistic miracles of this century", see The Black Jacobins , p.396.

Back in the West Indies, the revival of African religions and revivalist cults, as well as the Rastafari movement in Jamaica, also took inspiration from Garveyism and was a new expression of a West Indian identity that saw itself as a people in exile.⁵³ In July 1940 the West Indies National Emergency Council was established in New York and tabled a "Declaration of Rights of the West Indian Peoples to Self-Government and Self-Determination". For the leaders of these movements, their activity "evoked a mind set of 'reds under the bed' and 'Niggers in the pile' among officialdom of the North Atlantic Colonial Powers" which led to increasing surveillance of black political activists in Europe and the United States.⁵⁴ Yet at the same time as demands for greater autonomy were being voiced, the connection between Britain and her colonies remained strong. Indeed, Britain was still viewed by many as the "mother country", as is evidenced in the comments of Connie Marks. In their book, West Indian Women at War, Bousquet and Douglas use her as an example of the "contradiction between the rebellious and loyal sides" of the relationship between West Indians and Britain. Marks joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) of the British Armed Forces and served in Jamaica during the Second World War, where she refused to accept a subservient role (asked to act as a charwoman to an Officer). Of her experiences Marks commented that:

We were taught since before we came out of our mother's womb that we were British. We were taught that England was our mother country. And if your mother had a problem you had to help her. Do you think I could go into my house and say anything against the royal family? We were taught that the King and everybody loved you because you are their subjects. And so we didn't have any bitterness.⁵⁵

Similarly, CLR James has commented on the lack of bitterness amongst West Indian writers and intellectuals who were struggling to evoke new forms of West Indian identity. In The Black Jacobins he writes that:

The West Indian writers have discovered the West Indies and West Indians, a people of the middle of our disturbed century, concerned with the discovery of themselves, determined to discover themselves, but without hatred or malice against the foreigner,

⁵³For a discussion of revivalist cults in the Caribbean, see Sherlock, The West Indies, pp.124 - 128. The Rastafari movement was founded in Jamaica in 1934 and recognised Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia as the Living God.

⁵⁴Fitzroy Andre Baptiste, "Caribbean Decolonisation Caught Between the Manchester Principles and the Cold War", Presentation at Conference, "Africa in the World: The 1845 Pan-African Congress and its Aftermath", Manchester, England, 13 - 15 October 1995, pp.3 - 5.

⁵⁵Bousquet & Douglas, West Indian Women at War, p.47.

even the bitter imperialist past.⁵⁶

During the war, identification between “the Mother Country” and West Indian colonies was reinforced with the active service of British West Indians, serving in the West Indies and abroad.⁵⁷ Bousquet and Douglas have described how “the people of the region saw Britain’s fight as a fight to defend not only the United Kingdom, but also their own islands, from German occupation”.⁵⁸ With the outbreak of war, “the Allies were so jittery over the Caribbean in the first month of the conflict that virtually every report of hostile activities was investigated”.⁵⁹ The fear of fifth column activity stemmed partly from the presence of a large minority of German nationals in neighbouring Latin American countries and throughout the war large numbers of Germans and Italians were interned in camps in South and Central America and the Caribbean.⁶⁰ Whilst there were real concerns about enemy activity, the powers given to Governors under Defence Regulations were often used to quell political activism rather than in defence of the colony.⁶¹ New Defence Regulations led to a number of labour leaders being interned. The use of repressive measures was particularly intense in Jamaica, and attracted criticism from the American Consul stationed there, and from the Colonial Office in London.⁶² Whilst Jamaica gained a new constitution in 1944, more

⁵⁶ James, The Black Jacobins, p.417.

⁵⁷ Over 5,000 West Indians served in the Royal Air Force in Britain. Many others enlisted in Canada and the United States. The majority of local defence forces in the Caribbean were made up of West Indians who had volunteered. See Marshall, ed., The Caribbean at War, p.22.

⁵⁸ Bousquet & Douglas, West Indian Women at War, p.116.

⁵⁹ Fitzroy André Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, New York, London 1988.

⁶⁰ The United States probably underestimated the threat from a minority of German nationals with economic power in Latin America, see Anthony P. Maingot, The United States and the Caribbean, London 1994, pp.48 - 56. At least one million Germans lived in Brazil and a greater number in Argentina. Kelshall has described how a high percentage of these Germans were interned, “...Venezuela had five thousand Germans interned in concentration camps. Curacao had three hundred detained, and Dutch Guiana had a hundred and fifty-one, against only three Germans detained in Trinidad”, see Gaylord T.M. Kelshall, The U-Boat War in the Caribbean, Maryland 1988, p.11. There is reason to doubt Kelshall’s figures, particularly in regard to Trinidad.

⁶¹ Trinidad’s importance to the war led to a review of internal security, partly because of the social unrest. A series of security measures in Jamaica were taken under local Defence Regulations, including the tightening of controls over incoming passengers by air or sea, and keeping “a close watch on a small group of intellectuals and workers who had communistic tendencies, and anti-British and pro-Nazi sentiments”. See Baptiste, War, Cooperation and Conflict, p.9

⁶² In January 1941 the American Consul told the Secretary of State in Washington that none of the interned labour leaders in Jamaica were anti-British, and therefore no threat to the security of the colony. They were anti the current government instead. The Consul wrote that the Governor, Sir Arthur Richards was misusing his powers. See American Consul to Washington, “Political Developments in Jamaica”, RG59, 5062, National Archives Washington (hereafter NA). See also letter from Governor of Jamaica to Colonial Office justifying policy but admitting he was on “shaky ground”, and Colonial Office discussion in PRO CO323/1797/14. For general on repressive measures in

general changes advocated in the Royal Commission were delayed until the postwar period.⁶³ The war made the Caribbean “part of the home defence region of the United States” and the more active interest of the United States in the Caribbean was reflected in the increase of Consular Offices.⁶⁴ Yet the American view of the West Indies was not necessarily a positive one. Probably with Hobbes’ dictum in mind, the American Consul in Barbados stated that:

These islands are nothing but liabilities - whoever owns them - except for the oil interests in Trinidad and Aruba-Curacao. They are poverty stricken, without natural resources except for oil in Trinidad, indigent, thickly populated with undernourished Negroes, church ridden and run by and for the few “vested interests” - often with an eighteenth if not seventeenth century point of view.⁶⁵

Whilst there were fears over the sovereignty of the islands and United States intentions, the presence of American bases created a boom for employment in the colonies. The saying “You can never be in a financial jam when you are working for Uncle Sam” applied for thousands of West Indians, employed in the construction of bases.⁶⁶ In addition, the war created other employment opportunities, the construction of Gibraltar Camp, and employment in the Panama Canal and as agricultural workers in the United States.⁶⁷

With the advent of German submarine activity, the war was brought to the shores of the Caribbean. From between 1941 to mid 1943 German U-Boats controlled the Caribbean area, mining shipping lanes and causing thousands of casualties.⁶⁸ Many of the merchant seamen working the shipping routes were West Indians recruited from the Trinidad Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.⁶⁹ Those who suffered the most from the sea battles in the Caribbean were

Jamaica, see Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.182; Ayearst, The British West Indies, p.68; Ken Post, Strike the Iron: A Colony at War: Jamaica 1939 - 1945, Vol.I, New Jersey, The Hague 1981, pp.127 - 131.

⁶³Whilst a summary of the Royal Commission was published in 1939, its findings were not made public until 1945. See Lewis, The Growth of the Modern West Indies, p.108; Bernard Poole, The Caribbean Commission, USA 1951, p.147.

⁶⁴See Annual Colonial Report, British Guiana, “The War Years”, pp.4 - 5, and Poole, The Caribbean Commission, p.180.

⁶⁵Report by Prescott Childs, American Consul, Barbados to the Secretary of State, Washington, “Anti-American feeling in Barbados”, 31 May 1940, RG59, Box No.5065,844G.42/11, NA.

⁶⁶The construction work was not entirely welcomed. The building of the bases left hundreds homeless, see Review of the Year, Trinidad, p.8.

⁶⁷See Annual Report, Trinidad and Tobago, Review of the Years 1939 - 1945, p.7; Annual Report, Jamaica, Review of the Period 1940 - 1945, p.97.

⁶⁸Maingot, The United States and the Caribbean, p.58.

⁶⁹Marshall, ed., The Caribbean at War, p.22.

the merchant seamen: “For them, the sunny Caribbean became a place of horror. They died in their thousands from the effects of torpedo explosions, of heat stroke, of thirst, of despair, or simply by drowning and by the ever present sharks”.⁷⁰ With the attendant shipping shortage caused by the U-Boat war, a severe food shortage was created in most West Indian colonies. Whilst Britain subsidised crops such as bananas, which lay rotting at ports unable to transport them, campaigns were launched to increase local production. Scarcities of gasoline, kerosene, rice, flour, salt and fish created rationing and controlled distribution of food stuffs in the colonies.⁷¹ Of the crisis, one historian has written that “By 1942, the food crisis had threatened some areas with actual famine...in Dominica and British Guiana for example, there was no bread available for a period of almost two weeks”.⁷² In Jamaica, the food shortages caused resentment against storekeepers, the majority from the Chinese community. For some reason this was of interest to the FBI, whose Director, then J.Edgar Hoover, wrote the following of the situation:

There have been many complaints that storekeepers, who for the most part are Chinese, refuse sales to poor people and hold their goods for sale to wealthy customers from whom they are able to obtain higher prices. There has been a marked increase in the number of grocery store robberies and the merchants have requested to arm themselves.⁷³

Ken Post has written of the class and race elements that underpinned the food shortages, that it was the poorest sections of the community most affected, and that the Chinese, visible as an ethnic and racial minority, were targets of hostility for their economic role and for their visible ethnicity.⁷⁴ Seen within this context, the economic arguments at the Bermuda Conference in April 1943 against further refugee admittance can be understood more fully.⁷⁵

⁷⁰Kelshall, The U-Boat War, p.XVI.

⁷¹Annual Review, Jamaica: “Review of the Period 1940 - 1945”, p.1.

⁷²Poole, The Caribbean Commission, p.181. For the crisis in Jamaica, see Post, Strike the Iron, p.246. For details of the “Grow More Food Campaign” see United States Caribbean Commission, The Caribbean Islands and the War: A Record of Progress in Facing Stern Realities, Washington, 1943, p.30.

⁷³J Edgar Hoover, FBI to Assistant Secretary of State, 5 June 1942, RG595062, Decimal File 1940 - 44, file no. 844D.1112/10-2644, NA.

⁷⁴Post claims that in July crowds were forcing storekeepers in Kingston to sell rice and kerosene to them. See Post, Strike the Iron, p.247.

⁷⁵See for example in chapter one, the report of the conference, which stated that the “acute supply problem” in regard to food, fuel and accommodation would create “grave problems” for further refugee admittance. Report to the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom from their Delegates to the Conference on the Refugee Problem held at Bermuda, April 19 - 29, 1943, printed for the War Cabinet, May 1943, Public Record Office, London (henceforth PRO) CO733/449.

- II -

“Lets give serious contemplation to the question of Jewish immigration”⁷⁶

Jewish immigration to the West Indies in the 1930s and during the war coincided with enormous changes for West Indians. The following section examines in detail West Indian attitudes towards Jewish immigration, and towards Jewish refugees who arrived in the West Indies. Whilst decisions about immigration were formed in Legislative Councils, it could be argued that legislative arenas provide only a limited source of public opinion (since elected and nominative members of Legislative Councils represented a minority of West Indians). Therefore newspaper reports, letters to newspapers, school debates and calypsos are also used in this section to illustrate public opinion.

Throughout the 1930s, restrictive immigration legislation was implemented in most West Indian colonies to protect against immigrant labour and competition. Specific groups targeted were Syrians and Chinese, but new measures were also introduced to restrict movement between West Indian colonies and from other parts of the British Empire. By 1938 the question of Jewish immigration began to appear in Legislative debates, in the press, and other public forums as more Jewish refugees began arriving in the West Indies. In addition to the arrival of refugees, public opinion was also sensitive to calls from the British government to find places in the Empire for refugee admittance. Objections to Jewish immigration centred on general economic arguments but also highlighted other fears, about immigrant groups in general, and about specific objections to Jews. Indeed, the issue of Jewish immigration keyed into ongoing West Indian debates about the nature of West Indian society in general, and the development of land and resources in particular. In January 1939 the Trinidad Legislature, with the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, enacted a temporary ban on immigration from Europe, and other colonies enacted legislation to allow Governor’s wide ranging power to prevent alien entry.

In September 1938 the findings of an Immigration Restriction Committee were put before the Executive Council in Trinidad. During 1938 the Committee established by the Governor had met to discuss whether existing legislation was adequate to protect the Trinidadian labour market. Looking back to 1928, the Committee identified that a major cause of unemployment was that yearly arrivals had begun to exceed departures. During 1937, the year the

⁷⁶Calypso by Atilla, “The Persecuted Jews”, cited in Rohlehr, *Calypso and Society*, p.314.

Committee finished its survey, they found an excess of 1,412 arrivals over departures. Of this figure, the majority were from Trinidad, other British West Indian islands and parts of the British empire, leaving 435 aliens who had entered the colony that year. Of these, the majority came from the United States and China with smaller numbers from Syria and elsewhere.⁷⁷ In a White Paper published in December 1938 it proposed protectionist measures to ensure that no immigrants should be allowed to replace local residents in skilled or unskilled employment. It recognised a distinction between alien immigrants and those from other West Indian colonies and parts of the British Commonwealth, and whilst recommending stringent immigration controls, it specified that “special treatment” should be given to British subjects, relatives of those living in Trinidad, those of independent means or with special training or professional skills unavailable in the colony.⁷⁸ The report came under criticism from those who felt that as a region, the West Indies should place no restrictions on movements between colonies. The Committee defended its position by stating that:

This Colony, is part of a group of Colonies which are closely linked both geographically and racially and are bound by economic and sentimental ties. There are those who think that little, if any, restriction should be placed on the movement of British West Indians within the West Indies, and that the individual Colonies should not attempt to raise artificial barriers against one another. There is much to said for this point of view. Nevertheless, in the absence of political federation, this Colony must, we feel, insist on the right to protect its own labour market, to conserve its standard of living and to control the increase by immigration of its population.⁷⁹

Thus by the end of 1938, the local response to labour unrest, unemployment and overpopulation was to limit immigration, and most particularly, immigration from countries outside the British Empire. Yet throughout 1937 and 1938 Colonial Governors had received a number of circulars from the Secretary of State for the Colonies enquiring about the possibilities of placing Jewish refugees. In December 1938 a further circular asked Governor’s to give “sympathetic consideration” to schemes of organised emigration and, more importantly, “greatly deprecate[d] the introduction of restrictions expressly designed to

⁷⁷In 1937 1,412 arrivals over departures. 73 were Trinidadians returning, 526 were from other British West Indian islands, 378 from parts of the British Empire. Of the 435 aliens remaining, 170 were from the United States, 163 from China, 35 from Syria and 67 from elsewhere. See Report of the Immigration Restriction Committee, Executive Council Meeting 28 September 1938, Executive Council Minutes, January to June 1938, PRO CO 298/177; Report on recommendations of the Committee, 10 December 1938, [Trinidad Guardian](#).

⁷⁸Report of Immigration Restriction Committee, 28 September 1938, Executive Council Minutes, PRO CO298/177 and see report of recommendations of White Paper on 11 December 1938, [Sunday Guardian](#).

⁷⁹Ibid.

render the entry of refugees from Germany more difficult”.⁸⁰ Whilst these instructions were not aimed solely at the West Indies, they were widely perceived as evidence that the British Government would overrule local opinion from preventing further Jewish immigration. Therefore, after November 1938 discussion centred on how to stem Jewish immigration, and on the implications of British government plans for mass refuge in West Indian colonies.

In Trinidad, throughout 1938 and 1939 several elected members to the Legislative Council raised questions about British policy concerning Jewish immigration. In 1938, objections in Council centred on the economic aspects and stressed the point that no exception should be made for Jewish immigrants. For example on 1 April, AC Rienzi, Member for Victoria, drew attention to the settlement of Jews in the Colony. He asked whether the “Government’s attention has been drawn to the resentment and dissatisfaction expressed in the local press in connection with the proposed settlement of Jews in Trinidad”. He asked whether the Government would reassure the people that it would advise the Secretary of State for the Colonies that “whilst capital would be welcome in Trinidad, it is undesirable to encourage Jews or immigrants of any other race seeking professional, technical or any other kind of employment settling in the colony?”⁸¹ On 22 April 1938, Mr TD Roodal, member for St. Patrick, asked whether, “in view of several publications in the local newspapers” regarding the settlement of Jews in the colony, the Government would state what information had been received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies? The reply informed the member of the demi-official letter received from the Colonial Office enquiring whether possibilities existed for refugees with professional qualifications, skills or those possessing capital of £500 - £600.⁸² Again in May 1938 Captain Cipriani presented a motion to restrict immigration, “putting the shutters of immigration up against all nationals whether Jew or Gentile, Englishman, Frenchman or Dutchman, and even our West Indian friends”.⁸³ In November

⁸⁰ See chapter one, p. 94.

⁸¹ 1 April 1938, Question No. 52, Member for Victoria, A.C. Rienzi, “Settlement of Jews in the Colony”, Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1938, Hansard, Trinidad 1938 (hereafter Hansard, Trinidad 1938).

⁸² 22 April 1938, Question No.55, Member for St. Patrick, “Jews-Settlement in Colony”, Hansard, Trinidad 1938. The “demi-official” letter referred to had been sent in December 1937, see chapter one. Hewan Craig has noted that there was a “loose alliance” in the legislature between three elected Indian members, Mr Sarran Teelucksingh, member for Caroni, Mr. T. Roodal, member for St. Patrick, and Captain A.A. Cipriani, member for Port of Spain. Both Roodal and Teelucksingh were members of Cipriani’s Trinidad Workingmen’s Association, and Craig writes that “These three often seconded one another’s motions, sometimes supported one another in debate, and tended, although not consistently, to vote together”. See Craig, The Legislative Council, p.86.

⁸³ 20 May 1938, Hansard, cited in Gordon Rohlehr, Calypso and Society, p.311.

1938, Rienzi again asked what government policy was regarding the “influx of immigrants into the colony” and was referred to the findings of the Immigration Restriction Committee.⁸⁴

The “resentment and dissatisfaction” referred to in Rienzi’s question in April related to press reports of an influx of refugees into Trinidad. By November 1938 Jewish refugees were headline news. For example, on 20 November 1938 the Sunday Guardian in Trinidad pronounced on its front page that “200 Jew Refugees Entered Trinidad in Six Months”. The headline spread across the front page, but the article scarcely took up the first quarter of the page. It focused on the inadequacy of existing immigration controls and reinforced the view that the British Government was encouraging Jewish migration to Trinidad. In an interview with the Harbour Master, he confirmed that “as long as these people made the necessary deposit they could not be debarred from entering the colony due to the decision of the British Government to help them by letting them enter the colonies”.⁸⁵ Whilst the article was not substantial, an editorial in the same issue was devoted to the subject of “Trinidad and Refugees”. Placed next to the editorial, an article entitled, “Germany at Bay”, argued that the persecution of Jews in Germany was unlikely to continue, and that now Germany had succeeded in annexing Austria and the Sudetenland, Europe would become stable and at peace once more.⁸⁶ Therefore, the editorial alerted its readers that whilst the pogrom in Germany [On 9-10 November 1938] had led to the need to find sanctuary for Jewish refugees, Trinidad could not, and should not open its doors. Nevertheless, it also informed readers that the pogrom had led to an increase in the numbers arriving, and argued in favour of Rienzi’s call for tighter immigration restrictions on economic rather than racial grounds. Indeed, the editorial was keen to point out that “there was every reason to believe that the Jew makes a good citizen” but that:

We do not need more traders in Trinidad, nor should we welcome competition with workers whether in the “white collar” or manual class.... On the other hand an immigrant possessing capital which he proposes to put into productive industrial enterprise to develop the Colony’s resources and afford employment, would be welcome.⁸⁷

⁸⁴Meeting of the Executive Council, 30 November 1938, Question No.106 of 1938 in the Legislative Council by AC Rienzi, Executive Council Minutes, January to June 1938, PRO CO 298/177.

⁸⁵20 November 1938, Sunday Guardian.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

It warned that current immigration restrictions were not sufficient to prevent “an uncontrolled influx of immigrants”, because Jewish refugees could either find the sufficient deposit, or have it paid by someone already in Trinidad.

Whilst economic arguments could be employed against the admittance of refugees to overpopulated colonies, the subject of mass refuge brought up varied reactions. The widely reported reaction in Britain to the November pogrom in Germany had heightened the sense that public opinion in the colonies would be overruled in favour of pursuing humanitarian aid to Jewish refugees. Referring to Kristallnacht, on 20 November 1938 the Trinidad Guardian had warned its readers that “the Mother Country has been turning its eyes about the Empire in the hope of finding spots where Jews can be conveniently placed”. It noted the current interest in British Guiana, and stated that :

We should like to be assured that no representations have been or will be made which may give the impression in the United Kingdom that there is a prospect of settling Jewish or any other immigrants here. Trinidad does not suffer from under-population, and deeply as we appreciate the nature of the call which the refugee problem makes upon the humanities, it is clearly impossible for us to offer aid. Any unwise action would not contribute towards order and stability but would simply create new embarrassments.⁸⁸

In British Guiana, a local newspaper, the Daily Argosy had reported that local opinion was “vigorously opposed” to Jewish settlement there. It argued that the professions were already crowded, and that sentiment should not overrule facts. It also stated that :

In addition to sincere, humanitarian motives, Britain will support Jewish immigration into her colonial Empire for two reasons: First, less than a thousandth part of the colonial population is white. Second, the absorption of German Jews might strengthen the opposition to Germany’s colonial claims [regarding Tanganyika, South Africa, Cameroon and Togoland].⁸⁹

This view is reinforced by Harold Persaud, who grew up in British Guiana. At school and as Vice President of the debating society, he forwarded a motion in favour of Jewish immigration, saying that “they’re a great race and if we could have people like Einstein and that sort”, but that the master supervising the debate replied that “I listened to Persaud's speech with a great deal of interest but the people you’re going to get here are not Einstein's and that sort!” He remembers that as “racial problems became more pronounced, more overt, then people began to say they didn't want another European race who to come to Guyana to

⁸⁸20 November 1938, Sunday Guardian.

⁸⁹18 November 1938, Trinidad Guardian.

lord over the local population [sic]"⁹⁰ Similar views were expressed to Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies from Marcus Garvey, President of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. From London, on behalf of his organisation he protested over British government plans to support the settlement of Jewish refugees in Tanganyika, Kenya and British Guiana. He stated that:

I am seriously protesting on behalf of the natives, to whom these countries belong, against the attempt to complicate their national and future existence... Without any prejudice toward the Jew, nor any desire to in any way do anything that would now or henceforth obstruct him, ...the introduction into these Colonies and Mandated Territories of large numbers of alien races, will only tend to create an extreme dissatisfaction among the natives, who may be considered up to the present, as haven't expressed themselves on any such desire as may be intended by the British Government and politicians.⁹¹

He continued that it would be wiser for Jews to agitate and organise for the establishment of their own country, "to which they have moral and legal rights, rather than be shifted from place to place, all over the world, to create other problems in other ages".⁹²

In addition to these objections were questions about the suitability of Jews as agricultural pioneers. However, some opinion seemed in favour of Jewish settlement there. On 23 November 1938 the Trinidad Guardian reported that "British Guiana welcomes Jews", and that the "proposal to settle Jewish refugees in British Guiana was warmly welcomed here in newspapers [in Georgetown, British Guiana]". The reasons for their support were because:

It has long been recognized that lack of population is the chief obstacle in the way of British Guiana's development and though the feeling that the West Indies always have first claim is known, neither British Guiana nor the West Indies is financially able to make large scale settlement.⁹³

This assumes that Jewish organisations had sufficient funds to organise and carry out the planned settlement, which seems ironic, since part of the reason for the failure of the plan was the insistence that private organisations fund the initiative. It is not clear whether this information was known to the Trinidad Guardian, but suggests that they held an inflated idea of the financial wealth available to Jewish organisations. Yet in February, the paper carried a

⁹⁰Marshall, ed., The Caribbean at War, p.20.

⁹¹Marcus Garvey, President, Universal Negro Improvement Association to Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 22 November 1938, PRO CO 323/1604/5.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³23 November 1938, Trinidad Guardian.

more ambivalent attitude to the project, stating that the local government had mixed feelings, and that Jews themselves were unsure about the viability of the plan. Referring to a recent decision to close individual emigration to the colony, it said of government opinion in British Guiana that whilst they were “willing to let them occupy their spare rooms in the yard, do not want their visitors to walk into the hall, eat in the dining room, and sleep in their bedrooms”.⁹⁴ The article led with a headline attributed to a local refugee, stating that “The Jews may not be able to pioneer in British Guiana jungle”. The Guardian had already run a feature on Ernst Fişher, a former journalist who had been court reporter for the Austro-Hungarian Parliament before the First World War, and later an editor for a Vienna newspaper.⁹⁵ It stated that whilst many views had been elicited on the proposed Guiana project, Jewish opinion was absent. It therefore decided that among the “500 Jews in Trinidad today”, Fişher as a newspaperman would be able to discuss the question from “a more general point of view”. Fişher’s response was that British Guiana was far from suitable as a Jewish settlement, because of climatic conditions, the challenge of turning city dwelling Jews into “Jungle pioneers” and the time and money which would be needed for the project to succeed. What Jews needed was a place of refuge immediately, not somewhere that would take years to develop.⁹⁶ With the outbreak of war, the Trinidad Guardian reported that action was suspended and that Jewish refugees from Europe would have to “possess their souls in patience”. It ended with the advice that “The urge to help the Jewish people who have been driven from their homes and divested of all they owned will be the greater after the war, by reason for the loyalty so many of them are showing in this time of distress”.⁹⁷ As will be shown in a later section, the “loyalty” of Jewish refugees became an issue in itself in Trinidad. Notwithstanding mixed opinions about Jewish settlement in British Guiana, there was a general consensus that land development schemes would both serve to provide an outlet for emigration from overpopulated West Indian colonies, and benefit the colony itself, turning swamp land into agriculture. Yet as the West India Royal Commission found, drainage and cultivation could only be effected with substantial expenditure, and as Fischer

⁹⁴ 19 February 1939, Trinidad Guardian. Pending the Anglo-American enquiry into mass refuge possibilities in British Guiana, Jewish immigration to the colony had been halted in January 1939 for a period of two years.

⁹⁵ 11 December 1938, Sunday Guardian.

⁹⁶ 19 February 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

⁹⁷ Leader comment, “Action Suspended”, 28 September 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

had observed, were only viable as long term solutions.⁹⁸

The feeling that Jews were an unwelcome addition to the population in British Guiana was also reflected in arguments against individual migration. Before refugee admittance was prohibited in Trinidad and other West Indian colonies, calypsos were written and circulated which showed ambivalence towards Jewish immigrants. Several reflected general fears about minority immigrant groups and assumed that the drive to become established would be at the expense of the local population. Hence a Trinidad calypso entitled “I don’t want any Syrians again”. It stated that Jews were preferable to Chinese or Syrian immigrants because they would extend credit, yet, they “should be in Jerusalem or Palestine, instead of in this Country of mine”.⁹⁹ Another expressed fear at the perceived industriousness of the Jews, who would “progress at the expense of the Trinidadian”. Yet another on the same theme “anticipated a further addition to the race and class conflict in Trinidad, resulting from the presence of a new and accomplished group with potential for rapid advance”¹⁰⁰ Anxiety was also expressed over the perceived fertility rate of Jewish immigrants, one calypsonian warning that:

Since Jews coming to this Colony
They are marrying and raising a family
In a couple of years, believe it’s true
Trinidad children will be only Jews.¹⁰¹

Some calypsos were, however, sympathetic to the plight of Jewish refugees. For example, a calypso by Atilla the Hun (aka Raymond Quevedo), called “The Persecuted Jews” welcomed Jewish immigration, stating that West Indians should remember the suffering of their slave ancestor’s and extend welcome to another persecuted group:

Let’s give serious contemplation
To the question of Jewish immigration
Just like our forefathers in slavery
From the brutality of tyrants they have to fell
So its nothing but Christian charity
To give these oppressed people sanctuary

⁹⁸See Royal Commission, p.41. Schemes to develop British Guiana were kept active during the war years, and with the passing of the Colonial Development Act, Sir Frank Stockdale visited the colony twice during 1942 to investigate large schemes for land drainage. Whilst these schemes had the backing of the government (and a willingness from the Treasury Department to fund the initiatives) they were in the long term, envisaged over a period of 20 years.

⁹⁹Calypso by Growler, “I Don’t Want Any Syrians Again”, in Rohlehr, Calypso and Society, p.314.

¹⁰⁰Rohlehr, Calypso and Society, p.313 & p.314..

¹⁰¹Final verse from Charlie “Gorilla” Grant, Jews in the West Indies, 19 December 1938, cited from Rohlehr, Calypso and Society, p.313. The first two verses of this calypso are cited in the introduction to this chapter.

Negroes, our slave fathers long ago
 Suffered all kinds of tribulation and woe
 With yokes round their necks beaten day and night
 Their only salvation remained in flight
 So in remembrance of their agony
 And gratitude to those who showed them sympathy
 We shall extend to the Jews hospitality
 As a monument to our ancestors' memory.¹⁰²

This calypso was greeted with uncertainty by the colonial censors: whilst it upheld the notion of British generosity to refugees (at a time when Jewish refugees were still being admitted to Trinidad), it also implicitly saw an alliance between the "enslaved African and denationalised Jew", and between "slave master and Nazi". Whilst several calypsos on Jewish immigration were banned, Gordon Rohlehr suggests that this one escaped censorship because it supported the notion of Jewish immigration. Yet it also "was hardly the sort of link that the colonial administrators, some perhaps themselves the direct descendants of slave owners, wanted to see made, at a time when they were trying to impress on the world their difference from the Nazis".¹⁰³ Many calypsos denouncing Nazi policies contained barbed criticism of colonial legislatures, reflecting the continuing struggle between emerging political parties and colonial authorities. Nazi racial policies were given wide publicity in the local press, and some calypsos denouncing Hitler made implicit links between Nazi ideology and the way in which labour riots had been suppressed by the Trinidad police force. In 1939, Ziegfield's "Hitler" was banned because of its reference to the 1937 riots in Trinidad. Whilst its anti Nazi message was welcomed, its comparison between Hitler and the "methods of British imperialism" were not.¹⁰⁴ Whilst public opinion in Trinidad and other West Indian colonies was, for a variety of reasons, mainly against Jewish immigration, the effect of banning the calypsos reinforced the idea that local opinion was being ignored in favour of British policy. For example, in the case of a calypso by Ryan, "Jews Astray", the Commissioner of Police justified its ban by stating that "the whole of this calypso is in bad taste in view of the British policy of extending hospitality to Jews everywhere, and should not be allowed".¹⁰⁵ Yet as

¹⁰²Atilla's "The Persecuted Jews", 19 December 1938, *ibid*, p.314.

¹⁰³*Ibid*, p.314.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid*, pp.310 - 311, & p.315.

¹⁰⁵Calypsos banned included Ryan's "Jews Astray", Growler's "I Don't Want Any Syrians Again", Gorilla's "Jews in the West Indies" and Radio's "The Jewish Immigration". See *ibid*, p.312.

more refugees arrived in Trinidad, this policy became increasingly difficult to defend against a wide consensus in favour of restricting immigration.

This attitude was also true in Jamaica, where barriers against refugee admittance had been far more effective. Despite the fact that very few refugees had emigrated to Jamaica, in January a new Aliens Law was implemented on economic grounds, preventing any alien who had been resident in Jamaica from returning to the colony. Mainly affecting Chinese and South American aliens, this also strengthened the colony's right to turn away Europeans. Reporting this law, the Trinidad Port of Spain Gazette concentrated on its effect on Jewish refugees, stating that those arriving were being sent back to Europe. The Gazette described how:

It is known that a good many European refugees desire to come to Jamaica, not as visitors but to reside here, some in the hope of obtaining positions in the Colony. Scores of them have applied to the Government for permits upon which they could apply at steamship offices to come this way; but there is reason to believe that their applications have been refused. Not even one permit has been granted, the official view being that there is no room in Jamaica for immigrants whose air is to seek a living here. All things being equal, opportunities in respect of employment must be reserved for Jamaicans.¹⁰⁶

It is not surprising that this report was carried in a Trinidad paper, given the general mood in the colony. By December 1938, some 500 refugees were in Trinidad, and the Trinidad Guardian began to reflect a siege mentality, campaigning for restrictive measures to be taken. In a series of articles under the heading "Jewish influx", the public were informed of the impending immigration changes the Government were about to make.¹⁰⁷ Justifying their campaign, the paper concentrated on highlighting the economic problems that Jewish refugees would pose to the colony. For example, one article reported that Trinidad had become the "sole refuge" for Jewish refugees. It asked one refugee why he had come to the colony and reported that:

It was the only place he could come without any trouble. Most places, he said, refuse to admit refugees at all. Other places, such as Australia, issue permits of entry, but these often take as long as two years to procure.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ "Jamaica Bars Aliens", 8 January 1939, Port of Spain Gazette.

¹⁰⁷ For example, under the headline "Jewish Influx", the Sunday Guardian reported on the Emergency Session of the Executive Council, who were meeting to discuss how to prevent the Caribia from docking in Trinidad. See 8 January 1939; On 10 January 1939 a front page headline proclaimed "Government to check Jew influx", reporting on the new measures taken to ban European refugees, see 10 January 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

¹⁰⁸ 8 January 1939, Sunday Guardian.

It went on to describe the difficulties that Jewish refugees had in taking money with them from Germany, describing how one refugee had to pay German authorities £2000 in order to bring £1000 with him. It reported that he had also brought gold fountain pens, cameras and other valuables in the hope of selling them in Trinidad, but the article emphasised (in bold) that this refugee was the exception, and that most “land with only about ten shillings”.¹⁰⁹

Other colonies were of the same opinion, that economic necessity prevented a more liberal approach to accepting refugees, and picked up on arguments raised in the Trinidad Guardian. On 20 January 1939 the Barbados Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to ask for a similar ban to be introduced in Barbados. Debating the matter, a member of the Chamber claimed that many of the 500 refugees in Trinidad were "walking the streets of that colony seeking jobs and he certainly would not like to see that state of affairs existing in this island". The President added that whilst there was sympathy with their situation, "everyone of these people who secured a job in this island was automatically putting or keeping a local person out of employment".¹¹⁰ An additional factor which may have influenced colonies against refugee admittance was the growing importance of tourism to their economies. The growth of this industry can be seen in the following figures: in 1935 nine tourist ships docked in Barbados. By 1938, the number of tourist ships docking in the colony had risen to 18.¹¹¹ Whether Members of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce felt that the sight of penniless refugees would deter the tourist trade is not known, but this argument was used in the Bahamas as an excuse to prevent Jewish entry. In 1934 the Governor had informed the Colonial Office that an "antisemitic bias" existed in the colony and that the Americans who visited the colony felt "antipathy" to Jews, as did local residents. Up to and after the outbreak of war, potential damage to the tourist industry was used to justify restrictions against Jewish admittance.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰ 20 January 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

¹¹¹Barbados Colonial Report, 1937 - 38, p.16.

¹¹² The Governor feared the tourist trade from the United States would be adversely affected by Jewish immigration to the colony. After the outbreak of war, this continued to be used as justification to prevent Jewish entry. On 6 August 1940 the Governor(Sir Dundas) informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that an individual, Kurt Silberstein had been refused entry "because of the very widespread feeling in the Colony against the admittance of Jews. There are some grounds for the view which is strongly held here that the entry of Jews in any appreciable number will have a prejudicial effect on the tourist trade from the States". See Governor Bahamas to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 6 August 1940, PRO CO23/755.?

Yet whilst in favour of stemming immigration, the Trinidad Guardian was by no means unsympathetic to the plight of Jewish refugees. The ban on immigration to Trinidad was announced on 10 January and came into effect on the 15 of that month. On the day of the announcement, the paper carried a letter from a local author, Albert Gomes, complaining that the "human aspect" of the problem was being ignored. He warned that "Laws, after all, and particularly this law, vitally concern human relationships, and having regard to this it were well if we made provision in cases where our eagerness to preserve ourselves meant cruelty to someone else".¹¹³ In an editorial, the paper stated that, "the restrictions which have been imposed are not intended to be cruel or oppressive, but are dictated by economic reasons which can readily be appreciated".¹¹⁴ After the 15 January, the Trinidad Guardian adopted a more conciliatory tone and reminded readers that the Governor in Executive Council had the power to exempt individuals from the ban, and that special permits would be granted to husbands, wives and close relatives of aliens now resident in Trinidad. It hoped that the Government would be "wise and merciful in considering applications for exemption, but the underlying motive - that is, to safeguard the Colony against a new economic problem - must be adhered to".¹¹⁵

Whilst the ban in Trinidad had a drastic effect on refugee admission, generally, exemptions were granted to relatives and family of resident refugees. The precedent for this policy may have come from Jamaican laws concerning Chinese aliens. Since 1935 the Jamaican Legislature had prohibited the entry of all male Chinese to the island, but for a limited period had allowed wives, children and fiancées permission to join their families. On 29 June 1939 this policy was reviewed and in future all alien Chinese were barred from the colony.¹¹⁶ In December 1938 the Executive Council in Trinidad had agreed that cases should be examined on their individual merit, and in February laid down general principles: Consular Officers in overseas territories were to be authorised to issue landing permits automatically to wives and children under 16 years, and in the case of parents and children over 16 years, should first submit a report to the Trinidad Legislature, on the degree of dependence to relatives in the

¹¹³ Letter from Albert Gomes, 12 January 1939, Trinidad Guardian. In the same issue the paper carried a review of a volume of poetry by the author.

¹¹⁴ Editorial, "A Sensible Precaution", 15 January 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

¹¹⁵ 20 January 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

¹¹⁶ See explanation of policy concerning Chinese aliens from Governor of Jamaica to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 7 November 1946, PRO CO 318/472/13. In 1945 the Foreign Office had received representations from the Chinese Consul but the Jamaican Executive Council had decided against altering its policy.

colony. Each case would then be examined on its merits.¹¹⁷ It would seem that the Governor and Council exercised leniency in considering requests. Whilst in May the Council rejected a request from the Jewish Refugee Society (JRS) in Trinidad to exempt fiancées from the Ordinance, on at least one occasion exceptions were made.¹¹⁸ Between January and September 1939 under this scheme the Executive Council agreed to exempt some 105 parents or relatives of refugees in Trinidad and grant them permits to enter the colony. It is not known how many were able to take advantage of these permits. In addition, it is not known how many of those issued permits automatically (ie, wives and children under 16), were able to arrive.¹¹⁹

During the last six months of 1939 most West Indian colonies either strengthened or amended existing legislation to prohibit the entry of aliens. Whilst there may have been some local feeling specifically against Jewish immigrants, on the whole these measures were dictated by economic arguments, and were aimed at aliens of any nationality. Yet there was flexibility in their approach: the principle of giving special consideration to British subjects of other West Indian colonies and parts of the Commonwealth had been extended in Trinidad to cover resident Jewish aliens. Therefore whilst other factors influenced attitudes towards Jewish immigration, economic arguments provided the overwhelming justification against refugee admittance. This was true before the war, and during. Admittance in the wartime period was due to the special geographic and strategic position of the Caribbean, and did not alter the basic position taken by Colonial Legislatures, that no aliens should be allowed to enter as legal immigrants. Gibraltar Camp was not an exception to this, but an example of how a compromise could be reached between enabling British Government objectives and satisfying local conditions. The camp was erected in Jamaica because of the priority placed by the British Government on evacuating the civilian population of Gibraltar, and was carried out with scant attention paid to local opinion (as we have seen, its building was completed in a very short time). Yet the Jamaican Legislature was appeased by two factors, that the building of the camp benefited the local economy, contracting local construction firms and employing

¹¹⁷Executive Council, Trinidad, 29 December 1938, PRO CO 298/177; Minutes of Executive Council, 22 February 1939, PRO CO 298/178.

¹¹⁸For example, at an Executive Meeting on 7 September 1939 the Council discussed and agreed to grant a permit to the fiancée of Philip Chizer (sic), a Romanian resident in Trinidad since 1937, on the undertaking that he married her within one month of arrival. See Minutes of Executive Council, 7 September 1939, PRO CO 298/178.

¹¹⁹The figure of 105 persons has been estimated by counting the number of cases discussed at the following Executive Council meetings in 1939: 15 February, 15 March, 3 May, 17 May, 28 June, 9 August, 7 September. See Meetings of Executive Council Minutes, 1939, PRO CO 298/178.

Jamaican labour, and that none of the inhabitants could seek employment or residence in Jamaica.¹²⁰ The camp was, in a sense, off Jamaican limits: its inmates were not immigrants to Jamaica but temporarily housed for the duration of the war; their status as evacuees under Defence Regulations meant that the boundaries between the camp and the island were absolute.

Indeed, comparisons could be made between the status of Gibraltar Camp and Oswego Camp in New York. The idea for establishing "free ports", or temporary havens to circumvent immigration regulations had circulated at the Bermuda Conference, and became realised in June 1944, with President Roosevelt's backing. Fort Ontario, a disused army compound in upstate New York became a temporary camp for some 983 refugees evacuated from Southern Italy. Their admittance to the United States rested on the condition that they would return from whence they came at the end of the war, and the routine in camp, as described by David Wyman, has many similarities to life in Gibraltar Camp, Jamaica. So too, did refugee attitudes to the camp. Although refugees had signed a form agreeing to repatriation at the end of the war, many became bitter at the restrictions imposed upon them, and Jewish organisations were relied on for providing help and subsistence to them.¹²¹ Here, however the similarity ends. Unlike Jamaica, after the war the majority of refugees were able to remain in the United States despite concerted opposition from Congress. In Jamaica, it was perhaps understandable that evacuees were only allowed entry under restrictive conditions. The impact of several thousand refugees on the economy of a small colony suffering from unemployment was by no means the same as the effect that one thousand refugees would make on the stability of the economy in the United States, particularly in 1944, no longer a period of economic depression. Nevertheless, whilst economic reasons were used to justify immigration restrictions, as we have seen, other fears about Jewish immigrants also influenced debates. The following section explores how ambivalence continued to govern attitudes towards Jewish refugees present in the island of Trinidad.

-III-

Refugee reception.

Until November 1938 little attention seems to have been given to Jews who settled in various

¹²⁰For the general background to building the camp, see chapter one. Regarding the Legislatures condition of entry to Jamaica, see chapter three, page 8, footnote 29.411

¹²¹For a description of the camp, and refugee experience there see David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941 - 1945, New York 1985, pp.268 - 276. See also Sharon Lowenstein, Token Refuge: the Story of the Jewish Refugee Shelter at Oswego, 1944-1946, Bloomington Il, 1986.

West Indian colonies. This may have been for several reasons, that only small numbers arrived, that none were indigent, and that most were successful in establishing themselves and their families. But more importantly, it may also have been because up to that point, Jewish immigration was not a specific issue in the public's mind. Yet with the change in British refugee policy after Kristallnacht came an increased focus on the Jewish situation in Europe, with local press reports speculating about the role that Britain expected its colonies to take in helping to solve the Jewish refugee problem. In addition, the increase of Jewish immigration to Trinidad began to focus debates throughout West Indian colonies on the potential impact of another immigrant group, and about the specific impact of Jewish refugees. In the majority of colonies these concerns remained speculations. In reaction to the situation in Trinidad, between January and September 1939 West Indian colonies ensured that no further influx of Jewish refugees would occur. In Trinidad, however, issues brought up in debates about immigration were tested by the presence of a large group of Jewish refugees, many of whom would remain after the war. The rest of this chapter will examine the reception of, and attitudes towards Jewish refugees in Trinidad, with some reference to other West Indian colonies.

Initially, Jewish immigrants began to establish themselves against a background of panic about their presence. Between November 1938 and February 1939, a spotlight was thrown on Jewish refugees in Trinidad as the debate about immigration continued. Focusing on the effect of Jews on housing and employment in the colony, many reports spoke of overcrowding in Jewish houses and the health risk that this posed to the general population.¹²² Arriving in Port of Spain, Trinidad's capital, many refugees were penniless, having spent what they had on the voyage and the deposit securing their entry. On arrival, the Jewish Association of Trinidad (JAT) rented a number of houses in which they could stay. The situation was described in January by an American Jewish organisation advising other agencies that the following situation had created a ban on immigration:

A Committee of Jews is renting housing accommodation and has seriously accentuated the already acute housing situation. Certain local inhabitants have been dispossessed. There is a serious overcrowding among the refugees and the director of Medical services states that the conditions under which they are living constitute a

¹²² For example, this was the reason used to seek permission from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to prohibit further emigration to Trinidad. On 6 January the Executive Council met to discuss the situation and submitted the report which advised the closing of immigration, in part in response to the effect of refugees on "housing accommodation, employment and health conditions" Meeting of Executive Council Trinidad, 6 January 1939, PRO CO 298/178.

grave danger to the public health.¹²³

Whilst it is true that the presence of Jewish refugees exacerbated a housing shortage, the language in which the debate about overcrowding took place suggests that the issue was also used to provoke hostility against the refugees. In June 1939 a report from the Chief Medical Officer to the Port of Spain City Council found that no serious overcrowding occurred in Jewish homes. He described how “There would be six or eight or ten people coming off the boat and staying at the house for two days or so and then going to another place. I could not satisfy myself that there was any overcrowding”.¹²⁴ In efforts to allay public fears about the effect of Jewish immigration, statements were made by the Jewish Refugee Society (JRS) and the JAT to the Trinidad Guardian. In these statements, both organisations made the point that no Jewish refugees would become a public charge, that their organisations were receiving money from Jewish charities abroad, and that efforts were being made to establish local industries, of benefit to the local population. In one article, the JRS even came out in favour of the ban on immigration, stating that they had advised refugee organisations abroad not to send further numbers to Trinidad, which could not absorb them.¹²⁵

Although the Trinidad Guardian had become involved in a campaign to close immigration, the paper was by no means unsympathetic to the plight of Jewish refugees. Displaying curiosity about those in Trinidad, there were regular features on who they were and where they had come from. Yet most attention focused on refugees from Nazi Germany rather than Eastern European refugees. Many of these articles stressed the social class of those recent arrivals from Austria and Germany. For example, in an article entitled “The Strangers Within Our Gates” the correspondent from the Sunday Guardian commented that:

At the outset I must say I have been struck by their general appearance, the evident high standard of education and knowledge shown on all matters on which we conversed. I think it will interest those who have not had the opportunity of meeting the new comers to know that these recent arrivals comprise professional men, such as, doctors, dentists, engineers, lawyers, dairy men, farmers and so on.¹²⁶

¹²³“Recent developments regarding emigration to Trinidad”, JDC Report, 19 January 1939, #1049, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archive New York (henceforth JDC).

¹²⁴“No Crowding in Jewish Homes”, report of meeting of Port of Spain City Council, 23 June 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

¹²⁵See for example the following reports in the Trinidad Guardian which contained interviews with the JAT or the JRS: 10 January 1939; 15 January 1939; 20 January 1939; 19 February 1939.

¹²⁶25 December 1938, Sunday Guardian.

In the same vein, an article in December 1938 announced that a Viennese dress designer was in the colony, and accompanied the article with a sketch of one of her designs. The following week, Helen Hammerman had become employed by the Trinidad Guardian, in a regular series of articles and sketches about the fashion scene in Trinidad. Reporting solely on the society ladies and what they wore to social events, the articles reinforced a link between the social class of professional refugees, and the upper classes in Trinidad.¹²⁷ Since, however, many refugees were unable to practise their professions, there was considerable anxiety amongst West Indians about whether they would compete and take away local employment. These anxieties covered both economic and racial considerations. For example, a native born Jew, Edgar Pereira wrote to an American Organisation of the necessity to prevent European refugees from peddling. His concerns, however, were to prevent Jews from stooping to the level of black West Indians. He wrote that:

I desire you to get the position very clearly. The great majority of the inhabitants of this Colony are of the coloured race almost to the extent of 85% and it is extremely necessary that the prestige [sic] of the white race should be maintained, and Government carefully sees to it that nothing is done that would lower this prestige. Therefore it is necessary that we should stop Europeans accustomed to a high standard of living, such as the immigrants we have here going on the roads of the Colony as peddlars and doing work that hitherto has been done by the coloured people. I must emphasize the importance of this not only for political aspects but also for the benefit of our race. It is for reasons such as these and the heartbreaking sight of seeing men of culture suffering indignities at the hands of coloured people that spurs on my efforts to get something started quickly which would assist the situation materially and morally.¹²⁸

Whilst this opinion reflected racist attitudes towards coloured and black West Indians, the fear that Jews were competing for local employment was shared with other minority groups and by sections of the working class. For example in January 1939, a Syrian peddler was taken to court over non payment of a debt. In court, he claimed that his livelihood had been ruined because of competition from Jews, who had “spoiled his business”. Reporting the case, the Trinidad Guardian’s headline was “Syrian Pedlar Blames Jew Rival for his Failure”.¹²⁹ Yet whilst some Syrians may have felt that Jewish competition was to blame for business failure, some West Indians saw both Syrian and Jewish involvement in small business and trading as a threat to their own livelihoods. Gordon Rohlehr has described how

¹²⁷See 11 December 1938, Trinidad Guardian and 29 December 1938, Trinidad Guardian.

¹²⁸Edgar Pereira, Jewish Refugee Society, 15 May 1939, #1047, JDC.

¹²⁹6 January 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

the enactment of a Shop Closing Ordinance became associated with the rise of Syrian and Jewish business at the expense of West Indian traders. As we have seen, Jews had already been linked to the Syrian community in a calypso by Growler entitled “I Don’t Want Any Syrians Again”.¹³⁰ The Shop Closing Ordinance, enacted in January 1939, had caused protests from a large section of the Trinidad population during its passage through the Legislature in the preceding few months. It proposed shortening shop hours, ostensibly to protect shop workers. Yet it was viewed by many as an attempt to replace small businesses with “the fearfully vigorous entrepreneurship for which the Jews had become legendary”. In the public mind, the Ordinance became linked with the perceived British policy of encouraging Jewish immigration to Trinidad, and Rohlehr has also cited one history of the Trinidad working class which suggested that the Ordinance “was mainly responsible for the collapse of Black small businesses and the emergence of Jewish and Syrian businesses in Trinidad”.¹³¹ That this was not the case is attested to in the amendment of the legislation after a period of four years, not long enough in Rohlehr’s opinion to “support the thesis of a deliberately planned and fiendishly executed Jewish and middle Eastern takeover”.¹³² These attitudes demonstrate the sharp stratification which existed in West Indian society between whites, other minorities, coloured and black West Indians. The views expressed by Edgar Pereira are disappointing of a man who did so much to help refugees, and who himself must have dealt with discrimination from those reacting to his leprosy and blindness. Yet his opinions also illustrate the hegemony of his colonial world, which saw one group pitted against another in competition and mistrust. In the 1930s at least, Pereira’s views were probably representative of many, unable to see beyond common prejudice and misunderstanding.

Whilst press attention focused on the presence of Jewish refugees in Trinidad, attention was also given to the implications of Nazi policies for Jews and for other races. Whilst most reports were sympathetic, some showed more ambivalent attitudes to the “Jewish problem” in Europe. For example, in September 1938 the Trinidad Guardian ran a series of reports filed from a European correspondent entitled “Eye Witness in Europe”. On 14 September the correspondent described his tour of Germany, stating that whilst the anti-Jewish feeling was

¹³⁰Calypso written by Growler, cited in Rohlehr, Calypso and Society, p.314.

¹³¹Ibid, pp.192 - 193.

¹³²Ibid, p.193.

“pretty terrifying, ...around Berlin you can still see Jews behaving as ostentatiously as that type of Jew does in every other city in the world”.¹³³ Whilst this article reproduced a familiar antisemitic stereotype, other articles were more sympathetic, often drawing attention to the situation that the refugees had left. Several for example told of the experience of refugees who had been in concentration camps, one such describing the impact on a former law student:

His morale is broken and the expression in his eyes is that of a wounded being who is still suffering, whose spirit requires careful and kindly treatment so that he may be induced to take interest in life once more.¹³⁴

As well as sympathising with the plight of Jews, the articles drew clear parallels between Nazi policies towards Jews and other ethnic groups. Reports on Nazi racial policies drew frequent attention to the fact that “Hitler sees Aryan race as superior to Jews, Negroes, Chinese and French”. Accompanying this particular article was a photograph of Paul Robeson with the caption that “even such cultured men of colour are despised in the Reich”.¹³⁵ But whilst press reports made clear Nazi racial policies, they also reinforced comparisons between the current Jewish plight and that of West Indians whose ancestors had been enslaved. In other forums, this comparison was also being made. In December 1938 a performance of the opera “The Children of the Captivity” took place, the publicity stating that the opera was about “captive Jews”.¹³⁶ The calypso by Atilla the Hun, “The Persecuted Jews”, which also made direct comparisons between Jews and enslaved Africans, was performed in the same month. It is questionable however, whether the analogy was accepted. In an article on Martinique, Kurt Kursten, a refugee journalist wrote about rising black antisemitism in the West Indies, identifying several key factors to explain it: the influence of the church and a widespread belief in charges of deicide, the absence of any number of Jews, allowing prejudice to breed without any countering influences, and most importantly, antisemitism that resulted from the experiences of black West Indians themselves. For example, Kursten wrote that :

¹³³“Eye Witness in Europe”, 14 September 1938, Trinidad Guardian.

¹³⁴*Ibid.* Other stories on concentration camps included a feature on 29 October 1938, “The Nazis got me: A Grim Story of Six Months in a Concentration Camp”, and on 22 January 1939 a feature entitled “3 Months in a Concentration Camp: Now Hell Holds No Terrors for Him!” which described how a young Jew was imprisoned after Kristallnacht, and gave a graphic description of life in the camp (the article did not say which one). See 29 October 1938, Trinidad Guardian and 22 January 1939, Sunday Guardian.

¹³⁵30 October 1938, Sunday Guardian.

¹³⁶Report on Opera, “The Children of Captivity” by R. Wiggins, performed by the Royal Victoria Institute, 11 December 1938, Sunday Guardian.

the coloured man cannot conceive of the martyrdom of the Jewish people. Even if he could, it would be a moot question how he would react to it because he would be overwhelmed by the memory of his own past and harassed by the mortifications and insults of the present.¹³⁷

Other comparisons have since been made about the Caribbean and Jewish diasporas, making the point that the “general historical experience” of both groups have characteristics in common since “both have been uprooted peoples at the perennial mercy of the forces of migration and accident”, and both have produced a body of Caribbean and Jewish literature of exile.¹³⁸ Similarly, in the Rastafari cult in Jamaica, the Jewish song of exile (psalm 137) was adapted to reflect their belief that until a return to Africa, black West Indians remained in exile:

By the rivers of Bablyon
 Where he sat down
 and there he went
 When he remembered Zion
 But the wicked carried us away captivity,
 Require from us a song
 How can we sing King Alfa song
 In a strange land.
 Sing it out loud,
 Sing a song of freedom sister
 Sing a song of freedom brother
 We gotta sing and shout it
 We gotta talk and shout it
 Shout the song of freedom now
 So that the words of our mouth
 And the meditation of our heart
 Be acceptable in thy sight
 Over I...¹³⁹

Whilst similarities were drawn at the time, and subsequently, between the Jewish situation and that of black West Indians, their differences were more apparent, particularly in a colonial world where colour and class were such important determinants.

Once the ban on immigration had come into effect, a calmer period ensued in Trinidad for

¹³⁷Kurt Kursten, “Black Antisemitism”, manuscript, p.4, Kurt Kursten Collection, Leo Baeck Archive, NY (hereafter LBI). Kursten was released from a concentration camp in France and subsequently Casablanca, from where he went to Martinique, from 1940 to 1946.

¹³⁸See Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, p.66.

¹³⁹Cited in Holzburg, *Minorities and Power*, pp.3 - 4. See also Rabbi Bernard Hooker, *The Sacred Writings*, Jamaica 1981, pp.34 - 37 in which the former rabbi of Jamaica also makes the comparison between psalm 137 and the rastafari version.

Jewish refugees. The second phase of adjustment began with the establishment of Jewish communal activities, reflecting the more settled situation of Jewish refugees. As the JDC grants began to take effect, refugees found employment and life became more stable, Jews in the colony began to show confidence in their presence as a community. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Jewish community established social, cultural and religious activities and in addition, contacted Jewish communities in Britain, the United States and other Caribbean colonies for help in obtaining religious material and to engage the services of a rabbi.¹⁴⁰ Religious and cultural differences within the Jewish community complicated these attempts, and the community became engaged in often bitter debates between themselves over the priorities which both the JAT and the JRS should be engaged in. Whilst this had been an internal struggle, efforts to gain religious parity with other denominations in Trinidad became an external confrontation between representatives of the Jewish community and officials in the local Council and Legislative Assembly over requests for a Jewish graveyard and ritual slaughterer. The official response to these requests contained barely disguised hostility towards Jewish religious practices. Since these debates were reported in the press, the discussions and attitudes of officials also entered the public domain and further influenced attitudes towards Jewish refugees. Ostensibly, since the majority of Jewish refugees had not become naturalised as British citizens, they were unable to enjoy the same rights as other minorities, such as Muslims, enjoyed and this, alongside arguments about assimilation, seemed to be the main objections against granting the requests. Yet since the first Jewish burial was of a naturalised British subject, who had been in Trinidad for a period of seven years, it must be concluded that the withholding of privileges given to other minorities was discrimination against the Jewish minority. This conclusion was also reached by the American Consul in Trinidad in 1943, who accused the Colonial Office of discrimination when it refused to allow an American Jewish Army chaplain permission to marry a Jewish soldier and Jewish resident whilst that right was granted to Christian and Muslim ministers.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Since there were insufficient funds and a lack of agreement about securing a minister, it was not until American troops entered the colony that a rabbi was found to officiate over services. With the presence of American bases in Trinidad, some 200 American Jewish soldiers entered the colony, and the Jewish community gained the services of an American army chaplain, rabbi Sydney Ungar. The rabbi took services in the synagogue of the Jewish Association, which were attended by the refugees and American soldiers present in the colony. See report from M.W. Beckelman to JDC NY, 19 October 1941, #1048, JDC.

¹⁴¹ In 1943, the American Consulate in Trinidad protested to the Colonial Office that discrimination was being practiced against Jewish soldiers in the colony. Whilst Christian, Muslim and Hindu Ministers were registered to enact marriages, an American request to have rabbi Ungar do the same was denied by the Legislature, on the grounds that legislation would have to be amended for this to take place. See C.H. Hall, Jr. American Consul,

In September 1939 the request to purchase a part of land for a Jewish cemetery was turned down, and to help their case, the Chief Rabbi was called upon for assistance, to explain to the Legislature how Jewish congregations had their own cemeteries all over the British Empire.¹⁴² The Trinidad Guardian reported the “strong opposition” that met the recommendation by some councillors. For example, one objector, Councilor Gormandy, claimed that “There should be no segregation because there could be no question of nationality after death”. Councillor Gomes stated that “If they were permitting a fetish in one case they would have to allow it in all cases”. Councillor Richards “expressed his opposition to any discrimination in these cases”. Whilst objections were on religious grounds, supporters of the request linked objectors to Nazi supporters. Hence the Mayor asked Richards if he was making a “Hitler speech” to which he replied:

I am making a Christian speech. I am speaking of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In the eyes of God we are all children of God. But the Jews cannot come here and dictate to us what we can do.¹⁴³

In response, the JAT wrote to the Council to explain that their request :

was NOT [their emphasis] made with the wish to separate ourselves from our fellow men. It was made in order to comply with the rules laid down by religion and religious rules are beyond our power to adjust at will.¹⁴⁴

In October of that year a compromise was reached, and 250 graves were reserved for Jewish burial in a special section of the cemetery at Mucurapo.¹⁴⁵ On 31 May 1940 the first Jewish

Trinidad to Secretary of State, Washington, “Rejection of Government of Trinidad to Designating Jewish Chaplain as Marriage Officer”, 25 May 1943, 811.34544/2946 (and enclosed replies from Colonial Secretary Trinidad); See also advice from Secretary of War, War Department Washington to Secretary of State, State Department Washington, 30 June 1943. The Secretary of War informed the State Department that this was “discriminatory and definitely adversely affects the morale of our troops. It is also inconsistent with the thesis that the United Nations are fighting for religious freedom as well as other objections...The continuation of this situation, if known, will undoubtedly have a more or less adverse influence upon the Jewish element in our nation, thereby affecting in some degree at least the amicable relations between the Colonial Government of Trinidad and our own Government”, 811.34544/2978, RG59, Box No. PI-157, 740, NA.

¹⁴²Office of the Snr. M.O.H., Port of Spain to Gandelman, JAT, 5 September 1939 & JAT to CRREC, 21 September 1939, Max Markreich Collection, (henceforth MMC), LBI. In the Isle of Man, a refugee community had a similar struggle with the local legislature and again the Chief Rabbi was called upon to intervene. See MS 183 384 f.3, AJA, University of Southampton Archive (henceforth SA).

¹⁴³27 October 1939, Trinidad Guardian.

¹⁴⁴JAT to His Worship the Mayor, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 2 November 1939, Max Markreich Collection, LBI.

¹⁴⁵Town Clerk to Girion, Secretary, JAT, 27 October 1939, Max Markreich Collection, LBI.

death was consecrated at the Jewish cemetery. The Trinidad Guardian reported the funeral for Mrs Eva Gandelman as a landmark for the colony, “Trinidad has first Jewish funeral” and its report was not dissimilar in style to the society pages, listing the names of the mourners who seemed to be solely from the Jewish community.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, attempts in 1940 to engage a ritual slaughterer were met with a hostile response. In March the City Council was asked permission for a licence for cattle to be slaughtered in the abattoir by a Jewish butcher. Again, the Chief Rabbi was asked to send information to the Port of Spain City Council, but their request was turned down. The discussion in Council seemed to have split along the same lines as it did over the request for a Jewish graveyard. The Mayor defended the request, whilst Councillor Richards attacked it. Richards stated that foreigners should not have the right to impose different rules but should adapt to those of the host country. When the mayor stated that Jews were asking for the same privilege already accorded to Moslems, Richards replied that Moslems were British citizens. Yet in the event only one councillor voted in favour of the request and was (to laughs in the Chamber) taunted for being “pro-Nazi” by Councillor Richards. Since the Trinidad Guardian printed the discussion in its entirety, this last remark probably added to the mounting confusion surrounding the identity of Jewish refugees, when mass internment measures were being discussed.¹⁴⁷

With the campaigns for mass internment in the spring of 1940, a spotlight was again thrown on the Jewish community, exposing attitudes which fundamentally misunderstood the situation Jewish refugees faced. During this period, Jewish refugees struggled to demonstrate their loyalty to Britain whilst the atmosphere created by the war caused many to view Jews of German origin as a kind of collective Trojan horse planted in the colony. Whilst there had been an understanding of the Nazi persecution of Jews, once at war, it was assumed that the nationality of Jews would become more important than their religious persuasion. On 28 May 1940 the Trinidad Guardian wrote an editorial entitled “The Fifth Column”. Referring to the recent order to intern all enemy aliens, the Guardian welcomed this action. It noted that:

Some of the Jewish enemy aliens who found refuge here from the horrors of Nazism have written suggesting that our campaign was based on anti-Semitism and appealing against internment on the ground that it is impossible to be a Jew and also a Nazi. No fair minded person will deny that there is merit in the statement that it is extremely unlikely for any Jew to be a Nazi. It must also be remembered, however, it is still very possible to be a Jew and remain a German.

¹⁴⁶ 31 May 1940, Trinidad Guardian.

¹⁴⁷ “Jewish Cattle Slaughter Plea Refused”, 22 March 1940 Trinidad Guardian.

The editorial continued by pointing out that Britain was not just at war with Nazism, but at war with:

the whole German people whose warlike spirit and lust created the fertile foundation on which Hitler and his gang of murderers were able to build a regime of lust such as Nazidom.¹⁴⁸

Whilst there were voices of dissent against internment, the majority of letter writers to the Trinidad Guardian agreed with the sentiments expressed in its editorial.¹⁴⁹ For example, a letter signed by “a Britisher” called for all enemy aliens to be interned.¹⁵⁰ Another letter writer claimed that he saw an alien switch on a radio to a German station and pronounce “Heil Hitler”, and asked that all refugees, whether sympathetic or not, should be interned.¹⁵¹ A letter signed by a “loyalist” argued that even though Jews in Trinidad had been expelled from Germany, as they had lived all their lives there, perhaps for generations, some may still remain loyal to Germany. He continued that although internment would be hard on Jews who had started to build up businesses and rebuild their lives:

we must realise that we are at war with Germany and with all Germans regardless of whether they be Jewish-Germans, English-Germans, French-Germans, or any other kind of Germans; and that those Germans in our Country should be made to take the same punishment as other Germans who have been captured in other Allied countries.¹⁵²

This letter writer took the suggestion of internment further, suggesting that the Government should make the refugees “work for us, make them build roads, or some such useful work.”¹⁵³ Therefore fifth column activity was also an excuse for some to vent anti-Jewish feelings. One letter writer talked of German Jews who “tell us these fantastic stories” about their struggles for survival, whilst all the time being very rich. Likening the Jews to Syrian immigrants, the writer added that both complained of poverty whilst accumulating wealth. He concluded that:

I am inclined to believe that there is a well organized Nazi spy ring operating here

¹⁴⁸“The Fifth Column”, 28 May 1940, Trinidad Guardian.

¹⁴⁹ The Anglican Bishop in Trinidad complained in a letter to the press that interning local aliens was against the spirit of Christian understanding. See letter from “Anglican” to Sunday Guardian, describing and attacking letter to same paper from Anglican Bishop, undated cutting from MMC, LBI.

¹⁵⁰“Britisher” to Trinidad Guardian, undated cutting from MMC, LBI.

¹⁵¹Letter to Trinidad Guardian, undated cutting from MMC, LBI.

¹⁵²“Loyalist” to Trinidad Guardian, undated cutting, MMC, LBI.

¹⁵³Ibid.

which perhaps would destroy our oilfields and sugar factories, thus putting thousands out of employment...These pro-Germans are not aware that Hitler is fighting for his own people and the Allies are fighting for us and the defeat of barbarism.¹⁵⁴

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the JAT provided statements to the Government and to the public via the Trinidad Guardian to allay fears and stress loyalty. One statement printed in the newspaper also directly refuted the charges of spying, and attempted to explain the difference between being a German Jew, and being a German:

To the public of Trinidad: Remarks have been publicly made that many of the Jews here in Trinidad are German spies...this is an absurd charge for the Jews of the world have no greater enemy than present day Germany...We ask the people of Trinidad that all remarks against us as German spies cease. Such matters are logically subjects for the police, who know best how to handle them. To make wanton attacks without proof against us Jews smacks too much of the German spirit: for that is the true German method. True British spirit is what we ask for, and expect from everyone in Trinidad.¹⁵⁵

Seen in the context of the growing propaganda about pro-Nazi activity in the West Indian area, the fear whipped up by the press and government campaigns against fifth column agitators would have seemed real to many Trinidadians. Yet it also demonstrates a lack of imagination and forethought in a colony where refugees had been present for a number of years before internment was carried out. This was less the case in Jamaica, where the public would not have come into contact with many refugees. Before the arrival of refugees to Gibraltar Camp, about 30 Jewish refugees were present in the colony. At the outbreak of war, all were interned in camps without separating Jewish refugees from pro-Nazi sympathisers. Up to 1943, some women refugees remained interned together with pro-Nazi Germans. Initially, the Daily Gleaner showed considerable ignorance about the difference between these two groups, reporting that "Prisoners of War Cheerful at Camp". For two paragraphs the article described how prison facilities were pleasant and "cheery" and food was "plentiful" and that the men were under far better conditions than if they had been conscripted into service in Germany. The only drawbacks were the restrictions imposed, that the inmates were becoming a "little bored" and that many were separated from their wives and children. It was only in the last paragraph that it was explained that these "prisoners of war" were in fact "Jews - refugees from Germany".¹⁵⁶ Yet by 1941 the discussions in the

¹⁵⁴Shah Soodeen to Trinidad Guardian, undated cutting from MMC, LBI.

¹⁵⁵Statement to the Trinidad Guardian, undated cutting from MMC, LBI.

¹⁵⁶7 September 1939, the Daily Gleaner.

letter pages of The Daily Gleaner had become more complex, particularly in regard to a campaign to release an internee. Edward Schonbeck, a refugee chemist working for the West India Sugar Company (WISCO) in Jamaica had been interned in September 1939, released on investigation by the Appeals Committee, and reinterned in the spring of 1940. A campaign for his release was led by Ronald Kirkwood, Director of WISCO and local politician. In June 1941 Schonbeck was released. The Gleaner took a keen interest in the campaign, not least because in Jamaica the wide ranging use of detention powers was a critical issue.¹⁵⁷ Yet its reporting of the campaign was criticised by Kirkwood, who felt that the paper stirred up opposition to Schonbeck's release by calling attention to his German nationality. In June 1941, Kirkwood wrote to the Gleaner, complaining that the paper should have been better informed, particularly because of its Jewish ownership.¹⁵⁸ He wrote that since "there are a number of gentlemen of Jewish extraction connected with the 'Gleaner', I think that your editorial staff might at least have taken the trouble to stress the fact that Schonbeck is a Jew - and not a German". The Gleaner's reply seemed to confirm that it felt Schonbeck should have remained interned because, despite his Jewishness, he remained a German:

Mr. Kirkwood says in the first paragraph of his letter that Mr. Schonbeck is "a Jew who happens to be German". In his second paragraph, he says that we should have taken the trouble to stress the fact that "Schonbeck is a Jew and not a German". We cannot reconcile this contradiction. We have always understood that a man's nationality does not necessarily indicate his race, and vice versa, and this in spite of anything Mr. Hitler may say.¹⁵⁹

Whilst internment was a harrowing experience for many refugees in Jamaica and Trinidad, the actual running of the internment camp in Trinidad was done with sensitivity, and no refugees were interned with Nazi sympathisers as had happened in Jamaica. Therefore there seems to have been a difference between public attitudes and the actual treatment given to refugees by those running the internment camp. Yet no campaigns were carried out in Trinidad to reverse the internment measures, and the release of refugees resulted from following the initiative set by London in the summer of 1941. Throughout the period of internment, the common perception that all German Jews were potential spies was maintained. Reporting on the arrival of the steamship Winnipeg in May 1941, the Trinidad

¹⁵⁷For example, in September 1940 Alexander Bustamante had been interned under Defence Regulations. See Ken Post, Strike the Iron: A Colony at War: Jamaica 1939 - 1945, Vol.I, New Jersey, USA, The Hague, Netherlands 1981, pp.129 - 131. See also the first section of this chapter, which has described the American Consul's criticism of Jamaica's use of detention powers.

¹⁵⁸The Gleaner newspaper was founded by the Jamaican Jewish family the Ashenheims.

¹⁵⁹R.L.M. Kirkwood to the Editor, 9 June 1941, The Daily Gleaner.

Guardian commented that “most of the faces seemed tired and worn from the ravages in Europe. Many of them had the refugee look. Examinations will reveal how many of the refugee claims are spurious”.¹⁶⁰

With the publication of the Allied Declaration in December 1942 and subsequent reports in the press about Nazi atrocities, the misunderstanding of Nazi policies towards German Jews was exposed, and once again sympathy rather than hostility was shown towards the plight of refugees in Trinidad. On 8 December 1942 a communication from the World Jewish Congress was sent to “all Trinidadian Jews” calling for a day of mourning and fasting on the 10 December 1942, with a religious service provided by rabbi Ungar, an American Chaplain. All Jewish businesses closed for the day. On 20 December 1942 the churches in Trinidad organised a protest meeting which was attended by the Governor, rabbi Ungar, Church representatives and, according to Dr Pulver, the President of the JAT by “hundreds of Christians from Churches of all denominations”.¹⁶¹ In September 1943 Pulver broadcast a Jewish New Year message which drew attention to information about the slaughter of Jews provided by the WJC. Describing its reception to a WJC member in New York, Pulver said the broadcast was “listened to by thousands of local friends (non-Jewish) and by the majority of the Jews - from all the reactions shown so far it appears that it had a good reception from the listeners”.¹⁶²

With the release of refugees from internment, no further issues arose from their presence, suggesting that they had become integrated into the fabric of Trinidadian life. The debates about internment had acted as a trigger for reactivating arguments used in the 1930s about Jewish immigrants, and they were overwhelmingly hostile in tone. Yet, as in the 1930s, sympathy about the Jewish situation was also demonstrated by the public reaction to the news of the extermination of European Jewry. Yet, as with all the issues shown in this chapter, ambiguities still remained.

The final phase of adjustment could be called assimilation into West Indian life. By 1945

¹⁶⁰31 May 1941, Trinidad Guardian.

¹⁶¹Dr B. Pulver to World Jewish Congress NY, 28 December 1942, H330, WJC series H, American Jewish Archives Cincinnati (henceforth AJAC).

¹⁶²See transcript of “New Year Message delivered by Dr B. Pulver at the Radio Distribution Co. On 29 September 1943, 7.30pm for the Jewish New Year” & Pulver to Zuckermann, WJC NY, 10 October 1943, H361, WJC Series H, AJAC.

those Jews who chose to remain in the West Indies had begun to see themselves as West Indian Jews. What was the process by which they became acculturated? Was acculturation at the expense of retaining Jewish identity? Did success in Trinidad depend on the loosening of ties with Jewish communal establishments? Or, as a white group, were they able to retain Jewish ethnic and religious ties without detrimental effect in their attempts to become West Indians? The process of Jewish integration has been divided into four phases of adjustment, the last stage stretching into the present. Concentrating on issues such as housing, employment, internment and religious difference, within each phase, Jewish immigrants and West Indians attempted to accommodate and understand each other. Jews had to adjust to external pressures whilst West Indian reactions towards them were based on real and imagined fears about the effect that Jews would have on their society. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine whether Jews in Trinidad did eventually gain the right to a ritual slaughterer or to the ordination of marriages under an appointed Jewish officer.¹⁶³ As in the Jamaican Jewish community, Jewish tradition probably underwent gradual adaptation, a cartoon from the Jamaica Weekly Gleaner illustrating this point. In a restaurant, a Jewish man informs the waitress that “Miss Jane, I don’t eat pig flesh...Please if you have any replacement for the pork, ... like bacon or ham?”¹⁶⁴ Whilst this illustrates a turning away from tradition, Jews in Jamaica still see themselves as forming a distinct community. The question is whether Jews in Trinidad (and other colonies such as Barbados) from orthodox backgrounds were forced into forsaking religious custom within the space of a few years, rather than over the centuries, as the Sephardic community had done.

So where did Jews “fit” into West Indian society in the postwar period? There is no doubt that those Jews who remained saw themselves as West Indians. In an interview in 1989, Henry Altman described the process by which he became a Barbadian:

When we first came to Barbados it happened that most of us had blue eyes and the original Jews had black eyes, the ones who came from the Mediterranean, the Spanish and Portuguese, and they were suspicious,[West Indians] they thought that we were Germans. It is a fact, and people called us Germans until the war broke out. Then slowly they realised that we were not. We are Polish Jews. Most of us are Polish

¹⁶³There exists little material on the history of the Jewish community in Trinidad post 1945. A Caribbean Studies Thesis carried out in 1991 which examined the history of the community from the 1930s to the 1970s does not state whether or not a ritual slaughterer was eventually engaged. In the 1960s, the community attempted to purchase land to build a synagogue, the town council postponing the request. No mention is made of the final decision. See Donah Farah, “The Jewish Community in Trinidad, 1930s - 70s”, University of the West Indies, Caribbean Studies Thesis 1991, p.25.

¹⁶⁴1 October 1979, cartoon by Stephen Reid, Jamaica Daily Gleaner, cited in Holzburg, Minorities and Power, p.53.

Jews. We always thought that we would leave the Island and go somewhere else, like to New York, America, Canada. But somehow we loved it here and we are Barbadians.¹⁶⁵

That initially Altman was seen by others as a German illustrates how Jews were perceived as part of a white minority coming to the West Indies. This explains to some extent the hostility that the question of Jewish immigration created. Much opposition to Jewish immigration stemmed from economic conditions on West Indian islands, but it also represented different reasons. At a time of emerging political consciousness, new forms of West Indian identity were being formed. The immigration of another group of European settlers also represented to many West Indians competition in the middle ranks of society. At the same time, the plight of Jewish refugees was sympathised with, from the dissemination and discussion of news in papers and the radio, through debates in legislative councils and discussions in schools.

Conclusion

Can the often antisemitic attitudes taken towards Jews be explained? West Indian society during the 1930s was fractured between the very rich and the majority without franchise or economic power. As seen in the section on immigration, the reception of Jewish refugees was preceded by debates in which specific anti-Jewish prejudices, as well as more general anti-immigrant prejudices were raised. How did this effect the reception of Jewish refugees? And how did these prejudices originate without a Jewish community present? Whilst the Sephardic Jewish community in Jamaica had remained, in most West Indian colonies, consciousness of Jews had been limited to a memory of their presence, reflected in street names and family names inherited from slave relations and from intermarriage. Jewish refugees entered colonies which were dominated by the influence of the Church, and its sometimes prejudiced or distorted views of the Jewish religion. For many West Indians, Jews were an abstract image, an absent stereotype which connotated negative attributes. In addition to religious prejudice, there was a racial element to the reception of Jewish refugees: there was no way of distinguishing them from white West Indians, and no knowledge or understanding of Jewish religious custom. Accounting for black antisemitism in Martinique, Kurt Kursten interviewed West Indians who claimed that if white people were persecuting

¹⁶⁵From transcript of interview with author, August 1989, Barbados, in author's possession.

Jews, and Jews were white people, Jews must indeed be deserving of their persecution.¹⁶⁶ In other words, Jews were unwelcome as an additional white group, yet were also seen as inferior to other whites.

Today, with few Jewish communities present, the history of Jewish immigration to the West Indies is explored and retold as part of the rich cultural diversity of West Indian heritage. In Jamaica, the site of Gibraltar Camp is now part of the University of the West Indies. Few people knew why it had its name until 1990 when The Sunday Gleaner serialised the memoirs of Miriam Stanton, a former refugee at the camp who had corresponded with Father William H. Fenney, the then chaplain of the camp.¹⁶⁷ An article in the Trinidad Sunday Guardian in December 1989 is captioned “Visitors baffled by some street names in New Yalta”, and a photograph of “Dr. Theo Hertzal [sic] Avenue” is shown. Whilst an area in Trinidad had been developed by Jewish immigrants, hence the street names, the majority of the community had since emigrated. Telling the story of how Jewish immigrants arrived in Trinidad in the 1930s, the article ends by stating that now only two or three families remain, “the only tangible proof [of the communities] existence in this country are simple street signs”.¹⁶⁸ In Barbados, in the 1950s the Jewish community bought back from the government and restored the ancient Sephardic synagogue, now a point of pride for the remaining community, and a tourist attraction mentioned in most guide books and Jewish travel guides.¹⁶⁹ As a point of tourism, Jewish heritage in the West Indies is repeatedly drawn on. The story of Jewish immigration has been integrated into a history of the West Indies which emphasises tolerance and acceptance, and the role of the West Indies as a haven. In these accounts, no mention is made of the restrictions which Jews faced in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, or the reluctance which Jews faced in the 1930s and 1940s. The complex responses made up of elements of antipathy, ambivalence and sympathy is flattened in order to fulfil the celebratory

¹⁶⁶See Kurt Kursten, “Black Antisemitism”, p.1, LBI.

¹⁶⁷Five articles serialized in The Sunday Gleaner, March 1990.

¹⁶⁸10 December 1989, Sunday Guardian. For other articles which celebrate a Jewish presence, see “The Lost Tribe: The forgotten Jewish Community of Trinidad”, 6 February 1990, Daily Express (Trinidad Paper); “The Saga of Hans Stecher: His Early Days in Trinidad as a Jewish Immigrant”, 4 February 1990, Sunday Guardian; There are also numerous articles about Jewish settlement in Jamaica, Barbados and other colonies.

¹⁶⁹In 1990 the Barbados community received a Jewish Commonwealth Award for its work in restoring the synagogue. It is one of a variety of places pointed out in tourist guide books on Jewish heritage in the West Indies. See for example, Malcolm Stern & Bernard Postal’s guide for American Airlines, Jews in the West Indies which provides a history of Jewish immigration to the West Indies, lists colonies with a current Jewish population, colonies of “Jewish historical interest” and lists Jewish synagogues, graveyards and other points of interest for the American tourist.

needs of heritage nostalgia.

CONCLUSION

In the 1930s, the international community had no legal obligation towards refugees, but for political and moral reasons allowed some to settle in western states. Yet whilst refugees were admitted to western countries, other concerns, real and imagined, prevented thousands of others from obtaining refuge from Nazi Germany. The immigration of Jewish refugees to the West Indies was viewed with ambivalence by most parties involved. The British Government was happy to use figures of refugee admittance to its colonial Empire as an example of a generous refugee policy, but once pressure built from the West Indies to prevent further numbers, action was taken to stem Jewish immigration. Why should the West Indies have accepted large numbers of Jewish refugees? Were they in a better position than Britain, the United States and South American states to accommodate them? In the 1930s Britain and the United States both dealt with the refugee crisis by a process of selectivity, supplanted by a more generous interpretation of immigration regulations after Kristallnacht. But both countries also increasingly focused on possibilities, rather than concrete solutions, to resettle refugees.

Mass refuge in British Guiana was offered by the British Government as an alternative to allowing refugee entry to Palestine. Whilst policy concerns dictated the offer of land for refugee settlement, few Government Ministers, or officials concerned in the Home, Colonial and Foreign Office, felt the offer was, in seriousness, a viable scheme which would come to fruition. For British West Indians, schemes to develop land in British Guiana would have been of benefit to those in the colony, and possibly a solution to overpopulation in other colonies, such as Barbados and Jamaica. Yet the suggestion of a Jewish refugee settlement, funded privately by American Jewish organisations, took the project away from West Indian concerns and was viewed by many in the West Indies and the Colonial Office as an attempt to 'dump' a European problem on West Indian land.

Sympathy at the plight of the Jews, and an empathy based on a shared experience of racism and persecution, went alongside fears at the impact the refugees would have on Caribbean islands. The situation of Jewish refugees allowed British West Indians to compare their colonial experiences of slavery with another ethnic group. Attitudes towards Jewish immigrants in the Caribbean reveal much about the class and race pre-occupations of West Indians: Jews were viewed as an unwelcome addition to the white population, yet at the same time, their persecution was compared to the experience of a generation coming to terms with

the slavery of their parents or grandparents. Thus although refugees were only a temporary feature of West Indian society, they represented an important focus in considering identities in the Caribbean. For refugees, the West Indies, whether accidentally or deliberately reached, was of the utmost importance. Whilst it is difficult to estimate with accuracy, the British West Indies provided refuge for several thousand refugees at some points during 1933-1945.

Nevertheless, for the vast majority of refugees trying to leave the German Reich, settlement in British Guiana, the scheme most associated with the West Indies, was not a viable alternative to finding a temporary or permanent place of refuge. It is possible that within a properly funded scheme, Jewish refugees with experience in attendant industries could have found employment and refuge, but this would not have been applicable to the 250,000 refugees first discussed for the plan. In the Dominican Republic, where a farming colony in Sosua was attempted, with far fewer numbers, the results were that the majority of refugees found it impossible to make a living in agriculture, and soon became reliant on overseas aid, or moved from the settlement. Jewish organisations became involved in investigations with British Guiana unwillingly. Political objections to the scheme revolved around the obvious need to persuade Britain to allow refugee settlement in Palestine, and for other countries to allow refugee entry. Economic objections were based on the recognition that funding a vast settlement project, with its attendant probability of failure, would be financially out-of-range, particularly since the JDC was running at a deficit. Moreover, practical objections were based on the long experience in the settlement of refugees. For Jewish refugee organisations, what the British Guiana episode reveals was their total lack of influence at governmental level. At the same time as the British Guiana plan, President Roosevelt was in favour of pursuing settlement projects in all manner of exotic locations, and attendant to his enthusiasm, Jewish refugee organisations felt compelled to pursue these avenues, however futile they may have seemed.

Between the Evian Conference in July 1938 and the outbreak of war in September 1939, British interests were served by keeping the British Guiana project alive as a show of concern over refugee settlement and to appease relations with the United States. Whilst Britain did alter its refugee policy after Kristallnacht, with the outbreak of war, refugee settlement was no longer a Government concern or priority. This was demonstrated by the use of Gibraltar Camp. As a plan to house evacuees from Gibraltar, the Camp was a waste of resources for the British Government. It was never used to its full potential, and only 1700 of the proposed

seven thousand Gibraltans were evacuated to Jamaica during the summer of 1940. Whilst the British Government could have allowed the camp to be used for refugees who had escaped from Nazi Germany to neutral territory, this ignores the situation from a British perspective. During 1940 and 1941, the British Government felt no particular obligation to rescue Jewish refugees, during a period when fear of invasion was high, and domestic policy involved the mass internment of German and Austrian Jews. Yet when it was in the British interest to do so, the camp was used. In 1942 and 1943, refugees were moved from Spain and Portugal to Jamaica. This episode has recently been characterised as an example of British rescue, which “goes some small way towards rehabilitating British honour”, but it is doubtful whether either refugees or refugee organisations viewed it as such.¹

For both these groups, ambivalence governed attitudes to Gibraltar Camp. Taken from an uncertain future in Portugal, refugees were at first enthusiastic and grateful for their removal to Jamaica. But once the restrictions of life in Gibraltar Camp, however beneficent the regime was, became clear, refugees became increasingly restless. The slow rate of emigration only added to a sense of betrayal by the refugee organisations blamed for bringing them to the camp. For Jewish organisations, the camp serves as a reminder of their powerlessness. Whilst responsible for refugees in the camp, they were unable to initiate further movements of refugees there, requests to do so declined at various points, before and after the Bermuda Conference in April 1943. Yet whilst in private the JDC may have felt ambivalence to the project, in public it was used as an example of the possibility of rescue, and used in publicity to bolster fundraising and morale amongst its staff and supporters.

By examining the position of refugee organisations, important parallels can be drawn to their situation today. In 1995, having just returned from Bosnia and Rwanda, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) described how the organisation’s scope for action was limited by the political considerations of the governments sponsoring it.²

Since 1945, the amount of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working for refugees has proliferated, as has the numbers of refugees. According to the UNHCR in 1996, there are today approximately 50 million people forced to flee their homes and some 13 million are

¹Paul Bartrop, “From Lisbon to Jamaica: A Study of British Refugee Rescue During the Second World War”, *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol.13, No.1, March 1994, p.62.

²This remark was made by Ray Wilkinson of the UNHCR at a talk at the University of Southampton on 9 May 1995.

legally defined as refugees under international protection.³ Despite the postwar legal recognition of refugee status, it would seem that little has changed to empower organisations to make more of a difference. Of all groups of refugees in the inter-war period, Jewish refugees benefited from the most organised and experienced network of relief agencies. Yet both international refugee bodies and Jewish relief agencies were unable to intervene to any significant extent in directing refugee emigration or carrying out rescue. Nevertheless, their intervention did save lives.

In fictional and historical accounts of the Nazi era, the Caribbean has served as a powerful metaphor to illustrate the plight of Jewish refugees. Saul Friedländer's Nazi Germany and the Jews concludes by describing a performance of a J.B. Priestley play, People at Sea, performed by the Jüdische Kulturbund in Berlin in April 1939:

The play tells of the terrors and hopes of twelve people on a ship in the Caribbean disabled by fire, adrift, and in danger of sinking. The characters depicted on the stage are saved at the end. Most of the Jews seated in the Charlottenstrasse theater that night were doomed.⁴

In Julian Barnes's novel, The World in 10½ Chapters, the voyage of the steam-ship St. Louis in June 1939 is described. The account depicts the desperate plight of refugees expelled from Germany and shunted from port to port in the western Hemisphere.⁵ As this thesis has demonstrated, the Caribbean can be seen as a symbol of hope or despair, but most of all it serves to demonstrate what happened at the margins of the refugee crisis and the Holocaust.

³Public Information Section, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR by numbers July 1996, p.3.

⁴Saul Friedländer, Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939, Vol.I, USA 1997, p.333.

⁵Julian Barnes, A History of the World in 10½ Chapters, London 1989.

APPENDIX

Refugee Numbers

Between 1933 and 1945 approximately 14,000 - 15,000 refugees came to the British West Indies of whom 1,500 - 2,000 were European Jews. These figures have been arrived at from the following sources and 'guestimates'. Where information is available, the exact number of Jewish refugees is given.

Refugees to Gibraltar Camp

October 1940	1,700 Gibraltar evacuees. ¹
January 1942	180 Jewish refugees from Portugal. ²
February 1942	107 Jewish refugees from Portugal. ³
December 1942	250 Dutch refugees from Vigo, Spain. 175 Dutch Jewish refugees from Vigo, Spain. ⁴
April 1943	305 Dutch refugees.
October 1943	60 Dutch refugees.
December 1943	300 Dutch refugees from Vigo, Spain. ⁵

The total number of refugees amounts to 3,077, of whom at least 462 were Jews. The figure is an underestimate as Jews were almost certainly amongst the Dutch refugees who came to the camp during 1943.

Refugees to Jamaica 80 Jewish refugees.⁶

Refugees to Trinidad 600 Jewish refugees.⁷
Intransit figures 1000.⁸

The total number of refugees amounts to 1,785. At least 585 of these were Jews. Of the intransit cases, a substantial number were also Jewish.

Dominica 10,000 refugees from Vichy-held French West Indian colonies.⁹

Barbados and other British West Indian colonies 200 Eastern European Jewish refugees.¹⁰

¹ See p.71, fn. 161.

² See pp.72 & 144. It is difficult to assess the exact number of passengers from the Serpa Pinto. Estimates from the JDC vary between 152 - 180 Polish Jews.

³ See p.144.

⁴ See p.145.

⁵ See p.145, fn.68.

⁶ This is an estimate based on the following information; 29 male Jewish refugees were interned in September 1939, see p.195, fn.109. An unspecified number of women and children, relatives of these men were also interned, see p.200, passim. If at least half were accompanied by wife and child, this gives an approximate total of 80.

⁷ By December 1938 some 200 Eastern European Jews had settled in Trinidad, see pp.167-168, and fn.25. Although Pereira claims 200 families, it is more likely that this figure is of individuals. In March 1940 the refugee population, including German and Austrian Jews was counted as 585, see p.177, fn.53.

⁸ At times, the numbers of intransit refugees in Trinidad amounted to 1,000. For examples of these voyages see pp.140, 141, 198.

⁹ See p.195, fn.108.

¹⁰ For a discussion on the difficulty of assessing refugee numbers to these colonies, see pp.175-177. In Barbados, during 1934, Henry Altman claims some 30 families arrived from Eastern Europe. Allowing 3 persons per family, the figure of 90 persons can be arrived at, see p.167. In 1950, the Jewish population had grown to 100 persons, due to the postwar immigration of Rumanian families. See pp.210-211, fn.164. As a conservative 'guestimate', it can be assumed that at least 100 Eastern European Jews settled in other British West Indian colonies, such as British Guiana, British Honduras and the Bahamas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography lists all primary and secondary material that has influenced the writing of this thesis.

1. PRIMARY SOURCES

Archival collections

BRITAIN

Public Record Office, London

Colonial Office record classes consulted:

Bahamas

CO 23 Original correspondence

CO 25 Acts

Barbados

CO 28 Original correspondence

CO 31 Sessional papers

CO 32 Government gazettes

CO 33 Miscellaneous

CO 565 Registers of correspondence

British Guiana

CO 111 Original correspondence

CO 113 Acts

CO 114 Sessional papers

CO 115 Government gazettes

British Honduras

CO 123 Original correspondence

CO 125 Acts

Colonies, general

CO 323 Original correspondence

CO 949 Indexes to circular despatches

CO 537 Colonies general supplementary original correspondence

CO 885 Confidential print, miscellaneous

Commissions, committees

CO 888 Colonial Labour Advisory Committee papers and minutes

CO 950 West India Royal Commission (Moyne)

Defence

CO 968 Original correspondence

CO 974 Index to correspondence

CO 980 Colonial Office Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees Department

Dominica

CO 73 Acts

Establishment

CO 866 Establishment, correspondence, original

Gibraltar

CO 91 Gibraltar

Jamaica

- CO 137 Original correspondence
 CO 139 Acts
 CO 140 Sessional papers
 CO 141 Government gazettes
 CO 351 Registers of correspondence

Leeward Islands

- CO 151 Original correspondence

Trinidad

- CO 295 Original correspondence
 CO 297 Acts
 CO 298 Sessional papers
 CO 299 Government gazettes
 CO 300 Miscellaneous

West Indies

- CO 318 Original correspondence

University of Southampton Archive.

Institute of Jewish Affairs archive - World Jewish Congress papers

MS 116/159 Papers relating to the Freeland League

MS 150. Papers of I.M. Greenberg.

MS 175 J.H. Hertz papers

MS 183 Solomon Schonfeld papers

MS 198 Papers of the Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations

MB/C282 Mountbatten papers

Wiener Library, London

Archives of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief

UNITED STATES**National Archives, Washington**

RG 59 General Records of the Department of State. Central Decimal file. File numbers:
 844E.543/2 - 844G.42/11-244; 844.B.61/12-2744 - 844D.1112/10-2644;

American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati

World Jewish Congress, series C

World Jewish Congress, series D, Relief and Rescue Departments

World Jewish Congress, series H, Alphabetical Files

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives, New YorkJDC Administration, NY, files

59 - 63 Administration Committee

75 - 88 Budget and Scope Committee

98 Committee on organisation

101 - 106 Plan and Scope Committee of JDC campaign

107 Committee on policy

112 - 114 Committee on Refugee Aid in Central and South America, 1939 - 1944

115 Informal South American Coordinating Committee

121 - 147 Personnel

150 - 153 JDC Running Publications

154 - 159 Annual Reports

Country files

533 Curacao
 722 Jamaica
 884 - 885 Poland
 1059 - 1141 South America
 1047 - 1048 Trinidad
 1059 South America

Organisation files

198 War Refugee Board
 244 - 248 Hias
 255 - 256 Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR)
 266 Jewish Telegraphic Agency
 267 Joint Emergency Committee on European Jewish Affairs
 346 - 348 World Jewish Congress

Sailings files

370 - 372 SS Cabo de Buena Esperanza
 388 SS San Thome
 389 SS Winnipeg

Post War files

135 Aruba
 199 Barbados, general
 893 Jamaica, refugees, 1945 - 1948
 894 Jamaica, refugee lists
 1215 Trinidad, general, 1945 - 61

Jewish Theological Seminary Archives, New York

Records of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Hilfsverein Library

Max Markreich Collection

American Jewish Congress Boycott Committee

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Jewish Press Agencies

Emigration Collection

Hias-Hicem Collection

Kurt Kersten Collection

YIVO Institute Archive, New York

RG245.4 Series XIII South America and Caribbean
 Series XII Hias and Hicem Central Office, New York

RG245.5 Hicem European office

RG245.6 Hicem office, Lisbon

RG245.7 HIAS European Office

RG278 Papers of J.P. Chamberlain

RG335.2 American Joint Reconstruction Foundation

RG335.5 AJJDC Lisbon office records

RG366 Dr Steinberg and Freeland League papers

GERMANY

Zentrum fur Antisemitismusforschung, Berlin

Papers of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe

Official publications and reports

Anglo-American Caribbean Commission. Report of the West India Conference held in Barbados 21 - 30 March, 1944, under Auspices of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission. Washington 1944.

Anglo - American Caribbean Commission. The Caribbean Islands and the War: A Record of Progress in Facing Stern Realities. Washington 1943.

British Guiana Governor Review of the Year. British Guiana, annually. Volumes consulted 1942 - 1945.

British Guiana Ordinances. British Guiana, annually. Volumes consulted 1933 - 1938.

Colonial Office Annual Reports, annually. Volumes consulted 1933 - 1945.

Bahamas

Barbados

British Guiana

British Honduras

Dominica

Jamaica

Trinidad and Tobago

Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago 1938. Hansard, Trinidad 1938.

Dominions Office and Colonial Office List, annually. Volumes consulted 1933 - 1945.

Jamaica: Rules, Regulations and Orders. Jamaica, annually. Volumes consulted 1931 - 1933, 1934 - 1937, 1938 - 1940.

Laws of Barbados. Barbados, annually. Volumes consulted 1931 - 1940.

Laws of Jamaica. Jamaica, annually. Volumes consulted 1931 - 1939.

Ordinances of British Honduras. British Honduras, annually. Volumes consulted 1931 - 1940.

Report of the British Guiana Refugee Commission to the Advisory Committee on Political Refugees Appointed by the President of the United States of America. Cmd. 6014, London 1939.

Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems of the American Jewish Committee.

Jewish Post War Problems - Relief, Reconstruction and Migration. August, US 1943.

Trinidad: Laws. Trinidad, annually. Volumes consulted 1925 - 1940.

Trinidad: Ordinances Passed by the Legislative Council, Trinidad and Tobago, annually. Volumes consulted 1933 - 1939.

Public Information Section, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR by numbers, July 1996.

West India Royal Commission Report, London, 1940.

Journals /Newspapers**Daily**

Dominica Chronicle

Dominica Tribune

Jewish Daily Bulletin, United States

Port of Spain Gazette, Trinidad

The Daily Gleaner, Jamaica

The Guiana Gazette
 The Times, Great Britain
 The New York Times, United States
 Trinidad Guardian

Weekly

Jamaica Times
 Jewish Chronicle, London
 Polish Jewish Observer
 Sunday Guardian, Trinidad
 Sunday Gleaner, Jamaica

Document Collections

Mendelsohn, John & Donald Detwiler, S., eds. The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes. New York, London 1982.
 Spackman, Anne. Constitutional Developments of the West Indies 1922 - 1968: A selection from the Major Documents. Barbados 1975.
 Thurston, Anne. Sources for Colonial Studies in the Public Record Office, Volume 1, Records of the Colonial Office, Dominions Office, Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office, London 1995.
 Woodward, E. & R. Butler, eds. Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919 - 1939. Vol.5, London 1956.
 Wyman, David, ed. America and the Holocaust: A Thirteen Volume Set. New York, London 1990.

Unpublished memoirs

Shuckburgh, Sir John. "Colonial Civil History of the War", Unpublished typescript, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1949.

Published memoirs and autobiographies

Amery, Leopold. My Political Life, Vol.III: The Unforgiving Years 1929 - 1940. London 1955.
 Brock, Esme. An Evacuee in Jamaica 1940 - 1945. Buriton, Titchfield 1990.
 Burns, Sir Alan. Colonial Civil Servant. London 1949.
 Goldmann, Nahum. The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann. Helen Sebba, trans. New York 1969.
 Hooker, Rabbi Bernard. The Sacred Writings. Jamaica 1981.
 Lévi-Strauss, Claude. Tristes Tropiques. London 1973.
 Parkinson, A.C.C. The Colonial Office From Within, 1905 - 1945. London 1947.
 Stanton, Miriam. Escape from the Inferno of Europe. London 1996.

Fiction

Barnes, Julian. A History of the World in 10½ Chapters. London 1989.
 Markham, E.A., ed. The Penguin Book of Caribbean Short Stories. London 1996.
 Phillips, Caryl, ed. Extravagant Strangers: A Literature of Belonging. London, Boston 1997.

Interviews

Mr Henry Altman, Barbados, 28 August 1990.
 Hazel Delgado, Surrey, 16 May 1991.
 Edward Schonbeck, New York City, 20 June 1994.
 Miriam Stanton, London, 30 April 1991.

Contemporary printed articles and books

- American Jewish Year Book, annually. Volumes consulted 1933 - 1946.
 Anglo-Jewish Association. Future of European Jewry. London 1946.
 Hilfsverein. Arbeitsbericht der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland, 1937-1938. Berlin 1939.
 Cohen, Joseph L. Salvaging German Jewry: A Guide to those who wish to help. London 1939.
Contributions A L'Etude Des Possibilites De Colonisation Juive: Materiaux statistiques groupes par les services techniques du Congres Juif Mondial. WJC, Janvier 1939.
 Council for German Jewry, Evian Conference - Concerning Political Refugees : Memorandum of Certain Jewish Organisations Concerned with the Refugees from Germany and Austria. London 1938.
 German Jewish Aid Committee. While You Are In England: Helpful Information and Guidance For Every Refugee. London 1938.
 Gollancz, Victor. Let My People Go. London 1942.
HIAS Survey, 1940 - 1941. New York 1942.
 Inman, Samuel Guy. "Refugee Settlement in Latin America", Francis J. Brown, ed., Refugees: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 203, May 1939, pp.183 - 193.
 Macmillan, William M. Warning from the West Indies: A Tract for Africa and Empire. New York 1936.
 Nossal, Kim Richard. "A Note on Bermuda - and After", Reports of the World Jewish Congress, (British Section), No.5, July 1943.
 Olivier, Lord. Jamaica, the Blessed Island. London 1936.
 Phiebig, Albert J. HIAS Survey, 1940 - 1941. New York 1941.
 Rathbone, Eleanor. Rescue the Perishing. London 1943.
 Simpson, Sir John Hope. Refugees, A review of the Situation since September 1938. Oxford 1939.
 Tartakower, Arieh & Kurt Grossman. The Jewish Refugee. New York 1944.
 World Jewish Congress. Contributions A L'Etude Des Possibilites De Colonisation Juive: Materiaux statistiques groupes par les services techniques du Congres Juif Mondial. New York 1939.
 World Jewish Congress. Unity in Dispersion: A History of the World Jewish Congress. New York 1948.
 Traub, Michael, Dr. Jüdische Wanderbewegungen Vor Und Nach Dem WeltKriege. Berlin 1930.
 Wischnitzer, Mark. Die Juden In Der Welt. Berlin 1937.
 Simpson, Sir John Hope. Refugees: Preliminary Report of a Survey. London 1938.

2. SECONDARY SOURCES

Unpublished dissertations, papers and theses

- Lawrence John Butler, "Economic Development and the 'Official Mind': The Colonial Office and Manufacturing in West Africa, 1939 - 1951" PhD thesis, University of London, 1991.
- Farah, Donna. "The Jewish Community in Trinidad, 1930s - 70s", Caribbean Studies undergraduate thesis, University of the West Indies, 1991.
- London, Louise. "British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees, 1933 - 1942", PhD thesis for the University of London 1992.
- Newman, Joanna. "Jews in a Colonial Society: The Jewish Community of Barbados, 1654 - 1833", MA for University College, London 1993.

Catalogues

- Catalogue of West India Reference Library. Jamaica 1980.
- Commonwealth Caribbean Resource Centre. Complete Caribbeana: 1900 - 1975. London, Ontario 1974.
- Klepfisz, Rose & Emil Lang, eds. Annotated Catalogue of the Archives of The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1933 - 1944, unpublished, no date.

Unpublished Conference and seminar papers

- Baptiste, Fitzroy Andre. "Caribbean Decolonisation Caught Between the Manchester Principles and the Cold War", Presentation at the Conference, "Africa and the World: The 1845 Pan-African Congress and Its Aftermath," Manchester Town Hall, Manchester, England 13 - 15 October, 1995, pp.1 - 45.
- Furedi, Frank. "Grappling with Race Relations: Colonial Knowledge of Race Towards the End of Empire", Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Postgraduate Seminar, Paper for Discussion on 28 November 1997, pp.1 - 15.
- Martin, Tony. "Jews to Trinidad". Paper presented at 23rd annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Santo Domingo, March 1991, pp.1 - 24.

Books and essays in collections

- Abella, Irving and Troper, Harold. None is too many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933 - 1948. New York 1982.
- Addison, Paul. The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War, UK 1994.
- Adler-Rudel, S. Judische Selbsthilfe unter dem Naziregime 1933 - 1939. Im Spiegel der Berichte der Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland. Tübingen 1974.
- Alderman, Geoffrey. The Jewish Community in British Politics. Oxford 1983.
- Alderman, Geoffrey. Modern British Jewry. Oxford 1992.
- Andrade, Jacob. A History of the Jews in Jamaica from the British Conquest to the Present Time. Kingston 1941.
- Angrss, Werner. "German Jews, 1933 - 39", H.Friedlander & S.Milton, eds., The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy and Genocide. Millwood, New York 1980, pp.69-82.
- Arnold-Forster, Mark. The World At War. London 1973.
- Ashton, S.R & Stockwell, S.E. Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice 1925 - 1945. London 1996.
- Avni, Haim. Argentina and the Jews, a History of Jewish Immigration. Tuscaloosa, London 1991.
- "Latin America and the Jewish Refugees: Two Encounters, 1935 and 1938", Judith

- Laikin Elkin & Gilbert W. Merckx, eds., The Jewish Presence in Latin America, Boston 1987, pp.45 - 70.
- "Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Latin America During the Holocaust", Randolph L.Braham, ed. Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era. New York 1985, pp.87 - 154.
- Ayearst, Morley. The British West Indies. London 1960.
- Baptiste, Fitzroy A. War, Co-operation and Conflict: The European Possessions in the Caribbean, 1939 - 45. New York 1988.
- Bartrop, Paul R. & Gabrielle Eisen. The Dunera Affair: A Documentary Resource Book. Melbourne 1990.
- ed., False Havens: The British Empire and the Holocaust. New York, London 1995.
- Bassler, Gerhard P. Sanctuary Denied: Refugees from the Third Reich and Newfoundland Immigration Policy 1906-1949. St John's 1993.
- Bauer, Yehuda. My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1929 - 1939. Philadelphia 1974.
- The Holocaust in Historical Perspective. Washington 1978.
- American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945. Detroit 1981.
- Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933 - 1945. New York 1994.
- Beaglehole, Ann. A Small Price to Pay: Refugees from Hitler in New Zealand, 1936-1946. Wellington 1988.
- Becker, Avi. "Diplomacy Without Sovereignty: The World Jewish Congress Rescue Activities", Troern and Pinkus, eds., Organizing Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period. London 1992, pp.343 - 359.
- Beckles, Hilary and Verene Shepherd, eds. Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present. U.S 1996.
- Behrens, C.B.A. Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War. London 1955.
- Ben - Sassoon, H.H., ed. A History of the Jewish People. Cambridge MA 1976.
- Bentwich, Norman. They found refuge: An account of British Jewry's work for victims of Nazi oppression. London 1956.
- Benz, Wolfgang. Das Exil der Kleinen Leute. Munchen 1991.
- Berghahn, Marion. German-Jewish Refugees in England: The Ambiguities of Assimilation. London 1984.
- Birnbaum, Pierre & Ira Katznelson, eds. Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, Citizenship. New Jersey 1995.
- Blakeney, Michael. Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933 - 1948. Sydney 1985.
- Bolchover, Richard. British Jewry and the Holocaust. Cambridge 1993.
- Anna Bramwell, ed. Refugees in the age of total war. London 1988.
- Breitman, Richard & Alan Kraut. American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933 - 1945. Bloomington, Indiana 1987.
- Brereton, Bridget. A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783 - 1962. London 1981.
- Burns, Sir Alan . History of the British West Indies. London 1954.
- I.C. Butnaru. The Silent Holocaust: Romania and Its Jews. New York, London 1992.
- Cardozo, Jessurun. Three Centuries of Jewish Life in Curacao. Curacao 1959.
- Carmichael, G. History of the West Indian Islands of Trinidad and Tobago, 1498 - 1900. London 1961.
- Carnegie, James A. Some Aspects of Jamaica's Politics 1918 - 1938. Jamaica 1973.
- Cesarani, David & Tony Kushner, eds. The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain.

- London 1993.
- ed. The Final Solution: Origins and Implementations. London 1994.
- ed. Genocide and Rescue: The Holocaust in Hungary 1944. Oxford 1997.
- Chalmin, Philippe. The Making of a Sugar Giant, Tate & Lyle 1859 - 1989. UK 1983.
- Cohen, Michael J. Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate: The Making of British Policy 1936 - 1945. London 1978.
- Churchill and the Jews. London 1985.
- Cohen, Robin. Global Diasporas. London 1997.
- Constantine, Stephen. The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914 - 1940. London 1984.
- Craig, Hewan. The Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago. London 1952.
- R.J. Crampton. Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century. London, New York 1994.
- Cross, John Arthur. Whitehall and the Commonwealth: British Departmental organisation for Commonwealth relations, 1900 - 1966. London 1967.
- Cumper, George E. Preliminary Analysis of Population Growth and Social Characteristics in Jamaica 1943 - 1960. Jamaica, 1963.
- Daniels, Roger. "American Refugee Policy in Historical Perspective", Jarrel C. Jackman & Carla M. Borden, eds., The Muses Flee Hitler: Cultural Transfer and Adaptation 1930 - 1945. Washington 1983, pp.61 - 77.
- Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life. U.S 1990.
- Dawidowicz, Lucy S. The Holocaust and the Historians. Cambridge MA, London 1981.
- The War Against the Jews. London 1987.
- De Kadt, Emanuel. Patterns of Foreign Influence in the Caribbean. London 1972.
- Dear, I.C.B., ed. The Oxford Companion to the Second World War. Oxford, New York 1995.
- Douglas, Colin & Bousquet, Ben. West Indian Women at War. London 1993.
- Edmonds, Robin. The Big Three: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in Peace and War. GB, USA 1991.
- Emmanuel, Dr Isaac & Suzanne Emmanuel. History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles. Two Volumes, New York 1957.
- Engel, David. In the Shadow of Aushwitz, The Polish Government-in Exile and the Jews, 1939 - 1942. North Carolina 1987.
- Eppler, Elizabeth. "The Rescue Work of the World Jewish Congress During the Nazi Period", Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference - April 1974, Jerusalem, 1977, pp.47 - 69.
- Feingold, Henry L. The Politics of Rescue, The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938 - 1945. New York 1980.
- Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust. Syracuse New York 1995.
- A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream 1920 - 1945. Baltimore, London 1992.
- "Rescue and the Secular Perception: American Jewry and the Holocaust", Troern & Pinkus, eds., Organising Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period, London 1992, pp.154 - 166.
- Feldman, David. Englishmen and Jews. London, USA 1994.
- Ferris, Elizabeth, G., ed. Refugees and World Politics. New York 1985.
- Finestein, Israel. Jewish Society in Victorian England: Collected Essays. London 1993.

- Finkelkraut, Alain. The Imaginary Jew. USA 1994.
- Foot, P. Immigration and Race in British Politics. Glasgow 1983.
- Fortune, Stephen. Merchants and Jews: The Struggle for British West Indian Commerce 1650 - 1750, Florida 1984.
- Fraser, Cary. Ambivalent anti-colonialism: the United States and the genesis of West Indian independence, 1940 - 1964. U.S 1994.
- Freeden, Herbert. The Jewish Press in the Third Reich. London 1993.
- Friedlander, Saul. Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933 - 1939. Volume I. New York 1997.
- Friedman, Saul. No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Towards Jewish Refugees, 1938 - 1945. Detroit 1973.
- Fryer, Peter. Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain. London 1984.
- Gallagher J. The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire. Cambridge 1982.
- Garner, J. The Commonwealth Office 1925 - 1968. London 1978.
- Gilbert, Martin. The Holocaust, The Jewish Tragedy. Glasgow 1987.
- Atlas of the Holocaust. London 1982.
- Auschwitz and the Allies. London 1981.
- Gillman, Peter & Leni. Collar the Lot! How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees. London 1980.
- Gilroy, Paul. The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness. London, New York 1993.
- Grahl-Madson, A. Status of Refugees in International Law, Volume IV.1 , Leyden: Sijthoff 1966.
- Gupta, P.S. Imperialism and the British Labour Movement 1914 - 1964. London 1975.
- Hancock, Sir W.K. Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs,(1). Problems of Nationality 1918 - 1936. London 1964.
- Handlin, Oscar. A Continuing Task: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1914 - 1964. New York 1964.
- Hart, Richard. Arise/Rise and Organise, Warning from the West Indies. London 1987.
- Havinden, M & D. Meredith. Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850 - 1960. London 1993.
- Hilberg, Raul. Perpetrators Victims Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933 - 1945. New York 1992.
- Hirschfeld, Gerhard, ed. Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany. Leamington Spa 1984.
- Keith Hitchins. Rumania, 1866 - 1947. Oxford 1994.
- Holland, R.F. Britain and the Commonwealth Alliance, 1918 - 39. London 1981.
- Holland, R.F. European Decolonization 1918 - 1981: An Introductory Survey. London 1985.
- Holmes, Colin. John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871 - 1971. Basingstoke 1988.
- Holzburg, Carol S. Minorities and Power in a Black Society: The Jewish Community of Jamaica. Boston 1987.
- Honeychurch, Lennox. The Dominica Story. Dominica 1975.
- Hooker, Rabbi Bernard. The Bible, Judaism and Jamaica. Jamaica 1969.
- Howe, Stephen. British Left and anti-colonialism. London 1993.
- Howe, S. Anticolonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire 1918 - 64. Oxford 1993.

- James, C.L.R. The Black Jacobins. London 1989.
- Kelshall, Gaylord T.M. The U-Boat War in the Caribbean. Annapolis, Maryland 1994.
- Kinder, Hermann & Werner Hilgemann, trans. Ernest A. Menze. The Penguin Atlas of World History, Volume two, London 1978.
- Kochan, Miriam. Britains Internees in the Second World War. London 1983.
- Kranzler, David. Japanese Nazis and Jews 1938 - 1945. New Jersey 1988.
- Kuczynski, Robert Rene. Demographic Survey of British Colonial Empire. London, New York 1953.
- The Administration of Imperialism: Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office. London 1969.
- Kushner, Tony. The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society during the Second World War. Manchester 1989.
- The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination. Oxford, Cambridge MA 1984.
- "An Alien Occupation - Jewish Refugees and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933 - 1948", Werner E. Mosse, ed., Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom. Tübingen 1992, pp.553 - 578.
- Lane, Tony. The Merchant Seamen's War. Liverpool 1990.
- Lafitte, Francois. The Internment of aliens. London 1988.
- Leavitt, Moses A. The JDC Story: Highlights of JDC Activities, 1914 - 1952. New York 1953.
- Lee, J.M and M. Petter. The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy: Organisation and the Planning of a Metropolitan Initiative, 1939 - 1945. London 1982.
- Lesser, Jeffrey. Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question. Los Angeles, London 1995.
- Levine, Robert M. Tropical Diaspora. The Jewish Experience in Cuba. Florida 1993.
- Lewis, Gordon K. The Growth of the Modern West Indies. New York 1968.
- Lipstadt, Deborah E. Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933 - 1945, New York 1986.
- Litvak, Yosef. "The American Joint Distribution Committee and Polish Jewry 1944 - 1949", Troern and Pinkus, eds., Organizing Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period. London 1992, pp.269 - 295.
- London, Louise. "Jewish Refugees, Anglo-Jewry and British Government Policy, 1930 - 1940", David Cesarani, ed., The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry. Oxford 1990, pp.163 - 190.
- "British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees 1933 - 1939", Werner E. Mosse, ed., Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom. Tübingen 1991, pp.485 - 517.
- Lowenstein, Sharon. Token Refuge: The Story of the Jewish Refugee Shelter at Oswego, 1944-1946. Bloomington, Il. 1986.
- Maga, Timothy. America, France and the European Refugee Problem 1933 - 1947. New York, London 1985.
- Maingot, Anthony P. The United States and the Caribbean. London 1994.
- Margaliot, Abraham. "The Problem of the Rescue of German Jewry During the Years 1933 - 1939; The Reasons for the Delay in their Emigration from the Third Reich", Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Second International Historical Conference - April 1974. Jerusalem 1977, pp. 553 - 571.
- Marrus, Michael R. The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century. New York

- 1985.
- & Robert O. Paxton. Vichy France and the Jews. New York 1983.
- The Holocaust in History. London 1987.
- Marshall, Oliver, ed. The Caribbean at War - 'British West Indians' in World War II. London 1992.
- Marshall, Trevor G. "Bajans Come Back to Calypso", Rachel Wilder, ed., Insight Guide: Barbados, Singapore 1990, pp.235 - 240.
- McEvedy, Colin. The Penguin Atlas of Recent History (Europe Since 1815). GB 1982.
- McFarlane, Walter G. The Birth of Self Government in Jamaica, 1937 to 1944. Brooklyn, New York 1957.
- Medoff, Raphael. The Deafening Silence. New York 1987.
- Melander, Göran. "The Concept of the Term 'Refugee'", Anna C. Bramwell, ed., Refugees in the Age of Total War. Boston, Sydney, Wellington 1988, pp.7 - 14.
- Mendelsohn, Ezra. The Jews of East Central Europe Between the Wars. Indiana 1983.
- Mitchell, Sir Harold. Europe in the Caribbean: The Policies of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands Towards their West Indies Territories in the Twentieth Century. California 1963.
- Monahan, Laila, ed. Refugees and International Relations. Oxford, New York, Toronto 1989.
- Moneke, Kirsten. Die Emigration der Deutschen Juden nach Argentinien: Zur Rolle der Jüdischen Hilfsvereine 1933 - 1945. Munster 1993.
- Moore, Bob. Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands, 1933 - 1940. Dordrecht, Holland 1986.
- Morse, Arthur. While Six Million Died : A Chronicle of American Apathy. New York 1968.
- Norman, Theodore. An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association. London, Boston, Melbourne 1985.
- Oostindie, Gert, ed. Ethnicity in the Caribbean. London 1996.
- Parker, R A C. Chamberlain and Appeasement, British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War. London 1993.
- Pearson, Raymond. National Minorities in Eastern Europe 1848 - 1945. London 1985.
- European Nationalism 1789 - 1920. Britain 1994.
- Penkower, Monty. The Jews were Expendable: Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust. Detroit 1988.
- "Dr Nahum Goldmann and the Policy of International Jewish Organisations", Troern and Pinkus, eds., Organizing Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period. London 1992, pp.141 - 153.
- Phillips, Caryl. Extravagant Strangers: A Literature of Belonging. London 1997.
- Poole, Bernard L. The Caribbean Commission. USA 1951.
- Post, Ken. Strike the Iron: A Colony at War: Jamaica 1939 - 1945. The Hague 1981.
- Post, Ken. Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath. The Hague 1978.
- Prazmowska, Anita. "Polish refugees as military potential: Policy Objectives of the Polish Government in Exile", Anna C. Bramwell, ed., Refugees in the Age of Total War. London 1988, pp.219 - 232.
- Proudfoot, Malcolm J. Population Movements in the Caribbean. Port of Spain, Trinidad 1950.
- European Refugees 1939 - 52: A Study in Forced Population Movement. London 1957.

- Pulzer, P.G.J. The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria. New York 1964.
- Sibille Quack, ed. Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period. U.S 1995.
- Quevedo, Raymond. Atila's Kaiso: A Short History of Trinidad Calypso. Trinidad 1983.
- Reynolds, D. The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937 - 41. London 1981.
- Rich, Paul. Race and Empire in British Politics. Basingstoke 1986.
- Roberts, W Adolphe. The French in the West Indies. London 1971.
- Roberts - Wray, Kenneth Owen Sir. Commonwealth and Colonial Law. London 1966.
- Robinson, Kenneth. The Dilemma of Trusteeship: Aspects of British Colonial Policy between the Wars. London 1965.
- Rohlehr, Gordon. Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad. Port of Spain, Trinidad 1990.
- Rosenbaum, Alan S., ed. Is the Holocaust Unique? USA 1996.
- Rubinstein, W.D., ed. Jews in the Sixth Continent. Sydney, London, Boston 1987.
- The Myth of Rescue. London, New York 1997.
- Sanders, Ronald. Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration. New York 1988.
- Scott, John. A Matter of Record. London 1990.
- Sharf, Andrew. The British Press, Jews and Nazi Rule. London 1964.
- Sherlock, Philip. West Indies, London 1966.
- Sherman, Anthony. Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933 - 1939. London 1973.
- Sjöberg, Tommie. The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. Sweden 1991.
- Skran, Claudena. Refugees in Interwar Europe. Oxford 1995.
- Smith, Raymond T. Kinship and Class in the West Indies, a Geneological Study of Jamaica and Guyana. Cambridge 1988.
- Soyer, Daniel. Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York: 1880 - 1939. U.S 1997.
- Stent, Ronald. "Jewish Refugee Organisations", Werner E. Mosse, ed., Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom. Tübingen 1991, pp.579 - 598.
- Stern, Malcolm & Bernard Postal. Jews in the West Indies. American Airlines Guide, USA, no date.
- Strauss, Herbert A. Biographische Handbuch der Deutschsprachigen Emmigration nach 1933. Munich 1981.
- ed., Annotated Bibliography. Munich, New York, London, Paris 1981.
- Tabori, Paul. The Anatomy of Exile. London 1972.
- Taylor, A.J.P. Origins of the Second World War. London 1961.
- The Roaring Lion. Calypso from France to Trinidad: 800 Years of History. San Juan, no date.
- Thomas, Gordon & Max Morgan-Witts. Voyage of the Damned. New York 1974.
- Thompson, Paul. The Voice of the Past. Oxford 1988.
- Thorpe, Andrew. Britain in the Era of Two World Wars 1914 - 45. London, New York 1994.
- Troern and Pinkus, eds. Organising Rescue: Jewish National Solidarity in the Modern Period. London 1992.

- Turner, Barry. The Long Horizon: 60 Years of CBF World Jewish Relief. London 1993.
- Wasserstein, Bernard. Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939 - 1945. Oxford 1979.
- Weinberg, David. A Community on Trial: The Jews of Paris in the 1930s. Chicago 1977.
- Westphal, Uwe. Berliner Konfektion und Mode: 1836 - 1939, Die Zerstörung einer Tradition. Berlin 1986.
- Wetzel, Juliane. "Auswanderung aus Deutschland", Juliane Wetzel, ed., Die Juden in Deutschland 1933 - 45. Berlin 1993.
- Wilgus, A.Curtis, ed. The Caribbean: British Dutch, French. Gainsville, Florida 1958.
- Williams, Eric. British Historians and the West Indies. New York 1966.
- Williams, Eric. From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492 - 1969. London 1970.
- Wischnitzer, Mark. To Dwell In Safety: The Story of Jewish Migration Since 1800. Philadelphia 1948.
- Visas to Freedom: The History of HIAS. Cleveland, New York 1956.
- Woodward, L. British Foreign Policy During the Second World War. History of the Second World War, Civil Series, Volumes 1, 2 & 4, London 1962.
- World Jewish Congress. 40 Years in Action: A Record of the World Jewish Congress 1936 - 1976. Geneva 1976.
- Wriston, Agnes M and Lucy F. Horsfall. Britain and the West Indies. New York, London, Toronto 1948.
- Wyman, David. Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941. New York 1968.
- The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941 - 45. New York 1984.
- Yahil, Leni. "Madagascar - Phantom of a Solution for the Jewish Question", Bela Vago and George L. Mosse, eds., Jews and Non Jews in Eastern Europe, 1918 - 1945. New York 1974, pp.315 - 334.
- "The Historiography of the Refugee Problem and of Rescue Efforts in the Neutral Countries", Gutman, Yisrael and Greif, eds., The Historiography of the Holocaust Period, Proceedings of the Fifth Yad Vashem International Conference. Jerusalem 1983.
- The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry. New York 1990.
- Zweig, R. Britain and Palestine during the Second World War. London 1986.

Articles in journals

- Adler-Rudel, S. "The Evian Conference on the Refugee Question", Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, XIII, London 1968, pp.235 - 273.
- Ammar, Nellie. "They Came from the Middle East", Jamaica Journal, Vol.4, No.1, March 1970, pp.2 - 6.
- Ball-Kaduri, Jacob. "The National Representation of Jews in Germany. Obstacles and Accomplishments of its Establishments", Yad Vashem Studies 2, 1958, pp.159 -178.
- Bartrop, Paul R. "From Lisbon to Jamaica: A Study of British Refugee Rescue During the Second World War", Immigrants & Minorities, Vol.13, No.1, March 1994, pp.48 - 64.
- "Indifference of the Heart: Canada, Australia and the Evian Conference of 1938", Australian-Canadian Studies, Vol.6, no.2, 1989, pp.57-74.
- Basdeo, Satiadeo. "The Role of the British Labour Movement in the Development of Labour Organisation in Trinidad, 1929 - 1938", Social and Economic Studies, Vol.31, No.1, March 1982, pp.40 - 73.

- Caron, Vicki. "Prelude to Vichy: France and the Jewish Refugees in the Era of Appeasement", Journal of Contemporary History, Vol.20, 1985, pp.157 - 176.
- Eck, Nathan. "The Rescue of Jews with the Aid of Passports and Citizenship Papers of Latin American States", Yad Vashem Studies I, 1957, pp.125 - 152.
- Esh, Shaul. "The Establishment of the Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland", Yad Vashem Studies, 7, 1968, pp.19-38.
- Gilbert, Martin. "British Government Policy Towards Jewish Refugees (November 1937 - September 1939)", Yad Vashem Studies, Vol. XIII, 1979, 127 - 169.
- Gruenewald, Max. "The Beginning of the Reichsvertretung", Leo Baeck Year Book, I, London, 1956, pp.57 - 68.
- Hagen, William W. "Before the Final Solution; Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland", Journal of Modern History, 68, June 1996, pp. 351 - 381.
- Holborn, Louise. "The Legal Status of Political Refugees, 1920 - 1938", The American Journal of International Law, 1938, pp.680 - 703.
- Johnson, Howard. "Oil, Imperial Policy and the Trinidad disturbances 1937", Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, IV, I, 1975, pp.29 - 54.
- "The Political Uses of Commissions of enquiry (1): The Imperial Colonial West Indies Context; The Forster and Moyne Commissions", Social and Economic Studies, Vol.27, No.3, September, 1978, pp.255 - 275.
- Kushner, Tony. "Rules of the Game: Britain, America and the Holocaust in 1944", Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Vol. 5, No.4, 1990, pp.381 - 402.
- La Guerre, John. "The Moyne Commission and the West Indian Intelligentsia, 1938 - 39", Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, IX, 2, 1971, pp.134 - 157.
- Lawrence, Keith. "The Establishment of the Portuguese Community in British Guiana", Jamaica Historical Review, Vol.5, N.2, 1965, pp.50 - 74.
- London, Louise. "Refugee Agencies and their Work, 1933 - 39", The Journal of Holocaust Education, Vol.4, No.1, Summer 1995, pp.3 - 17.
- "British Government Policy and Jewish Refugees 1933 - 45", Patterns of Prejudice, Vol.23, No.4, 1989, pp.26 - 44.
- Malmsten, Neal R. "The British Labour Party and the West Indies 1918 - 1939" Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, V, 2, 1977, pp.172 - 205.
- Margaliot, Abraham. "The Dispute Over the Leadership of German Jewry 1933 - 1938", Yad Vashem Studies, Vol.X, 1974, pp.129-148.
- McCree, Roy Dereck. "The Chinese Game of Whe Whe in Trinidad: From Criminalization to Criminalization", Caribbean Quarterly, Volume 42, Nos.2-3 June-September 1996, pp.1 - 27.
- Milgram, Avraham. "The Jews of Europe from the Perspective of the Brazilian Foreign Service, 1933 - 1941", Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Vol.9, N1, Spring 1995, pp 94 - 120.
- Milton, Sybil. "The Expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany October 1938 to July 1939", Leo Baeck Year Book XXIX, 1984, pp.169 - 201.
- Nicholls, David. "No Hawkers and Pedlars: Levantines in the Caribbean", Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol.4, 1981, pp.415 - 431.
- Prinz, A. "The Role of the Gestapo in Obstructing and Promoting Jewish Emigration", Yad Vashem Studies, 2, 1958, pp.205 - 218.
- Rosenstock, W. "Exodus 1933 - 1939: A Survey of Jewish Emigration from Germany", Leo

- Baek Year Book, London 1956, pp.373 - 390.
- Rubinstein, W.D. "Australia and the Refugee Jews from Europe, 1933-1954: A Dissenting View", Journal of Australian Jewish Historical Society, Vol.10, part 6, 1989, pp.500-523.
- Schlesinger, Benjamin. "The Jews of Jamaica - A Historical View", Caribbean Quarterly, Vol.13, No.1, March, 1967, pp.46 - 53.
- Sompolinsky, Meier. "Anglo-Jewish Leadership and the British Government: Attempts at Rescue 1944 - 1945", Yad Vashem, XIII, Jerusalem, 1979, pp.211 - 247.
- Strauss, Herbert A. "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (1)", Leo Baek Year Book XXV, London 1980, pp.313 - 397.
- "Jewish Emigration from Germany, Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (2)", Leo Baek Year Book, XXVI, London 1981, pp.343 - 409.
- Strum, Harvey. "Jewish Internees in the American South, 1942 - 1945", American Jewish Archives, Vol. XLII, No.1, Fall / Winter, 1990, pp.27 - 48.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. "Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief (1914 - 1938)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol.LVII, No.1, September 1967, pp.52 - 106.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. "Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief and Immigration (1914 - 1938)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol.LVII, No.2, December 1967, pp.191 - 253.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. "Private American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919 - 1938): Problems and Attempted Solutions", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol.LVII, No.3, March 1968, pp.285 - 338.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. "Budgeting American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919 - 1939)", American Jewish Historical Quarterly, Vol. LIX, No.57, June 1970, pp.83 - 104.
- Taylor, Frank. "The Tourist Industry in Jamaica 1919 - 1939", Social and Economic Studies, Vol.22, No.2, June 1973, pp.205 - 228.
- Thompson, Alvin O. "Migration into Commonwealth Caribbean: a bibliographical Review of Period 1838 - 1938", Immigrants and Minorities, Vol.5, July 1986, No.2, pp.145-166.
- Zuroff, Efraim. "Attempts to Obtain Shanghai Permits in 1941: A Case of Rescue Priority During the Holocaust", Yad Vashem XIII, Jerusalem, 1979, pp.321 - 348.

