

CLOSED DOORS: AMERICA AND THE 1938-1940 REFUGEE CRISIS

by

Rebecca Jaeger

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors Degree in History with Distinction

Spring 2016

© 2016 Rebecca Jaeger
All Rights Reserved

CLOSED DOORS: AMERICA AND THE 1938-1940 REFUGEE CRISIS

by

Rebecca Jaeger

Approved: _____
James Brophy, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Polly Zavadviker, Ph.D.
Committee member from the Department of Department Name

Approved: _____
Barbara Settles, Ph.D.
Committee member from the Board of Senior Thesis Readers

Approved: _____
Michael Arnold, Ph.D.
Director, University Honors Program

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to first thank my Thesis Director, Dr. James Brophy, for his constant guidance and advice throughout this research project, and tireless support in providing feedback on my drafts. I also want to thank Dr. Polly Zavadvker and Dr. Barbara Settles for their crucial advice, which allowed me to further explore my ideas. I am truly appreciative of all of the time and effort that they spent helping me improve my thesis.

Thank you to the University of Delaware Office of Undergraduate Research & Experiential Learning, the Honors Program, and Dr. Burnaby Munson for generous financial support of my research.

Lastly, I want to thank my family and friends for supporting me throughout this entire process. I would have been able to do this with without their support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	v
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 OBSTACLES TO AMERICAN ACTION.....	5
Nativism and Anti-Semitism	5
State Department.....	10
3 AMERICAN ACTION	15
The Evian Conference	15
The President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees.....	21
The Advisory Committee Beyond Resettlement	35
4 PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT	40
5 CONCLUSION.....	50
REFERENCES	52

ABSTRACT

Prior to the Second World War, another lesser-known crisis rocked world affairs. In response to the rise of the Nazi Party, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, many Jews and other minorities sought refuge in countries around the world. This was the refugee crisis of 1938-1940. But, few countries, including the United States, agreed to let many refugees enter. While the United States and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt took some action to aid the desperate refugees by initiating the Evian Conference and establishing a President's Advisory Committee on Refugees, they did not aid a significant amount of Jews. Virulent nativist and anti-Semitic sentiments among the general public, as well as Congress's refusal to increase immigration quotas and the State Department's commitment to blocking immigration, limited the scope of American action. This thesis will explore the American action that was taken to save European Jews from a terrible fate and the many factors that limited such action.

INTRODUCTION

Eleven million: the number of Jews and other minorities that the Nazis slaughtered in the Holocaust. This is a fairly well known statistic. Another lesser-known number is 309,000. While less than eleven million, this number represents the amount of Germans, particularly Jews, who applied for American visas in 1939. Most people know about the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany and the devastating consequences of its dictatorship, but fewer know about the refugee crisis that precipitated the Second World War and Holocaust and the action, or lack thereof, taken by international governments to aid the refugees.

Adolf Hitler rose to power along with his Nazi Party in 1933. Very soon after, he and his officials took action against the Jews. Anti-Semitism had long been part of his party's message, as Hitler used this small portion of the population as a scapegoat for the country's ills. On April 1, 1933, the Nazi Party led a nationwide boycott of Jewish owned businesses.¹ The persecution of the Jews continued with the institution of the Nuremberg Laws on September 15, 1935. These laws defined a "Jew," revoked many of their political rights, and made Jews second-class citizens.² These are two

¹ "Jews in Prewar Germany," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed February 24, 2016, <https://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007687>.

² "Jews in Prewar Germany"

examples of government-sponsored programs that targeted and persecuted Jews during the Nazi regime.

Other countries around the world, including the United States, were aware of the Nazi persecution. As early as 1933, the United States government received word of the harrowing treatment of Jews through George Messersmith, the American Ambassador stationed in Berlin. In one of his memoranda, dated September 21, 1933, Messersmith stated that “there has been no alleviation whatsoever of the situation of the Jews in Germany” and that “on the contrary their condition is growing steadily worse.”³ In the same report, Messersmith detailed the persecution of the Jews, including the removal of Jewish professors from universities, the struggle of Jewish physicians to find work, and the impending law prohibiting marriages between Aryans and non-Aryans.⁴ High-ranking officials in the United States government were aware of the persecution that was increasingly prevalent and violent in Nazi Germany.

The persecution of the Jews worsened throughout the 1930s, and many sought refuge in countries around the world. By June 1939, 309,000 Austrian, Czech, and German Jews applied for the 27,000 spaces available for refugees to enter into the United States.⁵ The American government permitted the full quota amount to receive

³ George Messersmith, “Present Status of the Anti-Semitic Movement in Germany (September 21, 1933),” excerpted in *German History in Documents and Images*, accessed January 5, 2016, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=2166.

⁴ Messersmith, “Present Status of the Anti-Semitic Movement in Germany (September 21, 1933).”

⁵ “German Jewish Refugees,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed March 24, 2016, <https://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007687>.

visas (27,370), but that still left an eleven-year waiting list for those who sought entry into the United States from these countries.⁶ While international governments knew of the Nazi persecution, few offered assistance to the refugees clamoring to leave Germany and cited different spatial, economic, and social reasons for denying them entry. This led to a refugee crisis, as hundreds of thousands of Jews desperately sought refuge in other countries, but few countries offered places for the refugees. The amount of available places under the immigration quotas was far less than the number of persecuted people seeking a new home. By the end of 1939, 399,000 Jews had migrated from Germany and Austria to other countries, but 259,000 remained.⁷ The years of 1938-1941 serve as an interesting study of American attitudes toward immigration and rescuing refugees.

Secondary literature is split on interpreting the actions of Americans and their government toward Jewish and other political refugees in the years preceding the United States' entrance into World War II. Many of these works, such as David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust*, blame President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for the American failure to rescue a significant amount of refugees. Others, including Deborah Lipstadt's *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust* and Laurel Leff's *Buried by the Times*, describe the apathy of the American people, which, coupled with anti-Semitism and nativist sentiments, prevented American officials from pushing to save the Jews.

⁶ Breitman, Richard and Allan Lightman, *FDR and the Jews*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 102.

⁷ "German Jewish Refugees"

Other authors focus on the social, economic, and political reasons why the United States' government and President Roosevelt did not make more of an effort to save the Jews. These works frame the action, and the lack thereof, in a context that reflects the environment of the time. These sources include Richard Breitman and Allan Lightman's *FDR and the Jews* and Robert Rosen's *Saving the Jews: FDR and the Holocaust*. These works examine the whole picture of American politics in regard to the refugee crisis and point to other factors that limited FDR's ability to act.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the American immigration policies and prevailing attitudes towards immigrants and analyze what the United States did do to try and aid the refugees and what prevented government officials from acting further. While limited by an isolationist Congress and an uncooperative State Department, the U.S. government made efforts to alleviate the European refugee crisis through the Evian Conference and the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees.

Chapter 1

OBSTACLES TO AMERICAN ACTION

Many oppositional forces existed that prevented a full diplomatic rescue of the Jews. These forces influenced politicians not to take any swift, sweeping action to save the persecuted populations of Germany.

Nativism and Anti-Semitism

Nativism and anti-Semitism pervaded American public opinion and government. These sentiments were not new, as immigration restrictions had been in place for decades. An influx of immigrants in the early twentieth century caused Congress to pass and implement laws restricting immigration. The Immigration Act of 1917 prohibited persons likely to become a public charge from entering the United States.⁸ This same law also prevented “undesirables” from entering the United States. In 1921, Congress implemented a more restrictive immigration act, the Emergency Quota Act. This act established a quota system for immigration, stating that the number of immigrants entering from a certain country should be limited to 3 percent of the number of foreign-born people of that nationality in the United States in 1910.⁹

⁸ Joseph Chamberlain. *Memo to President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. June 4, 1938*. From Princeton University. *The Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers*.

⁹ *Proceedings, Sixty-seventh Congress*, University of Washington Library. Accessed February 28, 2016.

The National Origins Act of 1924 expanded upon this act by limiting the annual quota of any nationality to 2 percent of the number of foreign-born individuals of that nationality in the United States in 1890.¹⁰ By basing the quota on a smaller portion of people, the National Origins Act restricted immigration even further. After 1927, the ratio between 150,000 and the number of people of that nationality within the United States in 1920 determined the quota.¹¹ These acts evince the country's hostility toward immigration in the 1920s, as government acts increasingly limited entrance into the United States. The continuing nativism and xenophobia served as formidable obstacles to solving the refugee crisis that preceded World War II.

These feelings of nativism continued into the 1930s, fed by the country's poor economic state. While the Immigration Act of 1917 established that the United States could deny entry to any person considered to become a public charge, the government did not deploy this statute frequently. In September 1930, the White House issued a press release stating "if the consular office believes that the applicant may probably be a public charge at any time, even during a considerable period subsequent to his arrival, he must refuse the visa."¹² Because of the Great Depression, the Hoover Administration moved to tighten the immigration restrictions. This exclusionary statute served as a powerful obstacle that prevented the United States from taking in more German refugees in the early 1930s. However, after a fierce battle with the

¹⁰ *Proceedings, Sixty-eighth Congress*, University of Washington Library. Accessed February 28, 2016.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Department of State Press Release No. 50 (September 13, 1930)*, in *Paper Walls*, 4.

Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins, and with support from FDR, the State Department moved to slightly loosen immigration restrictions. Refugees previously considered a “public charge” were permitted to move forward in the process if they had American relatives willing and able to financially support them. The loosening of these restrictions resulted in small increases in immigration from Germany between 1933 and 1937, but quotas remained unfilled.¹³

Much of the American public expressed virulent nativist sentiments. President Roosevelt received many letters from irate Americans who expressed their views of the refugee crisis. In a letter signed by ‘Militant Christian Patriots,’ some Americans described FDR’s advisers as being “notorious radicals” and condemned Roosevelt’s policy as “tantamount to a betrayal of American workers.”¹⁴ Like many others, this group of Americans viewed admitting refugees as harmful to native Americans because they believed immigrants stole American jobs. The American population also reflected these nativist sentiments. In fact, a 1938 poll revealed that only 5 percent of Americans supported the raising of quotas to accommodate the refugees, while 67 percent explicitly wanted to keep the refugees out.¹⁵

¹³ David Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 5.

¹⁴ “Militant Christian Patriots to FDR, April 12, 1938.” Letter. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

¹⁵ Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945*, (New York: Free Press, 1986.), 97.

Nativism was not the only negative sentiment that many Americans felt toward the Jewish refugees; anti-Semitism also existed prevalently in the United States. Some 1939 polls found widespread anti-Semitism, with nearly half of Americans admitting that they felt Jews had too much influence in the United States.¹⁶ These same polls showed that 29 percent of polled Americans thought there would be a campaign against Jews and that 12 percent would support that campaign.¹⁷ Rampant anti-Semitism even existed in some of the highest realms of the American government. Wilbur Carr, an Assistant Secretary of State, described Jews as “filthy, most un-American... often dangerous... [and] mentally deficient.”¹⁸ This prejudice negatively affected the American ability to effectively aid the persecuted refugees.

However, not all Americans disapproved of helping refugees. Many of them supported American assistance for the persecuted Jews and expressed this sentiment via letters to FDR. Emanuel Kline commended FDR “very highly upon [his] very sensible and honorable spirited action in inviting the refugees from the dictatorial countries to take refuge under the Stars and Stripes.”¹⁹ Judge Irving Lehman echoed these sentiments, thanking FDR for all that he did “not only to rouse the conscience of humanity but to restore sanity to a world gone mad.”²⁰ A third constituent, Emanuel

¹⁶ Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 146.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Robert Rosen, *Saving the Jews: Franklin Roosevelt and the Holocaust*, (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2006), 39.

¹⁹ Emanuel Kline. *Emanuel Kline to FDR, April 2, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

²⁰ Irving Lehman. *Irving Lehman to FDR, March 28, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Silverman, Chairman of the Youth Committee for Refugee Aid, wrote, “your stand on the question of how this country should deal with the barbarians who commit such inhuman acts is worthy of the highest commendation.”²¹ While a minority, certain Americans supported swift and direct American action to help the refugees.

In a letter to FDR one American, Will Turner, aptly described the divide among the American people. Turner referred to himself as neither a “Jew lover” nor a “Jew hater,” but wrote that he “can hear the wail of their babies as well as themselves as well as if they were suffering close by.”²² He also stated that, “we [the United States] can help them.”²³ But, as strongly as he supported FDR’s plan, his close acquaintances did not share his beliefs. Turner told of his interactions with his friends and how he defended the FDR’s plan to aid the refugees, while his friends “contended that the act would have to let in other oppressed and they didn’t want them.”²⁴ This issue was at the forefront of American minds, and opinions on the situation varied greatly, even among friends. Nativism and anti-Semitism served as limiting factors to FDR’s actions, as he, and many other public officials, feared the results of defying the deeply rooted antagonism against immigration.

²¹ Emanuel Silverman. *Emanuel Silverman to FDR, December 5, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

²² Will Turner. *Will Turner to FDR, March 30, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

State Department

Although billed as the department in the federal government responsible for dealing with foreign affairs, prior to World War II, the State Department functioned as an obstacle to any American action meant to help refugees escape Nazi Germany. First, the State Department did not deem it necessary to increase immigration quotas. In a letter to Stephen Early, Secretary to the President, Undersecretary Welles wrote that immigration is a “problem in countries with disturbed economic conditions” and that the “United States is not considering a change in immigration practices as it has as liberal an immigration policy as any country today.”²⁵ These officials felt that the merging of the German quota (25,957) and the Austrian quota (1,413) was enough action to help European refugees enter the United States, even though it only permitted the entry of 27,370 people from those countries per year.

Welles did not support any legislation to change the quotas. In the same memoranda Welles wrote that the “admission of refugee aliens will be an added burden on our people and our already strained economy for a long time to come.”²⁶ For Welles, allowing more refugees into the United States harmed Americans. These beliefs coming from high-ranking officials in the State Department and other areas of government prevented any discussion about lifting immigration quotas, thus preempting any dialogue about that solution.

²⁵ Welles, Sumner. *Sumner Welles to Stephen Early, April 11, 1938*. Letter. The FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

²⁶ Ibid.

The State Department repeated this rhetoric time and time again particularly to the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees. In the thirteenth meeting of the Committee, on December 8, 1938, State Department officials again insisted that no legislative proposals could go before Congress asking for an increase in immigration quotas.²⁷ The committee members were again reminded of this at the fifteenth meeting on January 9, 1939, when they discussed the proposed Wagner Bill, which would have allowed for the admission of 20,000 children to the United States.²⁸ The State Department frequently reiterated its position of not reconsidering the immigration quotas.

Once the Second World War began in September 1939, the State Department found other issues more pressing than the admission of refugees, such as the repatriating of Americans from Europe. Breckinridge Long, a Special Assistant Secretary of State, wrote about this experience in his personal diaries. He described the continuing "frantic telegraphing for funds from persons abroad through the Department [of State] to their families or employers and the remission of funds and information through the Department."²⁹ The description of American repatriation continued into October; Long described how he was engaged with "details for the closing arrangement of repatriating Americans" and how "well over 50,000 have landed in thirty days, and of those remaining in Europe all who desire to come at this

²⁷ Warren, *Thirteenth Meeting Minutes*.

²⁸ Warren, *Fifteenth Meeting Minutes*.

²⁹ Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diary, September 14, 1939*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

time will have had an opportunity by the end of the current week.”³⁰ As soon as the war began, the repatriation of Americans came to the forefront of the State Department’s actions. It is interesting to see how quickly the State Department was able to transport thousands of Americans back to the United States (50,000 in thirty days), and to think how quickly they might have been able to admit thousands of refugees, if the immigration quotas had been increased.

The State Department also played a role in tightening immigration restrictions. Long oversaw the division of the Department that handled immigration. Beginning in May 1940, Long increasingly pushed for limiting immigration regulations, saying that it was in the best interest to protect the national security of the country. On June 26th, he described this rationale in his personal diaries saying, “it is very apparent that the Germans are using visitor’s visas to send agents and documents through the United States.”³¹ With this as his excuse, Long encouraged consuls to be more stringent about to whom they gave visas. In a letter to Messersmith, Long stated that “We [the State Department] are communicating with the Consuls to be stricter in their interpretation of the law, and we have clamped down in various ways... All the gaps are being stopped up. I have had a good deal to do with it, and it has taken a considerable bit of time.”³² He then wrote in his diary, “the cables practically stopping immigration

³⁰ Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diary, October 4, 1939*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

³¹ Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diaries, June 26, 1940*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

³² *Long to Messersmith, June 14, 1940*, Long Papers, General Correspondence, 1903-1947: M-Q Miscellaneous, Container 133. qtd. *Refugees and Rescue*, 200.

went!”³³ These excerpts from Long’s personal papers and correspondences show a concerted effort by State Department officials to slow down, and in some cases halt, the visa process.

In a letter to political advisers, Long wrote, “we can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative advices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of visas.”³⁴ State Department officials slowed down the visa issuance process to halt immigration into the United States to a trickle. Long used whatever bureaucratic means he could to “postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of visas.”³⁵ Long was clearly against allowing immigrants into the country and this did not bode well for political refugees, as he had great influence on the Visa Division and the international consuls.

The State Department served as a formidable obstacle to any American action to recuse the refugees. First, they did not want to consider, or even discuss, any increase in immigration quotas. And, certain members of the Department, particularly Breckinridge Long, even worked to limit the flow of refugees into the country. The Visa Division of the Department of State was created to help those seeking refuge and better lives enter the United State. But, in the years preceding the American entrance

³³ Long Diary, June 29, 1940, LC, Container 5, quoted by Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 174.

³⁴ *Long to Berle and Dunn, June 26, 1940*, From Library of Congress, The Breckinridge Long Papers, Container 211, Visa Division File. qtd. in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue* 204.

³⁵ Ibid.

into World War II, the State Department served as a roadblock that denied refuge to those in need. The State Department refused any increase in refugees allowed into the United States, and succeeded in limiting the quantity of immigrants allowed in.

Chapter 2

AMERICAN ACTION

In the spring of 1938, President Roosevelt began clear efforts to alleviate the refugee crisis. The United States knew of the terrible situation that Jews faced in Germany, but FDR sprang into action after the annexation of Austria by Germany, also called *Anschluss*. Hitler incited violence in Austria, which served as his excuse for entering into and annexing the country. However, countries around the world, including the United States viewed this act as one of aggression. It showed the world that Hitler was a threat and that appeasement would no longer be a viable defense against the Nazis. Believing that international cooperation was the easiest way to solve the refugee crisis, Roosevelt sent messages to the American republics and nine European countries about a conference to discuss the plight of the refugees.

The Evian Conference

FDR wanted to establish an international body to try and relieve the suffering of the people eager to leave Germany. To facilitate this, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, on behalf of Roosevelt, sent telegrams to thirty-two countries located on four different continents (Australia, Europe, North America, and South America) to gauge their interest in a conference to discuss assistance for political refugees.³⁶ The

³⁶ Hull, Cordell. Hull, Cordell. *Cordell Hull to Joseph Kennedy, March 23, 1938*. Telegram. From *Foreign Relations 1* (1938):740, accessed November 15, 2015.

messages asked if the government would be “willing to cooperate with the Government of the United States in setting up a special committee composed of representatives of a number of governments for the purpose of facilitating emigration from Austria and presumably from Germany”³⁷ The telegram also clarified that this conference was not intended to replace existing institutions that were aiding refugees, but simply to contribute to the efforts to solve the problem.

FDR made this initiative a large effort as the swift occupation of Austria caused him to recognize the grave urgency of the situation. Hull’s telegrams to the international governments reflected this, as he described the “urgency of the problem with which the world is faced and the necessity of speedy, cooperative effort under governmental supervision, if widespread human suffering is to be averted.”³⁸ The mission for this conference and its urgency show the first step that the United States took in engaging the international community to collaborate and find a solution for the refugee crisis. The United States was the first, and only, country to take initiative and start discussion on how to aid the Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Germany.

France volunteered to host the intergovernmental meeting in early July. The American delegation consisted of Myron Taylor, Robert Pell of the State Department as Political Advisor, and George Brandt, a Foreign Service Officer, as Technical

³⁷ Hull, Cordell. *Cordell Hull to Joseph Kennedy, March 23, 1938*. Telegram. From *Foreign Relations* 1 (1938):740, accessed November 15, 2015.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 741.

Advisor.³⁹ The President's Advisory Committee on Refugees sent James McDonald and George Warren as representatives.⁴⁰

The conference took place between July 6th and July 15th and culminated in a resolution that all of the participating governments adopted. The resolution principally created an Intergovernmental Committee, which would work to find ways to help the refugees.⁴¹ This resolution provided that representatives from each government at the Evian Conference sat on the committee, led by a Chairman and four Vice Chairmen, and a director that would direct its actions.⁴² George Rublee, an American, became the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee and Edward Turnour, also known as Lord Winterton, became the Chair of the Committee.⁴³

The Evian Conference did accomplish its goals, but its outcome was ineffectual. It was the first step forward for international collaboration in regard to the Jewish refugees, but the imposition of certain standards prior to the conference hindered its effectiveness. The invitations to the participating governments made it clear that there would be no requirement for participating governments to increase their immigration quotas. A Statement for the Press released on March 24, 1938 about

³⁹ Pell, Robert. *Refugees 1938-1940*. Report. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*, 11.

⁴⁰ Warren, George. *Fifth Meeting of the Advisory Committee Minutes, June 10, 1938*. From Princeton University. *The Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers* (hereby HFA papers).

⁴¹ *Resolution of the Evian Conference (Pell Report)*. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*, 23.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 23

the conference confirmed this notion declaring that it “should be understood that no country would be expected or asked to receive a greater number of immigrants than is permitted by existing legislation.”⁴⁴ This statement had two significant consequences: it prevented increasing immigration quotas from becoming a topic of discussion and also might have encouraged certain nations to participate.

Many delegations during the conference established that they would not be receptive to accepting more refugees into their country. The excuses were all different, but used the same social and economic scapegoats. France reported that it had already received over 200,000 refugees and was spending large money in support of them.⁴⁵ Lord Winterton, the spokesman of Great Britain, echoed these sentiments stating that Great Britain was not a country of immigration, as it was fully populated and still faced the problem of unemployment.⁴⁶ Britain’s policy of granting asylum to refugees, he noted, could only occur within narrow limits.⁴⁷ Representatives from Belgium also blamed unemployment as a hindrance to accepting refugees, and the Australian, Canadian, Argentinian, and Dutch diplomats spoke cautiously of space for immigrants in their respective countries and did not make any specific commitments.⁴⁸ These statements echoed the sentiments of countries around the world. The responses

⁴⁴ *For the Press, March 24, 1938*. Press Release. From the FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

⁴⁵ Pell, *Refugees 1938-1940*, 16.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁷ Pell, *Refugees 1938-1940*, 16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

demonstrate that the United States faced a very non-committal world environment. While many countries condemned the actions of the Nazis and their presence at the Evian Conference showed some initiative to solve the refugee crisis, few were willing to open their borders. While the refusal to increase worldwide immigration quotas negated the easiest response to the refugee crisis, it did succeed in bringing many diverse countries together to discuss other solutions including finding other locations for settlement of the refugees and establishing a continuing body that would attempt to negotiate with Germany to facilitate the organized evacuation of Jews from the country.

Not all countries, however, evaded responsibility. The Dominican Republic was the one of the only countries that actually offered to accept refugees from Europe during the Evian Conference. The delegation, on behalf of the Dominican Republic government, offered to take in 100,000 Jewish migrants.⁴⁹ This was a rare case, as many countries around the world, while somewhat concerned with the Jews who wanted to escape Germany, were not willing to offer up their own countries as places of refuge.

Another common criticism of the conference is its inefficacy. However, leaders of the conference, particularly the American Delegation, knew that one meeting was not going to solve the refugee crisis. Prior to the conference, the Interdepartmental Committee within the State Department established “guiding principles” to instruct the American delegation on how to best represent American intentions at the conference. The principles held that the “the idea should be kept

⁴⁹ Taylor, Myron Charles. *Myron Charles Taylor to Harry Truman, May 15, 1947*. Letter. From Library of Congress. *The Myron Charles Taylor Papers*.

before the meeting that it is dealing with a serious, long-range problem. The meeting at Evian is merely an initial session called to map out a course for the work that lies ahead” and that the “objective of the meeting is to set a machinery in action which may be effective in promoting general appeasement.”⁵⁰ These principles show that the conference was not intended to immediately solve the refugee crisis; instead it was seen as the first step in a larger solution to combat a “serious, long-range problem.”

Myron Taylor corroborated these principles in his opening address. He stated that the diplomats must “admit frankly, indeed, that this problem of political refugees is so vast and so complex that we probably can do no more at the initial governmental meeting than put in motion the machinery.”⁵¹ And the conference did just that. The resolution adopted by all of the participating governments provided for a continuing Intergovernmental Committee that was responsible for negotiating with German and arranging for the immigration of the Jews.⁵² American officials understood that this was not a problem that could be solved from a weeklong conference, especially not when increased immigration quotas were not a possible remedy.

By those standards, the conference was successful. While the Evian Conference did not solve the refugee crisis or save the lives of any Jews, it was, at the very least, a step in the right direction toward international diplomatic collaboration.

⁵⁰ Pell, *Refugees 1938-1940*, 9, 10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 13

⁵² *Resolution of the Evian Conference (Pell Report)*. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*, 23.

The President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees

President Roosevelt also established machinery on the home front to handle the refugee crisis, in the form of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. On April 8, 1938, Roosevelt invited a small group of powerful men and religious officials to the White House to discuss the most effective manner to facilitate emigration of political refugees from both Germany and Austria.⁵³ This group was diverse religiously, but all shared the common characteristic of holding positions of influence and power. FDR wanted to use these men to establish a plan for emigration of refugees that did not involve increasing American immigration quotas. In a letter to Basil Harris, a member of the committee, President Roosevelt described his hope that this cohort might be able to "relieve in large measure the suffering and distress of many thousands of persons migrating from Germany and Austria and desirous of obtaining refuge in some other part of the world."⁵⁴ While their charge was great, FDR made it clear in this same letter, that the committee would not propose changes in immigration law or utilize government funds for its relief efforts. President Roosevelt viewed this committee as the best way for the United States to take limited action in the refugee crisis, and not challenge the nativist sentiments of Congress and the American public.

⁵³ Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Joseph Chamberlain, April 8, 1938*. Letter. From FDR Library. *The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

⁵⁴Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Basil Harris, April 8, 1938*. Letter. From FDR Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

The meeting between President Roosevelt and these selected men on April 13th represented the first collaboration of American leaders to discuss the refugee crisis. After a series of membership changes, the official committee met for its first meeting in May 1938, where they adopted the name the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees and elected James McDonald as the Committee Chair. The continuing committee consisted of McDonald, previously the High Commissioner of Refugees Coming from Germany; Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of *Foreign Affairs*; Joseph Chamberlain, Columbia University professor; Samuel Cavert, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America; Louis Kenedy, President of the National Council of Catholic Men; Bernard Baurch, stock broker and Presidential Adviser; Paul Baerwald, the founder of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, an organization dedicated to aiding refugees; Harris, Vice President, of the United States Lines Company; and Reverend Joseph Rummel, Chairman of the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany.⁵⁵

The members of the committee were all well versed in refugee issues, held positions of influence, and were highly committed to saving as many political refugees, particularly Jews, as they could. In fact, Armstrong even responded to his invitation to sit on the committee by saying that he wanted to help, but he was not certain he was qualified for the task.⁵⁶ He was so concerned with trying to find a

⁵⁵ Cavert, Samuel. *First Meeting Minutes, May 16, 1938*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁵⁶ Armstrong, Hamilton Fish. *Hamilton Armstrong to Franklin Roosevelt, April 25, 1938*. Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

viable solution for the refugee crisis, that he was willing to give up his position on the prestigious committee to someone more qualified.

McDonald served formerly as High Commissioner of Refugees Coming from Germany, an office connected with the League of Nations. Considering that he dedicated large parts of his career to helping refugees from Germany, his attempts to help the Jews and other populations escape the wrath of the Nazis appear genuine. In December 1935, McDonald resigned from his position because he felt that the League of Nations was not doing enough to handle the influx of people who wanted (and needed) to leave Germany. In his resignation letter, McDonald stated, “conditions in Germany which create refugees have developed so catastrophically that a reconsideration by the League of Nations of the entire situation is essential.”⁵⁷ He further noted, “when domestic policies threaten the demoralization and exiles of hundreds of thousands of human beings, considerations of diplomatic correctness must yield to those of common humanity.”⁵⁸ McDonald wanted to do more to aid the refugees and saw his role on the Advisory Committee as a way to do so.

First, the Advisory Committee had to define the term ‘political refugee’. This was an essential task to complete before the Evian Conference, so that the international delegations could accurately discuss the problem and potential solutions. The members of the Committee established that the term political refugee should refer to people who have not already left Germany but who desired to because of treatment based on their political opinions, religious beliefs or racial origin and people who have

⁵⁷ McDonald, *Letter of Resignation*.

⁵⁸ McDonald, James. *Letter of Resignation, December 27, 1935*. Letter. World Digital Library. Accessed February 22, 2016.

already left Germany or are in the process of doing so.⁵⁹ This definition allowed for the Evian Conference delegations to be very clear on which people they were referring to when they discussed political refugees.

The Advisory Committee served as the main point of contact between the continuing Intergovernmental Committee and FDR's government. FDR's advisory group fit nicely into the mission of the Intergovernmental Committee, as the committee had two objectives: the organization of orderly emigration from Germany with the cooperation of the German Government and the securing of immigration opportunities of temporary and permanent refuge.⁶⁰ On December 2, 1938, the Advisory Committee accepted responsibility for the study and advancement of resettlement projects.⁶¹

A meeting of individuals including Mr. Alfred Jaretzki Jr. of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish relief organization, and Mr. George Warren of the Advisory Committee served as the launch point of the Advisory Committee's resettlement projects. Since the United States and the majority of other countries refused to open their doors to refugees, the only option was to secure another location where the refugees could settle. This was a large task, as the resettlement of political refugees required a great deal of research and planning. Prior to receiving

⁵⁹ *Bearing on possible public statement by Advisory Committee—June 6, 1938.* Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁶⁰ Warren, George. *Ninth Meeting Minutes, September 30, 1938.* From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁶¹ *Meeting of individuals called to consult with Mr. Jaretzki and Warren on colonization projects, Dec. 2, 1938.* Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

approval for a resettlement project, detailed studies had to be conducted in order to determine the suitability of the area for supporting immigrants. At this same meeting, the men decided that studies of resettlement projects had to include information regarding the interest of the government of the selected country, land and trade economies, markets for products and the availability of capital.⁶² Together, these factors would help the Advisory Committee determine whether or not a proposed area was an appropriate location for settling refugees.

This meeting of individuals demonstrated the group effort that was required to contribute to solving the refugee crisis. The American committee (the President's Advisory Committee) focused on options in the Western Hemisphere, while a similar committee based in London focused on resettlement locations in Africa.

With their mission in hand, the President's Advisory Committee for Political Refugees began to look for locations of potential settlement. There was no shortage of suggestions from the American public and politicians. Charles Buckley, a Congressman from New York, sent Roosevelt a very detailed plan for establishing Alaska, still an American territory, as a location for refugee settlement. Buckley described Alaska as being "a land well endowed by nature and her resources will enable refugees to live there, and live there well."⁶³ He even included the opinion of Dr. Alfred Brooks, the head of the Alaska Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, who stated that Alaska would eventually be able to support a population of ten million

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Buckley, Charles. *Charles Buckley to Franklin Roosevelt, November 18, 1939*. Letter. From the FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, July-December 1939.

people.⁶⁴ Representative Buckley offered to introduce a bill to Congress that would exclude Alaska from the quota restrictions and immigration laws, allowing it to serve as a place of refuge for people attempting to escape Germany. Buckley's plan did not make it past the President's office, as FDR felt that removing immigration restrictions in Alaska would effectively make it a foreign territory, but it illustrated the many options that were brought to the attention of the Advisory Committee.⁶⁵

In addition to Alaska, members of the American public suggested other options within the continental United States, including a thousand acres in Florida, parts of New Jersey, Southern California, and North Carolina.⁶⁶ Warren reported that a total of fifty projects and suggested locations had been submitted to the Advisory Committee by a variety of constituents, and new proposals arrived on his desk almost daily.⁶⁷ The process of determining a location for resettlement was a lengthy one. In addition to establishing all of the required characteristics, as discussed above, exploration and survey commissions traveled to the locations of interest to provide more information on the living conditions of the country.

One particular location of interest was British Guiana (now Guyana) located along South America's North Atlantic coast. Dr. Isaiah Bowman, a leading geographer from Johns Hopkins University led the research on many potential locations of

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *Franklin Roosevelt to Charles Buckley, December 8, 1938*. From the FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

⁶⁶ *Meeting of Individuals*

⁶⁷ *Meeting of Individuals*

resettlement. He originally reported that British Guiana was unsuitable for settlement because of health and transportation issues, but the Advisory Committee continued to explore it as an option. Another report by Dr. Korff on January 9, 1939 showed that British Guiana had potential as a settlement location. Dr. Korff recognized the difficulty of communication due to irregular mail service and many geographical obstacles, but thought that there was land suitable for refugees where they could live on cattle-raising and self-grown vegetables.⁶⁸ Once Dr. Korff prepared this more positive assessment of the land in British Guiana, the President's Advisory Committee organized an exploration committee to travel to the territory and further explore it as an option.

The committee contained military engineers, sanitary engineers, colonization experts, and an agronomist to better understand whether or not this location could continue to serve as a viable resettlement option.⁶⁹ The Survey Commission presented its results at the 25th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. The Commission Report stated that a settlement based in industry and agriculture seemed possible, as fertile soil was discovered and deep water and forest products offered fodder for industry.⁷⁰ The Survey Commission acknowledged that travel in British Guiana was difficult, but also reported that there were no health and safety concerns.⁷¹ The report

⁶⁸ Korff, Serge. *Report on British Guiana, Jan 9, 1939*. Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁶⁹ Warren, George. *Sixteenth Meeting Minutes, Jan 23, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁷⁰ Warren George. *Twenty-fifth Meeting Minutes, April 20, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁷¹ Ibid.

recommended an initial settlement of three to five thousand young married men and women.⁷²

The difference in reports from Dr. Bowman and that of the Survey Commission is striking. Dr. Bowman practically wrote off British Guiana as an area of resettlement due to disease, lack of transportation, and the natives.⁷³ The Survey Commission, on the other hand, found that the natural resources and land available in British Guiana outweighed the poor transportation systems. This was the report that the Advisory Committee acted on.

Moreover, the Committee's inquiry into British Guiana continued. In May, Robert Pell informed Secretary Hull that the British government had agreed to the experimental settlement and would offer assistance.⁷⁴ Great Britain offered to provide suitable communications between the interior of the country and the coast, in addition to recognizing the status of the new community and granting local autonomy. Governmental officials also pledged to provide general colonial services including currency, post, security, law and order, and telegraphs.⁷⁵ At this point, the creation of a viable location for resettlement was looking more plausible. By the twenty-sixth meeting of the Advisory Committee on June 29, 1939, the British Government had

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Warren, George. *Fifteenth Meeting Minutes, January 9, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁷⁴ Pell, Robert. *Robert Pell to Cordell Hull, May 12, 1939*. Telegram. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

approved a trial settlement of five hundred refugees and the Advisory Committee also supported this plan⁷⁶. But the plan never came to fruition.

After Great Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, the British provided little assistance in the creation of settlements on their territories. In late September, a letter from Norman Bentwich, a prominent British barrister and advocate for Jews, stated that America was the only hope for the refugees, because the British government would not permit those who are technically enemies to emigrate to their territories and the funds for the resettlement project were no longer available.⁷⁷ Essentially, very soon after Britain went to war with Germany, many of the plans made by the Advisory Committee crashed down. With Britain at war, the United States did not have any financial or logistical support from other countries. The governments had already denied the use of public funds to support the refugees and now the large majority of private funds were being utilized to aid those in war zones.⁷⁸ And, without this international support, or availability of land, the Advisory Committee could not do much else to continue pursuing British Guiana as a resettlement option.

With British Guiana no longer a possibility the Advisory Committee continued pursuing other locations for resettlement. The Philippines had long served as another

⁷⁶ Warren, *Sixteenth Meeting Minutes*.

⁷⁷ Bentwich, Norman. *Norman Bentwich to James McDonald, September 21, 1939*. Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁷⁸ Warren, George. *President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees to Franklin Roosevelt, September 26, 1939*. Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

location of interest for resettlement. During their thirteenth meeting on December 8, 1938, the Advisory Committee members discussed how the Philippine government was considering colonizing the island of Mindanao with Filipinos, and would also welcome large numbers of European refugees to the same area.⁷⁹ The report by Dr. Bowman provided a glimpse into the resources available on the island, and it seemed like a very favorable option for resettlement. The Advisory Committee received the report, “Preliminary Draft of Settlement Possibilities on the Island of Mindanao,” on January 21, 1939.⁸⁰ Bowman’s report described the temperate climate, bays for harbors, waterfalls for power, unoccupied land, and fertile soils, many of the qualities essential for creating a settlement of refugees.⁸¹ Further, there was plenty of space available on the island. Bowman reported that Mindanao was the second largest Philippine island, making it 31% of the total landmass, but only 10% of Filipinos occupied it.⁸² The quality and quantity of space available made Mindanao another intriguing area for refugee resettlement.

The exploration process of the Philippines as a potential location for resettlement continued throughout the remainder of 1939. The Advisory Committee only briefly mentioned the Philippine settlement at meetings on January 23rd and

⁷⁹ Warren, George. *Thirteenth Meeting Minutes, December 8, 1938*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁸⁰ *Preliminary Draft of Settlement Possibilities on the Island of Mindanao, January 21, 1939*. Report. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

March 24th, to say that studies were underway and would take a while.⁸³ The summer's meetings were largely spent focused on the settlement in British Guiana, but the Mindanao efforts made it back onto the agenda, finally, during the twenty-eighth meeting of the Advisory Committee on October 13th, 1939. At this meeting, the exploration committee reported that the climate and topography was sufficient for a settlement, which could hold as many as 10,000 individuals.⁸⁴ In a letter to the Advisory Committee on December 19th, 1939, Warren detailed the plans of Dr. Stanton Youngberg, director of the settlement, who sailed to the Philippines in early December to observe and plan the selection of suitable refugees.⁸⁵ And, in January and February 1940, negotiations were finally underway for the purchase of 13,000 acres and 42,000 heads of cattle.⁸⁶ At this time, the Advisory Committee and the exploration groups had been working on this resettlement project for almost two years, and they were finally accepting refugees to live there. As of February 9th, 1940, a thousand refugees had been accepted to move to the Philippines.⁸⁷

⁸³ Warren, *Sixteenth Meeting Minutes*. Warren, George. *Twenty-second Meeting Minutes, March 24, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁸⁴ Warren, George. *Twenty-eighth Meeting Minutes, Oct. 13, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁸⁵ Warren, George. *George Warren to the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees, December 19, 1939*. Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁸⁶ Warren, George. *Thirtieth Meeting Minutes, January 19, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁸⁷ Warren, George. *Thirty-first Meeting Minutes, February 9, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

This is the final mention of the Philippines settlement in the Advisory Committee minutes. While this site had seemed like a prime location for a settlement, it did not become as successful as the Advisory Committee had hoped. The Advisory Committee put two years of work and money into this project, but it did not make any major contributions to saving the lives of Jews.

This is a prevalent theme in the resettlement efforts of the Advisory Committee. The Dominican Republic had long been seen as a viable option for resettlement. As detailed earlier, the Dominican Republic's delegation was one of the only ones to commit to accepting more refugees. Its government continued this rhetoric and was prepared to receive immigrants as early as January 1939, as long as the endeavor was funded by outside sources.⁸⁸ The Advisory Committee appointed an Exploration Committee who traveled to the island nation in the spring of 1939 and made their report on June 29th. The Exploration Committee found soil suitable for settlement and recommended small-scale experimental settlement.⁸⁹ On October 23rd of the same year, negotiations between the Exploration Committee and the Dominican Republic's government finished and the representatives decided that the settlement would admit five hundred refugee families without payment.⁹⁰ This, by far, was the most successful negotiation between the Advisory Committee, their exploratory commissions and their targeted countries of resettlement. In the Dominican Republic,

⁸⁸ Warren, *Sixteenth Meeting Minutes*.

⁸⁹ Warren, George. *Twenty-sixth Meeting Minutes, June 29, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁹⁰ Warren, George. *Twenty-ninth Meeting Minutes, Oct. 23, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

they had governmental permission, interested families, and by February 1940, 26,000 acres of land.⁹¹

While the land was available and the government had agreed to permit the refugees, the settlement was not particularly successful. By June 7th, 1940, four months after the settlement was officially agreed upon, two hundred and twenty-five settlers had been selected, but only thirty-seven had arrived.⁹² While refugees now had positions in the settlement, they were unable to travel out of Europe because of the on-going war in Europe and the closing of the Italian borders. So, while the Advisory Committee and their partners worked for over two years to establish this settlement, the Dominican Republic ended up taking in only a small number of refugees.

The process of establishing locations for resettlement was very thorough, but also very time consuming. It is difficult to determine why the process took so much time. After all, it was important to ascertain that the area was suitable for receiving refugees, but it took a great deal of time and effort to establish these locations. The records of the Advisory Committee do not indicate any foul play, or any intentional impediments on the speed of the process, but much went on behind the scenes.

One possible explanation for the lengthiness of the project was the influence of Dr. Bowman. Bowman worked closely with the United States government, FDR and the Advisory Committee in efforts to establish locations of resettlement. But, what is not mentioned in any Advisory Committee records are Dr. Bowman's personal beliefs. Dr. Bowman was a racist who believed that Jews lacked the ability to be pioneers and

⁹¹ Warren. *Thirty-first Meeting Minutes*.

⁹² Warren, George. *Thirty-fifth Meeting Minutes, June 7, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

thought that they did not have the skills to resettle in undeveloped lands.⁹³ Further, Bowman believed that the success of resettlement programs was based in creating small-scale settlements in multiple locations.⁹⁴ As can be seen from the attempts and failures of the Advisory Committee, this was a disaster. The attempted settlements in the Philippines and British Guiana show the long, drawn-out process of establishing a settlement, so it would take a lot of effort to create these resettlements and fewer refugees would have been saved. Dr. Bowman might have been a prominent geographer, but he steered the Advisory Committee in the wrong direction by encouraging the creation of smaller resettlements, which took a lot of effort, but did not contribute to saving the lives of the Jews who desperately needed to escape.

It is true that little came out of the resettlement programs led by the Advisory Committee. While some areas were established by cooperative governments and received a few refugees, the process simply took too long and did not offer any viable options for large numbers of refugees. By the time that the locations in the Philippines and the Dominican Republic were created, it was too late for most Jews and other persecuted minorities. The Advisory Committee's genuine attempt to find a solution to the refugee crisis and to offer refugees a viable place to live warrants attention. Yes, their settlements were not very effective, and that certainly was no help to the Jews who desperately needed to escape the harrowing situation in Europe, but they also demonstrate that not all Americans were bystanders when the Jews sought refuge abroad.

⁹³ Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 127.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

In hindsight, it is easy to say that the Advisory Committee failed to solve the refugee crisis via resettlement. Yet it is important to remember that these men showed genuine interest in wanting to help Jews escape Europe, but were limited by Congress and the State Department upon the creation of their committee. Without the ability to change the immigration quotas and under the impression by Dr. Bowman that smaller resettlements in other locations was the best options, the Advisory Committee did what they could to try and find viable options for resettlement. The President's Advisory Committee for Political Refugees chose to look at resettlement options and pursued that solution relentlessly in the hopes that these efforts would be successful in alleviating the refugee crisis.

The Advisory Committee Beyond Resettlement

The President's Advisory Committee on Refugees continued to work toward solving the refugee crisis even after their resettlement options were unsuccessful. In June 1940, the Advisory Committee pushed for more measures to bring refugees to the United States. Their thirty-seventh meeting focused primarily on this task, as they composed a letter to FDR with recommendations. Armstrong stated that there was an immediate need to remove refugees, particularly children from England and France.⁹⁵ The entire committee recommended that there be admission of refugee children by administrative measures under existing laws; that Congress pass new legislation to admit specific numbers of children during the next two years; that the British and French receive details on how many children will be admitted to the United States;

⁹⁵ Warren, George. *Thirty-seventh Meeting Minutes, June 17, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

and that suggestions are made to the British and French to make their island possessions available to refugees.⁹⁶ Warren developed these recommendations into a letter that was sent to both FDR and Sumner Welles on June 18, 1940.

After making those recommendations, the Advisory Committee stepped into another realm of the refugee crisis: helping refugees enter the United States. At a meeting with Undersecretary Welles, Department of Justice Officers, the Solicitor General, Department of State Officers and McDonald and Warren in late July 1941, the governmental officials established an expedited procedure for immigration visas. Any requests for emergency visas would go first to the Advisory Committee. The committee then inquired about the character of the person through obtaining an affidavit from an American.⁹⁷ The Advisory Committee would use all means available to then secure admission for this individual into a country. Then, the application would be sent to the Department of Justice for clearance and to the State Department for a final decision on the application. The State Department then communicated with the consul nearest the applicant whether or not to give the candidate a visa to enter the United States. In the words of Breckinridge Long, this process gave “more or less mandatory instructions” to issue visas to the selected refugees.⁹⁸ The Advisory Committee had the power to make recommendations for certain individuals to receive expedited visa action to gain access into the United States. The shift to using these

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *The Advisory Committee to Sumner Welles and the Attorney General, July 31, 1940.* Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

⁹⁸ Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 139.

visas was important, as it allowed refugees to enter the country outside of the quota limit. Thus, these temporary permits allowed substantive help, as they offered a select group of refugees an escape from Nazi Germany.

This process did not exist without opposition. Members of the State Department opposed the new process, claiming that the Advisory Committee having a role in the immigration process put the safety of the country at risk. Using this as an excuse, Breckinridge Long and Herbert Pell, an American Minister in Portugal, advocated for a return to stricter immigration policies. Pell encouraged this regression, stating that consuls should be allowed to deny visas whenever there was “any doubt whatsoever concerning the alien” and that there were “good reasons to have the greatest doubt” about certain refugees even if the evidence was not available.⁹⁹ This was one instance of using the security of the country as an excuse for tightening refugee policies, although there were no real instances of violent action caused by Jewish immigrants. With this reasoning and at Long’s insistence, President Roosevelt signed an order on September 19, 1940 approving the changed procedures, which permitted consuls to check more carefully before issuing emergency visas and requiring evidence if there was any doubt about the intentions of the refugee.

These more stringent policies negatively affected immigration into the United States. It effectively cut the Advisory Committee out of the process of issuing emergency visas and required a more thorough (meaning slower) review of visa applicants. This was clear when in December, the Emergency Rescue Committee (a group dedicated to aiding political refugees who needed emergency rescue) reported to

⁹⁹ *Herbert Pell to Cordell Hull, September 6, 1940*, Letter. State Department Records, Library of Congress. Quoted in Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 143

Eleanor Roosevelt that almost no new visas had been issued under the political refugee program since September.¹⁰⁰ The new procedures essentially stopped admittance of political refugees during a critical time when they needed an escape. By the end of 1940, the Departments of State and Justice, in addition to the President's Advisory Committee established a new procedure for issuing emergency visas. While the Advisory Committee regained the power to submit names potential refugees and investigate them, a new committee composed of representatives from the Justice Department, Naval Intelligence and Army intelligence would verify the recommended refugees in regards to national security. The final decision to issue a visa remained with the consuls, but the added investigative step ensured that the Advisory Committee still had a role in recommending people for emergency visas and that the power to issue or deny a visa did not rest solely with the misguided State Department.

This exchange between the Advisory Committee and the State Department is a powerful example of how virulently certain officials in the State Department opposed the entrance of political refugees. Any sort of excuse, be it national security or something else, served as a reason to deny admittance to the United States and crack-down on immigration procedures.

Luckily, the State Department was not completely successful in halting the issuance of emergency visas. By late December 1941, the new visa process had allowed the Advisory Committee to recommend 2,934 refugees for visas in a little over a year.¹⁰¹ After the United States entered the war after the attack at Pearl Harbor

¹⁰⁰ Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 147.

¹⁰¹ Warren, George. *Fifty-first Meeting Minutes, December 2, 1941*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

in the same month, the Advisory Committee no longer had the power to recommend refugees for visas. However, in December 1942, the Advisory Committee received a report on the success of their recommendations and Warren disclosed that 2,133 people from the list of Advisory Committee recommendations received visas and were now in the United States or other countries of safety.¹⁰² While the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees could not make sweeping changes or persuade Congress to lift the immigration quotas, they expedited the visa process for as many refugees as they could. As a result of the action of this committee, over 2,100 people came to the United States and were spared the wrath of the Nazis. Compared to a figure of six million, a little over two thousand is not much, but to those two thousand people, it was everything.

¹⁰² Warren, George. *Fifty-sixth Meeting Minutes, Dec. 1, 1942*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Chapter 3

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

President's Roosevelt opinions and actions in regards to the refugee crisis are highly debated. He consistently spoke out against the Nazis and their treatment of Jews, but did not make any bold changes to allow more refugees into the United States. Roosevelt consistently had a favorable attitude toward Jews. He was the first presidential candidate to speak out against discrimination of Jewish people. During his campaign he stated, "It is foolish to call the Jews a materialistic race. The Jews are idealists primarily. The trouble is that people are slow to perceive realities and prefer to cling to old- even if untrue- proverbs."¹⁰³ He also called for the humanizing of immigration restrictions and stated that the "regulations must be carried out with tact, discretion, and human understanding."¹⁰⁴ While FDR made these statements prior to being elected as President, they reflect his genuine concern toward both Jews and refugees throughout his presidency. In May 1938, FDR's secretary Margaret LeHand noted that "the President wrote Mr. Swope, April 7th, saying that the lines engraved on the Statue of Liberty were wonderful and he wish more could be done for the

¹⁰³ "'Human' Alien Laws Urged by Governor," New York Times, 24 October 1932, p.9, quoted in *FDR and the Jews*, 42.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

oppressed.”¹⁰⁵ Statements like this, of apparent genuine concern for the plight of the Jews, are consistent throughout FDR’s correspondences and papers.

The annexation of Austria by Germany, the *Anschluss*, sparked Roosevelt’s attention toward the matter of solving the refugee crisis. In his first cabinet meeting after the *Anschluss*, Roosevelt discussed ways for aiding the refugees. He stated, “after all, America had been a place of refuge for so many fine Germans in the period of 1848 and why couldn’t we offer them again a place of refuge at this time.”¹⁰⁶ FDR, in this same meeting, proposed two legislative endeavors to aid the refugees: combining the quotas of Germany and Austria and a bill that would increase the quotas. When he asked about the Congress’s potential support of increased quotas, Vice President Garner replied that if Congress could vote in secret, it would halt all immigration, and no cabinet member denied this.¹⁰⁷ From this assessment, Roosevelt likely concluded that while he would take measures to address the refugee crisis, he would only do so in ways that did not require the assistance of Congress. It was at this point that he initiated the Evian Conference and formed the President’s Advisory Committee on Refugees.

Another act against Jews in Germany, *Kristallnacht*, incited FDR’s public condemnation of the Nazis and some action to aid the persecuted Jews. *Kristallnacht*, or the Night of Broken Glass, was a Nazi-organized effort in November 1938 to attack

¹⁰⁵ LeHand, Margaret. *Note on the President, April 8, 1938*. From Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

¹⁰⁶ The Morgenthau Diaries: Depression and the New Deal, 1933-1939, 22 March 1938, microfilm, reel 31, Library of Congress, qtd. in *FDR and the Jews*, 102.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

and destroy Jewish businesses. In reaction to the destructive events, President Roosevelt stated, “I myself could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a twentieth-century civilization.”¹⁰⁸ Acting on this expression of disgust, Roosevelt announced on November 18th that the United States government would allow the thousands of refugees in the United States on visitors’ visas to stay via an extension of their permits. He stated that the refugees would be allowed to remain in the United States, as he could not “in any decent humanity, throw them out.”¹⁰⁹ This executive action represents a small change instituted by FDR to allow more refugees to stay in the United States.

While Roosevelt condemned the actions of the Nazis and willingly amended the rules for foreigners currently in the United States, he did not act to change the immigration laws and quotas. Even after expressing such disdain at the actions by the Nazis on *Kristallnacht*, Roosevelt refused to consider allowing more refugees to enter the country. When asked about this policy, FDR responded, “That is not in contemplation; we have the quota system.”¹¹⁰

In terms of relieving the refugee crisis in the most significant manner, it would seem as if the easiest solution would have been to open up the doors of the United States. Many diplomats agreed that amending the immigration laws would be the most

¹⁰⁸ *Statement by the President, November 15, 1938*. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

¹⁰⁹ *Press conference, November 18, 1938*, Franklin Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, Vol. 12, 132-134, qtd. in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 151.

¹¹⁰ “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs” ed. Donald B. Schewe, Second Series, January 1937-August 1939 (New York: Clearwater, 1979), Vol. 12, 83-86.

beneficial solution to the crisis. Norman Bentwich, a British diplomat, wrote to James McDonald and expressed his views of the refugee situation. He stated, “the main effort during the next period should be to increase the possibilities of emigration to the American continent, and particularly, of course, to the U.S.A., if there is any chance of getting some relaxation of the quota rules.”¹¹¹ Increasing the immigration quotas would have allowed thousands of desperate Jews to exit Germany and Austria for refuge in the United States.

However, for the reasons of nativism and public opinion against the action, that did not occur. Roosevelt described to Myron Taylor, “this Government is already accepting involuntary emigrants to the fullest extend permitted by law. I do not believe it either desirable or practicable to recommend any change in the quota provisions of our immigration laws. We are prepared, nevertheless, to make any other contribution which may be in our power to make.”¹¹² FDR did not even consider increasing the quotas to be a possible solution to the refugee crisis. Part of the reason for avoiding that course of action was the fear of oppositional forces. First, the American public was against allowing more refugees into the country. In a Roper/Fortune poll in January 1939, 83 percent of respondents opposed statutes that would open the doors of the United States to more refugees than permitted under the quota, and only 9 percent supported such legislation.¹¹³ This sentiment, prevalent both

¹¹¹ Norman Bentwich to James McDonald. Letter. Qtd. in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 187.

¹¹² *FDR to Taylor, November 23, 1938*. Myron Taylor Papers, Box 3, Folder 1: Correspondence, Roosevelt Library, qtd. in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 155

¹¹³ Breitman and Lictman, *FDR and the Jews*, 116.

among the people and in Congress caused many American politicians to fear the backlash of increased quotas.

These officials had legitimate concerns that a bill pushing for changes in the quotas might cause an opposite reaction, including the tightening of restrictions. George Messersmith wrote to Hull and Welles and described his personal experiences with Congressmen in relation to amending the immigration quotas. He wrote, “a number of members of Congress have been in touch with me and I have gathered uniformly from them that they realize that any proposed changes in our immigration laws might lead to more restrictive rather than more liberal immigration practice on our part.”¹¹⁴ Hamilton Fish Armstrong echoed these sentiments when talking to a journalist advocating for an increase in the quota limits, “I haven’t met anyone yet connected with the refugee work, or any representative of a Jewish organization, who isn’t definitely and entirely opposed to discussing the quota in Congress for fear that a discussion would result in lowering the quota rather than raising it.”¹¹⁵ Those who wanted to relieve the crisis were concerned that any efforts to increase the immigration quotas would result in fact achieve the opposite effect.

The fear of backlash was a very real fear, best demonstrated by the failed Wagner-Rogers bill. This legislation, introduced to both congressional houses on February 9, 1939, provided for 10,000 unaccompanied German children to enter the

¹¹⁴ George Messersmith, *Messersmith to Hull and Welles on March 31, 1938*, Letter, quoted in Breitman et al. *Refugees and Rescue*, 124.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton Fish Armstrong, *Armstrong to Frederick Keppel, 18 November 1938*, Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers, box 77, President’s Advisory Committee, Mudd Library. Quoted in *FDR and the Jews*, 116.

United States outside of the quota limit during the next two years.¹¹⁶ This bill captured support from a range of notable politicians including former President Herbert Hoover. Even Eleanor Roosevelt publicly endorsed the bill, making it the first time she openly supported an effort to aid the refugees.¹¹⁷ President Roosevelt remained silent. However, the opponents of the bill, including the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, had much more influence and impact.¹¹⁸ All of these groups were powerful organizations with ties to what they considered “traditional” American beliefs and values. In addition to having groups of such stature speak out against the bills, rumors spread about powerful companies replacing workers with foreign Jews and elected officials spoke out against the idea of permitting more immigrants to enter the country. A Texas representative, Martin Dies, stated that Americans should “stay on our shores and mind our own business” while Senator Robert Reynolds of North Carolina claimed that the refugees were “systematically building a Jewish empire in this country.”¹¹⁹ The rampant and harsh criticism piled on the bill, by legislators and private groups alike, caused allies to quickly retreat. The Wagner-Rogers bill died in committee, as only four of nineteen members supported it.

And, the presentation of the bill spurred discussion of even stricter immigration policies. The same committee that killed the Wagner-Rogers bill reported

¹¹⁶ Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 149.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹¹⁸ Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 149; Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 69.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

positively on bills that proposed slashing immigration. These bills included measures to end all immigration for five years, deporting all non-citizens and requiring all aliens to be registered and fingerprinted every year.¹²⁰ One bill, that included measures to deport immigrants who advocated for changes in the American government, even passed in the House.¹²¹ The gutting of the Wagner-Rogers bill caused Congressmen to discuss and bring about legislation to move immigration policies in the opposite direction. Congress refused to support a bill to help innocent children, which showed that there would be little hope of them supporting the admission of any refugees. While Congress never voted on some of the anti-immigration bills, their mere existence and the support they rendered demonstrated the reality of FDR's fears. Congress was going to take any opportunity to limit immigration quotas and retreat the United States further into isolationism.

Because of this, FDR continued to try and find ways to circumnavigate the immigration quotas. In 1939, he encouraged exploration of Alaska, not yet a state, as an option for resettlement, an idea that he had previously rejected in November 1938. In his diary, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes recorded that the "President's idea is that we ought to try and take care of ten thousand settlers a year in Alaska for the next five years."¹²² According to Ickes, Roosevelt further expanded on this idea by describing how five thousand of the Jews would be from the United States, while the

¹²⁰ Ibid., 151.

¹²¹ Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 69.

¹²² Harold Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*: vol. III, 56-57. Quoted in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 191.

other five thousand would be from foreign countries, admitted under the same ratio provided by the quotas.¹²³ Ickes noted his surprise at FDR's serious thought into what Ickes considered a "minor problem."¹²⁴ While Roosevelt did not consider opening up the United States to more refugees, he continued to focus on big plans to relocate the Jews outside of the United States. These proposals reflect good intentions, but like the Advisory Committee's resettlement plans, they did not amount to much. The option to resettle refugees in Alaska, known as the Slattery Plan, did not muster support from a wide range of politicians or Jews. Two Democratic Congressmen introduced the legislation in February 1940, with support from some officials in the Department of the Interior, but the White House did not publicly endorse or oppose the bill.¹²⁵ Without this support and with the opposition from Alaskans and other Interior Department leaders, the Alaska Plan stalled in committee.

Like the raising of immigration quotas and the Wagner-Rogers bill, the Alaska Plan had FDR's support behind closed doors, but he did not speak out publicly on behalf of the legislation. Despite the private support for measures intended to improve the situation of refugees, FDR did not act in any way that would put his standing with Congress at risk. He placed great importance on his relationship with Congress because of the impending war in Europe. FDR knew that in order for the United States to partake in the conflict or to support its allies, as he promised Great Britain in late

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 160

1938, he would have to maintain a good relationship with Congress.¹²⁶ This was necessary, as any action in the skirmish would require the repealing of the Neutrality Acts by Congress. In particular, FDR needed the support of the bloc of Southern Democrats who had voted 127 to 0 in favor of the Immigration Act of 1924, but 106 to 3 in support of revising the Neutrality Acts in 1939.¹²⁷ FDR knew it would be politically unwise to alienate these Congressmen, as they would provide necessary support to enter into the imminent European conflict. Thus, FDR did not act tenaciously on the refugee issue and push for the liberalization of immigration quotas, because, for him the refugee crisis came second to international political concerns.

Other members of the Roosevelt administration echoed these sentiments. Messersmith opposed any initiatives that would impact relations with Congress. He wrote, “there are things in the world today which are of even greater importance than the refugee problem, and that is major political considerations and sound trading principles.”¹²⁸ While FDR and many of his officials expressed genuine concern for the plight of refugees, world affairs and political concerns outweighed their humanitarian objectives.

In contemporary context, it is easy to simply state that President Roosevelt did not do enough to rescue the Jews from Europe. However, it is important to consider

¹²⁶ Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut, *America Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 63.

¹²⁷ Rosen, *Saving the Jews: Franklin Roosevelt and the Holocaust*, 87.

¹²⁸ George Messersmith, *Letter to Geist, November 7, 1938*, Messersmith Papers, Item 1066, University of Delaware. Quoted in Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*, 63.

the complex factors of the time that mitigated FDR's actions. He had to act in accordance with his values, while also being wary of the rampant anti-Semitic and nativist sentiments among both his administration and the American public. President Roosevelt navigated these constraints by selecting which fights he would put energy into. Instead of trying to convince Congress to relax the immigration quotas, he loosened the time restrictions on the visitors' visas. Instead of pushing for the entirety of the United States to be open to Jewish immigrants from Europe, he advocated privately for the use of Alaska. FDR's efforts did not amount to much, but they demonstrate a leader attempting to navigate difficult circumstances where the public and a large portion of the legislative branch did not share his same values and beliefs. But, while he did successfully thread through competing priorities, he did not make any real efforts to save the hundreds of thousands of desperate refugees. Despite his humanitarian actions and public condemnation of the Nazis, President Roosevelt did not enact any bold changes that aided the refugees, for fear of public outrage and severe retaliation from Congress.

CONCLUSION

The question of American action, or lack thereof, to save the persecuted Jews of Europe, is a large, complex issue. In hindsight, the United States did not do enough to prevent the deaths of eleven million people at the hands of the Nazi government. But, it is also important to recognize the cultural climate of the country at the time, and consider what actually could have been done. Rampant sentiments of nativism and anti-Semitism limited the actions of the Roosevelt administration. The Roosevelt administration curtailed any efforts to increase immigration quotas in order to avoid repercussions from Congress in the forms of more restrictive immigration policies and a denial of Neutrality Act revisions. The administration attempted to work around this hindrance through changes in policy that did not require congressional approval.

FDR also established other avenues of action in the United States. The President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees strove to solve the refugee crisis through resettlement and expedited visa processes. While their efforts paled in comparison to the number of people who were forced to remain in Germany, the Advisory Committee did help some Jews and prominent intellectuals acquire refuge in the United States.

The Holocaust and the lack of worldwide action that precipitated it serve as powerful examples of the devastating consequences of inaction. While focusing on domestic policies is necessary to ensure the welfare of the people in one's own

country, it is also important to remember how international action, or lack thereof, could affect the lives of millions worldwide.

REFERENCES

Primary Sources:

The Advisory Committee to Sumner Welles and the Attorney General, July 31, 1940. Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Armstrong, Hamilton Fish. *Hamilton Armstrong to Franklin Roosevelt, April 25, 1938.* Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Armstrong, Hamilton Fish. *Armstrong to Frederick Keppel, 18 November 1938.* Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers, box 77, President's Advisory Committee, Mudd Library. Quoted in Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 116.

Bearing on possible public statement by Advisory Committee—June 6, 1938. Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Bentwich, Norman. *Norman Bentwich to James McDonald, September 21, 1939.* Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Bentwich, Norman. Norman Bentwich to James McDonald. Letter. Qtd. in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 187.

Buckley, Charles. *Charles Buckley to Franklin Roosevelt, November 18, 1939.* Letter. From the FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, July-December 1939.

Cavert, Samuel. *First Meeting Minutes, May 16, 1938.* From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Chamberlain, Joseph. *Memo to President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees. June 4, 1938.* From Princeton University. *The Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers*.

For the Press, March 24, 1938. Press Release. From the FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Hull, Cordell. *Cordell Hull to Joseph Kennedy, March 23, 1938*. Telegram. From *Foreign Relations* 1 (1938):740, accessed November 15, 2015.

“‘Human’ Alien Laws Urged by Governor,” *New York Times*, 24 October 1932. p.9. quoted in Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 42.

Ickes, Harold L. *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes*: vol. III, 56-57. Quoted in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 191.

Kline, Emanuel. *Emanuel Kline to FDR, April 2, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Korff, Serge. *Report on British Guiana, Jan 9, 1939*. Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

LeHand, Margaret. *Note on the President, April 8, 1938*. From Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Lehman, Irving. *Irving Lehman to Franklin Roosevelt, March 20, 1938*. Letter. From FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Lehman, Irving. *Irving Lehman to FDR, March 28, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diary, October 4, 1939*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diary, September 14, 1939*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diaries, June 26, 1940*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diaries, June 29, 1940*, From Library of Congress. Container 5, quoted by Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 174.

Long, Breckinridge. *Personal Diaries, July 12, 1940*. Diary. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.

Long to Berle and Dunn, June 26, 1940, From Library of Congress, The Breckinridge Long Papers, Container 211, Visa Division File. Quoted in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue* 204.

- Long to Messersmith, June 14, 1940*, Long Papers, General Correspondence, 1903-1947: M-Q Miscellaneous, Container 133. Quoted in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 200.
- McDonald, James. *Letter of Resignation, December 27, 1935*. Letter. World Digital Library. Accessed February 22, 2016.
- Meeting of individuals called to consult with Mr. Jaretzki and Warren on colonization projects, Dec. 2, 1938*. Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Messersmith, George. "Present Status of the Anti-Semitic Movement in Germany (September 21, 1933)," excerpted, *German History in Documents and Images*, accessed January 5, 2016, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=2166.
- Messersmith, George. *Letter to Geist, November 7, 1938*, Messersmith Papers. Item 1066. University of Delaware. Quoted in Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*, 63.
- Messersmith, George. *Messersmith to Hull and Welles on March 31, 1938*. Letter. Quoted in Breitman et al. *Refugees and Rescue*, 124.
- "Militant Christian Patriots to FDR, April 12, 1938." Letter. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.
- Morgenthau, Jr., Henry. *The Morgenthau Diaries: Depression and the New Deal, 1933-1939*, 22 March 1938, microfilm, reel 31, Library of Congress, qtd. in Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 102.
- Pell, Herbert. *Herbert Pell to Cordell Hull, September 6, 1940*. Letter. State Department Records, Library of Congress. Quoted in Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 143
- Pell, Robert. *Refugees 1938-1940*. Report. From Library of Congress. *The Breckinridge Long Papers*.
- Pell, Robert. *Robert Pell to Cordell Hull, May 12, 1939*. Telegram. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Preliminary Draft of Settlement Possibilities on the Island of Mindanao, January 21, 1939*. Report. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

Press conference, November 18, 1938, Franklin Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, Vol. 12, 132-134, qtd. in Breitman et al., *Refugees and Rescue*, 151

Proceedings, Sixty-eighth Congress, University of Washington Library. Accessed February 28, 2016.

Proceedings, Sixty-seventh Congress, University of Washington Library. Accessed February 28, 2016.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Basil Harris, April 8, 1938*. Letter. From FDR Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *Franklin Roosevelt to Charles Buckley, December 8, 1938*. From the FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano. *Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Joseph Chamberlain, April 8, 1938*. Letter. From FDR Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

Roosevelt, Franklin Deladon. *FDR to Taylor, November 23, 1938*. Myron Taylor Papers, Box 3, Folder 1: Correspondence, The Roosevelt Library. Quoted in Breitman et al., “Refugees and Rescue,” 155.

Silverman, Emanuel. *Emanuel Silverman to FDR, December 5, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

Statement by the President, November 15, 1938. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

Taylor, Myron Charles. *Address before the Council on Foreign Relations, October 1, 1938*. Speech. From FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, June-December 1938.

Taylor, Myron Charles. *Myron Charles Taylor to Harry Truman, May 15, 1947*. Letter. From Library of Congress. *The Myron Charles Taylor Papers*.

Turner, Will. *Will Turner to FDR, March 30, 1938*. Letter. From the Roosevelt Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.

- Warren, George. *Fifteenth Meeting Minutes, January 9, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Fifth Meeting of the Advisory Committee Minutes, June 10, 1938*. From Princeton University. *The Hamilton Fish Armstrong Papers* (hereby HFA papers).
- Warren, George. *Fifty-first Meeting Minutes, December 2, 1941*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Fifty-sixth Meeting Minutes, Dec. 1, 1942*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *George Warren to the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees, December 19, 1939*. Letter. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Ninth Meeting Minutes, September 30, 1938*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees to Franklin Roosevelt, September 26, 1939*. Memo. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Sixteenth Meeting Minutes, Jan 23, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Thirteenth Meeting Minutes, December 8, 1938*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Thirtieth Meeting Minutes, January 19, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Thirty-fifth Meeting Minutes, June 7, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Thirty-first Meeting Minutes, February 9, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Twenty-eighth Meeting Minutes, Oct. 13, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren George. *Twenty-fifth Meeting Minutes, April 20, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.

- Warren, George. *Twenty-ninth Meeting Minutes, Oct. 23, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Thirty-seventh Meeting Minutes, June 17, 1940*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Warren, George. *Twenty-sixth Meeting Minutes, June 29, 1939*. From Princeton University Library. *The HFA Papers*.
- Welles, Sumner. *Sumner Welles to Stephen Early, April 11, 1938*. Letter. The FDR Presidential Library. *The FDR Papers*, OF3186: Political Refugees, January-May 1938.
- Secondary Sources:
- Breitman, Richard and Alan Kraut. "America Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945." Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Breitman, Richard and Allan Lightman. "FDR and the Jews." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs" ed. Donald B. Schewe, Second Series, January 1937-August 1939 (New York: Clearwater, 1979), Vol. 12, 83-86.
- "German Jewish Refugees." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. accessed March 24, 2016.
<https://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007687>.
- "Jews in Prewar Germany." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. accessed February 24, 2016.
<https://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007687>.
- Lipstadt, Deborah E. "Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945." New York: Free Press, 1986.
- "Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald." Edited by Richard Breitman, Barbara McDonald Stewart, and Severin Hochberg. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press: 2009.
- Rosen, Robert. "Saving the Jews: Franklin Roosevelt and the Holocaust." New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2006.

Wyman, David. "Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941." Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968.