Between Despair and Hope:

The Work of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society in the 1930s and 40s

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Abstract

The literature on Jewish Immigration to Canada in the 1930s and 1940s either deals with the obstacles in the way of potential immigrants, which were almost impossible to overcome, or consists of general overviews over the efforts of Jewish organizations on behalf of European Jews. In this thesis, a new aspect will be added to that picture. By examining the efforts of one of the Jewish organizations, that of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada (JIAS), in more detail, it wants to direct attention to the fact that there were Canadians who cared about the fate of European Jewry and tried to intercede with the immigration authorities on their behalf.

The documents of JIAS reveal that the society kept constant contact with the Canadian authorities, which allowed them to approach the Canadian government on several occasions. In the 1930s, JIAS mainly dealt with individual refugees from Germany and Austria. The society tried to obtain special permits for entry to Canada for applicants with special skills who could find employment. Immigrants who could open a business that did not compete with existing ones were also admitted occasionally.

In the 1940s, JIAS' obligations changed. The Canadian government agreed to some special programs to bring European refugees to Canada. JIAS assisted these immigrants. They were met in the ports, and JIAS helped them to find accommodation and jobs.

The efforts of JIAS changed the situation of potential immigrants to Canada. Due to their endeavors, special permits for entry were obtained on behalf of Jewish refugees in the 1930s. In the 1940s, the society's activities allowed new immigrants to settle in Canada quickly and successfully. Even if JIAS was not highly successful, they clearly

made a difference for the refugees who came. Therefore, the many efforts of JIAS deserve to be acknowledged in the historical record.

The JIAS records consist mainly in correspondence between JIAS and individual Jews or other organizations trying to help European Jewry. The remainder of the archival sources are more official statements such as memoranda, minutes of meetings, annual reports, and newspaper articles.

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I also appreciate it that, although I am a German citizen, my intention to work on a sensitive subject in Jewish-Canadian history was never seriously questioned. I hope the co-operation of everybody involved in this thesis made a humble contribution to a better understanding between Jews and Germans.

I will also always remember the encouragement and support from my family and friends in Germany. However, I would like to express special thanks to my parents. They put me in a position to get a good education, which opened a whole new perspective on the world to me.

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List of Abbreviations

CNCR - Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Persecution

CJC - Canadian Jewish Congress

CJCNA - Canadian Jewish Congress – National Archives

CNR - Canadian National Railway

CPR - Canadian Pacific Railway

HIAS - Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America

HICEM - Union of HIAS, ICA and Emigdirect, the name was made up from the first letters of HIAS, ICA, and Emigdidrect

ICA - Jewish Colonization Association

JDC - American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

JIAS - Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada

ORT - Organization for Rehabilitation and Training

UJR - United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies

Introduction

This thesis deals with the ways in which the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada (JIAS) tried to help the Jews who wanted to immigrate to Canada in the 1930s and 1940s. Of course, the Great Depression had an impact on Jewish immigration to Canada in the first half of that period. Immigrants were not welcome anywhere at this time due to the economic problems that resulted in a high unemployment rate.[1] Yet during these two decades, it was important for European Jewry, especially German and Austrian Jews, to find new homes.

Jews represented about one per cent of Germany's population. Yet they were highly visible because of their concentration in big cities and their overrepresentation in certain professions. They held important positions in finance and business. Jews were prominent doctors, lawyers, and journalists, and they were involved in German cultural activities. In general, Jews were anxious to integrate into the Christian German bourgeoisie. However, Saul Friedlander is of the opinion that Jews consciously or unconsciously created a new subculture for themselves. In his view, the religious and racial differences combined with economic success and social ascent resulted in negative reactions of non-Jews to their Jewish neighbours. It seems that it is difficult to determine how German Jews themselves perceived the issue of antisemitism in the period between 1918-33 because they held diverse views on the attitude of society towards them. Jewish writers, for example, dealt

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[1] This was illustrated by the fact that opinion polls in the United States showed that 80 per cent of the population were opposed to a change in the immigration laws. Leni Yahil, The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.93

with the topic either by avoiding it almost entirely or by making it one of the central issues in their writing.[2]

Many Jews lost their jobs because of the restrictions that were placed against them in Germany and Austria after the Nazis had come to power; many feared for their security. The Jews who wanted to immigrate to Canada in the 1930s were highly educated and could have made a useful contribution to Canada's economy and society. Despite this, most of them were not admitted. Because it is one of the objects of this thesis to examine this situation, the fate of the adult applicants who wanted to settle in the cities will be examined in some detail. The other program that JIAS was involved in in the 1930s was a project on behalf of Jewish farmers from Europe. The Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) was the organization that took on most of the efforts, but, especially towards the end of the 1930s, ICA was assisted by JIAS.

JIAS in collaboration with the United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies (UJR) launched several efforts to help children enter Canada. Attempts were made to rescue children who had fled from the European continent to England. Another group of children from Vichy France was chosen for a movement to Canada. Canadian Jewry also tried to reunite children who had been sent to the United States with their parents.

After the Second World War had broken out, the situation for the refugees became even more desperate. At the same time, bringing new immigrants to Canada became more difficult for several reasons. Yet JIAS tried to help groups of refugees from Vichy France and from the Iberian Peninsula to enter Canada. They also assisted the internees who were sent to Canada from England after the fall of France. JIAS also tried to

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[2] Saul Friedlander, Nazi Germany and the Jews, (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), p.77-81

establish contact between refugees who had fled Poland and their relatives in Canada. Because JIAS did not launch the rescue efforts for these groups alone, their efforts cannot be dealt with without also discussing those of the other organizations. Despite this, the main focus remains on JIAS.

This thesis is meant to answer two questions: what did Canadian Jewry do to help the Jewish refugees in Europe, and did they try hard? In order to depict several aspects of the work of JIAS, this thesis introduces the efforts on behalf of many groups of possible immigrants to Canada. However, it does not aim at presenting a thorough examination of the fates of the refugees and all the rescue efforts of Canadian Jewry.

In the first chapter, JIAS and the general immigration situation in Canada in the 1930s will be dealt with. Then, the worsening position of German and Austrian Jews in that decade will be described in the second chapter based on the applications that were sent to JIAS. Because the situation for German and Austrian Jews changed towards the end of the 1930s, the conditions of the end of that decade will be examined separately. The next step will be a general discussion of the applications. The efforts on behalf of farmers will be dealt with in chapter three. Chapter four will examine the groups of children on whose behalf JIAS intervened. After that, it will be depicted in what ways the situation of the refugees in Europe and the work of JIAS changed due to the outbreak of the Second World War, and some of the rescue attempts that JIAS was involved in will be described.

Some aspects concerning Jewish immigration in the 1930s and 1940s have already been examined. The most important work on the topic to date is None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948 by Irving Abella and Harold Troper. They

provide a detailed description of the fate of the Jews who tried to enter Canada in the 1930s and 40s and the difficulties they faced. "The Canadian Rescue Effort: The Few Who Cared" by Gerald Dirks, Through Narrow Gates: A Review of Jewish Immigration, Colonization, and Immigrant Aid Work in Canada (1840-1940) by Simon Belkin, and With Faith and Thanksgiving: the History of Two Hundred Years of Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada by Joseph Kage deal with the immigrant aid effort in Canada. "The Few Who Cared" discusses the activities of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Persecution (CNCR), the national Canadian organ coordinating the efforts of several organizations trying to assist refugees. It was established in December 1938. The colonization and immigrant aid work of the Jewish organizations in Canada in the years 1840-1940 is described by Simon Belkin in Through Narrow Gates. In With Faith and Thanksgiving, Joseph Kage depicts the different stages the development of the Jewish community and its immigrant aid effort went through from 1760-1960.

Another work, Donald Avery's "Canada's Response to European Refugees: The Security Dimension", argues that the concern for national security had an important impact on the Canadian immigration regulations during the Second World War. James Rea examines the career of Thomas Crerar, the minister responsible for immigration in the Canadian cabinet, in his work T.A. Crerar-A Political Life, and Paula Draper discusses the fate of the internees who were sent to Canada from Great Britain after the fall of France in "Fragmented Loyalties: Canadian Jewry, the King Government, and the Canadian State" and in "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees: Part Two".

None of these works focuses on JIAS alone. Furthermore, the literature on Jewish immigration to Canada either consists in brief overviews over the rescue efforts or focuses on the obstacles that potential immigrants to Canada had to overcome. This thesis wants to add a new aspect to the discussion by dealing with one of the Jewish organizations that was involved in the endeavors undertaken on behalf of European Jewry.

This is the reason why it is necessary to base the paper on archival material, mainly consisting of correspondence of JIAS at the National Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress in Montreal. The greater part of this material is straightforward. It mainly consists of correspondence between JIAS and individual Jews applying for help in their efforts to come to Canada, other Jewish organizations trying to help those people who wanted to leave Europe, or the Canadian Government. It contains information on the applicants' ages, professions, families, and the circumstances of their encounter with Nazi persecution. Under Quebec law, it is not allowed to give any information that could reveal the identity or violate the privacy of the individuals whose fates were discussed in these letters. The rest of the sources are publications of JIAS, including the annual reports, memoranda, and newspaper articles. Statements were made with more care there than in the correspondence.

It could be argued that it is too narrow a view to have a look at the correspondence of the applicants and the organizations trying to help them only. On the other hand, the statements made there can be proven by documents sent with the applications or simply by the fact that some of the descriptions of the fates are so detailed.

They convey both the abject desperation of the would-be immigrants and the feelings of JIAS' officials, which consisted of a mixture of a sense of almost complete helplessness and hope for a better future as they tried to console the refugees and frantically find a way to save some of them.

Chapter One

JIAS and Immigration to Canada in the 1930s

1.1. The Origins of JIAS

The Jewish Immigrant Aid Society was founded in 1920 as part of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC).[3] The Jews of Eastern Europe found themselves in what JIAS called "intolerable conditions"[4] at that time. So the object of JIAS was to find relief and shelter for Jewish immigrants and assist them in settling successfully. Canadian Jewry was especially concerned with bringing Jews from Eastern Europe to Canada because many members of the Canadian Jewish community had relatives in that area.[5]

There had been little obstacles in the way of potential immigrants to Canada before the First World War. After 1918, however, the Canadian government restricted immigration from various countries, among them states in Eastern Europe. This affected Jewish immigration to the country because it was especially that area where Jews wanted to leave. Canadian Jewry was aware of the fact that an organization that specialized in immigrant aid was needed in order to help the potential Jewish immigrants come to Canada and to co-ordinate the efforts on their behalf. The inaugural meeting of JIAS was attended by members of the CJC, ICA, the Ukrainian Farband, the Romanian Farband[6],

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[3] Irving Abella and Harold Troper None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948 (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1991), p.10-11

[4] Annual Report of JIAS 1935, Canadian Jewish Congress – National Archives (CJCNA), JIAS Collection KE 4

[5] Simon Belkin, Through Narrow Gates: A Review of Jewish Immigration, Colonization, and Immigrant Aid Work in Canada (Montreal: The Eagle Publishing Co. Limited, 1966), p.96-98

[6] The Polish, Ukrainian, and Romanian Jews in Canada formed alliances called Farband in 1919.
Belkin, Through Narrow Gates p.95

the Hebrew Ladies Immigrant Protective Association, and the Association of Jewish War Relief Societies. The first officers of JIAS were members of the National Executive Committee of the CJC. JIAS was understood to be the instrument of Canadian Jewry to help Jewish newcomers. They were met on arrival, they were helped with transportation and in dealing with the Canadian authorities.[7] Over the years, JIAS grew as an organization and had to take on more and more responsibilities, especially because the CJC ceased all activities soon after its foundation until it was re-established in 1933.[8]

The executive director's report for the year 1935 indicated that JIAS was proud of the work it had done during the first 15 years of its existence:

> "Between 1920 and 1935 47,822 Jews landed on our shores. These immigrants constitute a well established and loyal group of citizens, men and women who are a credit to our country and a blessing to our people."[9]

This is the reason why Canadian Jews tried to keep JIAS an efficient organization, even though this was very hard during the Depression. Their first challenge was to try and help when the victims of Hitler's antisemitic measures in Germany desperately needed it.

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[7] Joseph Kage, With Faith and Thanksgiving: The Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada 1760- 1960 (Montreal: The Eagle Publishing Co. Limited, 1962), p.64-75
Belkin, Through Narrow Gates p. 98
[8] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.10-11
[9] Annual Report of JIAS 1935 KE 4

1.2. Immigration to Canada in the 1930s

The 1930s was the decade when the Jews of Europe needed to find a safe haven from persecution, but at the same time the Great Depression hit the world economy. This meant that new immigrants were not welcome in many countries that might have been likely to provide shelter under different circumstances. All of them had enough problems of their own, even without new arrivals coming to their shores. Canada was no exception from the rule, and, concerned about their own problems most, Canadians opposed immigration.

The Canadian government reacted to the public opinion by trying to terminate immigration to Canada almost entirely.[10] Consequently, the immigration laws of Canada were very restrictive. In 1931, an Order in Council was passed defining five categories of new immigrants who were admissible to Canada. These were:
a) British subjects from Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Irish Free State, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, provided that they had enough means to maintain themselves until they could find employment, b) citizens of the United States with means to support themselves, c) the wife and unmarried children under 18 years of age of a Canadian resident who could provide for his family, d) agriculturists with sufficient means to farm in Canada, e) the fiancée of any adult male, provided he was a legal resident of Canada and in the position to marry and care for his future wife.[11] These immigration regulations remained in effect until 1948.

In certain cases, JIAS was able to secure special permits for refugees if Canadian relatives were prepared to support them, or if the refugees could bring considerable

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[10] Gerald Dirks, Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism? (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), p.50-53

financial means with them.[12] In February 1939, categories of immigrants for whom such special permits could be obtained were defined in negotiations between the CJC and the Canadian Government. These included: capitalists who could invest money in new industries that did not compete with existing Canadian companies. Skilled mechanics and technicians were also acceptable if they were needed in order to establish new industries, or if employment could be found for them. And remnants of families not going beyond first degree relationships were allowed, provided that all the members of that family were admissible and able to come to Canada. If one of the members of a family could not comply with these conditions, the whole group was inadmissible because if some members of the family were admitted to Canada, they might try and bring those who were left behind to the country, too.[13]

It was hoped that immigrants with special skills would have an easier time being admitted. At least, this view was the basis for the argument in a memorandum that was sent to the immigration authorities by JIAS in an effort to persuade the government to admit more German-Jewish refugees into the country. The memorandum argued that Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria had proven to be very useful to the nations that had offered them shelter. It was mentioned that Jews who wanted to leave Germany were prepared to adjust to the needs of the countries they wanted to enter. Furthermore, several Jewish organizations in Europe helped the emigrants to prepare for immigration

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[11] Kage, With Faith and Thanksgiving p.95
[12] Ibid. p.101-02
[13] Letter by a member of the delegation to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Immigration, February 1939, CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 11 file 57

into some other country. For example, schools for vocational training were established. Training was available for both men and women.[14]

In the Annual Report of 1931-32 of JIAS, the president of JIAS, Benjamin Robinson, referred to Canada's economic situation and the impact it had on the immigration laws.[15] However, the purpose of his message was to convey new hope. His aim was to encourage Canadian Jewry to contribute to JIAS. He stressed that the society relied on the participation of Canadian Jewry in order to enable the organization to help European refugees.[16] There also was no reason why Robinson should not have believed that the Canadian government would admit more Jewish refugees from Europe eventually. He wrote:

> "More important however, than the actual work that our organization at the present time carries on, which alone more than justifies its existence during this period of depression, is the fact that our Society is still functioning efficiently, so that it may avail itself of the favourable opportunities for increased immigration when a change in the Dominion immigration policy takes place- and a change is bound to take place sooner or later."[17]

In the same report, JIAS' executive director, A.J. Paull, mentioned that the organization had advocated "more humane" immigration laws to the government and had registered its opposition to even tighter restrictions.[18]

Yet the prospects for a change in the Canadian immigration policy were not very high. Thomas A. Crerar, who had entered the King government in 1935 as minister of the

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[14] Memorandum of JIAS (no date given), CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 83 file 21162
[15] Annual Report of JIAS 1931-32 KE 2
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

interior, and was put in charge of the newly-created Department of Mines and Resources in 1936, was responsible for immigration to Canada. Crerar himself displayed a certain degree of sympathy towards the Jewish refugees. Yet, this did not keep him from enforcing the government policy most of the time. However, he tried to persuade the other members of the cabinet into being more generous in permitting victims of Nazi persecution to enter Canada. Yet he failed due to the opposition of his colleagues from Quebec. Furthermore, he hardly ever interfered with the actions of the director of the immigration branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, Frederick Charles Blair. Blair was influenced by the anti-immigration sentiment of his time. He also displayed a lot of antisemitism and used the power he had to keep new immigrants, particularly Jews, out of Canada. Although it would be a misconception to say that Blair alone is to blame for the fact that Canada did so little in order to rescue European Jewry, he certainly contributed his part.[19]

Apart from Canada's poor economic situation in the 1930s, antisemitism was a major factor stimulating opposition to immigration. The JIAS' minutes of April 1936 state that the antisemitism in both the English- and French-speaking press in Canada was so severe that the Orders in Council that allowed Jews to enter Canada under special permission were abrogated.[20] Although opposition to immigration and antisemitism were to be felt throughout Canada, it seems that it was in Quebec that these feelings were strongest.[21] In the minutes of one meeting of JIAS it was mentioned that it was the

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.7-8
James Rea, T.A. Crerar-A Political Life, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p.185-86 and 218-219

[20] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS April 1936, CJCNA, JIAS Collection KA 10

[21] The topic was mentioned in several of the minutes of the meetings in 1936.

French-Canadian press that agitated the most against the plans for the settlement of German-Jewish refugees in the country.[22] The supposition is further supported by the findings of Simon Belkin.[23] In general, antisemitism remained an important topic with the officials of JIAS, and they kept mentioning it during their meetings.[24] In December 1936, it was recognized that the federal cabinet ministers from Quebec were strongly opposed to new immigration.[25] Another issue that might contain an indirect reference to antisemitism was that it was considered to persuade influential non-Jews to support the efforts on behalf of the Jewish refugees because "the chances of securing favourable action would be much enhanced."[26]

All this suggests that the JIAS officials had learned what they were up against over time. Clearly, the Evian Conference about the European refugee crisis in 1938 proved sufficiently that the prospects of Jewish immigration to any country in the world were very slim. The conference and Canada's reluctance to take part in it were commented on during a meeting of JIAS in September 1938. As Abella and Troper point out, when it was over, Canadian authorities felt relief rather than anything else and did not want to be bothered with the issue of Jewish immigration to Canada again.[27]

As to the general situation of JIAS, a letter to Paull made it obvious that Canadian Jewry was faced with an unprecedented situation in 1933, and that the Jewish

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[22] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS September 1933 JIAS Collection KA 7
[23] Belkin, Through Narrow Gates p.177.
A thorough examination of antisemitism in Quebec is provided in a work by David Rome Clouds in the Thirties: Antisemitism in Quebec, (Montreal 1981)
[24] Antisemitism was discussed several times during the JIAS meetings over the years. The minutes of the meetings are proof of that.
[25] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS December 1936, JIAS Collection KA10
[26] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS September 1933, JIAS Collection KA 7
[27] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p. 20-36
Minutes of the meeting of JIAS September 1938, JIAS Collection KA 12

organizations had to develop in order to meet the challenge. For example, the way in which the funds that had been raised for the refugees in Europe should be distributed still had to be agreed upon,[28] and JIAS seems not to have been known very well because it was necessary to emphasize that it was an organization separate from the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America (HIAS), the counterpart of JIAS in the United States.[29] In fact, in one letter it was mentioned that funds raised in Toronto were sent to HIAS in New York because JIAS did not have an official office in Toronto, and therefore was considered to be nothing more than a subsidiary of the American organization.[30] Officials of JIAS responded by trying to have the money refunded and send it to Europe from Canada because "it would be in the interest of the JIAS and would add to its prestige".[31] The whole incident shows that there still was a lot of work to be done in order to make JIAS the organization that it was to become during the Second World War. Yet its reputation among the Jewish organizations was great enough, so that the money was sent back to Canada and could be forwarded to Europe from there.[32] Another indicator of the fact that JIAS grew in importance in the 1930s and 1940s is that

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[28] Letter from M.A. Gray, the general secretary of the Western Division of JIAS, to Paull, October 1933, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 A
The letter does not actually mention who was going to make that decision, it can only be assumed that members of JIAS, of the Joint Distribution Committee, of the Palestine Jewish Agency, and of ORT, the four Jewish agencies entitled to the money, were going to be involved.

[29] Letter from Robinson to Dr. A. Brodey, director of the Toronto branch of JIAS, October 1933 Ibid.

[30] Letter from Paull to Isaac Asofsky, general manager of HIAS, October 1933 Ibid.

[31] Letter from Robinson to Dr. Brodey December 1933 Ibid.

[32] Letter to Robinson January 1934 Ibid.

members of JIAS kept discussing the plan to open new branches in Toronto and Winnipeg.[33] The office in Toronto was opened in 1935.[34]

Furthermore, it becomes quite clear that, at that early stage, Canadian Jewry did not expect to be confronted with the kind of immigration policy that the Canadian government pursued. On the contrary, in October 1933 JIAS hoped that Canada would open its doors for European refugees. Yet they had enough experience with the attitude of the Canadian government towards Jews[35], so the cautious overtone of the message also suggests that the JIAS leadership was careful not to predict any special treatment for their co-religionists:

> "You no doubt have noticed that many important men have expressed the opinion that it is time for Canada to open its doors to permit some immigration. Mr. Beatty of the CPR, even Mr. Bennett himself expressed his opinion along these lines (sic). I have no doubt that when the restrictions are lifted even slightly, we will obtain our share and without a doubt some German refugees will be permitted to enter Canada,..."[36]

One of the measures that JIAS undertook to fight the immigration restrictions was to send a delegation to the Jewish Members of Parliament who were asked to try and obtain special permits for entry on behalf of some German- Jewish families that were

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[33] The plan keeps being discussed in the minutes of the meetings of JIAS and the annual reports throughout the 1930s. CJCNA, JIAS Collection KA and KE

[34] Minutes of Meetings of JIAS February and April 1935, JIAS Collection KA 9

[35] Harold Troper deals with antisemitism in Canada in the interwar period in "Anti-Semitism in Canada in the Interwar Years" in The Jews of North America, ed. by Moses Rischin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), p.235-246

[36] Letter from Robinson to Dr. Brodey, October 1933, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 A

selected by the HICEM[37] in Paris. At the same time, the JIAS officials conceded that "the economic situation in the country does not warrant any large movement of immigrants to Canada..."[38] In May 1933, the matter was also presented to the Minister of Immigration, W.A. Gordon. He was reported to have been sympathetic to the Jewish cause, yet no definite decision was reached during that interview.[39] In March 1934, the issue was even brought to the attention of the Prime Minister, R.B. Bennett who was willing to consider admitting a limited number of German refugees into Canada.[40] Yet it seems that no action was taken in the matter because the Prime Minister was petitioned again on the same topic at the end of the year.[41]

In 1936, another JIAS delegation was sent to T.A. Crerar, to discuss the possibility of admitting one hundred German-Jewish families to Canada on condition that JIAS would guarantee that they would not become public charges. JIAS reported that while Crerar "was very impressed and showed great interest in the proposal, which he promised to submit to the Cabinet,"[42] he made no specific promises. Crerar claimed that he needed the consent of the cabinet because helping German-Jewish families would include a change in immigration policy.[43] Two months later, in March 1936, the issue was raised again. However, Paull was pessimistic as to the outcome.[44]

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[37] The HICEM in Montreal consisted of JIAS and ICA. The Canadian branch of HICEM was established in 1928, and the executive directors of JIAS and ICA acted as the executive secretaries of HICEM in Canada.
Belkin, Through Narrow Gates p.169
[38] Minutes of the meeting of the JIAS March 29, 1933, JIAS Collection KA 7
[39] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS June 1933 Ibid.
[40] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS March 1934, JIAS Collection KA 8
[41] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS October 1934 Ibid.
[42] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS January 1936, JIAS Collection KA 10
[43] Letter to Hicem in Paris, January 1936, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067
[44] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS March 1936, JIAS Collection KA 10

All this suggests that JIAS tried to help the refugees from Europe in any way possible under the conditions that they faced. JIAS frequently approached the Canadian immigration authorities on behalf of individual immigrants and in an effort to launch a group movement of German-Jewish families to Canada. The fact that they hardly ever succeeded and even lost hope of success towards the end of the 1930s explains a lot about the atmosphere in Canada and in the offices of JIAS during that decade.

Chapter Two

Applications to JIAS

2.1.1. The Applications of German and Austrian Jews in the 1930s

All the while, Jews in Canada were concerned over the fate of their co-religionists in Germany. Hostilities against Jews were serious enough to be deemed a "cold pogrom". This was the reason why the Canadian Jewish Congress was re-established.[45] The Nazis used legislation, administrative decrees, and propaganda to defame Jews, whose social, economic, and legal standing was lowered. In addition, the police did not care about the rights of Jewish-German citizens any more. It was enough for a Jew to be accused of any kind of offence for the person to be threatened with imprisonment.

Nazis also successfully discriminated against Jewish businessmen and undermined business relations between Jews and non-Jews. Due to these measures, some German Jews had to liquidate their businesses. Others lost their jobs. As early as 1933 the unemployment rate among the Jewish population in Germany was much higher than that of the "Aryan" Germans.[46] The beginning of active measures against Jewish businesses was the boycott of April 1, 1933. Doctors and lawyers were the first to be affected. They were kept from entering their offices and the courts, and their businesses were marked by special signs.[47] Furthermore, the German authorities tried to prevent non-Jewish Germans from marrying Jews or to break marriages that already existed.[48]

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[45] Letter from the Montreal Protest Committee to JIAS, May 1933, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 A

[46] Marion Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany (Oxford: Oxford Universtiy Press, 1988), p.17-28

[47] Yahil, The Holocaust p.60-63

[48] Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair p.74

The fact that Canadian Christianity also expressed concern about the situation of European Jewry is an indicator that the Jews in Canada had good reason to be worried. The different Christian churches in Canada have been accused of not having reacted to the Holocaust, thereby displaying an antisemitic attitude. Recently, however, Allan Davies and Marilyn Nefsky have established the more complicated picture behind this alleged silence. They are of the opinion that it is hard to say whether the Churches really "did too little too late". The attitude of the Christian churches towards Jews was influenced by many factors such as doctrine, moral activism, nationalism in both the Catholic and Protestant denominations, and initial disbelief of the events in Germany. Davies and Nefsky conclude that the churches were not entirely silent, but that their reactions were diverse and even paradoxical at times.[49]

Although the clergymen were not of one opinion as to the right way of reacting to the hardships of European Jewry, some of them issued a pamphlet in March 1936. It displayed concern with the treatment that Jews received in Germany. Like Canadian Jewry, the clergymen in favour of the pamphlet initially thought that the situation in Germany would last for a limited time only and could be changed easily. They hoped that the results of appeasement policy would satisfy the Germans and eventually create better conditions for everybody in Germany.[50]

Nevertheless, more and more letters from German and Austrian Jews describing the actual situation in those countries came to the attention of JIAS. One of them was not an application, but a letter from a Jew from Berlin who described to friends the personal

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[49] Allan Davies and Marilyn Nefsky, How Silent Were the Churches? - Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight During the Nazi Era (Waterloo: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1997), p.123-131

situation of his family in considerable detail. Conditions of life of that family had deteriorated. They had been forced to sell their furniture and to leave their home. These changes must have been devastating for this former well-to-do family whose sons had left Germany for Russia and Palestine. The writer was clearly affected by what had happened to him; he wrote: "I cannot understand this, and I am walking around like a dreamer."[51] Despite this, he had plans for the future. Asking for money, he explained that he intended to go to Palestine, but he and his wife did not have enough left to carry out that plan and make ends meet until they could establish themselves there.[52]

Other applicants were prepared to change their entire lifestyle just in order to get a chance to be admitted to Canada. One applicant who had heard about JIAS applied for help in getting any kind of job because he lived under what he described as "serious conditions."[53] He had a good education and had been working as a salesman until that time.[54]

A young salesman from Osnabrueck applied to JIAS with the same request. He wanted nothing but a safe haven in Canada and to find a job that would allow him to earn his own living. He stated: "I would like to stress once again that my only desire is to find

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[50] Pamphlet of Canadian Christians "Canadian Christians and German Refugees", March 1936, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067B

[51] Letter by a German Jew, May 1933, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 73 file18674 translated from the German original: "Ich kann dass (sic) nicht begreifen und gehe wie in einem Taumel umher."

[52] Ibid.

[53] Letter to JIAS February 1934 Ibid. translated from the German original: "in drueckenden Verhaeltnissen"

[54] Ibid.

employment."[55] He also claimed to have a good education, and he had already been working in his profession.[56]

Another applicant who was willing to change his entire life in order to be admitted to Canada was a lawyer from Bielefeld. He had heard about JIAS from the Association for the Assistance of German Jews[57]. He was even prepared to take up farming.[58]

A similar application came from a lawyer who had fled from Germany to Brussels with some friends. For the moment, their position in Belgium seems to have been safe, but they were not allowed to make arrangements for a permanent stay there or earn a living. So they would have to leave that country in the long run. These young men realized that the chances of their remaining in their line of business were very small, so they looked for some other kind of profession. They planned to participate in a course for future farmers and settle on farms in Canada.[59]

Five young men with a good education, all of them academics, were thinking about immigrating to Canada and taking up farming, too. They had heard something about the requirements and had specific questions. They believed that Canada was looking for agriculturists and were prepared to give up their professions and learn enough about agriculture to become farmers. They also stated that they had enough capital to bring to Canada in order to allow them to settle and not become public charges.[60]

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[55] Letter to JIAS March 1934 translated from the German original: "Besonders hervorheben moechte ich, dass es mir, wie bereits erwaehnt, nur darauf ankommt, einen Arbeitsplatz zu finden."
[56] Ibid.
[57] Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden
[58] Letter to JIAS March 1934 Ibid.
[59] Letter to JIAS December 1933 Ibid.
[60] Letter to JIAS June 1933 Ibid.

Some applicants already had an education in agriculture or related professions. Two of them had worked in wood processing. One had specific questions about his prospects in Canada. He wanted to know whether there were Jewish companies in Western Canada that might be able to support refugees like him. It also seems that he wanted to keep up his Jewish lifestyle because he inquired about Jewish communities in that part of the country.[61] He was told that he could not expect great help from the companies connected with the wood business, but that many cities in Western Canada had Jewish communities.[62] Yet the letter from JIAS did not contain any information whether any of the Jewish families there was in a position and willing to help refugees. On the other hand, this applicant did not seem to be desperate.

Another applicant who had been working in the wood processing business wrote: "I believe that you know for yourself the situation of the German Jews. It is impossible to supporte (sic) one'self (sic) in this situation..."[63] The applicant was in a delicate position, saying that: "I am willing to work in <u>all this practicals branchs</u> (sic) in the West of Canada."[64] (underlining the applicant's)

Even as early as 1933, there were Jews who had fled Germany and gone to some other European country before they turned to JIAS for help. One application from Paris came from an able young man who had studied at several universities and held a Ph.D. in political economy. He spoke several languages, including English and French. His situation does not seem to have been desperate at that point. His concern was to find a

[61] Letter to JIAS July 1933 Ibid.
[62] Letter from JIAS August 1933 Ibid.
[63] Letter to JIAS August 1933 Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

position that would allow him to earn his own living and, at a later stage, to support his parents still in Germany.[65]

A family from Erfurt had not fled Germany yet, but the urge to leave was pressing because the writer of the letter had been in a concentration camp and had put himself under the obligation to leave the country as soon as possible in order to avoid being sent there a second time. He wrote that a lady in England was willing to give them temporary shelter, but that they could not enter Britain without having secured entry into one of the British Dominions.[66]

Another kind of application came from refugee Jews who requested help in locating relatives who, possibly, would support them in their efforts to immigrate to Canada. In some cases, JIAS helped to establish the contact between the refugees and their Canadian relatives. If the Canadians were willing to help, the Europeans had a better chance of being admitted to Canada. One applicant was a stateless refugee from Germany who inquired whether his relatives living in Calgary were willing to help him.[67] His case was a particularly difficult one because he could not comply with the passport regulations. Being stateless, he was not given an encouraging answer.[68]

Another of these cases was brought to the attention of HICEM and JIAS by the Committee for Refugees in Amsterdam. The refugees were a young German couple who had fled to Holland, but could not stay there because they did not have any resources. However, the wife had a father in Vancouver. So JIAS was asked to find out whether he

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[65] Letter to JIAS August 1933 Ibid.
[66] Letter to JIAS (date not legible), CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 83 file 21162
[67] Letter to JIAS, April 1934, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 73 file18674
[68] Letter from JIAS May 1934 Ibid.

was prepared to help his children.[69] But the father was on relief himself and not in a position to help them.[70]

Another refugee in need of help from members of his family was a young Polish Jew who had lived in France. JIAS contacted his relatives. They were "all very anxious to bring him here (to Canada) as he is quite destitute in his present country of residence."[71] Furthermore, the family's solicitors in Canada believed that he "would have no difficulty in establishing himself here, provided it could be arranged for him to enter the country."[72] JIAS could not do much on his behalf because he was inadmissible to Canada because he had lost his Polish citizenship. Yet there was still hope, JIAS wrote, because sometimes pressure on the Minister of Immigration helped if the relatives could guarantee that the prospective immigrant would not become a public charge.[73]

In another case a letter reached JIAS from Berlin. The refugee had turned to the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* and told them about his sister-in–law in Montreal. So the *Hilfsverein* turned to JIAS in order to contact his wife's sister.[74] Unfortunately, there is no information available as to the lady's reaction to the request.

A similar letter reached JIAS in July 1934 from the HIAS- JCA-Emigdirect from Paris. In this case, the relatives of the potential immigrant were definitely willing to help the refugee, and they even had already intervened with the Canadian authorities on his behalf. Yet it seems that procedures did not make progress fast enough because the letter

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[69] Letter to JIAS October 1935 Ibid.
[70] Letter from JIAS November 1935 Ibid.
[71] Letter to JIAS April 1934 Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Letter from JIAS May 1934 Ibid.
[74] Letter to JIAS July 1934 Ibid.

that reached JIAS was a request for more urgent help. HIAS-JCA-Emigdirect officials urged the members of JIAS to contact the relatives of that young Jew again.[75]

JIAS also received frequent inquiries about the possibilities for medical doctors and veterinary surgeons wishing to establish new practices in Canada or find a position in their professions. One inquiry came from a gentleman in England who wrote on behalf of a doctor who enjoyed an "excellent practice".[76] Unfortunately, the documents do not contain enough information on his situation. Despite this, it is important to know that doctors could not practice their profession because, according to the information of JIAS, it was almost impossible to obtain the necessary medical license.[77]

In another case, a Canadian citizen living in the United States tried to help his niece come to Canada. She was a young woman, 25 years of age, who had finished her education and had her "doctor degree and diploma as a dentist".[78]

JIAS also received the application of a young Palestinian citizen who wanted to know about the possibilities of studying veterinary medicine in Canada. He had been planning on going to Italy, but was informed that Jews would not be allowed to enter Italian universities. Because he was not a permanent resident of the United States and his visa was to expire in two years, his chances of getting admitted to Canada were not very high.[79]

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[75] Letter to JIAS July 1934 Ibid.
[76] Letter to JIAS (no date given) Ibid.
[77] Letter from JIAS December 1935 Ibid.
[78] Letter to JIAS August 1933 Ibid.
[79] Letters to JIAS both August 1939 and letter from JIAS September 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 21162

2.1.2. Applications from the End of the 1930s

At the end of the 1930s, German Jews were harassed worse than ever. So the overtone of the applications became increasingly desperate. Michael Marrus concludes the same from his material. He argues that, before 1938, there was reason to believe that the conditions for Jews would at least remain bearable, if they were not even to improve again. The basis for this assumption is that measures against Jews in Germany were uncoordinated and inconsistent during the first five years of Hitler's dictatorship.[80] This is also consistent with Abella's and Troper's observation that the number of applications for immigration to Canada from German Jews increased dramatically after *Kristallnacht*, which took place on November 9th, 1938.[81]

A young doctor from Schirmwindt wrote: "Certainly, I do not have to tell you about our situation. So I ask for your help urgently and beg you to do everything in your power to help us."[82] He also mentioned that the father of the person he wrote to was one of his patients in order to make the relationship between him and the receiver of the letter more personal.[83] While expressing sincere regret for the situation, the reply stated clearly that nothing much could be done. The opening passage ran: "We are terribly sorry that the restrictions that were imposed on immigration several years ago have not been lifted

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[80] Michael Marrus, The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.130-31
[81] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.52
[82] Letter to JIAS, December 1938, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 83 file 21162 translated from the German original: "Ich brauche Ihnen wohl nicht zu schildern, wie unsere Situation ist und ich bitte Sie daher instaendig, uns zu helfen, soweit es in Ihrer Macht steht".
[83] Ibid.

yet".[84] In addition, the officials of JIAS still hoped for a change in the Canadian immigration laws in the late 1930s: "At this time it is hard to say when our delegations to the government will be successful,"[85] implying that Jews in Canada actively tried to do something about the immigration situation.

A manager who had been working in a shoe manufacturing company until he lost his job, because of the new laws concerning Jews, described his situation as "desperate". He was out of work and could not find another position. He sent "urgent cries" for JIAS' help, stating that he had a lot of experience in his job. The rest of the family was also able and willing to work hard in order not to become a public charge. His wife had been working as a secretary for ten years, and the son had been forced to leave school by the new laws.[86] Yet the answer to this application was about the same as to all the others. JIAS could not do much to help this person, but it promised to keep trying.[87]

Although these applicants certainly were in urgent need of help, other refugees had an even harder fate. One of them was a Jew from Vienna. The first observation that is striking about his application is the sentence: "I escaped that hell called Vienna with my wife, my son (who has 2 ½ (sic) years), my sister, my mother and I are since October here in France"(sic).[88] The use of the word "hell" is very telling here. This family had fled to France in the hope "to be able to build up a new existence,"[89] a hope that did not

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[84] Letter from JIAS February 1939 Ibid. translated from the German original "Wir bedauern recht sehr, dass die vor Jahren verhaengte Einwanderungssperre immer noch in Kraft ist."
[85] Ibid. translated from the German original: "Wann unsere Vorstellungen bei der Regierung einen wesentlichen Erfolg zeigen werden, koennen wir beim besten Willen nicht absehen."
[86] Letter to JIAS January 1939 Ibid.
[87] Letters from JIAS February1939 Ibid.
[88] Letter to JIAS May 1939 Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

materialize. On the contrary, they pointed out that they even had to face difficulties in France, too, adding to the bitterness of the applicant. Yet the same letter also expressed new hope in saying "...a personal friend of mine, who called on you on his way to Australia told me about the nice way in which you received him. This encourages me to address myself in a personal matter to you."[90] JIAS' reply had to destroy these hopes because this particular person was planning on opening a textile business, a crowded and depressed field in Canada in the 1930s.[91]

The situation was heartrending. This applicant stated that he did not have the necessary money for the immigration to Canada. Yet he was still hopeful because he had heard that some friends of his had been admitted. His request was even more urgent this time because he and his family had been ordered to leave France. In addition, they were obliged to call at the police in France every week. The situation was becoming even more terrifying because these refugees had been trying to find some country in the world where they could enter. Yet all doors were closed.[92]

But JIAS had to give a negative answer even to this urgent request, saying "We are terribly sorry that we cannot find anything in your application that would enable us to turn to the ministry with any prospect of success".[93] Despite this, Murray Solkin, Paull's successor, tried to cheer up the family and give them some new hope by suggesting that the applicant turn to one of the friends who had been admitted to Canada because private

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[90] Ibid.
[91] Letter from JIAS May 1939 Ibid.
[92] Letter to JIAS June 1939 Ibid.
[93] Letter from JIAS June 1939 Ibid. translated from the German original: "Wir bedauern aufrichtig, dass wir Ihren Ausfuehrungen keinerlei Material entnehmen koennen, aufgrund dessen wir vor dem Ministerium in Ottawa auch nur mit einiger Aussicht auf Erfolg vorstellig werden koennen."

persons sometimes had more success in dealing with the immigration authorities than JIAS.[94]

Another request reached JIAS from a young man from Duesseldorf who was the father of a small child, only three years of age. His whole letter spoke of the desperation he felt. He wrote: "Imagine my inner torture. Every morning, when I get up after a sleepless night, always the same sorrow, and there is no escape".[95] The final sentence in the letter displays the same feeling. It reads:

> "Because I do not have any possibility to earn a living any more, and, considering all the other difficulties, life has become almost unbearable. Because of my young child I cannot think of the last resort. Please forgive my pestering, but help me."[96]

The reason why that young man applied to JIAS was that he was on the list of potential immigrants to the United States, but the family did not have the necessary affidavit for the entry. So he hoped that the officials of JIAS could help him in finding somebody who would provide the necessary documents because he did not have any relatives in any country other than Germany who could help him.[97] Faced with many similar requests, the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees and Emigrants Coming from

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Letter to JIAS February 1939 Ibid. translated from the German original: "Stellen Sie sich nun meine seelischen Qualen vor. Jeden Morgen, wenn ich nach durchwachten Naechten aufstehe, immer dieselben Sorgen und es gibt einfach keinen Ausweg."
[96] Ibid. translated from the German original: "Da ich nun keine Existenzmoeglichkeit mehr habe, ist das Leben neben den anderen ueblichen Schwierigkeiten direkt unertraeglich geworden. In Anbetracht meines kleinen Kindes kann ich doch nicht zu einer Radikalloesung schreiten. Verzeihen Sie meine Belaestigung, aber helfen Sie mir."
[97] Ibid.

Germany informed JIAS that "it is difficult to find people who are willing to assume the moral obligation which an affidavit of support implies"[98]

The most heartrending story is that of a seventeen-year-old youth from Berlin. He wrote: "I am a 17-year-old youth, and I am in a desperate situation, in which I cannot get any help at all. In my desperation, I do not know what to do, but to turn to you".[99] He had lived in Berlin all his life until October 1938 when he and his father were arrested along with about one thousand other people. They were told that they had to leave Germany within the next 24 hours.[100] Yet the writer of that letter and his father were taken to the German-Polish border even before the 24 hour period was up. After entering Poland, they were put into a camp together with all the Jews who had been expelled from Germany that night. The committee taking care of these refugees was running out of money. Unable to go back to Germany or enter Poland, the young man could leave the camp only if he was admitted to a country overseas. Hoping for a new life in a new country, this

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[98] Letter to JIAS March 1939 Ibid.

[99] Letter to JIAS January 1939 Ibid. translated from the German original: "ich (sic) bin ein 17jaehriger Junge und befinde mich in einer verzweifelten Lage, in der mir von keiner Seite irgendwelche Hilfe winkt und weiss mir in meiner Verzweiflung keinen anderen Rat als mich an Sie zu wenden."

[100] Expulsion was one of the means that Germans used in order to get rid of German Jewry. Especially Jews from Eastern Europe were among those that the Gestapo wanted to get out of Germany as soon as possible. The first to suffer were the Jews in the areas that were occupied by Germany in the second half of the 1930s and the Russian Jews who lived in Germany, but had never become German citizens. In 1938 German authorities negotiated with the Polish government about the resettlement of the Polish Jews on German territory. The Polish authorities had ordered a renewal of the passports of Polish citizens living in other countries. Yet they delayed the renewal of the passports of Jews in order to deprive them of their citizenship. It does not have to be mentioned that the German authorities did not want to be left with those stateless Jews. Therefore, Germany started to deport them to the Polish border in October 1938.
Yahil, The Holocaust p.109-10

adolescent sincerely believed that being admitted into Canada would not be a great problem.[101]

However, nothing could be done because of the immigration laws.[102] Nevertheless, it becomes obvious that JIAS' officials were moved more than usual by his fate. They expressed pity for this young man: "We have received and considered your letter with all the terrible information."[103] In the end, pity for this particular applicant was expressed once again: "We fully understand that our letter cannot provide a lot of confidence. Yet we would consider it irresponsible to let you hope despite the facts and prospects."[104]

Although the situation was so bleak, JIAS turned to the immigration authorities on behalf of some of the applicants. One promising case was that of a machinist and aviation mechanic. He was not sent the usual discouraging answer. Solkin applied to the Department of Mines and Resources on his behalf in an effort to obtain a permission for him and his family to immigrate to Canada. The letter to F.C. Blair pointed out the miserable situation of German and Austrian Jews: "We received a letter the other day from a Jewish gentlemen in Vienna wherein he, like many thousands of others, appeals to our organization for help."[105] Even the German government seemed to have acknowledged his abilities, and they did not make him leave his job directly when all his co-religionists lost their employment.[106] Yet Solkin's hopes were not fulfilled. The

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[101] Letter to JIAS, January 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 83 file 21162
[102] Letter from JIAS January 1939 Ibid.
[103] Ibid. translated from the German original: "Wir haben Ihren Brief mit all seinen schrecklichen Einzelheiten zur Kenntnis genommen."
[104] Ibid. translated from the German original: "Wir sehen vollkommen ein, dass unser Brief Ihnen nicht viel Zuversicht bieten kann, wuerden es aber fuer unverantwortlich halten, Ihnen Hoffnungen zu machen, die weder von Tatsachen noch von Aussichten gestuetzt sind."
[105] Letter from JIAS November 1938 Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

Department replied saying that there was no open position even for someone with these qualifications. On the other hand, the Department advised the mechanic to turn to Great Britain where workers like him were believed to be in greater demand.[107]

There were cases in which Canadian citizens applied to JIAS on behalf of Jews from Europe. On one occasion, a mining engineer inquired about possibilities for immigration for a person whom he described as "one of the leading manufacturers of perfumes"[108] who was also "known as an able (if not leading) chemist, manufacturer, and businessman."[109] This family was relatively wealthy, and it seemed able to bring some of their money and even some machines with them to Canada. If successful at bringing the money and equipment with them, it would help them in establishing a new business in their new home. However, additional funding was necessary.[110]

This applicant also mentioned that he had already tried to assist somebody else. This displays that he was truly eager to help. Furthermore, it indicates that the engineer was terribly disappointed when his first attempt to help failed. Thus he checked with JIAS for advice in his second trial. He himself wrote: "I did not succeed and now want not to fail again (sic)."[111]

JIAS was not able to help because business financing was beyond its means. On the other hand, they could at least give advice on alternative action. As this family was relatively wealthy, there was at least hope that they would be able to bring enough money out of Germany, so that immigration to Canada could be secured for them.[112]

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[107] Letter to JIAS from the Department of Mines and Resources December 1938 Ibid.
[108] Letter to JIAS March 1939 Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Letter from JIAS April 1939 Ibid.

In another case, a Canadian Jew applied to JIAS on behalf of a young man from Poland. The refugee was a law student, and, according to his protector, could provide enough money to provide for his stay and his studies in Canada.[113] JIAS officials were skeptical; they stated that, judging from their prior experience with the immigration department in similar cases, they could "safely forecast unfavorable consideration of such an application on the part of the Immigration Dept."[114]

Towards the very end of the 1930s two more difficulties arose. JIAS received more and more requests from German and Austrian Jews who had already arranged everything for their immigration to the United States. However, many of them had to wait for some time until their quota number was called. Some of them turned to JIAS asking whether they could wait for their turn for immigration to the United States in Canada. However, the Canadian government did not look upon these requests favourably. So JIAS could not do anything on their behalf.

One such case was that of a lawyer from Austria. He had arranged for all the documents needed for the immigration to the United States for him and his family. He did not want to remain in Germany until they were allowed to enter there. All JIAS could do for him was to suggest to turn to Cuba with his problem.[115] In another case, a couple from Magdeburg approached JIAS. Their fate was one of the very sad ones because they had suffered many hardships in Germany, and they had had many difficulties in arranging for all the necessary documents for their movement to the United States.[116]

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[113] Letter to JIAS February 1939 Ibid.
[114] Letter from JIAS April 1939 Ibid.
[115] Letters to and from JIAS April 1939 Ibid.
[116] Letters to and from JIAS May 1939 Ibid

The second issue that arose in the end of the 1930s was that the Nuremberg Laws had stripped the German Jews of their citizenship. In September 1935, Hitler demanded a law defining the status of Jews in Germany. Initially, four versions of such a law were submitted to Hitler who chose the most severe one. It stipulated that all persons with at least three Jewish grandparents or those with two Jewish grandparents who had married a Jewish spouse or belonged to the Jewish religious community were considered Jews. Starting November 14 all the civic rights of Jews were cancelled.[117] This made their immigration to Canada impossible because stateless candidates for immigration were denied entry to Canada regardless of their situation.

In September 1938, a Canadian citizen inquired about the chances of arranging the movement of his brother to Canada. JIAS had to inform him that he had to ask his brother about his citizenship because there was no chance he could help if his brother was stateless.[118] In May 1939, a similar case was brought to the attention of JIAS. A couple from Vienna who had fled to Italy applied for immigration to Canada. Because their Austrian citizenship had been revoked, JIAS was in no position to help them.[119]

It was not only the situation of individual Jews that deteriorated. Due to the new restrictions and laws, whole groups of people found themselves in intolerable conditions. JIAS corresponded with the Jewish Religious Community at Vienna[120] It appealed to JIAS officials to negotiate with the Canadian Government on behalf of 45 technicians and engineers. Those engineers had been selected by the community for immigration to

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[117] Friedlander, Nazi Germany and the Jews p.148-49
[118] Letters to and from JIAS, September 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 83 file 21162
[119] Letters to and from JIAS May 1939 Ibid.
[120] Israelische Kultusgemeinde in Wien

some safe haven because of their "1) professional capacity, 2) age, 3) physical, psychic and characteristic qualities:"[121]

> "We are firmly convinced that in the most favourable union of such men who have, thanks to their age, earned corresponding knowledge, large practice and highest qualifications ...no disadvantage at all for your country will occur. We rather believe that these men would most easily be able to fit in the economical structure of your country and to become helpers in the building up of so many Jewish existences at present perishing here undeservedly."[122]

The *Israelische Kultusgemeinde* knew that the Canadian immigration laws were very strict. But, like so many others, they expressed the hope that the candidates they proposed could enter Canada because of their high qualifications.[123] A little later, the Community sent JIAS a list of the persons in question in order to support their plea even further, mentioning the "urgency of the emigration of the above persons".[124]

JIAS seems to have done everything in its power to help these refugees. Solkin wrote that they had even contacted the CJC about the problem. He also mentioned that he had been to Ottawa only a short time before and that he had gathered information that gave him a little hope that the immigration situation was to change for the better in the near future.[125] In fact, the visit to Ottawa had given him so much hope that he replied to the *Kultusgemeinde* with more optimism than in all his answers written up to that point, mentioning his "anticipation of some improvement."[126] Normally, JIAS refrained from

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[121] Letter to JIAS January 1939 Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Letter to JIAS March 1939 Ibid.
[125] Letter from Solkin to the Toronto branch of JIAS April 1939 Ibid.
[126] Ibid.

indicating any hope to the applicants, preferring to give a realistic evaluation of the situation.

2.1.3. Specialist Applications

There were specialists with many different professions who believed that they could secure permission to enter Canada because they had certain outstanding skills, and, therefore, considered immigration to Canada as one of their options.

One optician had a business of his own, and he had been working in his profession for thirteen years. He had references and certificates from the schools he had attended.[127] JIAS could not really help him. All they could do was to file the information with that on all the other specialists and hope that they would find employment for him eventually. This letter expressed the mixture of frustration and hope that the members of JIAS felt. In the first paragraph, it said: "...but we have to tell you that the immigration to this country has been restricted terribly for several years already".[128] On the other hand, they always hoped that they could find some employment for these specialists because that was the only way to help them in their efforts to immigrate to Canada.[129]

The extent of this optician's desperation can be shown by a letter that was written by his wife. She mentioned the fact that the couple was deprived of its source of income due to the new laws against Jews. All the desperate hope for help was expressed in the sentence "I believe that there are enough opticians in your country, but should it really be

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[127] Letter to JIAS, May 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21521
[128] Letter from JIAS June 1939 Ibid. translated from the German original: "...muessen Ihnen aber leider berichten, dass die Einwanderung nach hier schon seit einer Reihe von Jahren auf das engste eingeschraenkt ist."
[129] Ibid.

impossible for a country that size to help somebody in a situation so desperate!"[130] She even considered getting help as "fundamental for the future life"[131] because she could not see any other way in which the present problems could be solved.[132]

A case that seems not to have differed much from the others was that of a young sculptor. JIAS was asked to try and find some occupation for him. The interesting feature about this case was that JIAS did not have much hope that they would find a vacant position because there were only a few companies in Canada producing china and these were not owned by Jews.[133] The fact that JIAS was concerned about this shows that it did not trust non-Jews with helping Jews by employing them.

In the case of a young and promising chemist it was her employer from Germany who applied to JIAS on her behalf. The former employer pointed out that the refugee was an excellent worker and that she wished to find some secure position for her. Furthermore, the chemist had first-class references and had published several works.[134]

Even in her case, JIAS was not very optimistic that employment could be found because most of the chemical industry was not under Jewish ownership.[135] A close reading of this letter of JIAS provides the reader with an insight of how frustrating the work of JIAS could be because there were so many refugees who could not be helped. One of the passages in the letter read:

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[130] Letter to JIAS June 1939 Ibid. translated from the German original: "Ich glaube gern, dass es auch in Ihrem Lande genug Optiker gibt, aber sollte es in einem so grossen Lande wirklich vollkommen ausgeschlossen sein, einem Menschen in einer so furchtbar schweren Lage behilflich zu sein!"
[131] Ibid. translated from the German "lebenswichtig"
[132] Ibid.
[133] Letters to and from JIAS both July 1939 Ibid.
[134] Letter to JIAS July 1939 and material that was sent with the same Ibid.

> "The regulation that foreigners with special skills that are hard to find in Canada are admissible to the country after employment has been secured is still in place in theory. Yet it can hardly be described in a letter how difficult it is to make use of this rule in practice."[136]

What is so striking about this passage is not merely what was said, but also the overtone, which could almost be called desperate.

Even if the applicants described so far did not find employment, it was not a total myth that some people with certain skills did have an advantage in the immigration poker game. In some cases, JIAS actually managed to establish the contact between the potential immigrant and the possible employer. One of these specialists was a rubber manufacturer with a lot of experience in his profession. His wish to immigrate to Canada was brought to the attention of JIAS by HICEM.[137] JIAS officials hoped that a rubber company in Canada would be interested in his services.[138] Unfortunately, there is no communication to indicate whether these efforts were successful.

A case in which JIAS could find possible employment was that of a chemist from Hamburg. He had fled to Belgium even before he applied to JIAS, but he could not stay there permanently because he could not obtain a permission to work. Yet, for a reason unknown both to JIAS and the applicant, the company that JIAS had found did not get to contact with him.[139]

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[135] Letter from JIAS July 1939 Ibid.
[136] Ibid. translated from the German original: "Die Bestimmung, dass Auslaender mit besonderen Fachkenntnissen, dergleichen in Kanada schwer zu finden sind, nach Abschluss eines Engagements bei einer hiesigen Industriefirma zugelassen werden, besteht theoretisch immer noch. Wie schwer sich diese Ausnahmebestimmung aber ausnutzen laesst, ist im Rahmen eines Briefes kaum zu beschreiben."
[137] Letter to JIAS March 1939 Ibid.
[138] Letter from JIAS April 1939 Ibid.
[139] Letter to JIAS July 1939 Ibid.

JIAS also was in constant contact with HICEM, the Jewish Religious Community in Vienna, and an Italian organization that tried to help Jews to find safety. These organizations sent lists of persons who were considered to have a chance of finding employment and securing a permission of immigration to a foreign country. Among them were people with all kinds of professions. The lists contained engineers of many different backgrounds, doctors, chemists, and architects with excellent references and a lot of experience.[140] The Jewish Religious Community also sent a separate list with the names of 250 chemists.[141] There is no information on how many of the persons on these lists were admitted to Canada. It was only mentioned that JIAS tried to find employment for them, and that the society made an attempt to lessen the obstacles that kept potential immigrants of this class from being admitted to Canada. In a letter to JIAS, HICEM expressed gratitude for JIAS' efforts.[142]

2.1.4 Program for Professors

Jewish professors lost their jobs in Germany and Austria just as well as their co-religionists. So in 1939, JIAS was involved in a program to place some professors who needed new employment with one of the universities in Canada. One of the officials of JIAS had heard that Dalhousie University in Halifax was willing to employ German-Jewish refugees, and the society had contacted organizations in Europe about the topic. The reaction from Europe was to send a list with the names of professors who were

[140] Lists of specialists recommended for immigration Ibid.
[141] Letter from the Israelische Kultusgemeinde in Wien to JIAS August 1938 Ibid.
[142] Letter to JIAS from HICEM June 1939 Ibid.

considered suitable for the program.[143] JIAS needed assistance in the negotiations with Dalhousie and employed a lawyer. This legal counselor needed to have some information about the people in question. He had to know which of the professors were able to speak English. In addition, he wanted to get their addresses, so that the universities could get back to them should that be necessary. Furthermore, he had to get some information on their professional skills, so that he could present the university with this information when he recommended the people in question.[144]

All of them were medical doctors. Apparently, it was assumed that doctors in the fields of biochemistry, pathology, and physiology had the greatest chance of success because all the recommended professors were in these fields. They could refer back to a long list of publications, and some had been in the profession for some time.[145]

Another problem was that everything had to be done with considerable speed because, when the program was started, the university was already making plans for the next year, and it was necessary to get all the needed information to the university very fast, so that the professors in question could be considered at all.[146]

Finances were a subject of discussion. Dalhousie University could not appoint the professors to paid positions.[147] Thus, some other source of funding had to be sought because the professors in question did not have sufficient resources.[148] The Association

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[143] Letter from Solkin to Robinson, June 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21549

[144] Letters to JIAS both June 1939 Ibid.

[145] list of recommended professors Ibid.

[146] Letter to JIAS June 1939 Ibid.

[147] The Medical School of Dalhousie University struggled for survival in the 1930s due to its low financial standing.
P.B. Waite, The Lives of Dalhousie University – Volume Two, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p.70-73

[148] Letter to JIAS, August 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21549

for German Scientists in Need[149] had inquired about that subject. On condition that the professors were given regular full-time employment after a period of two years, there was a chance of the Carnegie Foundation supplying the necessary funds until payments would be available from the university. The *Notgemeinschaft* did not see any reason for addressing people from Germany or Austria under any other circumstances because they did not expect anybody from these countries to possess the necessary financial means.[150]

The last issue was of considerable importance because, as it was mentioned several times in the correspondence on the program, it was meant to secure refugees from Germany or Austria a safe haven. The fact had to be addressed that often because the list of potential candidates also included professors who had already found a new home in England or the United States. In the end, two candidates from Vienna were given preference over those when the potential candidates were chosen.[151] However, it seems that the whole idea had to be given up because of financial problems. As soon as it was mentioned that none of the candidates from Germany or Austria had the necessary financial means, the correspondence on that program ceased altogether.

2.2. General Observations about the Applications

Although the Jews who tried to get help from JIAS were in many different situations and came from several backgrounds, some similarities can be detected in the applications and the ways in which the cases were handled. Paull listed some of them when he provided a brief overview over the general situation of JIAS in 1934. He described the conditions as "unparalleled in the history of our people (the Jewish

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[149] Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland
[150] Letter from the *Notgemeinschaft* to JIAS August 1939 Ibid.

people)"[152] Naturally, Canadian Jewry tried to help their co-religionists in Europe. One of the ways in which JIAS helped was to locate relatives who were living in Canada and might have been able to assist the European members of their families. Advice on the dealings with the immigration authorities was also given to the Canadian citizens who were eager to see their relatives or friends find a new life in their home country. Furthermore, JIAS also gave advice to people who stayed in Canada only temporarily and prepared to settle in the United States by obtaining the necessary documents such as affidavits, certificates of birth, marriage, or death. In some cases, financial aid was supplied.[153]

Other general observations that were not mentioned in that annual report can be drawn from the applications themselves. For example, all the German or Austrian Jews who sought help in the 1930s had lived in relative security until 1933 and, therefore, had a good education. A high percentage of the males even held university degrees. Almost all the applicants wrote with great care, and their letters read like applications for a new job. This indicates that, although these Jews, in being refugees, faced a situation totally unknown to them, and although they were not familiar with the immigration regulations and laws of Canada, they all understood what was at stake. All of them stressed either the experience they had in their jobs or at least mentioned the business they intended to enter in Canada, thus indicating that they were decent and hardworking people and did not intend to become public charges. Some of the applicants also had special skills, which could secure them employment in Canada. JIAS kept a file on these specialists, hoping that the contact could be kept and the refugees notified if a possible employer was found.

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[151] Letter from JIAS to the *Notgemeinschaft* July 1939 Ibid.
[152] Annual Report of JIAS 1933-34, JIAS Collection KE 3

Many of the applicants realized that they could not stay in their profession and were prepared to give their lives a new turn, so that they could be considered for immigration to Canada. Several of them had heard that that it was possible to enter Canada as farmers and indicated willingness to do so. Another interesting observation is that the wives of the applicants were prepared to enter the workforce in Canada. Many of them had some experience in tailoring. Others planned to take up household positions.[154] This could not be taken for granted because these women probably did not have to work in Germany or Austria.

Other measures that were used in order to get the desired help was to make the application more personal. Some of the applicants, like the young doctor from Schirmwindt, mentioned personal relationships between their relatives and one of the officials of JIAS. Others stressed the point that all the persons involved were Jewish. The opening in one of the applications reads "Dear Brothers in Faith".[155]

Other general observations concern the work of JIAS itself. Although the organization was not prepared for this emergency, it became efficient relatively fast. There is evidence that indicates that the different Jewish organizations all over the world co-operated in order to help the refugees soon after the Nazis came into power. Paull held close contact with the different organizations and even went on a trip to Europe in 1935.[156] The contact with the *Hilfsverein Fuer Juden in Deutschland* seems to have been the closest. However, there was need to communicate with organizations in other

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[153] Ibid.
[154] Letter to JIAS, October 1938, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 83 file 21162 and February 1938 Ibid.- those are only two examples of many
[155] Letter to JIAS, February 1934, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 73 file 18674 translated from the German original: "Liebe Glaubensbrueder"
[156] Minutes of the meeting of JIAS December 1935, JIAS Collection KA 9

countries as well because, even at that early stage, some Jews had already fled Germany and gone abroad. Almost all of them were in a desperate situation because they were not allowed to stay permanently in the countries that they had entered.

It is important to note that the situation was considered to be serious enough even at the beginning of the 1930s. Even then it was described as a "crisis"[157] and the worst situation that Jews have faced in their entire history. Yet the fact that conditions had deteriorated considerably by the end of the 1930s also becomes very obvious in the annual report of 1939. The president's description ran as follows: "I regret to say that the situation confronting us now is such as could not have been foreseen by the most pessimistic or morbid imagination."[158]

[157] Ibid.
[158] Annual Report of JIAS 1939, JIAS Collection KE 5

Chapter Three

Program for Farmers

The immigration situation for farmers was different from that of other potential immigrants there were no laws concerning the immigration of farmers, but the Canadian government was willing to admit bona fide farmers with a capital not lower than $1,000 into the country. Yet it was of great importance that these persons definitely were dedicated farmers and stayed on the land.[159] The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the Canadian National Railway (CNR) companies were in charge of the efforts to bring refugee farmers from Europe to Canada. The Canadian government had entered an agreement with the railway companies regulating the conditions of the land settlement and the number of families the companies were allowed to bring to Canada each year.[160]

ICA took on most of the efforts on behalf of the Jewish farming families who came in the 1930s, but, especially towards the end of that decade, it was assisted by JIAS. ICA was an international organization with headquarters in Paris. It was incorporated in 1891 as an English company. In Canada, it operated through trustees. A subsidiary, the Jewish Colonization Association of Canada, was established in 1935. Its purpose was to assist needy and poor Jews from parts of Europe and Asia, where they were oppressed and deprived of political rights. For that purpose, the association intended to establish agricultural colonies in North and South America.[161]

In general, Jews all over the world must have been concerned about the fact that Jews were not believed to be good farmers. In 1937, Paull received a letter from a Jew

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[159] Clipping from Regina Leader Post, June 7, 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection, Series C CB 14.2

[160] Belkin Through Narrow Gates p.160

from New York who was of the opinion that European Jews should be encouraged to enter agricultural professions. He was convinced that many of the disagreements between Jews and other ethnic groups derived from the belief that Jews did not get involved in agriculture. Before he had emigrated from Germany, he had tried to persuade German Jews to work on farms. It was on the initiative of that Jew that an agricultural community was established in the vicinity of Berlin. According to the information in the letter, the farmers in that group intended to remain in agriculture even after they had been expelled from Germany.[162] In a letter to the Council of German Jewry, Solkin also commented on that topic. He mentioned that the experience of the railway companies with German Jewish farmers had not been favourable. He said that there was no hard proof that they were discriminated against, but he was certain that the companies would not make considerable efforts to settle Jewish farmers on their land.[163]

Apart from the prejudice that Jews were not believed to be successful farmers, the opponents to the land settlement brought forward other arguments as well, which were not necessarily meant to prevent Jewish immigration, but farmer settlement in general. J.G. Taggart, the agricultural minister of Saskatchewan, is reported to have commented on the financial situation of the province in an extract from the Regina Leader Post. He was quoted as having said that: "We could not lose much if we lost all and could not get further into debt because no one will lend us any more money."[164] Due to this, he also was of the opinion that "Saskatchewan has no room for immigrants."[165] Taggart thought

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[161] Ibid. p.68-69
[162] Letter to Paull, June 1937, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 C
[163] Letter from Solkin to the Council of German Jewry March 1938 Ibid.
[164] Extract from the Regina Leader Post, August 17, 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection, Series C CB 14.2
[165] Ibid.

that one of the causes of the contemporary financial situation of the province was the speedy land settlement undertaken in the past without any consideration of the land and its suitability for farming. Therefore, he suggested a re-habilitation program instead of the opening of new land.[166]

One other argument that was brought forward against the idea of bringing new farmers to Canada was that Canadian agriculturists already produced surplus that could not be sold, and Canada did not need even more farmers.[167] For these reasons, the Canadian government was not prepared to change its immigration policy. Only the farmers who were believed to be able to support themselves and their families for a considerable time and who had an extensive experience were allowed to enter Canada. Official circles in Ottawa stated that, in many cases, immigrants who were anxious to come to Canada could not comply with the immigration regulations, and those who could were not eager to come to the country. As a consequence, only a very small number of immigrants came to Canada at the end of the 1930s.[168]

As early as October 1933, ICA started to prepare their efforts to help Jewish refugees. They inquired about a purchase of land in the Hirsch-Sonnenfeld and Edenbridge districts of Southern Saskatchewan. They also contacted the government of Saskatchewan about support for their efforts to settle some Jewish families in that province.[169] In 1936, ICA still was in possession of farms that could be sold to the refugees. In 1937, they offered one of the potential immigrants a farm in the vicinity of

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[166] Ibid.
[167] Extract from the Regina Leader Post August 1938 Ibid.
[168] Extract from the Regina Star August 27, 1938 Ibid.
[169] Memorandum of ICA, October 1933, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection Series C, C B 19

Montreal for purchase.[170] In another letter that was sent to the same applicant there was also mention of farms that ICA still owned in Saskatchewan. He had inquired after other farms on behalf of his brother-in-law.[171]

Although they were in charge of the movement, CNR and CPR not worked out a specific plan for this program when ICA and JIAS got into contact with the railway companies in order to find out about any inside information on the project.[172] Despite this, members of ICA were thinking about working with the railroad companies in October 1938, yet they decided against it for fear that they also had to take on financial obligations in that case. They did not have the means to get involved in the settlement of farmers financially any more.[173]

That the concerns of the members of ICA were not without their foundation became clear in February 1939. A group of Jewish farmer families were on their way to Canada, yet the railway companies still had not worked out a plan on how to settle them. CNR officials turned to ICA for help. From a letter to Louis Rosenberg, the manager of the western office of the ICA, one could even get the impression that the railway company would have liked to renounce all responsibility for the settlement of Jewish families and turn it over to ICA.[174] Rosenberg even accused the members of the CNR of being irresponsible. He wrote to the head office: "It would appear from Mr. Gray's letter that

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[170] Letter from ICA, May 1937, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection Subseries SC-B SC-B 27

[171] Letter from JIAS July 1937 Ibid.

[172] Letter from Belkin, the director for Canada of ICA, to Solkin, July 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection, Series C CB 14.2

[173] Extract from a Paris Letter, October 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection Subseries SC-B SC-B27

[174] Letter to Rosenberg from Gray, general secretary of the CNR, February 1939 Ibid.

their plans were extremely nebulous and were limited solely to the selling of transportation and the acceptance of $1,000 deposited in each case."[175]

This problem was solved a little later, when members of all the agencies involved met and talked to each other rather than merely exchange letters. One of the facts established during the meeting was that the reason why the railway companies did not have a basis for planning the settlement of Jewish farmers in Canada was that there was no way for them to know how many families would come forward. Therefore, the companies still wanted all the support that ICA could give, so that it could be assured that the Jewish settlers to come under the arrangement of the railway companies would be successful. This was especially important to all parties involved because they knew that the future admission of more Jewish farmers depended on the success of the first group. The financial problem was also solved in the sense that it was acknowledged by all the parties that ICA could contribute no funding at all.

After that, details as to the land for the settlement of Jewish farmers were discussed. The questions raised in that context were: should the Jewish families be assigned isolated farms with no connections with any other Jewish settlement, or should they be integrated into the already existing settlements? In addition, the railway companies wanted to know whether ICA was in possession of any land that would be available for the Jewish farmers. The option of obtaining more land in the future was also discussed. In the end, the following was agreed upon: The Jewish farmers should be settled in the neighbourhood of the already existent Jewish settlement in Edenbridge because the settlement of Jewish farmers on isolated farms had not proven to be successful. The

[175] Letter from Rosenberg February 1939 Ibid.

CNR took on the responsibility for the acquisition of additional land in the neighbourhood of the Edenbridge settlement because the land in the possession of ICA was not sufficient for the settlement of the families.[176]

Towards the end of the 1930s, the ICA officials started to point out to any potential immigrant that they could not take on financial obligations of any sort. Despite this, ICA still tried to provide them with the advice and the information they needed. Several of the Jews to apply for immigration to Canada in the summer of 1938 were in a similar situation. They were bona fide farmers with a considerable amount of money. One of the features that all of them had in common was that they had lost their property recently, and that the German authorities did not allow them to take their money with them. A farmer from Vienna wrote: "My estate is being Aryanized."[177] As to his financial situation, he stated:

> "As you are well aware I cannot bring out with me any appreciable amount of money nor do I know whether I can take along with us anything else besides our clothing nor whether it will be possible later on while on the road to effect a transfer of my possessions."[178]

Another farmer from Prague who had been working on his estate stated that he was compelled to leave his property. In addition, he informed ICA that he had lost the greater part of his fortune due to antisemitic laws.[179]

ICA tried to help the prospective immigrants with advice and by answering their questions. In fact, the members of the organization did everything in their power to help

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[176] Memorandum "RE: Immigration of Farming Families" February 1939 Ibid.
[177] Letter to ICA, July 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection, Series S-C, Subseries SC-B 27
[178] Ibid.

the Jews who wanted to settle in Canada as farmers. The questions asked most frequently by the potential immigrants were those on prices and profitability of the farms, and climate. An American citizen who wanted to help a Jewish family from Romania wanted to get information on exactly these topics.[180] The farmers also frequently inquired which areas were suitable for specific kinds of agriculture. For example, a young farmer who was born in Poland and had moved to France for his education wanted to know where he had to settle for the cultivation of beets and potatoes and for raising cattle and chicken.[181] In addition, the potential settlers were interested in knowing about the costs for equipment and chattel. One of the applicants who was concerned about these subjects was a young man from Czechoslovakia.[182]

The questions on profitability and prices of farms were hard to answer for the members of ICA because prices for farms and equipment as well as agricultural products varied from district to district and also changed frequently.[183] Because ICA had no way of knowing where the applicants would find suitable farms, they always answered the question on the kind of farming that could be undertaken in a specific district in a general way. The overall trend was that the land in the West, the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, was used for grain growing and ranching. The areas in Eastern Canada, in the vicinity of Montreal and areas in Ontario, were suitable for mixed farming and poultry raising.[184]

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[179] Letter to ICA July 1938 Ibid.
[180] Letter to ICA, August 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection, Series C CB 14.2
[181] Letter to ICA August 1938 Ibid.
[182] Letter to ICA August 1938 Ibid.
[183] Letter from ICA January 1939 Ibid.
[184] Letter from ICA September 1938 Ibid.

ICA also provided people who were concerned about Jews in Europe with advice. In one case, a German Jew who had recently immigrated to the United States asked about the chances of immigration to Canada for the family of his brother-in-law.[185] In another case, the parents of a Polish Jew turned to ICA for help on behalf of their son who had remained in Poland. Yet the potential immigrant in this case did not have the required $1,000 that had to be deposited with the railway company.[186] Thus ICA could not do much more than refer this couple to the railway companies in the question of the immigration of their son.[187] In a third case, the sister of a refugee from Czechoslovakia tried to get advice from ICA about the chances of her brother's immigration to Canada. He had already made arrangements for his immigration to the United States, but the quota for immigration to there from Czechoslovakia had already been filled for the next ten years. Because he could not wait that long, he tried to come to Canada as a farmer. ICA informed his sister on the steps that had to be taken in order to secure the permit of entry to Canada for him.[188]

In many cases, Jewish farmers from Europe tried to buy, rent, or lease Canadian farms before leaving Europe. Therefore, ICA frequently received requests from potential immigrants for ICA's opinion on the value of a certain property. In other cases, they had concerns connected with the procedure of the purchase of a farm. In one case, a farmer from Breslau asked about the condition of two farms. He had detailed questions on the ways in which the land was used, and he wished to know details about issues concerning

[185] Letter to ICA January 1939 Ibid.
[186] Letter to ICA February 1939 Ibid.
[187] Letter from ICA March 1939 Ibid.
[188] Letters to and from ICA February 1939 Ibid.

the ownership title such as proprietary note and mortgages.[189] In another case, a Jew from Luxemburg tried to exchange his estate there for a farm in Saskatchewan. Naturally, he wanted to know about the value of the farm he was offered before closing the deal. So the issue was brought to the attention of the Jewish Agricultural Society in New York. The society could not be of any help except for in referring to ICA.[190] ICA could not be of great assistance in that matter. The only answer they could forward to the parties involved in the deal was that, to their knowledge, the German authorities had to give permission for this kind of exchange. Therefore, ICA officials had their doubts that the deal could be closed at all. However, they still offered to obtain the information that their correspondents required.[191] Despite considerable difficulties in establishing the right legal description of the land, ICA managed to acquire the information and sent it to the Jewish refugee in Luxemburg.[192]

Efforts to obtain a permission to enter Canada as farmers were not only made for single families from Europe, but also on behalf of groups of families. One letter reached ICA from Czechoslovakia. It was written by a potential immigrant who wanted advice on the plans for immigration of his own and four other families. One fact that could rob the entire group of any chance of being admitted to Canada was that there were not only farmers, but also merchants among them.[193] ICA could do nothing but inform the applicant that only the bona fide farmers had a chance of being admitted. The merchants could have no share in the effort to immigrate to Canada.[194]

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[189] Letter to JIAS March 1939 Ibid.
[190] Letter to ICA March 1939 Ibid.
[191] Letter from ICA March 1939 Ibid.
[192] Telegram from ICA April 1939 Ibid.
[193] Letter to ICA January 1939 Ibid.
[194] Letter from ICA February 1939 Ibid.

A rabbi from Romania turned to JIAS with a similar plan. He inquired about the measures that had to be taken in order to help twenty families in his congregation that planned to settle in Canada. Apparently, the chances for these families were high because all their members were genuine farmers, and they also had the amount of money that was needed for the deposit with one of the railway companies.[195] In fact, the immigration project of these families was so well prepared that ICA could do nothing for them except for correcting some procedural errors and put away with the rumor that immigrants could be turned away and sent back to Europe for no apparent reason at all.[196]

A group of 250 Jewish families from Czechoslovakia even brought a lawyer in on their immigration project. Apparently all of them were dedicated farmers and willing to take full responsibility for all the arrangements, including the deposit of $1,000.[197] In general, the immigration of these families seems to have been prepared particularly well. Each of them had signed a declaration stating that none of them would engage in any other occupation but farming, although there were persons among them who had not been farmers all their lives. In addition, they could also submit medical certificates and statements concerning their financial situation.[198]

ICA did not only deal with the applications of farmers, but also with the issue whether anything could be done on behalf of Jewish veterinarians. It was the Joint Application Bureau in Toronto that brought the attention of ICA to this question. It had received several applications from German-Jewish veterinarians concerning the chances of their immigrating to Canada and work as veterinary surgeons. It was very difficult for

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[195] Letter to ICA January 1939 Ibid.
[196] Letter from ICA January 1939 Ibid.
[197] Letter to ICA February 1939 Ibid.
[198] Two Letters to ICA both February 1939 Ibid.

veterinarians to find a position in their profession in Eastern Canada. Yet the Joint Application Bureau had heard a rumor that conditions in that sense were better in Alberta. Therefore ICA was asked to look into that matter.[199]

The inquiries of ICA furnished them with the following information: chances of finding employment for veterinary surgeons from foreign countries in Saskatchewan and Manitoba were hardly better than in Eastern Canada. The reason was that most of the veterinarians in these provinces were employed by the government. The farmers were not in a position to pay for the services of a veterinary surgeon at their own expenses. Thus it would not make sense to open a private practice.[200] Conditions in Alberta were a bit different from that. It was possible to register as a veterinary surgeon in that province, provided the candidate was a graduate of any veterinary school or college approved by the Senate of the University of Alberta and had passed an examination prescribed by that senate.[201] On further investigation, however, it turned out that the list of approved veterinary schools and colleges contained institutions in Canada or the United States only. All the other cases for registration as a veterinarian had to be considered individually.[202]

ICA also followed up on some of the families that had been settled in Canada. Simon Belkin conducted a thorough investigation into the fate of some farmers who lived in the vicinity of Winnipeg. He started his inquiries by questioning an official of the CPR about the number of applications of Jewish farmers for the settlement program in Western Canada. He continued his investigation at the Canada Colonization Association, a

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[199] Letter to ICA, November 1936, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection Series S-C Subseries SC-B 27
[200] Letter from ICA December 1936 Ibid.
[201] Letter to ICA December 1936 Ibid.

subsidiary of the CPR, which did the actual settlement work. He was told that the principal object of the Canada Colonization Association was the promotion of agriculture in the Canadian West.

Once land that was listed with the Canada Colonization Association was sold, a commission of five per cent was charged to the vendor; no charge was laid with the purchaser. After the family was settled, the Canadian government was notified, and a government inspector sent to the family to confirm that proper settlement arrangements had been made. In the cases of the settlers who came under the auspices of the CPR, the manager of the Canada Colonization Association, T.C.F. Hertzer, hoped that the families who already lived in the area would help the newcomers with the selection of suitable farms. Only after a farm had been found and a government inspector had approved of the arrangements, the money that had been deposited with the railway company was released for the down payment for the land.

As to the districts where the families were settled, the Edenbridge district was one of those from which favourable reports had been sent by the CPR agents. Yet the CPR had bought no additional land in the Edenbridge district because the officials did not expect many families to come to Canada as farmers. This assumption was based on the experience in the year 1938. That year, many families had inquired about settlement, but only a very small number had actually come forward and immigrated to Canada. Concerning the issue of Jewish families, which Belkin was interested in, the CPR officials had not yet given the subject much thought in September 1938. Generally, the point was raised that, if many Jewish families should apply for admission to Canada as

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[202] Letter to ICA December 1936 and Letter from ICA January 1937 Ibid.

farmers, they should be settled in one coherent block of land. In that case, additional funding would also be required for the settlement.

During his tour through one of the districts in western Canada, Belkin also interviewed the manager of the western Department of Natural Resources of the CNR, T.P. Devlin, and T.F. Kirkwood, the superintendent of the Canadian National Land Settlement Association, which did the settlement work for the CNR. Devlin had visited the Jewish colony in the Edenbridge district and was impressed by the Jewish farmers. Therefore, he had submitted a very favourable report on their achievements. This report had been submitted to the federal authorities in Ottawa. During this interview, it was also brought to Belkin's attention that 11 Jewish farming families had been accepted for entry to Canada during the month of August. As to the actual situation of the farmers, Belkin was informed that Kirkwood was of the opinion that those families who could not bring more than $1,000 with them had to go through a pioneering period, which could be very difficult.

The conclusions that Belkin arrived at from the interviews were that the dealings of the railway companies should be examined properly because he realized that these companies made a lot of money by bringing the farmers to Canada. The ocean transportation fare was paid to companies that worked closely with the railway companies. Agents of these companies earned commissions as intermediaries between the vendors of the land and the immigrants. Finally, the railway companies secured an income in fares for their services by settling farmers on their land. In Belkin's opinion, the railway companies lost interest in the farmers once they had bought the farms. The settlers were not given advice on running their farms and nothing was done on behalf of

farming families in need. If farmers left their land, it was not the railway companies that were blamed, but the farmers. This was a reason for worry because Jewish farmers were under special pressure to have good results, so that there was no reason to bar their co-religionists from being admitted to Canada in the future. Therefore, Belkin thought that the railway companies could not be trusted with settling Jewish farmers who had no farming experience or were not familiar with the life of subsistence farming.

In his final conclusion, Belkin expressed great concern about the future settlement of Jewish families. He agreed with Kirkwood saying than families with only $1,000 were going to have a very hard time in the first years of their settlement under the present conditions. The situation would get even worse should the prices of agricultural products fall. Another concern of his was that the immigration of several families would result in a boom in the Edenbridge district, which would cause the prices of farms to rise. He voiced the fear that Jewish farmers could be compelled to leave the land due to rising prices. On the other hand, should the settlement program be a success, the obligations of ICA towards these farmers could rise enormously.[203]

He also visited some of the farming families and reported on their progress. The families that were mentioned in his report lived in the Stonewall district, which is situated about 25-30 miles north of Winnipeg. In general, the soil in that district was believed to be of fairly good quality. Therefore, the ICA director was of the opinion that the families that he checked upon could make "satisfactory progress."[204] This assumption was based on the fact that these families had a "low standard of living."[205]. In one case, there were

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[203] Report on the interviews September 1938 Ibid.
[204] Memorandum "Canada Colonization Association's Land Settlement Arrangements in the Stonewall District" September 1938 Ibid.
[205] Ibid.

two families who shared one farm, the living expenses, and the expenses for the running of the farm. According to Belkin, they could be successful only because of their sharing everything. In his opinion, none of the families would have been able to make ends meet on their own. Another family had to organize their finances very strictly in order to allow them a reasonable standard of living and to meet all their other obligations. The fourth family mentioned in the report was fairly successful. Yet two other farmers had bought a farm that had been neglected. Therefore, they could not grow as much wheat as they would have wished. Thus they could not make any payments on their mortgage for the purchase of the farm. In fact, they ran even deeper into debt because they also could not pay the taxes on the property. The last family to be dealt with in the report did very well as farmers. Their financial position was so good that this family could buy out a partner with whom they had shared the ownership of the farm.[206]

In 1941, a member UJR also followed up on the fate of the refugees from the Sudeten area that had been settled as farmers by the CNR and interviewed officials of that company. J.S. McGowan, the chief colonization officer of the CNR, informed the UJR that in each of the cases the $1,500 had been enough to allow the families to start a life with a farm with some buildings and some of the necessary equipment. In the beginning, the farmers had also been provided with assistance by an instructor. According to McGowan, about 60 per cent of these families had a good chance of being successful and another 15 per cent were on the borderline with a good chance of success. The colonization officer was certain that some of the families among the remaining 25 per cent were bound to fail and leave their farms for one of the cities. Yet on the whole, the project was deemed to be worthwhile. Therefore, Saul Hayes, the executive secretary

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[206] Ibid.

of the UJR, wanted more attention to be drawn to the project because he wanted the public to know that Jews could be successful farmers. It was not expected for all the families to be successful because of the participants that had been chosen by the Czech Trust Fund directors. Not all of the families had come from a farming background; some of the people who had been sponsored by that fund had been merchants, lawyers, and in other occupations. In fact, by the end of February 1941, a number of the families that had been brought to Canada under the auspices of that project had turned to UJR for help in their efforts to be settled in industrial areas where they had a chance of finding jobs.[207]

Canadian Jewry was concerned about the success of the Jewish settlers with good reason. In February 1937, the Dominion Department of Immigration ran an investigation into the conditions of the existing Jewish farming settlements. Members of ICA felt that the admission of new Jewish farming families partly depended on the impression that these settlements gave. Therefore, they were relieved when the inspector of the department, H. Allen, returned with a favourlable report on two of the colonies and their settlers.[208]

ICA did not only deal with projects for the present; they were also concerned about the future development of the land. Late in 1938, a Jewish farmer who lived in Canada sent a proposal for the irrigation and future development for a district close to that where he lived in the Medicine Hat district in Saskatchewan. This farmer stated that there were 55,000 acres of land north of the district that had been abandoned due to lack of rainfall. He was of the opinion that the future welfare of the region depended on the development

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[207] Memoranda of UJR, both February 1941, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A

[208] Letter between the branches of ICA, March 1937, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Colletion Series S-C Subseries SC-B 27

of that area, and apparently, the Chamber of Commerce was interested in completing the project. Yet so far, their delegates who had been sent to the Provincial and Dominion Governments in order to secure funds for the undertaking had been unsuccessful. For that reason, this Jewish farmer proposed that some Jewish agencies buy the land, prepare it for settlement and settle Jewish refugees from Europe in the area.

He even estimated the costs for the undertaking. According to him, 900 families could be settled on the land and the expenses for the project would be $2,700,000. He was of the opinion that the land could be bought for a very low price because it belonged to the provincial and federal governments, and the company that had been in charge of the irrigation project for the area this farmer lived in was not in a healthy financial position. In his opinion, the costs could be covered by the income of the farmers who would be living on the land. According to his estimate, the average annual income of these farmers would be $780, which would leave enough money for the farmers to take over the costs of the irrigation program in form of a loan. He had even worked out a plan for the repayment of the money running for a period of ten years.[209]

The outline of this program was criticized heavily. For example, it was said that this farmer's estimates were very narrow. It did not allow for any margins in the costs. Yet the expenses for the purchase for material and livestock could easily be higher than estimated in the outline. One other criticism against it was that one point in the financing program was that machines should be bought second hand. Yet according to one of the critics, this practice had proven to be unsatisfactory in the years before the project was proposed. In addition, the farmer was criticized for having estimated the living expenses

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[209] Brief on proposed Jewish Farm Settlement, December 1938, CJCNA, ICA of Canada Collection, Series C CB 14.2

of the farming families as too low, which means that the sum of surplus money that should be used to pay off the debts for land and equipment purchases, was not as high as anticipated in the outline. Water charges and taxes for the land also had not been taken into account and would have to be deduced from the income as estimated there. The bottom line of this critic's estimates was that the income from the branches of agriculture that this farmer proposed would hardly be enough for the families to lead a comfortable life, let alone to pay for any debts deriving from the irrigation program.[210]

On the whole, regulations concerning the immigration of farming families to Canada were not as strict as those for other potential immigrants. Therefore, this was the area where the Jewish organizations trying to help European Jews were particularly active and relatively successful in the 1930s. Farming families were assisted in many different ways, and the fact that ICA also considered projects for the future only underlines how urgently Canadian Jewry tried to support their settlement. The efforts on behalf of farmers can be considered a success, because a high percentage of them seem to have made enough profits to allow them to make do, even if only at a low standard of living.

[210] Notes on the proposal for settlement of 900 German Jewish Families on a 55,000 acre tract of land in the Medicine Hat District Ibid.

Chapter Four

Efforts on the Behalf of Children

4.1. Regulations for Juvenile Immigration to Canada

The immigration situation of children posed special problems, many of which did not pertain to adults. All the Canadian provinces except British Columbia and Saskatchewan had the same special legislation for juvenile immigration, and heavy penalties were imposed if these were not complied with. These measures stipulated that any organization planning to bring children to Canada had to prove that it was properly constituted and that it was in a position to continue its operation until all the responsibilities that the organization had taken on were liquidated. This included coverage of all the administrative costs and the maintenance of the juveniles until they were eighteen years of age. It also had to be assured that the children were visited regularly. Therefore, any organizations planning to bring children to Canada had to have at least one person in their employment who was in charge of the placement and supervision of the children.[211]

4.2.1. German Jewish Children from England

In general, however, children had a slightly better chance of being admitted to Canada than adults. The first program undertaken on behalf of Jewish children by Canadian Jewry was inspired by a similar project in the United States. In January 1935, JIAS was informed of a program launched on the initiative of a group of influential Jews to get German Jewish children out of Germany and bring them over to the United States.

Thus they were to be given a chance of getting an education. It should be guaranteed that the children should be kept in school at least until the age of sixteen and that they should not become public charges.[212]

Some more information was sent to JIAS through a memorandum. It was on the behalf of the German Jewish community that the 250 children were brought to the United States. It was intended to place them in foster homes, and they were admitted on permanent visas. This plan seems to have been very well organized: The child care expert in charge had constant contact with the child caring agencies. A Jewish social agency selected the children, primarily those who were being denied proper education. Another issue was that they could not bring much luggage with them and had to be provided for soon after their arrival. Yet, because of the immigration laws, none of the Jewish agencies was allowed to assist them with the payment of the transportation costs.[213]

The situation of the Jewish students in Germany had been deteriorating constantly. In April 1933, the Nazis introduced the legislation against the overcrowding of the German schools. These might have forced many Jewish children to leave school.[214] In addition, many Jewish students left school even before legislation forced them to do so. They rather chose not to pursue an academic career. In many cases, the reason for this decision was that the atmosphere in the schools had become unbearable for them. Jewish

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[211] Legislation of the Canadian Provinces Bearing on Juvenile Migration, CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 11 file 58

[212] Statement Regarding German Jewish Children to be Brought to the United States for Education, January 1935, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 A

[213] Memorandum "Placement of German-Jewish Children", September 1935, sent with a letter from Cecilia Razovsky, executive director of the German-Jewish Children's Aid, to Paull Ibid.

[214] It is not possible to determine to what extent these laws affected the number of Jewish students in the schools because many exceptions were made for Jewish students at that early stage.

students spent a lot of time at school where they were not protected by their families, but met the repercussions in Nazi Germany. They had to sit apart from the other children and were barred from school events. Thus the children were discriminated against even before they were compelled to leave the public schools.[215]

A description of the educational system in Germany and Austria reached JIAS from the Jewish Religious Community in Vienna. The writer of this telegram was especially concerned because students did not have the opportunity to continue their studies. The teachers also found themselves in an awkward position. They had lost their jobs and were without any means of support. Therefore, it was proposed to send the students as well as some of the teachers to the United States and Canada, so that the children could get their education there, under the supervision of some of the teachers who had been employed in Vienna. The parents of these students were willing to send their children to North America and to pay for the expenses of their education.[216]

In July 1935, JIAS was approached by the National Council of Jewish Women of Toronto about the chances of having German Jewish children admitted into Canada, proposing to start a project similar to the one undertaken in the United States.[217] In a letter to T. Magladery, the deputy minister of the federal Department of Immigration and Colonization, on the same issue it was mentioned that the press and other reports that reached JIAS painted a dismal picture of the conditions under which Jewish children in Germany received their school training. Paull appealed to the Canadian authorities to allow a limited number of children to come to Canada, mentioning that the movement of

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[215] Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair p.94-98
[216] Telegram to JIAS, August 1938, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21521
[217] Letter from Dr. Brodey to Paull, July 1935, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 A

250 children had been approved by the American government.[218] While Magladery was not opposed, he emphasized that the admission of the children should not be considered a promise that the rest of their families would be admitted to the country at a later stage.[219]

In August 1939, a plan to bring 200 German Jewish children to Canada began to take shape. A letter from the Union of German Jews[220] to the CJC commented on the efforts of the association to place children with Canadian families. The plan had run into difficulties because the Canadian government had refused to accept any children except genuine orphans. It was very difficult to find orphans who could also comply with all the other requirements, such as perfect physical and mental health, among the German Jewish children. It was also pointed out that there were many children who were not admissible to Canada because one of their parents was still alive, but were in desperate need for help.[221]

In November 1939, Jewish organizations negotiated with the Canadian government about the plan to bring refugee children who had fled to England over to Canada permanently. Solkin mentioned that some 300 Jewish families were willing to give shelter to orphans and proposed that the Department of Immigration investigate the homes individually.[222] However, there were indications that it was not as easy to find proper homes as Solkin seemed to believe. A newspaper article mentioned that many families were not in a position to take proper care of their own children, let alone support

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[218] Letter from Paull to Magladery August 1939 Ibid.
[219] Letter from Magladery to Paull August 1939 Ibid.
[220] Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland
[221] Letter from the Union of German Jews to the CJC, August 1939, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 84 file 21349
[222] Draft of a letter from Solkin to M. Jolliffe, Blair's deputy, November 1939 Ibid.

others.[223] Despite this, the members of the Jewish organizations believed that it was important to place the children in foster homes because they should be given an environment as normal as possible. It was also intended to make the individual families feel responsible for the child staying with them.[224]

In November 1939, the Canadian authorities made known some conditions that would be connected with the movement of children from England. The efforts to bring children to Canada should not affect the admission of other immigrants. Only one hundred children would be allowed initially. They had to come as individuals and had to be victims of political persecution. The admission of children to Canada should not involve any obligation of the admission of other members of the families. They had to be genuine refugees, which meant that they had to come from a country under German control. They also had to come from families that were broken by enforced divorce or the death of one or both of the parents. It was only children between the ages of three and fourteen who were accepted for migration to Canada. The foster parents had the option of adopting their wards. The children had to be placed with families of their own faith.[225]

In November 1940, the CJC seriously discussed the procedures for this project. It agreed to make use of the services of child-placing agencies and social workers familiar with Canadian standards and practices. CJC officials were aware of the responsibility they were taking on. They were of the opinion that a "responsible and actually solvent

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[223] Newspaper Article (origin and date unknown) CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 11 file 58

[224] Letter to JIAS from the Jewish Children's Bureau in Toronto, November 1936, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 68 file 17067 C

[225] Memorandum of the CNCR November 1939 Ibid.

body"[226] had to be in charge of the program. It was also obvious that the Canadian government had no intention of taking on any responsibility for the movement of the juvenile refugees. Therefore, private citizens had to be relied on. One other issue was the legal status of the children. Because they came from broken families, they were without legal guardianship. It would have been possible to declare the children wards of an immigration society, but there was doubt whether that guardianship could be as effective as that of a children's aid society. The members of the CJC doubted whether an immigrant aid society had the right to authorize adoptions for the juveniles. Another issue was the approximate costs that their maintenance could entail. The social workers consulted believed that the expenses would add up to at least $600 for each child.[227]

As conditions in England deteriorated due to the war, the Canadian government lost interest in bringing German- Jewish children to Canada, and British children were given preference.[228] So by June 1940, only children with British citizenship were considered.[229] In addition, there was no possibility of convincing the Canadian authorities to make exceptions for children who came from any of the countries that fought against Canada and England in the war.[230] This excluded the children who needed help the most from being considered for the program. The number of Jews among the British children was much lower than among those who had fled to England. Thus another consequence of this shift of interest was that the number of Jewish children to be rescued was much lower

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[226] Memorandum of the CJC on the Migration of Refugee Children, January 1940, CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 11file 58
[227] Ibid.
[228] Letter from Solkin to M. Kraicer, JIAS' executive secretary, June 1940, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 84 file 21349
[229] Letter from JIAS June 1940 Ibid.
[230] Letter from JIAS July 1940 Ibid.

than Canadian Jewry had hoped. Therefore, they perceived this development as a major disappointment.[231]

It was not only the Canadian authorities alone that were in favour of that decision. Charlotte Whitton, secretary of the Canadian Welfare Council and key member of the Canadian National Committee on Refugee files opposed the movement of children who had come from the European continent to Canada. One of the reasons she gave for her opposition was that 80 per cent of these children were Jewish. It must be noted that she also was one of the most popular social workers in Canada. Therefore, she had influence in Ottawa. In addition, the United States opposed the project because they feared that their families and friends would make an attempt to bring them across the border. Apparently, the American authorities were convinced that British children would stay in Canada permanently.[232] In the end, forty-five hundred children came, including some British-born Jews, but none of the children who had fled the European continent.[233]

4.2.2. Children from Vichy France

Another program was organized in order to help children from unoccupied France in 1942. A description of the situation was provided in a letter from the UJR, which estimated that there were approximately 5,000 children whose parents had been sent eastward from that part of France.[234] According to the information of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), 10,000 people had already been deported

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[231] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.103
[232] Ibid. p.101-02
[233] Ibid. p.104-05
[234] The Vichy government officially pursued an antisemitic policy. They tried to get rid of Jews in their part of France by sending them to the occupied part of the country on several occasions.

and arrests were made daily. The consequence of all this was panic and frequent suicides. The Jews in unoccupied France were in urgent need of help, and everything had to be planned and organized very fast. In fact, some children who had lived in orphan or children's homes had already been deported, too.[235] Due to these events, the future of the children who still survived looked anything but bright. Those whose parents had been deported might have lost them forever and were without proper guidance.[236]

Despite the urgency of the situation, and although the Canadian authorities denounced the deportations of refugees from the unoccupied part of France, it took them a long time to agree on the actual conditions of the movement. It intended to emulate the policy of the United States, but the American authorities had a hard time determining the right way of reacting to the conditions in France themselves.[237]

Meanwhile, Canadian Jewry became impatient. The UJR made an appeal to the Canadian government to admit some of the children into the country for the sake of humanity. It was mentioned that other states such as the United States and the Dominican Republic had made plans to give a certain number of the children shelter. The UJR guaranteed on behalf of Canadian Jewry that the sole responsibility for the project rested with Jews alone. They would ensure that these children would never become public charges. The Canadian authorities were also reminded that Canadian Jewry had always lived up to their obligations to the Canadian government in the past.[238] This

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Marrus, The Unwanted p.202

[235] A copy of the letter to Crerar was included in a Memorandum by the UJR, September 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22350

[236] Memorandum on the plans for the movement of children from France September 1942 Ibid.

[237] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.107-09

[238] Memorandum of UJR, September 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection, Series C, box 89 file 22350

memorandum clearly displays that the people who spearheaded the efforts regarding this movement tried to make an argument as strong as possible.

Despite all these assurances, the negotiations between UJR and the Canadian government proved to be hard. F.C. Blair was convinced that the effort on behalf of the children was a scheme of the Jewry to bring adult refugees, too.[239] Yet the Jewish organizations indicated that they were willing to comply with all the conditions of the Immigration Department of the Canadian government, so that there would be no objections to the project. They had agreed to make sure that all the children came from refugee families. In many of the cases, the parents had already been deported, so that there was no possibility to place any requests on the parent's behalf with the Canadian government. Even if there should be a chance for the children to be reunited with their parents, it would be the Canadian authorities that would decide on the immigration status of the children and the admission of their parents.[240]

It was not only the Canadian Government that had to be persuaded to give permission for the movement of these children. American authorities negotiated with the Vichy government for exit visas for them. The authorities in Vichy had never committed themselves irrevocably. In fact, they had been warned by the Germans that they should not allow the Allies to use the movement of the children as anti-Nazi propaganda. In October 1942, the Americans were convinced that the Vichy government was not willing to allow the children to leave.[241]

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[239] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.111
[240] Letter from Hayes to Blair, September 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22350
[241] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.118

While the negotiations were under way, UJR already started the search for possible homes for the children, sounding hopeful that the number of homes needed could be found in the Jewish communities. The Jewish agencies planned to place the children with foster families. However, because the Canadian government would not admit them into the country on a permanent status, it did not make sense to think about adoption.[242]

In October 1942, the Jewish agencies had agreed upon which of them was to take on which of the obligations in the project of rescuing children from France. It was agreed that JIAS should have responsibility for finding new homes for them. One of the problems was that the search had to be restricted to Jewish families. Hayes suggested that JIAS turn to middle class Jewish families first because these were believed to be the most likely to respond.[243]

In a letter to Samuel Bronfman, president of the CJC, Hyman Barsky, JIAS' president, commented on JIAS' efforts to find homes for the children. He was of the opinion that JIAS was well suited for that task because the society had extensive contacts with other Jewish societies. On the other hand, he was aware of the fact that it would not be easy to find the number of homes needed.[244] Solkin stated that it was necessary to find at least 700 to 750 possible homes for the placement of 500 children because of the rate of rejection of unsuitable homes. There also was no guarantee that all the potential foster parents would take on the responsibility for a child because they might have specific wishes concerning age and gender of their wards. Like Barsky, he thought that the many contacts of JIAS would be very helpful. Yet he suggested that local leaders of Jewish

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[242] Letter from Hayes to Blair, September 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22350
[243] Letter from Hayes October 1942 Ibid.
[244] Letter from Barsky to Bronfman October 1942 Ibid.

communities lend JIAS their support by appealing to their congregations to provide homes. He was of the opinion that a personal approach could be much more effective than letters or circulars could be.[245]

In the middle of October, some trouble arose. JIAS was afraid of not getting enough credit for their efforts. Dr. John Atkins, the president of the Toronto branch of JIAS, wrote to Solkin: "I had just reason to worry that the project would be swallowed by the UJR and Congress."[246] He also complained about the fact that the issue of the admission of the children had never been discussed with the Toronto branch of JIAS. In addition, he mentioned that there were many instances when the project was discussed by UJR without JIAS even being mentioned. Another fact that suggested to Atkins that UJR wanted to sidetrack JIAS was that the Canadian authorities had no knowledge of the involvement of the society in the project.[247] He also wrote to the Chairman of the Central Division of UJR, S.J. Zacks. Atkins explained that he wanted to reiterate that a definite plan of handling the refugee children project had been prepared by Solkin, and the plea for their admission was made in the names of UJR and JIAS. In the end, he emphasized that JIAS was willing and prepared to take on its part of the obligation in the project.[248]

The overtone of this letter is much more diplomatic than that between the two branches of JIAS. This only emphasizes the fact that the members of JIAS were not interested in causing trouble between the different Jewish organizations. Naturally, they did not want the project to fail for that reason. Their only object was to get the credit they thought they deserved. The letter that was sent to Hayes on the same subject expressed

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[245] Letter from Solkin to Hayes October 1942 Ibid.
[246] Letter from Dr. Atkins to Solkin October 1942 Ibid.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Letter from Dr. Atkins to Zacks October 1942 Ibid.

the indignation of JIAS more clearly, but it also emphasized that JIAS did not want to jeopardize the children's program over that topic, but they wanted Canadian Jewry to know about the society's participation in the project.[249] The fact that it was the members of the Toronto branch of JIAS who were irritated the most, while the leadership in Montreal initially tried to soothe everybody [250] hints the same direction.

It could be a confirmation of the intention of UJR not to give JIAS proper credit for their efforts that there was no mention of JIAS in the official press release announcing that the Canadian government had agreed to admit the children.[251] This announcement was dispatched after JIAS had already complained and demanded insistently that the society be mentioned. This caused so much confusion that there was a point when even the JIAS' leadership had their doubts about the role of the society concerning that project.[252]

JIAS also received letters from Canadian Jews who had heard about the movement. A man from Trout River expressed interest in the program because he had been trying to find a way of giving his niece shelter in his home. He now sensed an opportunity to bring the girl to Canada. JIAS informed him that definite plans for the project still had to be made, but that his niece had a good chance of being among the beneficiaries once the

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[249] Letter to Hayes (The copy of the letter is not signed; it can only be assumed that it was written by Dr. Atkins) October 1942 Ibid.
[250] Abella and Troper, p.113-14
[251] Memorandum of UJR, October 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22350
[252] The matter was discussed between Solkin and Gray. Letters both October 1942 Ibid.

plan got under way.[253] JIAS also received an offer of clothing and a home for one of the children from a merchant from South Poroupine.[254]

In the end, it turned out that any effort undertaken on behalf of the children came too late. While arrangements were still under way, Canada and the United States severed diplomatic relations with Vichy France due to the development of the war.[255] The fact that this was a great disappointment for JIAS becomes obvious in a letter that Solkin wrote to Kraicer on the subject. He tried to console everybody by mentioning the prospect of a brighter future, saying:

> "On the whole, the time seems right, in my personal opinion, for organizational action. Just because the war entered into a more intensive phase we have better reasons to hope and believe that it will end sooner. The progress of developments so far would seem to justify a certain degree of prudent optimism,..."[256]

4.2.3. Children in the United States

In the summer of 1944, JIAS was involved in another program undertaken on behalf of children. Some of the refugees who came to Canada had sent their children to the United States. These couples were now eager to have their children stay with them again. They turned either to JIAS or UJR to inquire about the necessary steps.[257] The parents had to submit a written request to UJR.[258] All the parents made sure to inform UJR that they had the financial means needed to give their children a proper home. A

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[253] Letters to and from JIAS, October 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22359
[254] Letter to JIAS October 1942 Ibid.
[255] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer November 1942 Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Letter of UJR, June 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 90 file 22459

form letter was suggested to the families by JIAS, so the phrase reads the same in all the requests: "We believe that we shall be able to take good care of our children. Your kind cooperation in expediting our re-union will therefore be thankfully appreciated."[259] It seems that UJR needed this guarantee for the negotiations with the immigration authorities.

Unfortunately, there is no information whether the families were actually reunited. Yet it is certain that UJR worked out a definite plan for the movement of these children. It was explained in a letter to Solkin. At first, the United States Committee for the Care of European Children had to give exit permits for them. Furthermore, the foster parents had to release their wards. It was also arranged for a social worker from the United States to accompany them on the trip to Canada.[260]

4.3. Some General Observations on the Immigration of Children to Canada in the 1930s and 1940s

Two of the three children's projects that JIAS was involved in during those two decades ended in a great disappointment for the Jewish community in Canada. Because the Canadian government intended to save British children rather than those who had fled the European continent, the number of Jewish children included in the group that came from England was much smaller than Canadian Jewry had hoped. The rescue efforts on behalf of children from Vichy France were terminated when the diplomatic relations with the unoccupied part of France were severed.

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[258] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer June 1944, Ibid.
[259] Copies of letters to the UJR Ibid.
[260] Letter from Hayes to Solkin June 1944 Ibid.

Maybe JIAS and UJR had lost valuable time over their own rivalries, however, apart from that, they did everything in their power to prepare for the arrival of the children as long as there was hope that they could be saved. Unfortunately, there is no information on the success of the third project JIAS was involved in, the reunion of children who had been sent to the United States with their parents.

Chapter Five

Adult Immigration to Canada in the 1940s

5.1. General Observation on the Situation of JIAS in the 1940s

After war had broken out in Europe, the question of finding a new home became more and more urgent for European Jewry. As German troops conquered greater parts of Europe, the number of Jews who had to fear for their lives grew constantly. Although the Canadian authorities were described as having shown "considerable sympathy" for the Jewish problems by JIAS' officials, the immigration laws of Canada were not changed until 1948.[261]

There also was no doubt about the fact that the concern for national security was an issue in that respect. Many of the refugees who had entered Canada in the pre-war period had come from countries that fought against Canada now, and their citizens were classified as enemy aliens. The German blitzkriege and the defeat of France scared Britons and Canadians the most. Therefore, especially German and Austrian citizens were suspected of being involved in fifth column activities. The reports about German and Austrian agents working in Belgium, the Netherlands, and France after the outbreak of the war seemed to indicate that all the countries at war had reason to be concerned. There were also rumors of the Nazis having established a network of unwilling spies. It was believed that refugees gave information to the Germans because relatives who had remained in Germany were threatened. It was also believed that some victims of the Nazis were released from the concentration camps because they had promised to help the Germans. Therefore, it was impossible for enemy aliens to enter Canada even if they

were genuine refugees. To a certain extent, this development was the result of the influence of anti-refugee sentiments in Great Britain and the United States.[262]

Nevertheless, the security aspect was not the only obstacle preventing Jewish immigration to Canada in the 1940s. The situation changed for the worse for the potential immigrants due to the changes that had been brought about by the war. Immigration regulations that had been in force for a long time suddenly prevented European Jews from being admissible to Canada without any reason that still made sense in the 1940s. The regulation that a great number of the refugees could not comply with was the clause of continuous journey. Its purpose had been to prevent Hindu immigration from India. However, due to the situation in Europe and these regulations, many Jewish refugees were not admissible to Canada. Therefore, the number of Jews immigrating to the country dropped. In other cases, Jewish families who had been lucky enough to be admitted into Canada were not in a position to come forward and travel. In the annual report of JIAS of 1941, it was mentioned that the war had prevented 14 Jewish refugees from Switzerland, Vichy France, and Belgium from coming to Canada.[263]

Canadian Jewry also complained about discrimination against Jewish immigrants on the part of some officials in the immigration branch. The Canadian Jewish Committee on Refugees complained about the situation to Crerar and the Prime Minister. In this context, it is important to note that "so notorious was the attitude of the Immigration

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[261] Annual Report of JIAS 1940 KE 6

[262] Donald Avery: "Canada's Response to European Refugees 1939-45: The Security Dimension" in On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, ed. by Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, Lubomir Luciuk (Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1988), p.179-205

[263] Annual Report of JIAS 1941 KE 7

Branch that many responsible non-Jews had brought the matter before the Secretary"[264] Despite this, some women from Great Britain were allowed to enter Canada for the duration of the war. Yet these women soon found themselves without the means of providing for themselves and their children. Thus many of them tried to leave Canada for the United States because there they had relatives who were in a position to look after them.[265]

Although JIAS could not help many people enter Canada, they could still assist them in immigrating to other countries via Canada. Many of these ultimately went to the Philippines, the United States, and Australia. Others were en route to Central or South America.[266] Solkin also commented on the fact that the connections between JIAS of Canada and HIAS in the United States were crucial for the assistance that could be given to the refugees who came to Canada en route to the United States.[267] Considering the fact that the majority of migrants who came overseas found a new home there, the efforts of both these organizations were highly important for Jewish migration to the North American continent in general. In that context, it was one of the concerns of JIAS that the American authorities had introduced new measures to tighten the control over new immigration. These measures affected the refugees severely and even deprived some of them of their last hope of escape.[268]

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[264] Minutes of a Meeting of the Eastern Division of UJR, October 1940, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689
[265] Annual Report of JIAS 1940 KE 6
[266] Memorandum of the UJR, March 1941, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A
Annual Report of JIAS 1940 KE 6
[267] Annual Report of JIAS 1942 KE 8
[268] Annual Report of JIAS 1941 KE 7

JIAS also helped people who already lived in or had come to Canada. Because some of the refugees who had come to Canada did not know any English, they were taught the language at night schools.[269] Many residents were helped acquire citizenship. Amongst its other uses, citizenship was necessary to find employment in the war industries.[270] In 1942, Solkin proudly stated that a number of Jews had found jobs in this branch of industry only because they had obtained the Canadian citizenship with the help of JIAS.[271] After the outbreak of the war, JIAS frequently received inquiries from Canadian citizens about relatives who lived in Europe. It seems that it was especially hard to get information on the fate of Jews in Poland. JIAS made use of its connections to European organizations to try to locate relatives of Canadian citizens.[272]

5.2.1. Refugees from Vichy France

Among the victims of Nazi persecution to claim the attention of JIAS were Jews who had fled to France. Although Canadian authorities still did not want to encourage mass immigration of refugees to Canada, they displayed some sympathy towards their fate in the sense that they allowed that groups of them be brought to Canada from specific countries. In October 1942, JIAS prepared to send a delegation to the Prime Minister or other Cabinet members in order to compel the government to pronounce a definite policy towards the refugees in unoccupied France. According to Solkin, Blair had said that applications from refugees from France would be considered on condition that the applicants were actual refugees who had fled to France from Nazi persecution and had

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[269] Annual Report of JIAS 1942 KE 8
[270] Annual Report of JIAS 1941 KE 7
[271] Annual Report of JIAS 1942 KE 8
[272] Annual Report of JIAS 1941 KE 7

not lived there for a long time. He also wanted the refugees to have close connections to Canadian residents who could apply for the movement on behalf of the refugees. Preferably, the new immigrants should also be helpful in the war effort.[273]

According to the application form, applicants had to supply the following information: country of origin and citizenship of the proposed migrants, date of departure from the native country, duration of the stay in France, and the reason for entry. In addition, the applicants had to answer questions on their own situation. They were asked about their citizenship, their occupation, their financial situation, their relationship with the proposed migrants, and the extent to which they were willing to assist their relatives or friends.[274]

Among the refugees on whose behalf applications were submitted were Jews who were trying to flee from the Nazis for the second time. Among them was a family from Luxemburg. The village where they had lived was close to the French border and the Maginot Line. It had been evacuated, and the population was sent to France. After France had surrendered, the evacuees were allowed to return, with the exception of the Jews.[275] In addition, it seems that this family was prominent and had a great deal of influence in Luxemburg because they had certificates describing them as trustworthy and reliable signed by the Secretary General in the Government Department of Justice[276] and the Prime Minister[277] of Luxemburg. In another case, a former Russian citizen who had lost

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[273] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer, October 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22354
[274] Application form Ibid.
[275] Application form sent to JIAS in October 1942 Ibid.
[276] Ministere de la Justice
[277] Ministere d'Etat

his citizenship had entered France 22 years before. After the Germans had attacked France, he had fled from Paris to the unoccupied part of the country.[278]

In some other cases, the applicants pointed out that the immigration of their relatives would be an advantage for Canada. For example, in at least two of the applications, it was stated that the migrants could or were willing to help Canada in its war effort.[279]

The fate of one of the refugees illustrated that Jewry in France was unprepared for the speedy changes in their situation. This particular individual had left his country of origin, Poland, three years before the outbreak of the war and gone to England to study. He had planned to meet his mother for a vacation in Paris. This Jew got caught in the chaos in France and was unable to get out. His mother was not allowed to leave Poland and subsequently committed suicide.[280]

While there was a debate in Canada about the admission of the refugees from Vichy France, it was equally unclear whether that government would issue the necessary exit visas. The Vichy government feared to violate the armistice agreement with Germany because the released Jews could take up arms against Germany. In addition, Vichy was reported to continue the deportations of Jews.[281] However, it turned out that all the worries were for naught because, just like the program for the children in Vichy France,

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[278] Application form sent to JIAS Ibid.
[279] Application forms Ibid.
[280] Application forms Ibid.
[281] Jewish Telegraphic Agency Bulletin, September 1943, CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 25 file 299-299 A

this project failed due to the severance of diplomatic relations between Vichy France and Canada.[282]

5.2.2. Spanish Refugees

In June 1943, the CJC tried to draw the attention of the Canadian government to the fact that many Jewish refugees had reached Spain and Portugal and needed to find a permanent refuge. Many of them had fled from Nazi persecution in France, and initially, they had been interned in Spain, but were released later.[283] These refugees were the ones in the greatest danger because there was no guarantee that these countries would remain neutral or would not be overrun by the Germans. This time, T.A. Crerar and Mackenzie King, Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, listened sympathetically, but it took a long time for the authorities to take any action. The replies to Canadian Jewry expressed the concern of the Canadian state for the fate of European Jewry, but any word that could be interpreted as a commitment to help was avoided carefully. Finally, it was decided to make a small concession to the pro-refugee groups in order to appease them.

However, it was clear that the Canadian government did not intend to be overtly generous in its guidelines for admission to Canada. Only a limited number of refugee families should be brought over to Canada, and not all of them should be Jewish. In addition, the reaction of the Canadian public clearly showed that Canadians did not have enough sympathy with the victims of the Nazis to welcome them in Canada. As soon as King had announced in the press that the Canadian government had decided to do

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[282] Letter from the UJR to the Central Committee for Interned Refugees November 1942 Ibid.

something on behalf of the refugees on the Iberian Peninsula, anti- refugee groups started to protest fearing an unchecked flow of refugees to Canada. Anti-refugee feeling was combined with anti-Jewish sentiments. Although protest against Jewish immigration still was more pronounced in Quebec, antisemitism also rose among the English-speaking part of the Canadian population. In the pro-refugee lobby, on the other hand, initial satisfaction gave way to frustration when it was learned how little the Canadian Government was prepared to do.[284]

In November 1943, the Canadian government agreed to give refugees from Spain and Portugal an easier time obtaining a permission to enter Canada. In the cases of these immigrants the Department of Immigration did not even intend to make a distinction between citizens of allied or neutral countries or enemy aliens. It was assumed that all the refugees stranded in Spain or Portugal were genuine victims of the war and in need of help. On the other hand, the Canadian government was not willing to grant them permission to stay permanently. Because the measure was meant to bring relief to the victims of the war, they should only be allowed to stay for its duration.[285] The project was also restricted to the movement of family units. Families with relatives in the United States or other safe countries were not admissible to Canada under that regulation.[286] The immigration office in Lisbon had been re-opened for the selection of the admissible families.[287]

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[283] Kage, With Faith and Thanksgiving p.108
[284] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.148-65
[285] It seems that "for the duration" was generally used as a substitute for "for the duration of the war".
[286] Interview with Jolliffe, November 3, 1943, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380
[287] Letter from Solkin to Asofsky November 1943 Ibid.

Yet Odilon Cormier, the immigration officer who was sent to Lisbon, interpreted the family unit rule in terms so narrow that almost none of the families were eligible. And indeed, after having spent three month in Portugal, he reported that he had not issued a single visa to any of the refugees yet.[288] Here is the description of the case of one of the families that were rejected: Cormier turned down the application of that particular family because the wife had an unmarried brother in Palestine who was considered to belong to the family unit. The memorandum in which this case is described also commented on the policy in general. It was mentioned that the whole program obviously was designed for families that could fit very strict and narrow guidelines.[289]

Despite this, it was also one of the occasions where the Canadian government stood by the decision to admit a limited number of refugees into the country despite protest from Quebec.[290] Solkin also gave some thought to the situation in Europe. He expressed the concern that the Spanish or Portuguese authorities would not issue the required entry and exit permits.[291]

Although the whole project was built on shaky ground, the Jewish organizations in Canada were eager to make the most of the government's concession and did not lose any time planning the movement. The reaction in the Jewish press mirrored the joy and excitement that Canadian Jewry felt at that moment. The opening sentence in one of the newspaper articles ran: "Immediate action was taken by JIAS in following up the recent announcement by the Hon. T.A. Crerar, minister of mines and resources that the

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[288] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.165
[289] Memorandum of the JDC (no date given) CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 26-27 file 244
[290] News Bulletin Published by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, New York, November 1943, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380
[291] Letter from Solkin to Asofsky November 1943 Ibid.

Canadian government would open the doors of the country to refugees stranded in Spain and Portugal."[292]

The day after the Canadian government had stated its intention, JIAS and UJR started to think about the organization of the movement of the refugees. One of the issues mentioned was to find possible job options for the new arrivals. It was hoped that old labour limitation regulations would not be applied too strictly, so that any employer willing to sponsor the refugees by offering a job could do so.[293] In addition, many Canadian citizens knew that they had relatives among the refugees in Spain. It was expected that the Canadians who had come forward with requests on behalf of their relatives would give them financial support. This would relieve JIAS of a great burden.[294]

Finances were further discussed in the correspondence between JIAS and HICEM. It seems as if HICEM had more experience with the movement of refugees because it was Ilja Dijour, its executive secretary, who made suggestions to Solkin. HICEM had an agreement with the JDC, according to which the HICEM committees and its affiliated bodies in the immigration countries took over all the expenses of transportation and the maintenance of the immigrants for the first two or three weeks. If the newly arrived were not settled after that time, the JDC would step in.

For the movement of the refugees from Spain, this would mean that the transportation costs would be paid by the HICEM in Lisbon; JIAS and HIAS would collaborate in providing deposits and guarantees, and the two organizations would also be responsible for the maintenance of the migrants for the first weeks after disembarkation.

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[292] Newspaper article in the Hebrew Journal, November 22, 1943, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 90 file 22428

[293] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer, November 1943, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380

In a conversation with Solkin, Dijour suggested that JIAS negotiate the same agreement with the JDC should more refugees come to Canada in the future.[295]

In Canada, overseas relief was the obligation of the UJR, which was not a branch of the JDC, but a subsidiary to the CJC. Because of the prior experience with the UJR, which had kept penetrating the sphere of JIAS in the years before 1943, the leadership of JIAS was reluctant to enter an agreement with yet another organization. Therefore, they did not want to negotiate with JDC unless the movement of refugees was so large that UJR could not take care of all of them.[296]

JIAS and UJR had a disagreement on that program, too. Solkin stated that it started out as a mild difference of opinion and then grew into an open quarrel over a press release by JIAS. According to him, UJR claimed that it had been agreed that publicity should be refrained from only two days after both UJR and JIAS had consented to conduct publicity on a basis of "reciprocity and consultation with each other."[297] The problem was temporarily solved when it was proposed that UJR assume the responsibility for the refugees in front of the Canadian government. As an amendment, Belkin proposed that JIAS assume the responsibility, but this plan was dismissed because JIAS was not in a position to raise the necessary funds all alone. Thus Belkin could be persuaded to give up his opposition to the plan that UJR take on the responsibility and refrain from pushing his suggestion.[298]

In December the disagreements between JIAS and UJR seem to have grown more serious. At that point, it was proposed that a committee be elected to investigate the

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[294] Letter from Solkin to Asofsky November 1943 Ibid.
[295] Letter from Dijour to Solkin November 1943 Ibid.
[296] Letter from Solkin to Dijour November 1943 Ibid.
[297] Letter from Solkin to Dr. Atkins November 1943 Ibid.

publicity matter and establish a modus operandi between the two organizations.[299] In the middle of December 1943, UJR and JIAS finally managed to come to an agreement. The representations to the government on behalf of great numbers of refugees was considered the obligation of UJR on condition that JIAS participate in those representations. The field of individual immigration, however, was left entirely to JIAS. Shared immigration projects were considered under the joint care of both organizations, with JIAS doing the functional work and UJR supplying the funds for the undertakings. In order to make sure that both JIAS and UJR abide by the agreement, standing committees were established to monitor the actions of both organizations.[300]

In the matter of publicity, it was agreed that JIAS was provided with a certain amount of space in the bulletin of UJR for subjects that concerned JIAS alone. The issues that were of interest for JIAS and UJR were dealt with in the same bulletin. JIAS also agreed to inform the leaders of UJR and of the CJC of their news. This arrangement was supposed to work both ways, i.e. UJR and the CJC were expected to inform JIAS on their publicity releases. It was hoped that further irritation between the organizations could be avoided that way. Solkin considered this agreement as satisfactory to JIAS.[301]

Although HICEM had to admit that the statistical data on the refugees was not conclusive, at least it provided some information. It was estimated that the number of Jewish refugees in Spain was about 3,000 with an additional 500 in Portugal. The great majority of them, approximately 2,000, were Polish citizens, but there were also Jews from Denmark, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and several Baltic States among them. The

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[298] Ibid.
[299] Telegram from Kraicer to Solkin December 1943 Ibid.
[300] Letter from Solkin to Asofsky December 1943 Ibid.
[301] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer December 1943 Ibid.

migrants had not been allowed to bring any property with them. At that particular stage, there was no more information to be had on their financial situation. For example, it was possible that some of the families had bank accounts in England or the United States that could be made accessible. Furthermore, it was known that some of the refugee families had relatives in countries in the Western Hemisphere who were willing to support their relatives. Yet HICEM did not have any information on how much help they could provide.[302] An additional problem in terms of financial funding of the project was that the Canadian government demanded some guarantee that the refugees could be provided for until they found a job.[303]

The difficulties that JIAS met with while taking care of these migrants were manifold. The Canadian government had agreed to admit family units, yet the Canadian authorities did not accept the rabbinical marriage certificate. Therefore, couples who were married under Jewish law were not considered legally married. For that reason they were inadmissible to Canada.[304] It was tried to arrange secular marriage ceremonies in Lisbon, yet this seems to have been a difficult task. If it could finally be accomplished, the families had at least lost valuable time.[305] Apparently, the refugees in Spain had difficulties in producing travel documents that were satisfactory to the Canadian immigration officer in Lisbon because many of them had come across the Pyrenees as

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[302] Letter from Dijour to Solkin November 1943 Ibid.
[303] Letter from the American Committee for Christian Refugees to the UJR, March 1944, CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 26 file 244
[304] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer December 1943 Ibid.
[305] Memorandum of the JDC (no date given) CJCNA, CJC Collection Series CA, box 26-27 file 244

refugees. Fortunately, the British Embassy was in a position to issue papers that were satisfactory to Cormier.[306]

Generally, it seems that the medical condition of one of the members of the family units was the single most important reason for inadmissibility for the project.[307] In addition, the term family unit was open to a bit of variation. In February 1944, UJR turned to Jolliffe because it was not entirely clear whether it was possible to consider single persons as a family unit. It was also discussed whether the term family unit described a nuclear unit only or whether members of the broader family could be included.[308]

In negotiations between UJR and the Canadian government, it was at least agreed that families whose children had been evacuated to the United States, or had been left behind in enemy territory, and families of which one of the parents was missing, were admissible to Canada. In addition to children, families could also bring grandparents. However, single persons still were excluded.[309] Another problem that arose in connection with the family unit role was that Cormier did not consider persons over 21 years of age as children any more. If there was an unmarried child who was older than 21years in the family, it was inadmissible altogether or the unmarried child had to be left behind as a single person. It was the UJR that tried to intercede with the Canadian immigration authorities on behalf of these families.[310]

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[306] General Letter by the JDC February 1944 Ibid.
[307] Memorandum of the JDC (no date given) Ibid.
[308] Letter from Dijour to Solkin, February 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380
[309] Letter from Solkin to Dijour February 1944 Ibid.
[310] Letter from Hayes to Jolliffe, February 1944, CJCNA, CJC Collection, box 26-27 file 244

After the definition of family unit was clarified, a second issue was the refugees' exact position after they had entered Canada. The Canadian government had admitted them for the duration of the war. Yet the Jewry of North America hoped that Canadian government officials would change their minds on that issue in the future. In March 1944, Solkin observed that:

> "Post-war repatriation of refugees, even those who might be eager to return to their native habitats, is predicated on so many complex factors that it can hardly be expected to start upon cessation of armed hostilities. All the more remote and imponderable appears therefore the problem of refugees given temporary shelter but unwilling to go back whence they originally came. Offhand, it may be assumed that a country extending hospitality to war victims regardless or in spite of considerable opposition would be somewhat inconsistent pressing for the immediate departure of its guests before the emergency is over."[311]

Canadian Jewry was right in assuming that post-war repatriation was a complicated subject. In reality, the Canadian state did not have the resources to keep in touch with all the refugees who had come under the auspices of that program, and repatriation was impossible.[312]

Another issue that was considered was whether the newcomers would be allowed to earn their living. The agreement on that point was that the refugees admitted for the duration of the war had the right to "engage in any legitimate occupation or business."[313]

In January 1944, a joint JIAS-UJR committee was established to look after the housing and maintenance needs of the refugees.[314] JIAS undertook to locate rooms where

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[311] Letter from Solkin to HIAS, March 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380

[312] Avery, "Canada's Response to European Refugees" p.203-04

[313] Letter to HIAS from Solkin, March 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380

the new arrivals could stay. Two types of accommodation were sought in Montreal. The first was rooms offered to the newcomers by the well-to-do families of the Jewish community for a limited time of two or three weeks. The boarders were supposed to find their own place to stay during that time. The other type were rooms that were rented for remuneration.[315]

JIAS also tried to intervene on behalf of families that had been turned down by the Canadian immigration authorities. For example, a woman turned to JIAS when she wanted the family of her brother to be included in the group of refugees who were admitted to Canada. This family was refused because of the bad health of that woman's sister in law.[316] Unfortunately, no further information can be found.

JIAS also received applications for single persons who were reported to be among the refugees in Spain and Portugal. In one of the cases, a Canadian citizen who lived in Montreal tried to get his sister included in the transfer. There was not much hope of her being admitted because the auspices of the program did not include single persons. It could only be hoped that the Canadian officials would change their minds on that subject in the future.[317] A family which had come to Canada among the first group of refugees from Portugal tried to bring over a sister of the wife. The couple who had come to Canada were the only relatives of the woman left behind in Europe. Thus, this family was especially eager to be reunited. Furthermore, the couple had become self-supporting since their arrival, and they were in a position and willing to support that sister.[318] Generally,

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[314] Letter from Kraicer to Solkin January 1944 Ibid.
[315] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer February 1944 Ibid.
[316] Letter from Kraicer to Solkin, April 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 90 file 22427
[317] Letters to and from JIAS March and April 1944 Ibid.
[318] Letter from Kraicer to Solkin September 1944 Ibid.

the Canadian Jews involved in the efforts to help European Jews move to Canada hoped that refugees who had relatives in Canada had a chance of benefiting from the program, even if they had been rejected by the Canadian immigration officer in Lisbon.[319]

For this program, JIAS worked closely with HIAS. One of the reasons was that most of the groups of refugees coming to Canada under the auspices of that project arrived at an American port and traveled to Canada by train. Co-operation was also called for in the cases where the refugees had relatives in the United States. A woman from Ottawa inquired about the possibility of her brother's family coming to Canada among the refugees from Spain. She herself had arrived in Canada only a short time before, so that she was not in a position to assist her brother financially. Yet this family was lucky because there was another sister in the United States who was in a position to give her brother support, so that their passage to North America was secured.[320] In April 1944, it seemed as if all the necessary arrangements had been made, and everything was set for the family to travel to their new home.[321] Yet shortly after that new difficulties arose. The refugees' sister believed that the Canadian government was suddenly concerned because the couple did not have a civil marriage certificate.[322] On the other hand, Solkin dismissed the thought that the family did not come to Canada with the first group of refugees for that reason. He believed that there was a good chance of them arriving on the next ship.[323]

In March 1944, the first refugees who were admitted to Canada under the auspices of that program started their journey. They were met by JIAS and HIAS officials in the

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[319] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer June 1944 Ibid.
[320] Letters to and from JIAS December 1943 and January 1944 Ibid.
[321] Letter to JIAS from HIAS April 1944 Ibid.
[322] Letter to JIAS April 1944 Ibid.

port. Initially, JIAS was given the information that about 300 refugees were on their way to Canada.[324] By the end of March, Solkin gave the following information to Kraicer: 110 family units with 280 persons were reported to have embarked on March 23 and scheduled to arrive in Philadelphia on April 6, 1944. It was planned to split them into two groups of 55 family units each and send them to Montreal and Toronto.[325]

On April 5th, JIAS was informed that the first group was definitely about to arrive the next day or the day after. It arrived without any difficulties, and the new arrivals praised JIAS for their efforts.[326] The same feelings were expressed in a letter that was sent to JIAS by C.R. James, the division passenger agent.[327] It seems that the general agent of the CPR, B.A. Kenney, was also impressed with the work of the Jewish societies involved in the project.[328] Although the preparations for the arrival of the first group seemed to have been under control, the members of JIAS could not relax because a second group of refugees who had to be cared for were ready to get on their way.[329] Of course, this was encouraging news for JIAS.[330]

Towards the end of 1944, the Canadian government stopped the program on behalf of refugees from Spain and Portugal. JIAS tried to get more Jews out of Europe more or less at the last minute. They hoped that at least two of them would be accepted while the doors were already closing. One of the cases was tragic because the brothers of that particular refugee had been fighting to bring over their sister for a long time and were

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[323] Letter from Solkin to the sister of that refugee May 1944 Ibid.
[324] Letter from Solkin to Dijour, March 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box file 22380
[325] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer March 1944 Ibid.
[326] Letter from Bernhard Kornblith, supervisor on the pier, to Solkin April 1944 Ibid.
[327] Letter from James to Murray LeVine, executive director of HIAS, April 1944 Ibid.
[328] Letter from Kenney to LeVine April 1944 Ibid.
[329] Letter from Solkin to Kraicer March 1944 Ibid.

informed that she finally was accepted for the migration when the immigration officer was recalled from Lisbon and the office closed.[331] The reason that was given by the Canadian government for that decision was that the fate of the war had taken a favourable turn for the Allied countries. Therefore, the need to rescue refugees from Spain and Portugal was considered not to be urgent any more.[332]

The refugees encountered problems, however, that occurred after the arrival. One of them was so sick that she had to be hospitalized.[333] Some with relatives in the United States intended to move south and unite with their families.[334] Solkin advised the members of HIAS that the refugees were under the same regulations as the other resident non-citizens. This meant that they needed a labour exit permit from the National Selective Service in Canada and advisory approvals of their cases from Washington where these were applicable. Their movements were not restricted in any other way.[335]

In general, the new arrivals seemed to make good progress in settling in Canada. By May 1944, almost all the members of the group who were able to work had found employment, and most of them had become completely self-supporting. There were only two families in the group that caused severe difficulties for JIAS. In both of the cases, there was a person involved who did not consider taking on any employment.
A 44-year-old man had turned to several banks in an effort to borrow money on the property that had been taken away from him by the Germans. Furthermore, he claimed to

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[330] The arrivals of the other groups were not recorded as carefully.
[331] Letter to JIAS from the HICEM in Lisbon, October 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 90 file 22427
[332] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many p.173
[333] Letter from LeVine to Solkin, April 1944, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22380
[334] Letter from HIAS to Solkin May 1944 Ibid.
[335] Letter from Solkin to HIAS May 1944 Ibid.

be an old man at his age and complained about a variety of ailments any time he was sent to a possible employer. The doctor who had come from Europe with the group and had been familiar with the case for a number of years said that all the ailments were just imaginary. In that case, it was not possible for JIAS to discontinue the financial support because this would have had negative consequences for his wife and child, who were innocent victims of the husband's or father's actions. The other person who did not seek to be self-supporting was a woman who had health problems, but it seems these were not severe enough to make her an invalid.[336]

5.2.3. Help for Internees

Another group of adults that was helped by JIAS were the internees who were brought from Great Britain. They were interned in England because of their German, Austrian, or Italian citizenship when panic broke out in Great Britain after the fall of France. Initially, internment was meant to be temporary. Yet in the confusion of these days, refugees who had been classified as anti-Nazi were put together with fascists and Nazis and finally found themselves on their way to Canada. Canada had agreed to take dangerous internees and therefore treated everyone on these ships like enemies. Yet most of the new arrivals were genuine refugees. In fact, the majority of them had had arranged for their movement to the United Sates and were waiting for their turn to enter there when they were sent to the internment camps in Canada.[337] UJR also stressed this point

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[336] Letter from Solkin to Hayes May 1944 Ibid.

[337] Paula Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties: Canadian Jewry, the King Government, and the Refugee Dilemma" in On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State 1939-45, ed. by Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, Lubomyr Luciuk, (Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre,1988), p.155

together with the fact that almost all of the internees had been considered to have anti-Nazi sentiments, if they were not even in favour of the British cause.[338]

Members of UJR visited the camps, and it was through memorandums and reports of that organization that JIAS was informed about the situation. They reported on the moral and physical condition of the internees. Morale in the camps was somewhat low when they were first established. In certain instances, this manifested itself in disobedience. One of the reasons for this was that some facilities in the camps were not adequate for the purpose.

Obviously, the morale rose when proper showers and kitchens were installed. In the end, the inmates of the camps themselves undertook measures to make their lives more comfortable. In at least one of the camps they opened their own canteen, and they were about to open two shops.[339] The fact that the internees themselves opened businesses and participated in work programs, which included jobs such as driving the garbage to the disposal across town or working in the garden of the commandant of the camp, indicates that they were prepared to make the best of their situation. The inmates in the camps felt that being active helped them to keep their spirits up. Apart from that, a reasonable amount of money could be earned that way, which made the internees independent.[340]

Many of the problems concerning the internees were connected to religion. They were not provided with ritual articles. Therefore, UJR took over the responsibility of supplying them with the required instruments. One other problem that JIAS dealt with was the discrimination against orthodox Jews in one of the internment camps.

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[338] Memorandum of UJR, March 1941, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A

[339] Memorandum of UJR January, 1941 Ibid.

Misunderstandings originating from religious issues had occurred in November and December 1940. About three month later, the problems were solved, and according to the memorandum of UJR, conditions were considered to be satisfactory. In general, UJR saw to it that religious observance was facilitated as far as possible.[341] In addition to religious articles and items that were needed to keep up the very necessities of life, the internees were given musical instruments, sports equipment, books, and other materials in order to keep their spirits up and give them a possibility to learn.[342] One other issue was the provision of medical care. For that purpose, UJR sent medical supplies to the camps.[343] In general, it can be said that life in the camps became bearable over time.[344]

Of course the most important issue concerning the internees was their release. The Canadian government was disconcerted when they were informed that the majority of the internees were genuine refugees and had to be released. Even after the British authorities started to release the internees in their camps, and although officials from England tried to persuade the Canadians into following suit, the Canadian government did not do so. Apparently, Blair was involved in blocking the release of the internees. Considering the situation, even the Canadian Jewish Congress felt that they were in a complicated position. As far as the Canadian government was concerned, the internees were considered to be dangerous Nazis, and Saul Hayes felt that Canadian Jewry could not risk being criticized for fighting for men that still were under suspicion. Thus even the Jewish community in Canada was slow to interfere on behalf of the interned Jews. Later, it was

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[340] Paula Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees: Part Two" Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal (Fall 1978), p.88
[341] Memorandum of UJR, March 1941, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21989 A
[342] Ibid.
[343] Minutes of a meeting of UJR May 1942 Ibid.

argued that it had been more important to try and rescue European Jews, as those in the internment camps were not in immediate danger any more.[345]

UJR tried to arrange for the internees' immigration to Canada, the United States, or other countries. In several of the cases, the interned refugees had applied for immigration to the United States prior to their internment. After they were placed in the internment camps, they could not proceed with their immigration plans. Should they be released, they would have to be sent to England because the Canadian Government considered itself to be a custodian for Great Britain, and the internees were believed to be the responsibility of the British authorities. At the same time, the immigration plans to the United States that their future depended on would have been wrecked were the internees compelled to return to England. So it was of the greatest importance to obtain the release by the British authorities and the visas to the United States at the same time.

UJR worked on that problem together with the British and American governments. In the end, it was agreed that the British government would not release the internees before they had solved their problems. The American authorities also were willing to co-operate and synchronize the procedures.[346] The internees were also barred from immigration to the United States because the United States generally did not admit potential immigrants who were in custody of another country. On the other hand, they consented to make an exception for the interned refugees. In February 1941, the Central Department for Interned Refugees expressed the hope that the immigration of internees to the United States had been made possible at last. In the beginning, priority was given to

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[344] Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants" p.85
[345] Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties", p.158-60
[346] Minutes of the meeting of UJR, March 1941, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A

those people who had been given visas for the United States prior to their internment. Other reasons for preference were if the applicants had first degree relatives in the United States.[347]

In addition, UJR made progress in the negotiations on behalf of the interned refugees with the Canadian government. It was decided not to treat them as "prisoners of war" any more, but to consider them as "civilian internees", which allowed them more privileges.[348] In many instances, it was due to the presence of Alexander Paterson, His Majesty's Commissioner for Prisons, who had been sent from England, if Canadian Jewry was successful in its negotiations with the Canadian government.[349]

In general, certain categories of internees were considered to have an easier time being released than others. Schools were opened where the inmates of the camps could get vocational training, or obtain university degrees in order to help them get employment outside.[350] In addition, they made special efforts to bring about the release of bona fide and Yeshiva students. It was necessary to find sponsors for these students because their education had to be paid for.[351] The students also had to be under 21 years of age and in a position to prove that their education had been interrupted by internment. Furthermore, the candidate had to be admitted by an educational institution.[352]

UJR also tried to promote the release of doctors and technicians. In fact, Canadians had sent requests for the release of internees who could contribute to the war effort. The relatives of the interned Jews also inquired about chances of getting the members of their

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[347] Letter from the Central Department for Interned Refugees February 1941 Ibid.
[348] Memorandum UJR October 1940 Ibid.
[349] Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties" p.161-62
[350] Draper, "Accidental Immigrants" p.86-87
[351] Minutes of a meeting of UJR, May 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A

families out of the camps.[353] In addition, UJR hoped for the release of clothing workers who could help to produce uniforms. However, the Canadian government was opposed to that scheme because the production of uniforms was not considered to be war industry.[354]

In the long run, public opinion in Canada changed in favour of the internees. Especially in 1942 JIAS received many inquiries by Canadians who were interested in employing one of the internees. These letters that were sent to the Canadian authorities display how difficult it was to bring about releases. In each of them, the potential employer mentioned that a person with equal skills could not be found in Canada. In addition, those interested in employing the internees guaranteed that the wages paid would put the potential employee into a position to be self-supporting, so that the Canadian state did not have to take on any obligation. It is also interesting that many of the people interested in employing internees mentioned that they were unable to find skilled staff because former employees had joined the army.[355] There is evidence that some of the internees, with their specific skills, made a vital contribution to the companies that hired them.[356] The refugees usually established good relationships and friendships with their co-workers. The single most important reason for clashes was if the internees had higher skills than their colleagues.[357]

Although it seems that the placement of the internees in employment was fairly successful once it was started, there was one issue that presented an obstacle to

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[352] Draper, "Accidental Immigrants" p.103-04
[353] Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties" p.164
[354] Minutes of a meeting of UJR, May 1942, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A
[355] Inquiries about employment of internees, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22351
[356] Draper, "Accidental Immigrants" p.100
[357] Ibid.p.102

employment in some cases. Sometimes the potential employers did not see their way clear to employ internees who would have been suitable for their businesses because they were orthodox and did not want to work on Saturdays.[358] In other cases, the internees were exploited as cheap labour. Employers could do this because the wartime regulations made it almost impossible for the refugees to change their jobs. If an employer complained to Blair, the ex-internees were threatened with being re-interned.[359]

The more favourable view towards the internees was also reflected in the parliament. One of its members wondered why the internees were kept in the camps although they could make a contribution to Canada's war effort and to Canadian society. The reverse of this argument was also mentioned in favour of the internees. It was an unnecessary expense for the Canadian state to pay for the upkeep of the interned people if they could be self-supporting[360] It seems that UJR was content with the results of their efforts on behalf of the internees. In the minutes of one of the meetings, their situation was commented on. According to UJR, a total of 652 internees had been released since the last report of the Central Committee for Interned Refugees, with only about 400 persons remaining in the camps. An additional 130 internees were releasable after their situation had been clarified with the British authorities.[361]

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[358] Inquiries about employment of internees, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22351

[359] Draper, "Accidental Immigrants" p.100-01

[360] Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties" p.168-70

[361] Minutes of a meeting of UJR October (unfortunately the year is not given, however, there is reason to believe that it took place in 1942), CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 86 file 21689 A

On the other hand, the released internees were not left to manage on their own after their release. On the contrary, files were kept on their cases, so that all the information would be available for presentation to various governments.[362]

When more and more internees were released, Blair warned the Canadian government against a "Jewish plot" to bring unwanted immigrants to Canada. He feared that these people would build lives for themselves in Canada, making it impossible to send them home after the war. As a result, no promises of citizenship were given, and the ex- internees were told not to make any long-term plans in Canada. Therefore, the people released from the internment camps had a very insecure future at best. Despite this, their integration into Canadian society progressed faster than anyone could have anticipated. During the final stages of the releases, the CJC published a pamphlet illustrating that the Jews who had been interned were busy contributing to Canada's welfare, not Hitler's or Germany's. Finally, in October 1945, after hostilities had ceased, the ex- internees were given immigrant status, and all the obstacles to naturalization were lifted.[363]

6.2.4. Polish Refugees

After Poland was overrun by the Germans, many Jews fled to other European countries. Naturally, Canadian citizens with relatives in Poland were concerned about the fate of the Polish members of their families. In order to get the required information, JIAS kept contact with the Union of Russian Jews in New York. The Union of Russian Jews on their part had contact with the Jewish community in Moscow. That community

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[362] Ibid.
[363] Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties" p.170-71

had a special office for the purpose of locating refugees.[364] The World Jewish Congress had information on Polish Jews who had fled to Rumania.[365] Inquiries were sent to JIAS and the society tried to collect the information on Polish Jews who had arrived in safe countries. In one case, a businessman from Saskatchewan had found an announcement in the paper saying that his niece was looking for him. Yet JIAS did not have any record on the girl's fate.[366] JIAS also received a letter from Tucson, Arizona because a family from that town wanted to get any help available in their efforts to locate their relatives.[367] Unfortunately, there is no information as to the success of the search.

In those cases where the Jewish organizations managed to establish the contact between the relatives, the part of the family that was in North America could take steps in order to alleviate the condition their European relatives were in. For example, a manufacturer from Montreal started to send parcels to his brother once he knew his new address.[368]

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[364] Letter to JIAS from the Union of Russian Jews, September 1943, CJCNA, JIAS Collection Series C, box 89 file 22299 A
[365] Letter from the World Jewish Congress to Solkin January 1944 Ibid.
[366] Letters to and from JIAS August 1943 Ibid.
[367] Letter to JIAS August 1943 Ibid.
[368] Letter to JIAS January 1944 Ibid.

5.3. Some General Observations on Adult Immigration to Canada in the 1940s

Although the Canadian government agreed to admit some refugees, it can be concluded that rescuing them was not its main concern. The regulations for the efforts on behalf of victims of Nazi persecution from Vichy France and from the Iberian Peninsula were so narrow that the number of refugees who could qualify for the projects was limited from the start. The project on behalf of refugees from Vichy France came to naught due to the severance of the diplomatic relations between the Vichy government and Canada. The movement of refugee families from Spain and Portugal was fairly successful, although it was limited as to the number of families and subject to a narrow interpretation of the term family unit. Part of this success was due to the efforts of UJR and their negotiations with the Canadian government over a more lenient interpretation of the rules.

The largest group of Jewish immigrants who came in the 1940s was the internees who were sent from Great Britain. Initially, they were not supposed to leave the camps or make plans for a future in Canada. It took a long time for anyone in Canada to approach the subject of their release. On the other hand, when the Jewish organizations entered negotiations with the British, American, and Canadian governments over the release of the internees and over more privileges for them, they made a great difference in the lives of the inmates of the camps. UJR was given concessions from all the governments.

The adult immigrants who came to Canada in the 1940s owe a great deal to the efforts of the JIAS and UJR. These were the organizations that negotiated with the immigration authorities on their behalf and prepared everything for their arrival and a speedy and successful settlement.

Conclusion

When the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society was founded in 1920, the majority of its clients were Jews from Eastern Europe who were fleeing from persecution or were refugees from the results of the First World War. In the 1930s, the nature of the work of JIAS changed due to the new situation in Europe. It was now Middle and Western Europe that became the centre of concern for World Jewry. Furthermore, the new clients of the organization came from another class of people. Usually, they were highly educated, and several of them even had rare skills. Unlike Eastern Europeans, they came from a position of relative security and were not accustomed to migration.[369] They had lived more or less secure and carefree lives until the Nazis came to power. It was only when, starting in 1933, more and more restrictions were put into place against Jews that their position deteriorated. One serious result of these was that many Jews lost their jobs. These facts also show in the applications. All of the applicants underlined that they had an education and made an effort to convince the reader that they were not going to be public charges in what they hoped to be their new home.

Although these refugees were highly educated and decent, hardworking people who could have made a contribution to the economy of any country in the world, there were many obstacles that prevented these potential immigrants from being admitted to Canada. It was the decade in which the Great Depression made the position of new immigrants to any country a very precarious one. Newcomers were not welcome anywhere, and opposition to new immigration was strong in every country. Because unemployment was

high in the countries affected by the Depression, they did not want their labour force to grow. Thus European countries provided shelter for the victims of the Nazis, but did not grant them the right of a permanent stay. They rather wanted to perceive them as visitors on their way to a safe haven elsewhere.[370]

The Evian Conference of 1938 had made it very clear that no country in the world was prepared to give the Jewish refugees shelter. Canada was no exception from that rule, and it was because of the country's economic problems that Canada had introduced an Order in Council with very restrictive immigration laws in 1931. After that, there were only a few immigrants who were allowed to enter the country. They had to be the wives, future wives, or unmarried children of an adult male Canadian citizen. The other groups of immigrants whose applications were considered were British or American citizens with a considerable amount of money, and agriculturists.

In Canada, antisemitism also presented a difficult problem. Because it was in Quebec that antisemitic feelings seem to have been strongest, there was always the danger that the province would separate from the rest of the country. So the issue of national unity was always connected with antisemitism. Furthermore, the King government could not turn a blind eye to the sentiment of the Quebec public unless they wanted to risk a massive loss of support in that province, which would have deprived the Liberal Party of its majority in the federal parliament. The basis of the antisemitic feeling in Quebec was French-Canadian nationalism and the influence of the Catholic Church.

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[369] Annual Report 1933-34 of JIAS KE 3
[370] Marrus, The Unwanted p.132-33

French-language newspapers such as Le Devoir and L'Action expressed that French-Canadians believed their language and culture to be threatened.[371]

Despite this, the members of JIAS made many efforts in order to help their unfortunate co-religionists. They kept sending delegations to the ministers of immigration and the Prime Ministers over the years. The JIAS also kept close contact with the immigration authorities. Therefore, JIAS could contact the branch of immigration of the Department of Mines and Resources on behalf of individual applicants. Thus it was possible for JIAS to obtain Orders in Council that allowed some Jews to enter Canada under a special permit outside the strict immigration laws. These special permits could be acquired on behalf of immigrants with outstanding skills if employment could be found for them. In some of the cases, JIAS officials even established the contact between the potential immigrants and the possible employers. Other groups of immigrants who were admissible to Canada under the Orders in Council were entrepreneurs with enough money to establish themselves in business in Canada on the condition that there was no danger of them competing with Canadian companies and workers who were needed for these industries.

JIAS dealt with applicants who were in many different situations, and some of the refugees were in urgent need of help. As early as 1933, some of them had fled from Germany to another European country, but could not stay there permanently. Thus they were compelled to find a new home quickly. Others who were in the same situation were those who could avoid being sent to a concentration camp (sometimes for a second time) only by promising that they would leave Germany as soon as possible.

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[371] Valerie Knowles, Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration Policy 1540-1997 (Toronto, Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1997), p.116-18

The situation became even worse at the end of the 1930s. *Kristallnacht* was one of the important turning points in the fate of German Jewry. This was also obvious from the fact that the number of applications for immigration rose after November 1938. But it also was the overtone of some of the applications that displayed the precariousness of the situation. JIAS received letters in which the heartrending stories of individual Jews were presented. In this situation, JIAS tried to help the refugees in many ways. For example, they kept a file on specialists who were believed to have a chance of finding employment and being admitted to Canada. On the other hand, there was a lot of frustration going along with that kind of work. With many of the applicants, it was obvious from the start that no position could be found for them. And even if the applicants had extraordinary knowledge, there was only a slim chance of definitely finding somebody to employ them.

JIAS was in constant contact with HICEM in Europe, the *Israelische Kultusgemeinde* in Vienna, and the *Hilfsverein Deutscher Juden*. Some of them sent JIAS lists with names of Jewish refugees who were believed to have a chance of finding employment. In other cases, European organizations brought the stories of European Jews to the attention of JIAS. Many times, European organizations turned to JIAS on behalf of refugees who tried to get into contact with Canadian relatives. JIAS located the Canadian members of the refugees' families, and, in those cases where the relatives were willing and in a position to help, those persons had a better chance of being admitted to Canada. Similar cases were those where individual Canadians turned to JIAS for assistance because they wanted to help some of their friends from Europe.

A group of immigrants who had a fairly good chance of being admitted to Canada were farmers. The conditions were that they were dedicated agriculturists and able to

bring at least $1,000 with them. JIAS was involved in a program to bring refugee farmers to Canada together with ICA. As soon as the Nazis took power in Germany, ICA bought farms for the settlement of Jewish farmers. Up to the year 1937, ICA was in possession of these farms and sold them to Jewish refugees. Towards the end of the 1930s, however, ICA could no longer support the farmer movement from Europe financially. Despite this, they still did everything in their power to assist families who wanted to settle in Canada as farmers. They answered all sorts of questions on the prices of farms and equipment, farming products, the profitability of farms, and climate. In some cases, Jewish farmers had entered negotiations with owners of farms that they wanted to buy, lease, or rent. ICA furnished them with the necessary data on the specific farms. In addition, ICA inquired about the prospects of veterinarians to practice in Western Canada.

The Canadian authorities set the guidelines for the selection of the farmers, but it was the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railway Companies that were put in charge of the project. The interrelations between the railway companies and JIAS and ICA were not always easy. Members of ICA were afraid that the railway companies did not display enough responsibility in order to run the project successfully. The ICA officials who were familiar with the work of the railway companies believed that those were not interested in saving refugees, but in making profits, i.e. collecting the deposit and selling the land. They accused the railways of not having a real plan for the settlement of the farming families and of leaving them on their own as soon as the farmers were settled. Some of the problems could be solved during personal meetings. Despite this, the impression remains that ICA was not entirely satisfied with the performance of CPR and CNR throughout the entire settlement project.

After some of the farming families had been settled, ICA visited them in order to find out about the progress they had made. ICA knew that the future settlement of Jewish farmers in Canada depended on the success of those who were already there because, generally, Jews were believed not to be dedicated farmers. Simon Belkin, who examined the situation of the farming families, was of the opinion that those families who could not bring more money than the $1,000 required for the deposit with the railway companies had to go through a difficult time after their arrival in Canada. Other families were successful as farmers and made reasonable profits.

The Canadian government also consented to the movement of some groups of children to Canada. The first group that was considered by JIAS and other Jewish organizations was a group of children who had fled to Great Britain from the European continent. The efforts on behalf of these children were launched in 1939-40. However, this program ended in a great disappointment for Canadian Jewry. Due to the outbreak of the war, it was only children with British citizenship who were considered for the project by the Canadian government. Thus the number of Jewish children who could be saved was much lower than the Canadian Jewish community had hoped. JIAS and UJR also tried to bring children from the unoccupied part of France to Canada in 1942. This project came to naught due to a change in the fortunes of war. The diplomatic relations between France and Canada were severed. Therefore, the project could not be finished, and none of the children ever came.

Yet JIAS was very eager to prepare everything for the arrival of those children while it seemed that they could be saved. The most difficult undertaking was to find proper homes for them. Some legal problems such as the question of adoption also had to

be solved. JIAS was also involved in the reunion of children who had been sent to the United States with their parents. The parents had come to Canada themselves and, after they had established themselves in their new home, wanted their children to stay with them again. JIAS and UJR helped these families with the negotiations with the Canadian immigration authorities and organized the details of the actual journey.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the situation in Europe and that of the refugees changed fundamentally. Because Germany was very successful in its war efforts until 1942, the number of persons who were in imminent danger grew constantly. On the other hand, it became more difficult both to leave Europe and enter safe countries. The single biggest problem for people who wanted to leave Europe was to obtain the necessary exit visas.

The reasons that prevented refugees from coming to Canada were that enemy aliens and stateless refugees were inadmissible to Canada regardless of their situation. In addition, it was hard for the refugees to comply with some of the old immigration regulations. One was the continuous journey clause, which had served the purpose of keeping workers from India out of the country. Because the Canadian immigration laws were not changed during the whole period of the war, all the refugees and groups of refugees who were admitted to Canada had to do so with a special permission from the Canadian government. In that respect, the situation remained the same as it had been in the 1930s. Thus the Jewish organizations had to intervene with the immigration authorities for every single concession. JIAS was always eager to keep up good relations with the Canadian immigration officers, which also meant hiding the frustration that they must have felt.

Finally, the Canadian authorities agreed to a rescue effort on behalf of Europeans from Vichy France on certain conditions. The persons to be brought to Canada from that area were supposed to be genuine refugees. The Canadian authorities did not look favourably on the applications on behalf of refugees who had been living there for a long time. It was also required that the refugees from France should have close contact with relatives or friends who were Canadian residents and in a position to guarantee that they would support the newcomers for a certain time after their arrival. JIAS collected the application forms that were filled in on behalf of these refugees. The efforts to rescue adult Jews from the unoccupied part of France were launched around the same time as the project on behalf of children and failed for the same reason.

The program undertaken in order to bring Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1943 was more successful. Although the Canadian government tried to do as little as possible, several Jewish families came to Canada. UJR constantly contacted the Canadian government while this movement was under way. Several issues concerning the admissibility of some of the refugees and the legal status of the newcomers had to be clarified. JIAS, for its part, met the refugees in the port. They also looked for accommodation both permanent and temporary and assisted the newly arrived in finding employment. This project can be deemed successful in the sense that the families who came under the auspices of that program settled in Canada without great problems and became self-supporting in the course of a few weeks. In addition, JIAS kept close contact with HIAS on behalf of Jews who came to Canada from the Iberian Penisula and had relatives in the United States.

The largest group of Jewish refugees who came to Canada came by accident. In 1940, after the fall of France, the authorities in Great Britain became scared about fifth column activities and interned enemy aliens who had fled to England at an earlier stage. Yet in the confusion, Nazis and Anti-Nazis and even orthodox Jews had been sent to the same internment camps. UJR improved the conditions inside the camps by furnishing articles that the inmates needed.

Initially, Canada had agreed to admit dangerous enemies into the country to keep them in Canadian camps. When the British authorities informed the Canadians that the majority of the internees were genuine refugees and that the British authorities had authorized the release of those interned in England, the Canadian government was furious because they knew that they had to release the internees from their camps as well. The fact that the Canadian Government was disconcerted at this news displays a lot about the relationship between the Canadian authorities and the Jews. Canada's High Commissioner, Vincent Massey, even demanded an explanation why innocent people had been sent to Canada instead of the dangerous internees that the authorities had consented to receive.[372]

Everybody in Canada, even the CJC, was reluctant to address the issue of the release, yet it grew more and more urgent as time went by. Many of the interned Jews had arranged for their immigration to the United States prior to internment. UJR now helped them to enter there. The Jewish organizations successfully negotiated both with the British and the American governments in order to make their movement to the United States possible. Negotiations were also entered with the Canadian authorities. The first internees who were released and stayed in Canada were dedicated students who had

found a sponsor in Canada who paid for their education. JIAS was involved in finding employment and in bringing about the release for the interned Jews who wanted to stay in Canada. In several cases, they served as a go-between between the internees and their possible employers. In others, they were helpful in the negotiations with the Canadian authorities to bring about the release of the internees. They also argued for better conditions for those still inside the camps.

JIAS was also involved in finding relatives of Canadian refugees in Europe. Refugees from Poland were the group that was inquired about the most. Together with HIAS, JIAS kept contact with the Jewish community in Moscow because this community had established an office for the purpose of searching for Jewish refugees.

The fight against opposition to new immigration, antisemitism, and, to a certain degree, against the immigration authorities must have been hard. The difficulties that Jewry all over the world was confronted with seem to have left Canadian Jews with the feeling of being ostracized from society, while the feeling of unity among Jews all over the world seems to have become stronger. It can at least be observed that remarks describing the Holocaust as a purely Jewish problem that had to be solved by Jews alone can be found more frequently in the annual reports after the outbreak of the Second World War.

Two of them can be found in the annual report of JIAS of 1940. A reference was made to the "the blackest crisis of our people".[373] Another sentence read: "Pride in Jewish unity manifests itself in the hearts and minds of the givers and receivers alike and

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[372] Draper, "Fragmented Loyalties" p.155-156
[373] Annual Report of JIAS of 1940 KE 6

both are tried by a spirit of understanding and enduring friendship."[374] Solkin said in one of his reports: "...this war will also test our loyalty to our own kin."[375]

However, JIAS made an attempt to keep up hope during the trying years from 1939 to 1945 despite the obstacles they met constantly. In his address in the annual report of 1942 Barsky said:

> "Viewed against the background of appalling Jewish catastrophe and the tragic scenes of a world ablaze in a global war and historic upheaval, the activities of JIAS during the last year must be logically judged in the light of individual achievement rather than in terms of cold statistics and volume alone."[376]

The overtone in the annual reports of JIAS did not always display the frustration that was the constant companion of the members of JIAS. Especially the feelings towards Blair were not given away. In one instant it was even mentioned that he was helpful: "It is therefore our pleasant duty to express our profound gratitude to Mr. C. F. Blair, Director of Immigration."[377] It is obvious that this was designed to keep up a good relationship with the immigration authorities.

In addition, there were frequent disagreements among the Jewish organizations in Canada, apparently, because their spheres were not defined clearly enough.[378] JIAS complained frequently that UJR or the Canadian Jewish Congress penetrated their sphere and did not give the society enough credit for its endeavours. This is a dark spot in the history of the rescue efforts of Canadian Jewry. It will never be known whether the

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[374] Ibid.
[375] Annual Report of JIAS 1941 KE 7
[376] Annual Report of JIAS 1942 KE 8
[377] Annual Report of JIAS for 1940 KE 6
[378] Abella and Troper raise that point in None is Too Many p.13

Jewish organizations in Canada lost valuable time and mental strength over their own rivalries, implying that, maybe, more Jews could have found refuge in Canada.

In the 1940s, it was not only the immigration, but also the emigration problems that had to be overcome. Even in cases where the Canadian authorities had agreed to a movement of refugees, their coming forward was prevented, in many cases because the appropriate authorities in Europe did not issue exit visas.

Considering all this, it is safe to assume that JIAS tried hard in order to help Jews in Europe. Therefore, it can be said that, due to the existence of JIAS, Jewish refugees from Europe had an easier time immigrating to Canada. They negotiated with the Canadian government over special permits for entry and assisted the newcomers in the process of settling in their new home. A number of European Jews were saved, or settled in Canada so successfully only because of the endeavors of JIAS. Even if they were not particularly successful in bringing refugees over to Canada, they definitely made a difference for those who came. Furthermore, JIAS helped European Jews who came to Canada on their way to other countries.

The efforts of the Canadians who assisted refugees in the 1930s and 1940s deserve to be acknowledged in the historical record. Maybe it cannot be expressed better than in the words of Gerald Dirks "Although these humanitarian activists were never numerous and their efforts bore little fruit until after the Second World War, they were notable for their dedication and their persistence...".[379] The Canadians who were concerned about the refugees in Europe in general had more information on the events in Europe than the

[379] Gerald Dirks, "The Canadian Rescue Effort: The Few Who Cared" in: The Canadian Jewish Mosaic, ed. by Morton Weinfeld, (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons 1981), p.77

average Canadian because many of them had connections to international organizations.[380]

However, these findings do not change the fact that the position of new immigrants to Canada was devastating from their point of view. All the authors who have discussed the immigration situation agree on that point. Especially Simon Belkin stresses that the immigration record was "sorrowful" despite the efforts to help the refugees.[381] Joseph Kage adds to this view by commenting on the immigration of Jews in the 1930s. He states that the ratio of Jewish immigration was not higher than that of normal times, yet at the same time underlining that the times were not normal.[382] For the 1940s, Kage concludes that the number of immigrants who came to Canada during the war was small to begin with, and only between 3 and 4 per cent of the migrants were Jews.[383] It was only after the Second World War that considerable Jewish immigration to Canada started again. Many Jews entered Canada from one of the camps for displaced persons after 1948.[384]

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[380] Gerald Dirks, "The Few Who Cared" 77-78
[381] Belkin, Through Narrow Gates p.180
[382] Kage, With Faith and Thanksgiving p.105
[383] Ibid p.109
[384] For more information on post-war immigration of Jews to Canada and the special programs for displaced persons see Abella and Troper, None is Too Many

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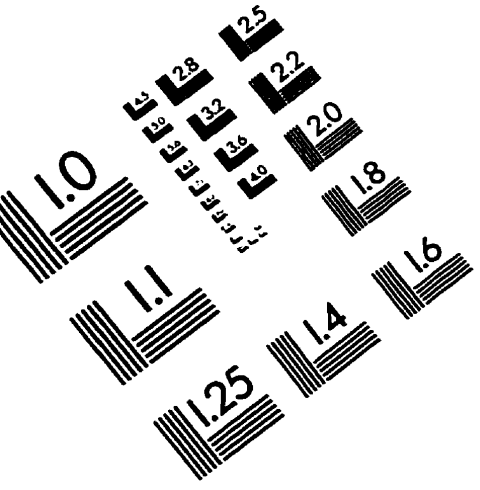

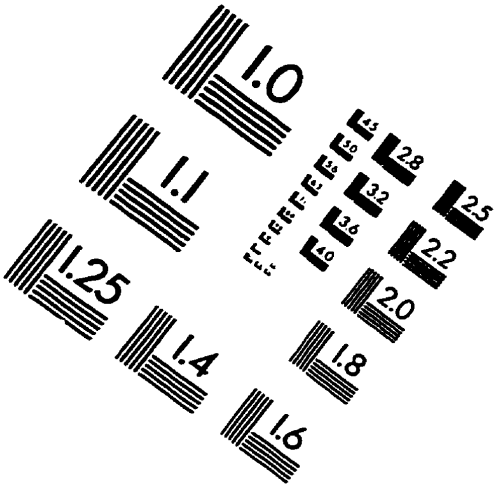

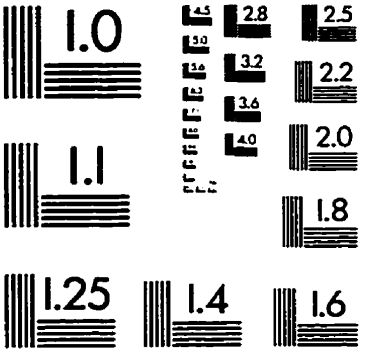

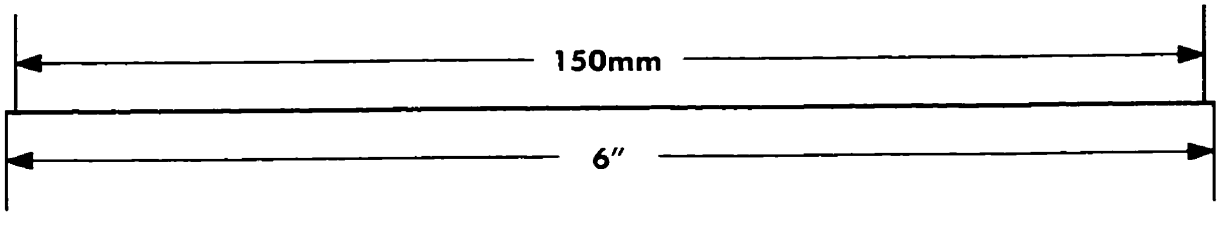

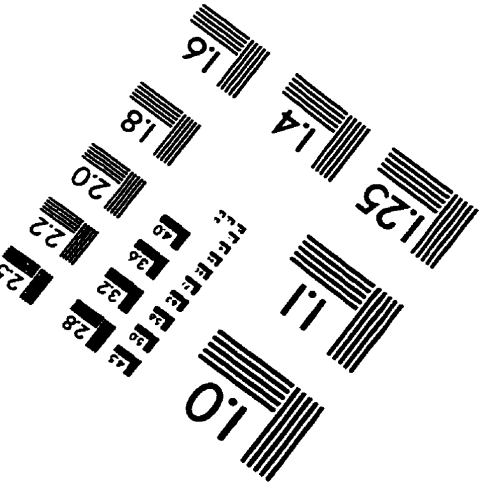

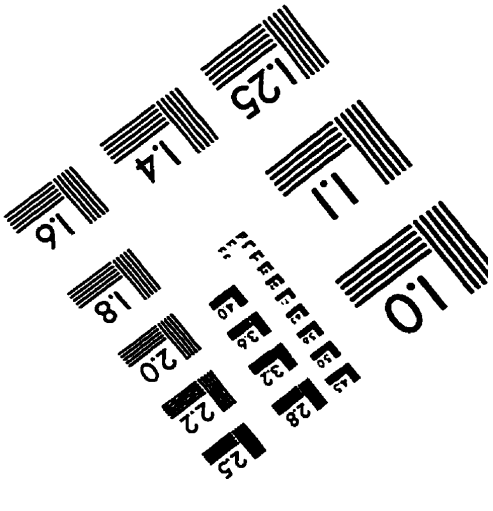

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