

American Refugee Policy before and at the outbreak of WW2

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Presented to the Philosophical Club of Cleveland

on October 26, 2010

In the six years between Hitler's rise to power and the outbreak of WW2 on September 1, 1939, a critical immigration issue involved the admittance of German Jews to the US. Since the Immigration Act of 1924 the annual quota on all immigrants coming to the US was 154,000, of which about 28,000 slots were allocated to Germany and Austria, combined, while about 85,000 were allocated to Great Britain and Ireland.

Following are the figures for the percentage of persons immigrating (most of them Jews) to the US from Germany and Austria under this 28,000 allocation:

1933-5.5%

1934- 13.7%

1935- 20.2%

1936- 24.3%

1937- 42.1%

1938-85%

1939- 100%

1940 95.3%

1941- 47.7%

1942- 19.2%

1943- 9.8%

1944- 9.2%

The total between 1933 and 1945 was about 120,000 persons out of a quota of 328,000 persons over twelve years/.

From 1933 on Germany began to turn up the heat on the 500,000 religious Jews living in the country and on the other 500,000 persons who were non-observant, but who had Jewish blood. On April 1, 1933 there was a national boycott of Jewish stores, products and services, particularly law and medicine. A week later, all non-Aryans were barred from holding civil service jobs, including teaching. In 1935 the Nuremberg Laws took away from all non-Aryans their citizenship status, barred intermarriage or sexual relations between Jews and Aryans, and barred Germans from working for Jews. After the Austrian Anschluss in March of 1938 Germany enacted a law requiring all Jews to register their property and in November of 1938

Germany levied a fine of about \$400 billion on such properties. On November 8, 1938 following the assassination of the 3d secretary of the German embassy in Paris by a Polish-German Jew, outraged at the transport and dumping of his relatives at the Polish border, Kristallnacht took place where Jewish establishments were broken into and trashed. The assassination in Paris in 1938 is a central theme of Gunter Grass' recent novel, "Crab Walk".

There was ample reason for Jews to want to flee Germany and then Austria after March 1937 and about 150,000 of them did so, many of them ending up in Palestine before the UK imposed a 75,000 per year limit on number of entries. At the time Germany was glad to be rid of its Jews and freely allowed emigration while confiscating property in the process. Not until November of 1941 did Germany close its borders and those of the countries it occupied.

Among those who did manage to make it the US were Kurt Loebel, the late violinist for the Cleveland Orchestra and violin teacher at CIM, and his wife, Ingrid. He fled from Vienna to Antwerp in 1938 at the time of the Anschluss, took a boat from there to New York where he had relatives and worked several years in a factory before attending Julliard on a scholarship and forging a career in music. Ingrid left Berlin after Kristallnacht. Likewise, the late Klaus George Roy, program annotator for the Cleveland Orchestra for many years, fled Vienna in 1939 and made his way to Boston. Bernard Eckstein, who now lives at Kendall at Oberlin with his wife, Sheila, is another who escaped Nazi Germany at the time of Kristallnacht and came to the US under the 1939 quota.

One of those who did not make it was Otto Frank, father of Ann Frank, and his family. Frank was a German Jew living in Amsterdam. Frank applied for a visa in 1938, and obtained the necessary affidavits of support from US citizens, but by the time he did so he was in a line of 300,000 refugees waiting for admission. Earlier this year we read the obit of Miep Gies, the Austrian who, after marrying a Dutchman, became a Dutch citizen and was a key person for delivering food and provisions to the Frank family while they were in hiding.

You will note from the chart above, that in 1938 the 28,000 limits were 85% filled and in 1939 100% of the quota was met. This followed the conference of European and English speaking nations at Evian-Les Bains in eastern France on the shores of Lake Geneva in July 1939. While the conference failed to persuade any country, except Bolivia and General Raphael Trujillo's Dominican Republic, to raise its quotas, the other nations did agree to try to fill their existing quotas. Bolivia in the late thirties accepted about 20,000 Jews for the purpose of resettling as farmers near the Paraguayan border. Most became shopkeepers in LaPaz and aroused anti-Semitic sentiment. Trujillo apparently had an ulterior motive for accepting Jewish refugees, as he charged an entry fee of \$500 per person, but finally accepted a total of about 645 without a fee to farm an area once belonging to United Fruit company on the northeast coast of the island of Hispaniola.

For two years, 1938 and 1939, under pressure from FDR, the State Department granted immigration visas close to its full complement of quota immigrants from Germany and Austria, 90% of who were Jews.

One of the representatives from the US at the Evians conference was James G. McDonald, former high commissioner of refugees for the League of Nations from 1934 to 1935 when he resigned in disgust at the lack of cooperation from member nations. McDonald, who

hailed from Coldwater, Ohio, spoke fluent German and had many contacts with high level Nazis. Based on his conversations with Nazis, McDonald was one of the few, who predicted the Final Solution, and he continued to work, without much success, for allowing the immigration of more Jews, in his capacity as Chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of American indifference towards Jewish refugees before WW2 involved the SS St. Louis under the command of Captain Gustav Schroeder sailing in May 1939 with about 900 Jewish passengers from Germany to Cuba. At the last minute the Cuban government reneged and refused to admit the passengers on tourist visas. The St. Louis sailed to Miami and requested permission to put ashore its passengers. The State Department refused and the St. Louis sailed back to Europe. Off the coast of the UK, Captain Schroeder, who was sympathetic to the cause of his passengers threatened to scuttle his ship if the European Atlantic powers did not allow his refugees to land. These countries finally relented and agreed to divide up the passenger list. In 1993 Yad Vashim in Israel recognized Captain Schroeder as one of the righteous among Nations.

A similar episode occurred in August 1940 when the Portuguese ship Quanza docked in New York, but the 100 or more Jewish refugees on board were denied entry on the insistence of the State Department. The Quanza sailed to Vera Cruz, Mexico, and again many of the Jews were denied visas. On its return voyage to Europe the Quanza made a coal stop in Virginia, just long enough for Eleanor Roosevelt to instruct the consular official there, to grant visas to the remaining Jews without the knowledge of the State Department.

Three questions have arisen, at least in my mind, about US policy towards refugees from Germany:

- 1) Why were the quotas so stingy?
- 2) Why weren't the quotas raised given the ugly circumstances in Germany in the 1930's, which were well known in the US?
- 3) Why weren't even these stingy quotas filled, except in 1939 when 100% of the 28,000 Germans and Austrians were admitted, 90% of who were Jews?

I believe the answer to the first question lies in the historical and cultural background to the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1924.

In 1916 Madison Grant, a New Yorker who graduated from Yale and Columbia Law School, published his book, "The Passing of the Great Race." Ultimately, this book which by the 1930's had sold over 1.6 million copies in the US, and which Adolph Hitler termed his "Bible", advocated the superiority of the Nordic people in advancing civilization, and the separation and eventual elimination of the less desirable races through sterilization. As Grant stated:

A rigid system of selection through the elimination of those who are weak or unfit — in other words social failures — would solve the whole question in one hundred years, as well as enable us to get rid of the undesirables who crowd our jails, hospitals, and insane asylums. The individual himself can be nourished, educated and protected by the community during his lifetime, but the state through sterilization must see to it that his line stops with him, or else future generations will be cursed with an ever-increasing load of misguided sentimentalism. This is a practical, merciful, and inevitable solution of the whole problem, and can be applied to an

ever widening circle of social discards, beginning always with the criminal, the diseased, and the insane, and extending gradually to types which may be called weaklings rather than defectives, and perhaps ultimately to worthless race types.

Grant provided statistical information on the racial composition of the US in 1890 and 1910 to support the quotas established in the Immigration Act of 1924, and was irked that the Law permitted entry to the US of even a small number of Eastern and South European immigrants. He also successfully lobbied for miscegenation laws. Not only were Grant's racial theories endorsed by Congress, but also by the Supreme Court. In 1927 Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, writing for an 8-member majority affirmed the power of Virginia to order a forced sterilization of 18-year-old Carrie Buck, who was mildly retarded, with these ringing words:

It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover cutting the Fallopian tubes. Three generations of imbeciles are enough. Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200, 204 (1927).

The Immigration Act of 1924 essentially capped annual immigration at 154,000 per year and set a national origins quota. Accordingly, the quota for Germans was set at that per cent that Germans living in the US bore to the entire US population in 1920. The act also permitted immigration only by those persons eligible to be naturalized as citizens. This excluded all Asians as under the Naturalization of 1790 only free white persons could be naturalized as citizens. Only immigrants from Latin America were not subject to these quotas.

Anti-Semitism, mixed with nativism, explains why the US refused to raise its quotas from Germany and Austria after Germany began to mistreat its Jews. 90% of the Germans and Austrians who emigrated to the US in the 1930's were Jews. There were radical anti-Semites who held the means to communicate with large segments of the population in the 1930's:

The Detroit priest Charles Coughlin railed on his weekly radio broadcasts against Jewish bankers and Jewish Marxists;

Henry Ford published the spurious Protocols of the Elders of Zion in his Dearborn Independent. The Protocols was a turn of the century Tsarist polemic claiming a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world, ;

Fritz Kuhn of the German-American Bund made a fiery speech before a rally of 20,000 in 1939 at Madison Square Garden in which he labeled FDR as Frank D. Rosenfeld and termed FDR's New Deal a Jew Deal.

Charles Lindbergh in the summer of 1941 at an America First Committee rally claimed that three groups "had been pressing the country towards war", the Roosevelt Administration, the British, and the Jews.

A subtler anti-Semitism also was pervasive among ordinary Americans. In 1939 a Roper poll found that only 39% of Americans felt that Jews should be treated like other people; 53% believed that "Jews are different and should be restricted" and 10% believed that Jews should be deported. In a March 1938 poll, 17% favored admission to the US of a larger number of Jewish exiles, 75% opposed; In a November 1938 poll taken after Kristallnacht, 21% favored expanding the admission of Jewish refugees, 71% opposed. I recall as a child that I played with two Jewish

friends at their homes, but never dared invite them to our home for play.

Thus, just after Kristallnacht, when the British ambassador offered to transfer their 65,000 per year quota to German Jews, he was rebuffed. Under-secretary Sumner Welles responded: "I reminded the ambassador that the President stated there was no intention on the part of the government to increase the quota of German nationals." Samuel Rosenman, a speechwriter for Roosevelt and one of many Jews in the Roosevelt administration at the time sent Roosevelt a memorandum telling him the increase in Quotas is "wholly inadvisable." "It will merely produce a Jewish problem in the countries increasing the quota." After the Anschluss Roosevelt, however, did combine the German and Austrian quotas, but a bill sponsored by Sen. Robert Wagner of NY and Rep. Edith Rogers of Massachusetts to admit 20,000 German Jewish children after Kristallnacht died in committee without FDR's support.

Another reason for American indifference was that the ugliness of German actions against Jews had not fully sunk into the American psyche. Even as late as the summer of 1943, when Nazi death camps were underway, Americans were still incredulous. A Polish officer, Jan Karski, who in disguise had served as a guard at two death camps and who had escaped Poland via railway to Portugal, met the Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter through the auspices of the ambassador for the London Polish government. In an interview with Karski by Hannah Rosen in 1995, Karski described his conversation with Frankfurter:

When I came to the United States in 1943, I had a meeting with a Justice of the Supreme Court, Frankfurter, who was a Jew, and he told me at a meeting at the Polish Embassy, "Do you know who I am? Yes. Do you know I am a Jew? Yes. Please tell me what is happening." After 20 minutes I told him all I saw. He was interested only in what happened to Jews. After 20-25 minutes, a moment of silence, I remember every word -- "Mr. Karski, a man like me talking to a man like you, I want to be totally frank -- I am unable to believe you." My ambassador said, "Felix, you don't mean it. You cannot say such a thing. You cannot call him a liar." "I did not say he is lying. I am just unable to believe what he told me." Then he reached out to shake my hand, but I couldn't.

On July 28, 1943 FDR met with the Ambassador of the Polish London government and Jan Karski. Karski described to the president how he had witnessed as a disguised Estonian guard Jewish bodies stacked in railroad cars waiting to be transported out of Belzec extermination camp for cremation. He reported that his government estimated that 1.8 million Jews had already been killed and that the Nazis intended to kill the rest. After an hour or so, FDR broke off the conversation and as a parting comment made the noncommittal comment: "Tell your nation we will win the war."

After the dissemination of several reports on Nazi atrocities towards Jews, a Gallup poll conducted in late November 1944 found only 19% of Americans thought the Nazis had murdered more than 500,000 Jews while 27% thought the number was less than 100,000.

Finally, the question arises as to why the Roosevelt administration kept out Jewish refugees when the quotas generally allowed for more refugees. There were both institutional and

personal factors involved in the failure in the pre-war years to accept immigrants up to quota. The Immigration Act of 1905 barred anarchists from immigrating to the US. The Immigration Act of 1917 adopted over Woodrow Wilson's veto, barred "epileptics", "insane persons", alcoholics, "professional beggars", all persons "mentally or physically defective", polygamists, and anarchists. The Hoover administration added an interpretative layer, requiring that potential immigrants demonstrate that they will not become a public charge, once they arrive in the US, This was usually rebutted by having a US relative or friend vouch for the immigrant, usually a guaranty to the Federal Government to the effect that US host will apply so much to the immigrant's support, if necessary.

As a result of fear of Fifth Column networks at German consulates in this country, the US shut down all German consulates in the US in the fall of 1940. The Germans retaliated by shutting down US consulates in Germany where refugees could apply for immigration visas. Now German refugees had to get themselves to neutral ports such as Lisbon or Stockholm and apply to the US consulate there. As delay piled on delay booking passage on a neutral ship became ever more dicey. Neutral ships began refusing payments for passage in Reich marks, resulting in another barrier.

But there were also human factors why visa applications had become so tricky. In the 1920's and 1930's many of the staff at the State Department came from the old boy network, many from the Ivy League colleges, which gave preference to sons of alumni and had quotas on admission of Jews. Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, a graduate of Groton and Harvard was in this group. Many in the department were also from the south, including the Secretary of State Cordell Hull from Tennessee whose ancestry harked back to the American Revolution, but who graduated from Cumberland School of Law and went immediately into Democratic politics. However, Hull was married to a Jew.

A key player, at least in so far as implementing US visa policy was concerned was Breckenridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of visa policy from 1940 to 1944. Long was a grandson of John C. Breckinridge, who ran as the proslavery candidate for president in the 1860 campaign and served as Secretary of war in the Confederate government. FDR appointed Long, a graduate of Princeton, a lawyer, and FDR's floor manager at the 1932 Democratic convention, first as ambassador to Italy where he spoke out against a boycott of Italy after Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia and then in 1940 as Assistant Secretary of State for visa matters.

Long's diary revealed that he bought into the theories of Madison Grant. In commenting with approval on a message from the US Ambassador to Moscow, Lawrence Steinhardt, himself a Jew, who opposed any consideration of admitting Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe after the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Long wrote referring to Steinhardt's memorandum opposing allowing in Eastern Europeans generally:

He [Steinhardt] says they are lawless, scheming, defiant- and in many ways inassimilable. He said the general type of intending immigrant was just the same as the criminal Jews who crowd our police court dockets in New York and with whom he is acquainted...I think he is right- not as regards the Russian and Polish Jew alone but the lower level of all that Slav

population of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

In a notorious memo to two State Department colleagues dated June 26, 1940, Long outlined how the US could protect against unwanted persons entering the country:

We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls, to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative devices, which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas.

Long achieved this objective with two new policies:

- 1) anyone applying for a US visa had the burden of showing that he would be an asset to the US, thus leaving wide discretion to reject on the part of consular officials;
- 2) anyone leaving behind a relative in Germany, Italy or Russia had to undergo an extensive security review by the FBI, and Army and Navy counter intelligence officials, which resulted in critical delay and outright objection.

The fear was that the Nazis would blackmail the individual into cooperating with sabotage by threatening his or her relative. FDR bought into this presumption, and he was apparently influenced by a speech from former Ambassador to Vichy France, William Bullitt. Bullitt claimed that a principal reason for France's defeat resulted from Germany's flooding France,, just before the outbreak of war with refugees, principally Jewish refugees. Bullitt claimed that these refugees acted as German agents, transmitting French military positions and troop strengths to their German masters. Newspaper articles by well known Americans such as Bill Donovan, and films like Confessions of a Nazi Spy also played up the dangers of a Fifth Column. With the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact in August of 1939, the fear of Jewish anarchists reawakened.

James McDonald of the President's Advisory Committee on refugees vigorously argued against the presumption that Jewish refugees with relatives still in Germany would serve as German agents on the grounds that Jews entering the US would harbor extreme animosity towards the Nazis and under no circumstances would allow themselves to be so co-opted.

McDonald's advisory committee on refugees and Long in the summer of 1940 became embroiled in a bureaucratic infighting. McDonald's committee struck an agreement with State and Justice under which it could present a list of prominent European intellectuals, politicians and Labor officials and that US consular officials would then expedite the visa applications of these officials without unduly burdensome reviews by the FBI, military intelligence and other National Security representatives reviewing these applications to determine if the applicant might pose a threat to US security. When many of these applications were delayed or rejected, McDonald tried to go over Long's head, even to the Justice department and FDR. McDonald received noncommittal responses, especially from FDR and the State Department's visa division continued to ignore him..

McDonald's arguments did achieve one result: the establishment of a review board, composed of pro-immigrant members, including Robert Buckley of Ohio, and led to the establishment of an independent review committee for denials of visa applications. By then it was too late.

Epilogue-

In July 1942 a German industrialist, Dr, Eduard Schulte, temporarily located near Auschwitz-Birkenau and with contacts with Nazis officials learned of the nearby death camp where Jews were executed with carbon monoxide poisoning- later Zyklon D. At least a year before special German units had seized Jews, forced them to dig graves and then shot them or let them starve to death in their ghettos, but this practice took a psychological toll on the soldiers, and the Nazis sought to depersonalize the process. Schulte traveled to Geneva, ostensibly on business, and gave his information about the final solution through an intermediary to Gerhard Reigner, a young German-Jewish lawyer and the Swiss representative of the World Jewish Congress. Reigner persuaded the US consulate in Geneva to relay the message back to the US for delivery to Dr. Stephen Wise, then, President of the World Jewish Congress. He also persuaded the British consulate to forward the message to Sidney Silverman, a representative of the WJC and a member of parliament in Britain.

The State Department, after instructing the Geneva consulate not to send any further such messages, kept the information to itself. ostensibly on the grounds that it needed confirmation, until November 1942. However, Silverman did not keep the information confidential and telegraphed Wise. Wise at the request of State told only a small circle of friends. By November of 1942 State had received corroborating reports of death camps for Jews:

- a) from the International Red Cross whose representatives, Karl Burkhardt who had heard from Hitler, and who had witnessed trains carrying Jews heading east;
- b) from a YMCA representative in Vichy France who had observed trains carrying Jewish children to the east; (unlikely that they were being transported to labor camps)
- c) from a report from Aguth Israel, based on information supplied from Eastern Europe, of transport of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Belzec death camp and mass killings of Jews in Latvia.

At this point Sumner Welles informed Rabbi Wise of the German plans for a final solution. Wise immediately held a press conference, but the information received only indifferent attention in America's major newspapers, and all stories were relegated to the inside pages.

Under pressure from the British, the Allies on December 17, 1942 issued a joint statement condemning the atrocities, which included language:

From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to eastern Europe...The above mentioned governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination.

The news did galvanize Jewish groups in the US where some infighting was occurring. There was tension between those factions within the Jewish community that placed priority on rescuing European Jews and those, led by Rabbi Hillel Silver of Cleveland, placing priority on establishing a Jewish state in Israel after the war. Silver's faction ultimately prevailed and he succeeded Rabbi Wise as head of the World Jewish Congress.

Allegedly, to avoid pressure from US Jewish groups, the US State department and the British Foreign convened a conference in Bermuda to deal with the refugee issue. Some cynics thought that Bermuda was selected to avoid reporters. Little by way of concrete recommendations and no action came from that conference. The US refused to budge on its refugee quota and the UK refused to change its 75,000 per year quota limit to Palestine.

In November 1943 Congress began consideration of an independent War Refugee board,

and called Breckinridge Long to testify in closed committee. Long, seeking to head off this move, testified that that the State Department had done as much as it could, and that under his leadership had admitted some 580,00 Jewish refugees. Representative Emanuel Celler, D-NY, called Long on his claim and established that this figure included all refugees, not just Jewish ones, and that the Jewish refugees made up barely one-quarter of this number. A few months later Long stepped down under pressure and within the year retired altogether to his horse farm in Maryland.

On January 13, 1943, the staff of Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau delivered to the Secretary a "Report on the Acquiescence of the US Government in the Murder of the Jews."

The report prepared by Ronald Paul of the Treasury, did not mince words:

I am convinced on the basis of the information which is available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy, have been guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler.

I fully recognize the graveness of this statement and I make it only after having most carefully weighed the shocking facts which have come to my attention during the last several months.

Unless remedial steps of a drastic nature are taken, and taken immediately, I am certain that no effective action will be taken by this government to prevent the complete extermination of the Jews in German controlled Europe, and that this Government will have to share for all time responsibility for this extermination.

Paul was apparently referring to the delays in releasing the information from Shulte sent on by Riegner. Two days later Morgenthau met with FDR and persuaded him to adopt an executive order creating the War Refugee Board to deal with saving Jews during the war and to deal with refugees after the war. For the first time, a specific government agency was now devoted to the problem of the Holocaust. The new director, a 35 year old Treasury official and Protestant lawyer, John Pehle, moved aggressively to authorize all who could escape refuge to be allowed in the US and placed in detention camps where they would at least be safe until the end of the war. But Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, was opposed and Cordell Hull was only lukewarm. So the matter was kicked up to FDR for decision. FDR approved the concept but limited the number to 1,000 persons. Refugees fleeing the Balkans to Allied controlled Italy, wound up at a camp known as Ft. Ontario in Oswego NY. They did not fare well in Oswego, but it was Harry Truman who, after the war, authorized these refugees to be released and to be given the opportunity to apply for permanent residency.

The War Refugee Board also released a letter describing Nazi gas chambers; this letter was received through diplomatic pouch from Switzerland in November 1944 from two Slovakian Jews who had escaped from Auschwitz. For this release without prior approval of atrocities the Board was severely chastised by the Office of War Information. The Board also pushed for a statement stronger than the Dec. 17, 1942 Joint Statement, warning against Nazi atrocities against Jews and threatening war crimes trials against those participating. FDR approved the Board's draft statement, but the statement, to be given by Eisenhower as the future military occupier of Germany, was delayed until October 1944 as Eisenhower sought to omit references to Jews specifically and required direct authorization from the chain of command to issue the statement.

Although the finances of the War Refugee Board remained precarious, the Board did

manage to fund the work of a young Swedish businessman, who had been before the war, the Antwerp representative of a Hungarian Jewish export firm. In his capacity as a nominal representative of the Swedish embassy in Budapest Raoul Wallenberg managed to save the lives of an estimated 200,000 Jews in Hungary in the waning days of the war. He did so by intimidating Nazis officers from carrying out orders to execute Jews threatening them with dire consequences in war crimes trials after the war. Wallenberg also established as nominal Swedish territory- apartment buildings in Budapest to house Jewish refugees, apartment buildings, which he had acquired with War Refugee Board funds.

Adolph Eichmann unsuccessfully tried to arrange for Wallenberg to be killed in a truck pedestrian accident. Only when the Soviets entered Budapest, and arrested Wallenberg as an American spy, did Wallenberg's work come to an end. He was held incommunicado for the rest of this life and was executed by the Soviets in the 1950's.

After the war the question of surviving Jewish refugees became embroiled with Zionism and the fight to establish a Jewish state. President Truman commissioned a Philadelphia lawyer, Earl Harrison, to inspect DP camps, especially Jewish DP camps in Europe. Harrison found conditions there less than desirable and the US Army sometimes mistreating Jewish DP's. A Republican Congress enacted the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. which authorized the admission above quota levels of 200,000 DP's until 1952. Of those admitted to the US under the Displaced Persons Act about 68,000 were Jews, according to the US Holocaust Museum.