

Cooperation with other Governments; United Nations: Historical Summary

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The signatories: United States, United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, South Africa, Yugoslavia.

Nations subsequently adhering - with dates: Mexico, 6/5/42; The Commonwealth of the Philippines, 5/10/42; Ethiopia, 7/28/42; Iraq, 1/16/43; Brazil, 2/2/43; Bolivia, 4/27/43.

Groups associated with the United Nations: The Fighting French, the French National Committee, the French Authorities in French North and West Africa and in French Guiana, and the Free Danes.

Nonmember nations which have severed connection with the Axis and have been included in United Nations work, such as the Food Conference: Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Other governments cooperating in certain ways with the United Nations and invited to the United Nations Food Conference: Egypt, Iceland, Iran, Liberia.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE 3/10/44

TO Mr. Pehle  
FROM Mr. McCormack

Appreciating that during the seven weeks the Board has been enjoying life, much history has been written figuratively and literally. Nevertheless, as resource material worthy of reading for a picture of activity in the field of refugee relief, I submit for circulation and staff consumption this paper: Refugees 1930-1943, a report prepared by George Warren currently associated with State and Executive Director of the International Migration Service Office in New York.

I would call your attention to the bibliography and particularly Sir John Hope Simpson's "The Refugee Problem" (London 1939) and "Refugees, A Review of the Situation since September 1938" (London 1939) both excellent surveys outlining successes and failures in coping with the relief, repatriation and resettlement of refugees.

cc: Miss Chauncey (Sec'y), Arzin, Abrahamson, Bernstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, McCormack, Paul, Pollak, Rains, Mann, Laughlin, Lesser, Lurford, Standish, Stewart, H. D. White, Files.

**The Following Pages Are the Best Available**

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#### REFUGEES

1930 - 1942

The death of Fridtjof Nansen in May 1930 was a distinct loss to the refugees whose problems had absorbed his attention during the last ten years of his life. After a year of study and uncertainty the League of Nations established in 1931 the Nansen International Office for Refugees to carry on the work which Dr. Nansen had initiated.

The League of Nations while accepting responsibility for the legal protection of refugees, had always considered its interest in refugee problems to be of a temporary nature and had particularly avoided assuming responsibility for the relief of refugees. Consequently the new Nansen Office was established as an autonomous body under the authority of the League of Nations with mandates to conclude its affairs by 1938 and to restrict its humanitarian activities to the coordination of the efforts of private organizations engaged in administering relief to refugees.

In order that the legal protection of refugees might be assured after the closing of the Nansen Office, the League of Nations provided, through the medium of the Convention of October 28, 1933, for the issuance of Nansen identity certificates by the Governments signing the Convention and for rights of residence and employment, and other benefits for Russians, Armenians, and assimilated refugees then under the protection of the Nansen Office.

After the Plebiscite in the Saar in 1935 approximately 7,000 former residents of the Saar left that territory, most of them to settle in France. This new group of refugees was added by League action to those already under the protection of the Nansen Office and a recommendation was made to the Governments that Nansen identity certificates be issued to them.

In 1936 Judge M. Michael Hanssen of Norway was appointed president of the Nansen Office and carried the work forward with energy and distinction until its close in 1938. He greatly simplified the work and finances of the Office, reorganized its nine representative offices in different European countries, and achieved a realistic accounting of the refugees remaining unsettled. At the close of his work in 1938, Judge Hanssen reported that 600,000 refugees, Russians, Armenians, Assyrians, Assyrian Chaldeans, Turks and Saarlanders remained under the care of the Office. The depression years from 1931 to 1938 had not eased the task of settling refugees and it was significant that twenty years after the end of World War I this substantial number of people remained in an unsettled state. They were destined later to join the stream of refugees from Central Europe and the war refugees of the western European countries who fled southward into France in advance of the German armies in the spring of 1940.

The war in China beginning in 1937 precipitated the largest  
internal migration in recent history. It is estimated that approx-  
imately 35,000,000 Chinese fled before the Japanese armies in two  
widespread movements from the coast areas to the agricultural  
interior, one from central China and the southeast to the south  
west and the other from the northeast to the northwest. Skilled  
laborers, industrialists, small merchants, government employees,  
students, and intellectuals participated in government efforts to  
move inland and were provided with special resources. Unskilled laborers  
and peasants were closely tied to the land under shorter distances  
along railroads and highways from areas of military action and were  
able to return after the Japanese occupation or the recapture  
of the land by the Chinese forces.

Under this restricted movement, only a few permanent settlements  
were established in the interior. Before the Japanese invasion the in-  
terior of the interior was from the coastal cities in the degree  
of years of the...

After the Nazi Party assumed control of the German Government in  
1933 thousands of new refugees were displaced over central and west  
Germany in the beginning of a movement which gained momentum  
through the three years of World War II and finally developed into  
an unprecedented pattern of displaced groups and populations in  
1941 and 1942. Those in Germany who opposed the Nazi political  
philosophy, non-Aryans according to the Nuremberg laws, scientists,  
intellectuals, authors, artists, the members of other liberal pro-  
fessions, and labor leaders, were first removed from government  
posts and later from private positions in the universities, publish-  
ing houses, and business; were arrested and confined in concentra-  
tion camps; deprived of their property and citizenship, and finally  
driven from Germany to find new places of livelihood as best they  
could in other countries.

Neighboring countries, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Czecho-  
slavakia, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and France accepted  
the refugees, often in flight over their borders at night, in the  
expectation of extending hospitality to them for a temporary period  
until they could emigrate to places of permanent residence overseas.  
Approximately half of the Jewish refugees who left Germany in the  
early days of the persecution migrated to Palestine.

In October 1933 the League of Nations appointed James G.  
McDonald as High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming  
from Germany, but separated the office from the League to avoid the



The first group of refugees to be accepted in the United States were the 100,000 refugees from the 1930s who were accepted in the 1950s. These refugees were accepted in the 1950s because of the political situation in Europe at that time. The refugees were accepted in the 1950s because of the political situation in Europe at that time. The refugees were accepted in the 1950s because of the political situation in Europe at that time.

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During 1939 the countries of temporary refuge in western Europe were obliged to seal their borders against the further influx of refugees. Palestine, the United States, and South America had absorbed approximately 270,000 refugees in about equal proportions. About 20,000 reached Shanghai and Havana. Cuba acted as an open port of distribution in the Western Hemisphere.

During that year the forced process of dispersal was overman. States were loaded at German ports for undesignated points in South America. Refugees were charged for country passages. The Captain

In the brief period of months between the transfer of the Reichsmann to Germany and the occupation of Czechoslovakia the British and French Governments attempted to assist the Czechoslovak Government to organize the emigration of refugees. The British Government made an original loan of 10,000,000 Pounds for the purpose and later the British and French Governments made 10,000,000 Pounds available, half as a loan and half as a gift. Out of the 10,000,000 Pounds loaned, 6,000,000 Pounds were earmarked for repayment of the original loan of 10,000,000 Pounds and the balance of 4,000,000 Pounds of this loan was made available as a gift. This latter fund remained in London available for the expenses of the emigration of refugees after the occupation of Czechoslovakia. About 2,500 Jewish refugees were assisted to emigrate to Palestine, some 7,000 political refugees reached England and other unknown numbers managed to escape to Poland, the Scandinavian countries, Western Europe, the United States, and South America.

In accordance with decisions taken in earlier years by the League of Nations, the Nansen International Office for Refugees (Russians, Armenians, Assyrians, Assyrian-Chaldeans, Turks, and Scandinavians) and the High Commissioner for Refugees Coming from Germany (Germans and Austrians) concluded their activities in December 1938. Logically, there was no reason for distinguishing

mean the different groups of refugees. It was also obvious that the League could not cease its activities on behalf of refugees at a time when their number was increasing rapidly. Consequently the League of Nations in 1938 constituted a new High Commissioner of the League of Nations to deal with refugees hitherto covered under the Nansen International Office for Refugees and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees Coming from Germany. Sir Herbert Emerson was appointed High Commissioner and established his office in London.

His duties were rigidly set forth in the resolutions adopted by the League of Nations to provide for the political and legal rights of refugees, to superintend the entry into force and the application of the laws of the host countries as defined in the Conventions of October 29, 1933, and February 10, 1938, to facilitate coordination of humanitarian assistance, and to assist Government and private organizations in their efforts to promote emigration and permanent settlement. In July 1939, Sir Herbert Emerson was elected Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees to combine the work of both organizations.

The Assyrians in Iraq and Syria, technically under the control of the League of Nations, some 50,000 in number, provided a specific example of their experience of the many political, racial, and economic difficulties inherent in the effort to settle refugees. Originally participants in World War I on the side of the Allies in the Near East, they had taken refuge after the war in Iraq. When the United Kingdom in 1932 relinquished its mandate over that country they became refugees a second time and their efforts to emigrate into Syria resulted in clashes at the Iraqi-Syrian border. The League organized contributions toward the expenses of settlement from the interested Governments. These funds were administered by an autonomous body set up by the League, known as the Trustee Board. After efforts on the part of the Nansen Office to find areas of settlement in Brazil and British Guiana had failed plans were made in 1936 to settle the Assyrians on the plain of the Ghab in Syria. In 1937 this plan had to be abandoned as the French Government notified the League of its intention to relinquish its mandate over Syria. In the end the Trustee Board spent the available funds in establishing 9,000 Assyrians who had entered Syria in the Valley of Khabur where they had encamped in 1933, an area considered at the time unsatisfactory because of its proximity to the Turkish border. 20,000 Assyrians were assisted in establishing homes in northern Iraq as a minority group because other plans for emigration and settlement had failed to materialize. Those who migrated to Syria eventually acquired Syrian citizenship and thus lost their refugee status. The Trustee Board ceased its activities in January 1942, twenty four years after the Assyrians entered the refugee state, immediately after World War I. The original homeland of the Assyrians in Kurdistan and Persian Azerbaijan had been lost to them in the peace settlement and they belonged to no country which could give them protection.

The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 precipitated the flight of thousands of Polish citizens to neighboring countries. The Polish government fled to France and then to London. The Polish military fought bravely but was overwhelmed by the German forces. The Polish people suffered greatly under German occupation.

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Between members of Poland and Jewish refugees who fled into the area of former Poland which was occupied by the forces of Soviet Russia were moved eastward to Siberia and northwestern Asiatic Russia.

The conquest of Poland also created a new German colony, the Polish provinces. The policy of the German Government was to repatriate German minorities in eastern and southeastern Europe to the Reich. A treaty concluded with Italy in the fall of 1939 providing for the return of some 270,000 Germans from the South Tyrol was the first effort to implement this policy. Later similar treaties were signed with Latvia and Estonia for the return of approximately 25,000 Baltic Germans. Some 300,000 Germans were also repatriated from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Roumania.

As the refugees of these German minorities in other countries returned to Germany they crossed the paths of the 300,000 to 400,000 Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia who were generally being expelled eastward to the ghettoes established in Warsaw, Berlin and Lodz. These constituted the remainder of the refugees who had been unable to escape from central Europe during the outbreak of the war. The last to escape had gone by land to Shanghai or through Finland or across Siberia to Harbin and Vladivostok and thence on to the Philippines or to the Western Hemisphere through Kobe and Yokohama.

As western Poland was incorporated into the Reich both Poles and Jews were driven eastward into Government General Poland. It was estimated by Polish sources that over 1,200,000 Poles had been moved into Government General Poland by Germany by the end of 1939. Germans in Government General Poland were returned to Germany. Germans were also moved from southern and eastern Poland occupied by Soviet Russia to Germany. From this area Poles and Jews were evacuated far eastward into Russia to be replaced by a Russian infiltration westward. No accurate figures concerning any of these movements will become available until after the war when the effort to repatriate uprooted population groups will disclose their magnitude. There is little evidence that any of the planned movements were completely effected. The task of accomplishing social homogeneity in given areas has proven difficult even to totalitarian authority. Germany pressed by constantly increasing demands for labor to meet the production requirements of an expanding war could ill afford to send sufficient Germans to the former western Poland to colonize the area and to develop German racial predominance over Poles on her new eastern border. Needless to say however the movements in eastern Europe were substantial and on a scale much larger than their counterparts in World War I. German reports in 1941 indicated that approximately 500,000 Germans had been repatriated from eastern and southeastern Europe.



Soviet control was extended to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania  
and refugees from central Europe who had escaped along the Baltic coast were  
sent inland into Russia. Those who were fortunate enough to escape across  
the Baltic Sea, or for example, on the Swedish neutral zone, were permitted  
to remain in the neutral zone. Soviet officials in Latvia, Estonia and  
Lithuania were instructed to take care of these refugees and to provide  
them with food and shelter.

Refugees from the Baltic states were also sent to the United States  
and Canada. In the United States, they were settled in the designated areas of  
the country. In Canada, they were sent to the provinces of Ontario and  
Quebec. The United States and Canada were the only countries to accept  
refugees from the Baltic states. The United States and Canada provided  
them with food and shelter.

The evacuation of internal resettlement after the  
war was completed. Approximately 300,000 people were moved from the coast  
to the interior of the country, including many who had fled  
from the Baltic states during the war.

The evacuation of the German armies into the Low Countries of western  
Europe in the spring of 1940 preceded civilian populations on a scale comparable  
to the flight from China for months earlier by the invasion of Poland. This  
evacuation of 3,000,000 German, Belgian and French people in flight to  
England was the largest evacuation of the German armies was described dramatically in  
the literature reported simultaneously the collapse of the allied armies in  
the West. The men, women and children desperately clinging to their family  
possessions clogged the highways, impeding the movements of the armies attempting  
to escape. Included with the resident civilians were some 140,000 refugees  
from central Europe who had found temporary respite in Holland, Belgium and France  
in the high-rough places of final immigration overseas.

A majority who had fled to safety from military actions returned  
to their homes after the signing of the armistice between France and Germany,  
illustrating the generally temporary character of such war refugee movements.  
Political and racial refugees, and those who had resisted the German advance as  
government officials or members of the armed forces, however, attempted to  
escape with the British Army from Dunkerque or proceeded through southern France  
to Spain and Portugal whose Atlantic ports were the only exits from war-torn  
Europe.

England after the flight of her defeated army from Dunkerque found herself  
harboring some 70,000 central European refugees in addition to the members of the  
military forces of her allies who had escaped with her own forces. The threat of  
an impending German invasion from the continent and the fear of "fifth columnists"  
among the refugees induced by the recent experiences of Norway, the Netherlands,  
Belgium and France understandably resulted in the internment of all of the  
refugees. A previous attempt to classify them according to the degree of danger  
which each presented individually had failed to establish confidence in the results  
of the procedure.



At the end of the United States' occupation of the country of Poland, the United States Department of State, in cooperation with the United States Army, conducted extensive investigations into the activities of the German administration in Poland.

During the months of November and December 1941, approximately 100,000 Polish refugees were evacuated from the areas occupied by the Germans. The majority of these refugees in Poland were removed to the United States, and the remainder of their lives were included in the general resettlement of mass populations in Poland by the United States. The majority of these refugees were resettled in the United States, and the remainder were resettled in the United States. It was estimated that approximately 100,000 refugees were evacuated from Poland during the months of November and December 1941.

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In addition to political, racial and religious refugees, those who are being advised to return to their homes and property, and those who are being advised to return to their homes and property, and those who are being advised to return to their homes and property. The majority of these refugees were resettled in the United States, and the remainder were resettled in the United States. It was estimated that approximately 100,000 refugees were evacuated from Poland during the months of November and December 1941.

Poland	675,000
Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia	150,000
Italy	132,000
Netherlands	90,000
Belgium	87,000
Slovakia	89,000
Yugoslavia	49,000
Denmark	31,000
France	26,000
Hungary	21,000
Switzerland	17,000
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	10,000
Bulgaria	8,000



Germany	4,000
Norway	3,000
Sweden	2,000
Spain	1,000
Greece	500
Finland	500
Poland	500

Large-scale statements in January 1944 gave the number of prisoners of war in Germany as 2,000,000 exclusive of prisoners of war in France. The shortage in Germany has become increasingly acute as large numbers of industrial and farm workers have been drafted to the home front.

No statistics exist in any country of still possible years of internment. The evacuation of prisoners of war from the Channel Coast in France or from the east coast of England, evacuation of this character was the evacuation in early 1942 of 100,000 prisoners of Japanese origin from the Pacific Coast area in the United States to internment camps in the interior states. Nor are there any satisfactory estimates of dislocations caused by the removal of industrial workers for military reasons or the displacement of war production from one area to another. Such movements are likely to be of a permanent character dependent upon the mobilization of labor and the economic adjustments consequent upon the war effort. They have been substantial in the United States and even in Germany. Plans for the evacuation of prisoners of war under the New Order to integrate them into the mobilization of labor into a centralized whole.

In July 1942 Jews in Paris, including the civil population, men, women of all ages, children, and even patients in hospitals were arrested at night and sent to concentration camps. Thousands of refugees left occupied France immediately for unknown destinations in eastern Europe. Many of the children under two years of age were spared. Many suicides were reported and many parents handed their children over to people standing on the streets as they were taken from their houses.

Refugees who evaded arrest fled in fright over the Swiss border and across the demarcation line into unoccupied France. Arrests and deportations followed a few weeks later in southern France. All exit permits for departure from France were cancelled and none were available thereafter to Jews of other than French nationality. Following the deportations from southern France some 5,000 refugees managed to escape across the border into Spain where many were interned. Public protests arose in France, particularly from church authorities, but proved ineffective to stop the deportations.

It is estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 Jewish refugees disembarked in Lisbon originally to escape from northern France, and sought by the authorities of their respective countries of origin to be repatriated to France, Belgium, Greece and Denmark. However, they were reported by the authorities of those countries.

On December 17, 1941, the Department of State of the United States in concert with the governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Soviet Russia, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia and with the French National Committee issued a statement condemning the deportations, mass executions and extermination of the Jews in Europe. The statement included the following:

"From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to eastern Europe, in Poland, which has been made the principal field of slaughter, the ghettos established by the Germans here are being systematically emptied of all Jews, except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of these few are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The frail are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately poisoned in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody atrocities is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women, and children."

"The above-mentioned Governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of race-baited extermination."

The issuance of this statement was the only joint action of Governments on behalf of refugees since the beginning of World War II. Action by the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and by the Intergovernmental Committee was restricted by the spread of the war primarily to the coordination and encouragement of the efforts of private agencies to assist the refugees to escape from Europe or to provide relief in areas where they were permitted to function. Interventions were made by the offices particularly with the British Government on behalf of individual refugees and occasionally with other Governments in the interest of special groups of refugees. An instance of the latter was the successful intervention with the Netherlands Government in November 1941, which resulted in the acceptance at Curacao, Netherlands West Indies, of eighty-three refugee passengers aboard the S.S. DABO de HORROS, who had been denied admission to the Argentine and faced the threat of returning to Spain and reinternment.

Most the group had left Marseilles in January 1941 aboard the S.S. ALBINA. They were confined to the ship for four months in the harbor of Dakar, French West Africa, were later transferred to a concentration camp at Casablanca, and were finally permitted to embark for South America ten months after their

1930-1931

The Commission on the Status of Refugees, established in 1930, was the first international body to deal with the problem of refugees. It was created by the League of Nations and its mandate was to study the conditions of refugees and to recommend measures for their relief and protection. The Commission's work was limited to the League of Nations period and it ceased to exist in 1946.

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Report by the Secretary General of the League of Nations on the Status of Refugees (A. 28.1930.XIII) (Ref. G.A.O. 15.1930) (Geneva, 1930) (A. 28.1930.XIII) (Ref. G.A.O. 15.1930) (Geneva, 1930)

Report by the Secretary General of the League of Nations on the Status of Refugees (A. 28.1930.XIII) (Ref. G.A.O. 15.1930) (Geneva, 1930)

Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany addressed to The Secretary General of the League of Nations, London, December 27, 1935, (G.13 M.12.1936 XII, Annex) (Ser.L.O.N.P. 1936. XII B.2)  
Hansen International Office for Refugees Report on the Liquidation of the Office. Geneva, June 14, 1937 (A.11.1937.XII) (G.226.1937.XII.); Convention Concerning the Status of Refugees Coming From Germany. Geneva, February 10, 1938 (G.75.M.30. 1938.XII) (Ser.L.O.N.P.XII.B. International Bureaux 1938 XII B 1 )

January 5, 1943

cc: Miss Chauncey (to Sec'y) Messrs. Abrahamson, Aksin, Bernstein, Mrs. Cohn, Messrs. DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Miss Hodel, Miss Laughlin, Messrs. Lesser, Luxford, Mann, McCormack, Paul, Pollak, Raines, Smith, Standish, Stewart, H.D.White